



## **Request for Information: Intent to Award Evaluation of Prison to Employment Initiative**

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) is interested in contracting with a research organization(s) to help evaluate the efficacy of its Prison to Employment grant initiative. The research organization that contracts with the State Board will be required to produce a rigorous evaluation of grant efficacy, including assessing the degree to which grantees effectively provide services to formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals, the extent to which grant participants find employment, and to the degree feasible, whether the grant program reduces recidivism.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Intent to Award is to gather pertinent information from interested applicants about their research organization and its associated qualified individuals' technical skill and proficiency, education and workforce development system knowledge, relevant published works, expertise for performing statistically rigorous quantitative analysis that builds on existing methods and research relevant to the field, and overall capability to utilize and securely handle confidential data. To meet federal and state-mandated evaluation and assessment requirements, the CWDB is interested in working with researchers to evaluate the impact of the Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E) on labor market outcomes for client populations served by workforce, education, and human service programs operating in California. Prospective researchers should be prepared to detail the types of research they can perform utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data pertaining to P2E programs and services.

### **Background**

California releases approximately 36,000 people from the state prison each year, a portion of whom have received in-prison job training rehabilitative services such as Career Technical Education (CTE) or have participated in programs operated by the California Prison Industry Authority (CalPIA). Concurrently, California manages federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds through its State Workforce Plan, developed by the CWDB (State

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Board) and implemented by Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards) across the state.

While there is some, often informal, coordination between these two systems, there is no formal, sustained, and systemic relationship between them. Some reentry and workforce programs have been created to target certain subpopulations of the state's supervised population, and while these programs have provided good data and lessons learned, an ongoing marriage of the two systems is needed to better integrate services operating in isolation and to fill gaps and provide holistic and long-term outcomes to reduce recidivism.

The Governor's 2018 Budget proposal included \$37 million over three budget years to fund the integration of workforce and reentry services in the state's 14 WIOA Regional Planning Units (RPU). Known as the "Prison to Employment Initiative," the proposal is briefly mentioned in the [Governor's Budget Summary](#) from Budget Year 2018-2019 on page 74 (page 6 of the linked document).

Funding for P2E was approved by the Legislature in [SB 856 \(Budget & Fiscal Review, Chapter 30, Statutes of 2018\)](#) and is intended to support regional planning efforts, fund regional plan implementation, and provide resources for direct services to the formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals. It also sets aside specific resources for both supportive services and earn-and-learn activities, which were identified as a major gap by current grantees and local service providers. The CWDB awarded grants under P2E to all 14 California labor regions in 2019 and 2020.

## Framework for Contracted Work

The CWDB is interested in examining the efficacy of the P2E grantees' programs. Research questions include and are not limited to:

1. Which programs and types of programs led to higher employment rates and higher wages for participants?
2. Which programs and types of programs led to reduced inequities for historically marginalized populations?
3. How well did grantees coordinate pre-release reentry services and post-release workforce services from multiple service providers? What best practices can be learned?
4. What causal mechanisms may help explain answers to the above questions?

The contracted research organization(s) will have access to contacts at grantees' offices (for qualitative research) as well as data from the CalJOBS system. Administered by the Employment Development Department, CalJOBS is a case management system for individual participants in grantee programs (i.e. formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals). Researchers will conduct "for hire" research according to specifications agreed to by the CWDB.



Researchers will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement and any publication of research findings will be contingent on prior agreement by the CWDB.

The following provides a summary of CalJOBS information anticipated to be available to the research team for analysis:

1. Participant characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnicity, race, veteran status, barriers to employment);
2. Workforce training and related education information, including service providers, types of services received, dates of services received, skill gains achieved, and credentials attained;
3. Supportive service information, including the type of services received and the dates of services received;
4. Employment information, including employers, quarterly earnings, and industry/sector code.

#### Process for Communicating Interest in Relevant Work

Organizations interested in responding to this Intent to Award must submit a three to five page narrative which includes 1) relevant experience in developing and producing statistically rigorous quantitative research in the fields of criminal justice reform, reentry, human services programs, education, and workforce development, 2) a discussion of current or past research on prison reentry programs, 3) links to a curriculum vitae (CV) of potential individuals who would be administering the research, 4) a list of published research with links to the documents, and 5) any other pertinent information.

The CWDB research staff will review this material, and the most qualified parties may be contacted to further an understanding of how those parties might be able to help CWDB evaluate the P2E program. Depending on interest, CWDB may then conduct a competitive bid for the evaluation work.

Organizations interested in responding to this Intent to Award are invited to submit their three to five page narrative (as described in the “Process for Communicating Interest in Relevant Work” Section) to:

[travis.baker@cwdb.ca.gov](mailto:travis.baker@cwdb.ca.gov)

with “Intent to Award: P2E” in the subject line

by: **September 18, 2020, 3PM PDT**

Questions related to this Intent to Award may be submitted to the same email address.

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