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Incarcerated Individuals Secure State Job Offers Before Leaving Prison

JAMESTOWN – A third hiring event organized by multiple state agencies has proven successful for incarcerated individuals at Sierra Conservation Center (SCC). The hiring event prepares incarcerated individuals to qualify for state jobs within the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) before returning to their communities. In total, 31 incarcerated individuals have received conditional job offers from the hiring events held at California State Prison, Solano in 2019, Central California Women’s Facility in 2021, and SCC in 2023.

Representatives from the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA), along with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Caltrans, the California Government Operations Agency (GovOps), the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR), and the California Workforce Development Board all participated in the Civil Service Workgroup.

“CALPIA is one of multiple state agencies coming together to improve the lives of incarcerated individuals,” said CALPIA’s General Manager Bill Davidson. “These hiring events thrive through partnerships, and it is rewarding to see individuals find employment when they are about to leave prison.”

Incarcerated individuals are taught the process of getting a state job which includes participants taking the entry-level Highway Maintenance Worker exam.

“The Prison to Employment (P2E) Civil Service Hiring Event creates many other important skills to finding meaningful employment,” said Rusty Bechtold, CALPIA’s Assistant General Manager of Workforce Development. “The hiring event allows the participants to practice and learn an entire employment process from beginning to end for any civil service job they may apply for upon release.”

Hiring Event organizers first hold an informational meeting at the prison to answer questions from the incarcerated population. The second meeting introduces participants to computers and how to use a computer to create a CalCareer account. They are also taught how to complete a state application. The third meeting is when the interviews are held.

“Caltrans is honored to have joined another Prison to Employment Hiring event with CALPIA. Our hiring managers were impressed by the candidates and look forward to offering more job opportunities in the future,” said Caltrans Deputy Division Chief Tom Hicks. “We plan to participate annually and aim to collaborate with the Department of Motor Vehicles to assist candidates in obtaining their Driver’s

Licenses. We hope the knowledge gained will encourage incarcerated individuals to pursue civil service roles, especially at Caltrans, post-release.”

The Highway Maintenance Worker positions for Caltrans have been hard to fill entry-level positions for the State. Hiring Event organizers say this helps fill a gap in the workforce which benefits all of California.

Joe Flores, who is the Lead Representative for Reentry Initiatives for the California Workforce Development Board said when multiple state agencies and departments come together for the greater good, positive results take place.

“Through this coordinated partnership, we continue to build an inclusive path for incarcerated individuals to find quality post-release jobs,” said Flores. “We want these individuals to be successful when they leave prison, it is not only a win for them, but for the entire State of California.”