

# Successful Strategies Working with Parolees in the New Start Program

**nova**

**WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**Workforce Development  
Summit**

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# NOVA New Start Funding & Outcomes

- ◆ 2 years of funding: 1 FT Career Advisor
- ◆ 71 enrolled participants
  - ◆ 17 classroom training, 5 OJTs
  - ◆ 35 exited with employment (**76%** Placement Rate)
  - ◆ 14 currently receiving job search assistance
  - ◆ 11 incarcerated (neutral WIA outcome)
  - ◆ 11 exited from program without jobs

# Developing our Partnership

- ◆ Initial meeting with Parole Supervisors in our area
- ◆ CDCR Development of “Briefing Sheet”
- ◆ Attended Parole Agent staff meetings at each of the three Santa Clara County parole sites

# Developing our Partnership

## Awareness of Cultural Differences between our organizations and job functions

<b>Career Advisor</b>	<b>Parole Agent</b>
Counseling mindset	Policing mindset
More information	“Just the facts”
“Challenges”	“Consequences”
Enthusiasm for program	Wait and see (skepticism from past failures with similar services)

# Developing our Partnership

## Achieving Buy-In

- ◆ NOVA staff spoke or met with Parolees within 24 hrs of referral
- ◆ Informed Parole Officer of outcome – enrolling/not enrolling
- ◆ If not enrolled – explained resources provided to each Parolee
- ◆ Ongoing communication to each PO regarding participant status
- ◆ Job Placement!

# Developing our Partnership

## Referrals Increased

- ◆ Word of mouth
- ◆ Success stories shared between Parole Officers
- ◆ Presence of Career Advisor in Parole Office to meet with participants
- ◆ Over the first year, increased from one Parole Officer making referrals to sixty-two! In year two: 73 officers making referrals!

# Criteria for Referrals

- ◆ Participants
  - ◆ Clean & sober
  - ◆ Stable housing
  - ◆ Support network of family or friends
  - ◆ 100% support from their Parole Officer

# New Start Services Provided

- ◆ One-on-one job search coaching
  - ◆ Resume development
  - ◆ Interview preparation
  - ◆ How to find job leads
  - ◆ Effectively marketing oneself
- ◆ Soft Skills: Communicating, team building, problem-solving
- ◆ Computer skills: Intro to Computers, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access

# New Start Services Provided

- ◆ Supportive Services
  - ◆ Transportation Assistance
  - ◆ Clothing for interviews
  - ◆ Cell Phones
  - ◆ Work and training tools and supplies
- ◆ Training
  - ◆ On-The-Job Training (OJT)
  - ◆ Vocational classroom training

# Types of Training Provided

- ◆ Truck Driving
- ◆ Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE)
- ◆ Software Quality Assurance
- ◆ Automotive Specialist
- ◆ Green Building Construction
- ◆ Culinary Arts
- ◆ Filtration Systems (OJT)
- ◆ Shift Manager (OJT)
- ◆ Medical Equipment Technician (OJT)
- ◆ Recycling/Reclamation Worker (OJT)

# Key Factors in Parolee Success

- ◆ Family involvement and support
  - ◆ Initial meetings often included family members
- ◆ Parole Agent support
- ◆ Short training programs (6-16 weeks)
- ◆ On-The-Job Training (immediate wages)
- ◆ Regular visits with participants at training sites
  - ◆ Meetings with school administrators and instructors

# Key Factor: Helping Participants Effectively Market Themselves

- ◆ Do's and Don'ts of Job Search
  - ◆ Put significant time into job search, daily
  - ◆ Demonstrate a good attitude - no one owes you
  - ◆ Dress up for interviews and when submitting resumes and applications
  - ◆ Carry paper and pen to make note where companies are hiring so you can follow up later
  - ◆ Register on CalJobs and online job boards, Craigslist, yp.com

# Key Factor: Helping Participants Effectively Market Themselves

## ◆ Phone Etiquette

- ◆ Ensure professional outgoing message
- ◆ Don't answer phone with loud TV/music in background
- ◆ No dodging of calls until you know who is calling
- ◆ Answer questions fully with clear “yes” or “no”
- ◆ Be awake and ready to receive interview calls during business hours

## ◆ Email Etiquette

- ◆ Use a professional email address. NOT chickmagnet@yahoo.com

# Key Factor: Helping Participants Effectively Market Themselves

## ◆ Resume Development

- ◆ Templates available to create from scratch
- ◆ Sections - Objective, Summary, Skills, Experience, Education
- ◆ No GED?

## ◆ Job Application

- ◆ Create master application
- ◆ Q's re offenses: Read question VERY carefully
- ◆ Know your offense history to provide accurate info

# Key Factor: Helping Participants Effectively Market Themselves

- ◆ Preparing for the Interview - Q's re offenses
  - ◆ Be honest, but don't "spill your guts"
  - ◆ Short (30 second) positive response to state you made a mistake, how you learned from it, and what you have done since then
  - ◆ Return to your qualifications for the position

# Key Factor: Helping Participants Effectively Market Themselves

- ◆ Financial Incentives for the Employer
  - ◆ 50% OJT wage reimbursement up to 4 months
  - ◆ Bonding - up to \$25,000
  - ◆ Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) - up to \$9,000
  - ◆ Enterprise Zone employers - additional tax credits for up to five years

# Getting Ready for Changes to the Parole System

- ◆ Establishing connections Probation Officers
- ◆ Exploring grant opportunities to provide services to offenders going from Prison to Probation

# Participant Stories: Barry



Drug and gun convictions led Barry to prison when he was 25. While serving his sentence he was released twice, but quickly fell back into the world of addiction and crime.

Now 34, Barry is finally ready to leave his criminal past behind. He's been out of prison for one year, his longest stretch since 2002. In October, he began working as a truck driver in Sunnyvale and is determined to stay on a positive path and make a better life for himself. "Before, it didn't matter to me one way or the other," he said. "Now, I have a life."

# Participant Stories: Tes



Tes said New Start’s staff helped her regain her self-confidence, and got her to see that she “didn’t have to feel embarrassed” about having a criminal record. The program also paid to send Tes to TechSkills of San Jose, which provides information technology training.

In less than a year, she earned two certifications, one in database administration, the other in systems administration; together, they gave her the credentials to oversee and troubleshoot a company’s computer network. While still a student at TechSkills, Tes performed volunteer work fixing and updating computers for the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits. That reference helped her land a full time, permanent job in August 2010 with a software company in Santa Clara!

# QUESTIONS



# NOVA Contact Information

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