

Prison to Employment Initiative

Interim Report for Evaluation of Workforce Development Programs
submitted pursuant to Supplemental Report of the 2018-19 Budget Act,
Item 7120-101-0001

Introduction

In 2018, the California legislature appropriated \$37 million for the Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E) to be administered by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB).¹ Funding for P2E was approved by the Legislature in SB 856 and signed by the Governor on June 27, 2018. P2E funds the integration of workforce and reentry services through grants to workforce service providers across California, paving a pathway towards employment and away from recidivism for the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved population. The legislation required CWDB to submit an interim report on the progress of P2E 18 months after initial grants were awarded, and CWDB submits this report in fulfillment of the statute. The report presents an overview of P2E, aggregate participation and preliminary outcome data, four participant success stories, and lessons learned from the program.

Overview of the Prison to Employment Initiative

Among those with barriers to employment, formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals are some of the most difficult to serve. Returning to their communities and families, they not only need to find a job, but many also struggle with substance abuse problems, insufficient education and job skills, few housing options, and mental health issues. In addition to these barriers, most formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals in California are people of color. This compounds the challenges they face in trying to succeed in the workforce due to historical and institutional barriers that disproportionately affect people of color.

¹ P2E was proposed in the Governor's 2018-19 Budget, available at <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2018-19/pdf/BudgetSummary/PublicSafety.pdf>.

As part of California's efforts to improve its criminal justice system and reduce recidivism through increased rehabilitation, the CWDB, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), California Prison Industry Authority (CalPIA), and California Workforce Association (CWA) created and finalized the Corrections-Workforce Partnership in late 2017. This historic partnership agreement links education, job training, and work experience in prison to post-release jobs by fostering a system of coordinated service delivery to a population that faces a variety of barriers.²

To spearhead California's efforts to promote equity and create economic opportunity for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals, the Governor's 2018-19 Proposed Budget included \$37 million over three years for P2E. P2E funds the integration of workforce and reentry services in all of California's labor regions, or Regional Planning Units (RPUs). The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes guidelines for California's workforce system. At the local level, Local Boards implement plans under WIOA to align partnerships with education, business, and community organizations for skill attainment, economic mobility, and shared prosperity. At the regional level (e.g. the Inland Empire and the East Bay), RPUs are associations of Local Boards that implement plans designed to coordinate their Local Boards' efforts. P2E funds were awarded to RPUs, with the greatest amounts going to where the highest numbers of formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals reside.³ P2E enrolled its first participants in October 2019, and services are scheduled to wrap in March 2022. The initiative is designed 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 previous grantees and local service providers.

The mission of P2E and the broader Corrections-Workforce Partnership is to create a pipeline for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals towards employment and away from recidivism. To accomplish this mission, P2E funds both "direct services" and "supportive services." Direct services provide participants with career and skills training assistance, like interview coaching and tuition for Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) training in the construction trades. Supportive services provide participants with assistance meeting their basic needs, like stipends to cover participants' transportation, clothing, and food costs. "Earn and learn" models enable a participant to upgrade their skills while earning wages from an employer. Funds for P2E services were awarded with two grants: one for direct services and one for supportive services/earn and learn. CWDB measures the effectiveness of these services with the ability of P2E participants

² The partnership agreement is available at https://cwdb.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2018/02/Corrections-Workforce-Partnership-for-the-Prison-to-Employment-Initiative_.pdf.

³ A list of grantees and awarded amounts for the Prison to Employment Initiative is available at https://cwdb.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2020/11/P2E_Award_Announcement_Implementation_Grants_Updated_ACCESSIBLE.pdf.

to (1) transition from P2E into the broader workforce and education system, (2) obtain employment, and (3) earn higher wages. These data are tracked using the Employment Development Department's CalJOBS case management system.⁴

The Prison to Employment Pipeline

Perhaps the most important accomplishment of the P2E program is the building of a substantial infrastructure to funnel formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals towards employment and away from recidivism. Together with its partners in the Corrections-Workforce Partnership, CWDB has made substantial progress in sewing together an often disjointed patchwork of pre-release and post-release services into a coordinated effort. The Corrections-Workforce Partnership assists individuals as they prepare for release, providing career counseling, arranging for housing and supportive services, and hosting hiring events within the state prisons. Job centers across the state now automatically receive referrals from CDCR's Parole Division when their area receives new parolees. And "warm handoffs," in which a parole officer personally introduces a parolee to their workforce case manager, are increasingly becoming the norm. Because of P2E's focus on systems change, the two systems now work together to align services. This promotes a more efficient use of government resources, better employment outcomes for justice-involved individuals, and reduced recidivism.

Participant Demographics, Services Provided, and Preliminary Outcomes

P2E is currently scheduled to end in March 2022, and the overwhelming majority of participants have yet to complete their prescribed services and exit the program. With nine months remaining before most participants exit, it is too early to make firm conclusions about the effectiveness of P2E services. However, P2E grantees are meeting and exceeding their enrollment targets ahead of schedule, despite the many challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of P2E participants have co-enrolled into the broader workforce and education system. And employment outcomes among early P2E participants are encouraging. These results are outlined below.

Table 1 reports the total enrollment numbers as of June 1, 2021 along with a breakdown of the racial and ethnic demographics of P2E participants. The racial and ethnic demographics of California workers as a whole are also presented for comparison. These data come from the U.S. Census Bureau, and they highlight both the disproportionate barriers to employment faced by people of color along with the efforts

⁴ CalJOBS is available at <https://www.caljobs.ca.gov>.

P2E and CWDB are undertaking to mitigate these disparities.⁵ P2E has enrolled a disproportionately greater share of African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders than their percentages of the overall worker population. We also present the demographics of WIOA Title I participants who are ex-offenders to show that P2E participants have similar demographics. WIOA defines ex-offenders as individuals who have “been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent act.”⁶

Table 1. P2E Enrollments by Race and Ethnicity

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Enrollments</u>	<u>Percentage of Enrollments</u>	<u>Percentage of CA Workers</u>	<u>Percentage of WIOA Title I Ex-Offenders</u>
African-American	773	24.2%	7.0%	27.9%
Asian-American	76	2.4%	16.8%	2.2%
Hispanic/Latinx	1407	44.1%	35.2%	42.5%
Native American	124	3.9%	1.5%	3.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	41	1.3%	0.6%	0.9%
White	1125	35.3%	70.7%	38.3%
Multi-Racial	97	3.0%	3.3%	2.9%
Total Enrollments	3190			

Note: Data current as of June 1, 2021. The percentages do not sum to 100 as participants may fall into more than one racial/ethnic category. Data for WIOA Title I Ex-Offenders are from Program Year 2019-20.

Table 2 breaks down P2E enrollments by RPU, showing the geographical distribution of P2E participants. P2E grants were awarded to all 14 RPUs in California.⁷ In their applications, RPUs set *aspirational* enrollment goals for the two P2E grants: direct services (DS) and supportive services/earn and learn (SSEL). RPUs set enrollment goals of 2248 for DS and 2523 for SSEL. Recall that applications were submitted *before the pandemic*—the pandemic imposed myriad challenges for grantees, including bans on face-to-face interaction, public transportation shut downs, and a dramatically worsened economic outlook for a population that already faced imposing barriers to employment. In the face of these immense challenges, RPUs adapted and overcame, meeting and exceeding their enrollment targets with nine months still remaining in the program.

⁵ Data from the Census are available at <https://qwiexplorer.ces.census.gov/static/explore.html#x=0&g=0>. The numbers reported here are from third quarter 2020, the latest available at the time of this report.

⁶ The WIOA language is available at https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/Performance/pdfs/ETA_9172_DOL_PIRL_1.18.18.pdf. See Data Element No. 801.

⁷ The Coastal RPU has since split into the North Central Coast RPU and South Central Coast RPU after P2E grants were announced.

Table 2. P2E Participants by Regional Planning Unit

<u>Regional Planning Unit</u>	<u>Total Unique Participants</u>	<u>DS Participants</u>	<u>SSEL Participants</u>
Bay-Peninsula	141	141	96
Capital	176	145	132
Coastal	87	68	39
East Bay	108	83	59
Humboldt	72	69	63
Inland Empire	304	29	279
Los Angeles Basin	1311	1262	608
Middle Sierra	141	28	122
North Bay	85	60	42
North State	117	117	71
Orange	121	112	22
San Joaquin Valley	305	218	209
Southern Border	159	159	96
Ventura	63	42	28
Total Enrollments	3190	2533	1866

Note: Grantees set enrollment goals of 2248 participants for DS and 2523 participants for SSEL. Grantees did not set goals for unique individuals enrolled across the two grants. The enrollment goals for each grant were aspirational in nature and set before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. DS stands for the direct services grant and SSEL stands for the supportive services/earn and learn grant. Most P2E participants are enrolled in both the DS and SSEL grants.

Table 3 reports the mix of workforce services that P2E participants have received. Nearly all have received individualized career services, including career counseling, resume guidance, and interview coaching. Over one third have enrolled in education/training of some type, including adult basic education, forklift operation, food handling safety, truck driving, and construction code compliance.⁸ Over 200 P2E participants have received on-the-job training (OJT), often used as part of an earn-and-learn curriculum. About one-fifth were placed in work experience (WEX), often a critical component of a participant’s successful reentry from incarceration. Finally, nearly 1000 participants have received supportive services, including clothing, housing, food, and childcare assistance. CWDB has found these services to be an integral part of successfully serving the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved population.⁹

⁸ A full list of grant-funded activities classified as “Education and Training” is available at https://www.edd.ca.gov/Jobs_and_Training/pubs/wsd19-06att2.pdf.

⁹ The critical role that supportive services play in serving the formerly incarcerated and justice-involved population is outlined in CWDB’s final report to the legislature on AB 2060, the precursor to P2E.

Table 3. P2E Services Provided

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>Participants Served</u>	<u>Percentage of Participants</u>
Career Services	3085	96.7%
Education/Training (any type)	1153	36.1%
On-the-Job Training	206	6.5%
Work Experience	636	19.9%
Supportive Services	927	29.1%
Total Enrollments	3190	

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as participants may receive more than one type of service. On-the-Job Training and Work Experience are subsets of Education/Training (any type).

Tables 4 and 5 present cross-tabulations of P2E services provided and participants' gender identification and race/ethnicity, respectively. These tables provide a sense of P2E's efforts to promote gender and racial equity, as participants from historically marginalized populations have generally received services in proportion to their makeup of P2E participants as a whole.

Table 4. P2E Services Provided and Participant Gender Identity

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Not Provided</u>	<u>Total</u>
Career Services	552	2502	31	3085
Education/Training (all types)	189	957	7	1153
On-the-Job Training	31	175	<4	206
Work Experience	113	523	<4	636
Supportive Services	187	730	10	927

Note: On-the-Job Training and Work Experience are subsets of Education/Training (any type). Gender identity in this table is limited to Female, Male, and Not Provided because the data come from CalJOBS, which does not ask about transgender identities.

Table 5. P2E Services Provided and Participant Race/Ethnicity

<u>Services Provided</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>Asian-American</u>	<u>Hispanic/Latino</u>	<u>Native American</u>	<u>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Multi-Racial</u>
Career Services	744	74	1364	124	39	1091	94
Education/ Training (all types)	282	32	490	46	17	410	31
On-the-Job Training	43	10	79	9	7	63	6
Work Experience	174	15	268	29	15	212	16
Supportive Services	184	23	405	32	11	370	25

Note: On-the-Job Training and Work Experience are subsets of Education/Training (any type). There is no total column or row because none of the columns or rows are mutually exclusive.

Table 6 reports P2E participants' preliminary outcomes. Recall that the vast majority of participants have yet to exit the program and are still receiving services. To date, 1534 participants have co-enrolled into a broader workforce and education program, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, secondary and post-secondary education programs, and other state-funded workforce programs. Co-enrollments are a major goal of P2E, as they considerably increase the amount of resources available to participants and concurrently increase their chances of success in the workforce. This report specifically presents WIOA Title I co-enrollments as that workforce program is the broadest in California. Additionally, nearly 400 P2E participants have earned an industry-recognized credential, granting them access to a range of careers that require such certifications as a prerequisite for employment. Finally, at least 718 P2E participants have already exited the program and been placed in unsubsidized employment. The number is at least that high due to the voluntary nature of reporting requirements—the actual number of employment placements is likely higher and will be reported in the P2E final report, after CWDB has received final wage data from the Employment Development Department's Tax Branch. CWDB has already received wage data on 239 of those 718 employment placements, and their median wage is \$7175 in the second quarter (i.e. a three month period) after their exit from the program. While this early wage number is encouraging, it is *very early*—about 4,000 participants are expected in the program, so 239 only represents about five percent of the total number of expected participants. For this reason, participants' median wage in the final report could be quite different from the median wage reported here.

Table 6. P2E Preliminary Outcomes

<u>Preliminary Outcomes</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
Co-Enrollments: All Programs	1534
Co-Enrollments: WIOA Title I	1323
Credentials Earned	376
Employment Placements	718
Median Wage 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$7175

Note: Only 239 participants have wage data at the time of this report. This represents about five percent of the expected number of participants in the program, so the median wage in the final report will almost certainly be different. Over 70% of participants with wage data had wages within one standard deviation of the median. Co-Enrollments: WIOA Title I is a subset of Co-Enrollments: All Programs.

Success Stories

Given the preliminary nature of P2E quantitative outcomes, its early successes can perhaps best be demonstrated through the lived experiences of its participants. This report presents four stories of how P2E has impacted formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals across California.

Mathew was referred to P2E services in the San Joaquin Valley in May 2020 after serving over ten years in prison. Mathew worked closely with staff to participate in job readiness training (JRT). Through the help of P2E direct and supportive services, he received his certification in forklift operations. After completing his training, Matthew was placed in a transitional job to build homes, hotels, and apartments. Despite having no previous construction experience, he successfully completed the transitional job and began full-time employment in September 2020. His employer stated, “Matthew is always the first one here,” “he is a quick learner,” and he has had perfect attendance. Due to these positive traits, the employer began cross-training him in several additional positions. Matthew continues to receive follow-up services and has shared with staff his new passion for learning.

Jesús is a P2E participant from the Southern Border region who served an eight-year sentence. Once released, he first went to live with his family in Mexico. Later, he was referred to P2E services by Family Health Centers and provided an opportunity to live at Second Chance sober living while completing the intensive four-week JRT class. After the first week, he ran into an obstacle and was not allowed to live in housing. He returned to Mexico and continued to do the JRT class online every day. He was given another chance to stay in sober living if he showed commitment and followed the

expectations of the program. He demonstrated his commitment and investment by showing up every day and participating in the class. He recently graduated from JRT and landed his first job. According to P2E staff, he is beyond excited. His most recent communication stated: "I got the job! I'm like super wowed right now! I got the job at California Greenhouses & OC Succulents. They are starting me at 15\$/hr."

Olga is on active probation in Tulare County, and she enrolled in P2E services in June 2020. Through career coaching and JRT, Olga started a temporary survival job at a local restaurant, but her hours were reduced, and then she was laid off due to COVID-19. Workforce staff referred her to a COVID-19 support services program to inquire about rental assistance. Olga was also considered to receive work-based training as a contact tracer. Ultimately, through career services, Olga was hired on as an employment program representative with EDD earning \$19 an hour. Olga is enjoying the new position, and due to her interest in the medical field, staff continues to assist Olga in meeting her career goals.

Jerry lives in Sutter County and was recently released after spending most of his life incarcerated. He took advantage of many in-prison training opportunities, earning multiple certifications in automotive transmission and tune-up, small engine repair, and electrical repair. Eager to find work upon release but unsure of his "soft" skills, he was referred to P2E services by his parole officer. Jerry was given the opportunity to help around a local mechanic shop as an intern. After impressing his internship host with his skills and knowledge, Jerry was offered a permanent position. According to P2E staff, he gets along well with his boss and coworkers, and he couldn't be happier. His self-esteem improves every day, and he pays it forward by encouraging other recently released individuals to stay on the right path as well.

Lessons Learned

Although the program has yet to wrap up, there are several important lessons we have already learned. The first key takeaway is the integral role that supportive services play in serving formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. Similar to what we saw with the Supervised Population Workforce Training Program established by Assembly Bill 2060 (V. Manuel Perez, Chapter 383, Statutes of 2014), the CWDB's Workforce Accelerator Fund, and other grants serving this population, successful labor market outcomes are difficult to achieve when individuals face such difficult barriers to employment. These barriers include poverty, substance abuse problems, insufficient education and job skills, few housing options, and mental health issues. Supportive services address these barriers, and they are critical to participant success. CWDB encourages P2E grantees to provide supportive services even in the absence of direct services.

The second lesson is to combine the two separate grants, one for Direct Services and one for Supportive Services/Earn and Learn, into a single funding stream. The primary reason the funding streams were separated was to emphasize the importance of supportive services. But while the dual funding streams made sense on paper, they have proven burdensome in practice. Grantees have shared challenges with duplicative paperwork and processes required in order to manage two separate funding streams for what is in practice a single program.

Finally, P2E has added to the growing amount of evidence indicating that workforce services can help formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals enter careers and avoid recidivism. As shown in the preliminary numbers, P2E services appear to be working—despite the obstacles they face, P2E participants are completing their services and entering employment. If this progress continues, P2E will lead to significant improvements in the economy, public safety, and efficient use of public resources.

Conclusion and Next Steps

While it is still too early to reach firm conclusions on the effectiveness of P2E, CWDB is pleased with the progress grantees have made in recruiting participants from the population, as well as the early indicators on co-enrollment and employment placements. Final data on outcomes, including employment rates and wages, will become available one year after the last participant exits. CWDB will present these data to the legislature in the P2E final report. CWDB has also partnered with the Presley Center of Crime and Justice Studies at UC Riverside to conduct an in-depth program evaluation of P2E. The evaluation team will dive deep into the quantitative and qualitative effects of P2E, providing a clearer picture of how to best serve formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals and improve workforce services in California. In the 2021-22 Budget, the California Legislature appropriated \$20 million in additional funds for P2E. CWDB expects to award the additional funds to grantees in 2022.