



March 13, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for HB 5004 - Housing/Reentry Supports Policy Option Package

Dear Co-Chair Evans and Broadman, and Committee Members,

I am the Executive Director of East Cascades Works (EC Works), the local workforce development board appointed by the Governor to serve the 10 counties east of the Cascades Mountain Range in Oregon. We serve at the pleasure of Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Wheeler, Gilliam, Deschutes, Jefferson, Lake and Klamath counties.

My workforce area is where the WorkSource Oregon Reentry program began. In 2018, EC Works asked our longstanding partners at Oregon Employment Department (OED) to meet with us and the Department of Corrections (DOC) to explore my private sector led board's goal of creating a talent pipeline from the 2 prisons in our area to support local businesses. Through this partnership with OED and DOC we launched the first WorkSource Centers inside the two prisons in our area, Deer Ridge and Warner Creek in 2022.

Since that time, we've secured competitive grants from the US Dept of Labor and a Future Ready Grant to take the program statewide. These funds have supported the creation of a WSO Center with a computer labs and partial staffing.

Below is the program performance of the initial 2 prisons that started this work:

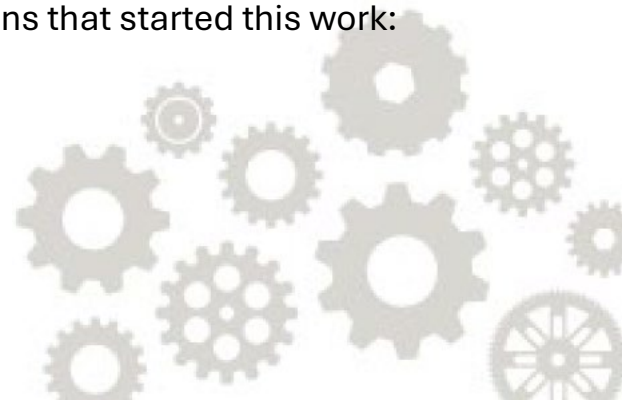
- July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024 – just 2 prisons
 - Pre-release program participants – 332

EAST CASCADES WORKS

1001 SW Disk Dr., Suite 250, Bend, OR 97702

Phone: 541-604-6382

www.eastcascadesworks.org



- Released participants – 277
- Active participants post release – 138
- Total employed or in trng – 107

As of January 2025, all 12 prisons now have WSO Centers with a computer lab and partial staffing. Please see below the initial statewide program performance:

- July 2024 – Jan 2025 – all 12 prisons
 - 350 AIC's enrolled
 - Not enough time has elapsed to capture placement performance, but an early positive indicator is that the 1 year recidivism rate is 1.43% for enrolled participants who've exited services (~100 people)

The investment in DOC's Housing/Reentry Supports Policy Option Package will provide the Transition Coordinators needed to support the institution's WorkSource Centers. Further it leverages a \$350M investment of federal and state resources in WorkSource Oregon. Alignment of state and federal investments across sectors should be the goal of the legislature. This investment will generate revenues through personal income tax as well as reduce recidivism and make our communities safer.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or clarifications. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Heather Ficht

Executive Director

heather@ecworks.org

541-904-5070

