

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 20, 2015

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Governor Brown Encourages Business Owners at CDCR and CALPIA Bay Area Employer Forum

OAKLAND – Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. gave opening remarks at the Bay Area Employer Forum, where state and local leaders discussed the benefits of hiring trained former offenders.

“I have talked with offenders who have experienced both failures and successes,” said Governor Brown. “And those who have experienced success attribute it to post-release employment and that was their turning point.”

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, California Prison Industry Authority, Alameda County Sheriff’s Office, EastBay Works, and the California Workforce Investment Board hosted the Bay Area Employer Forum.

“Employers benefit when hiring trained former offenders with valuable job skills and industry-recognized certifications,” said CDCR Secretary and Prison Industry Board Chair, Jeff Beard. “Californians benefit because when a former offender secures a job it keeps our communities safer and saves the state money.”

The average cost to house a CDCR offender is over \$62 thousand a year.

“CDCR and CALPIA teach real-world job training to offenders behind prison walls,” said Charles Pattillo, General Manager of CALPIA. “When offenders leave prison we want them to succeed and never return.”

CDCR and CALPIA held similar Employer Forums in Los Angeles and Sacramento last year. Several hundred employers attended the forums and learned about accessing a pool of trained, skilled and certified workers. Also, business owners discovered how to reduce their recruitment and training costs through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and fidelity bonding options.

“This forum is critical to educating employers and the community about the benefits of hiring the formerly incarcerated who are highly-trained, licensed, and working to rebuild their lives,” said Congresswoman Barbara Lee. “As a former small business owner, I encourage business owners to evaluate each person equally.”

CALPIA trains over 8,000 offenders per year in service, manufacturing and agricultural industries in California’s penal institutions. CALPIA is self-supporting and does not receive an appropriation from the state budget. CALPIA participants returned to prison, on average, 26-38 percent less often than offenders released from the CDCR general population.