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# VOCATIONAL TRAINING PLANNING BOARD

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**Annual Report**

***May 2023***

# New Jersey Department of Corrections

## New Jersey Department of Corrections Vocational Training Planning Board

The Vocational Training Planning Board was established in 2016 in an effort to “enhance and supplement the current vocational programming available” within the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC). The purpose of the Board is to review and introduce new and emerging vocational program offerings that will provide viable skills, thereby enhancing the success of incarcerated individuals post-release. The following will provide an overview of the current vocational programming offered within the NJDOC, as well as two (2) new pilot programs the Department is implementing. The first program, Career Technical Education (CTE) on demand, is specific to the adult male population and provides a variety of programs that will be offered virtually and provide an individualized learning plan for each incarcerated person. The second pilot program includes a partnership with the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to incorporate technological advances into the current vocational programming offered.

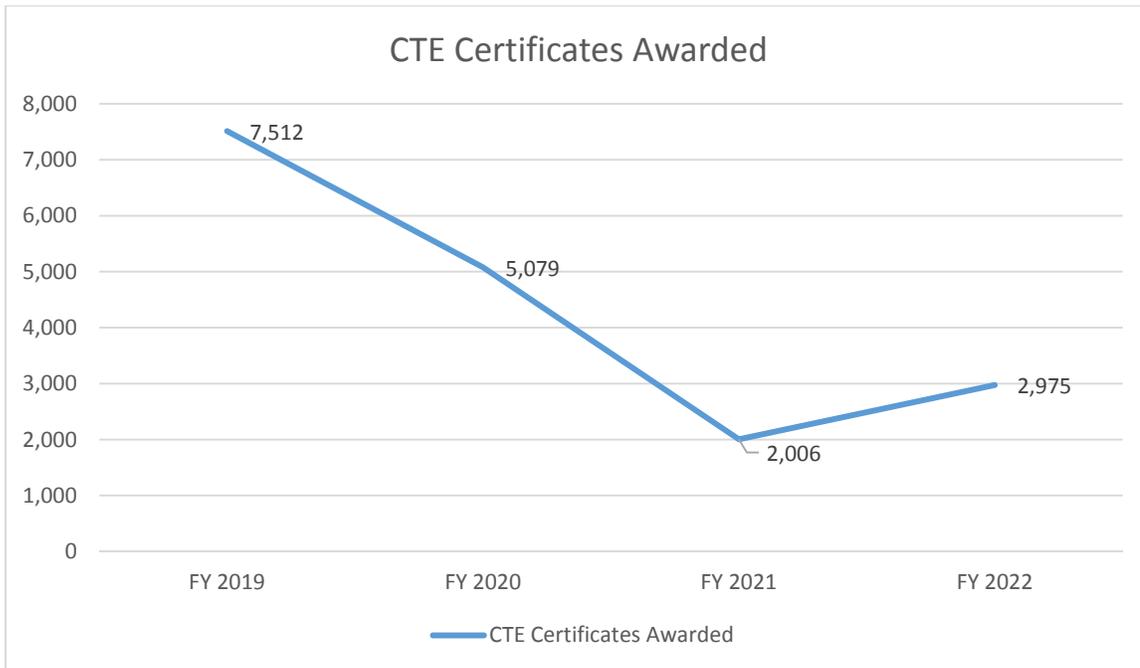
### Office of Educational Services (OES) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Overview- Current Course Offerings

The Office of Educational Services is committed to providing a broad range of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to ultimately pursue a career pathway that meets at least two of the three following criteria, as established by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) via Perkins V legislation: 1) high-wage; 2) high-skill; and/or 3) high demand. CTE programs offered in NJDOC facilities include long-term programs such as Carpentry, Computer Literacy and Information Processing (CLIP), Cosmetology/Barbering, Electrician training, Horticulture/Landscaping, HVAC, Masonry, Plumbing, and Welding, as well as short-term training programs such as CPR/First Aid, Forklift Operator, OSHA10, ServSafe certification, and Traffic Control and Flagging.

#### **Fiscal Year 2022 – CTE Certificates Awarded**

July 2021	Aug 2021	Sept 20221	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	Mar 2022	Apr 2022	May 2022	June 2022	Totals
253	342	236	204	246	294	80	235	311	321	190	263	2975

#### **CTE Certificates Awarded: Fiscal Year 2019-Fiscal Year 2022 Comparison**



\*Please note: the decrease in CTE certificates awarded is a result of the overall decrease in the population due to the Public Health Emergency Credits awarded to incarcerated individuals.

Office of Educational Services (OES) strives to provide CTE programs that will allow students to earn industry-recognized credentials; for instance, all of the construction trades vocational programs offered in NJDOC facilities are accredited by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and students who complete these programs earn industry-recognized NCCER certifications. Our CPR/First Aid/AED training program leads to certification from the American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI), our culinary programs lead to ServSafe certification from the National Restaurant Association, and our OSHA training programs provide students with an opportunity to earn an OSHA certification card backed by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL).

Prioritizing programs that lead to employer-valued credentials, OES works to ensure breadth and depth of CTE programming that can accommodate a diverse and transient student population. In addition to the rigorous long-term CTE programs which may require participants to have previously obtained their high school credentials, OES has developed a menu of short-term programs that can be completed in a matter of days or weeks. These courses (e.g. Forklift, OSHA, ServSafe, Traffic Flagging) are designed to serve students who may lack the literacy or numeracy skills to enroll in the long-term CTE programs that come with academic prerequisites. To supplement CTE courses taught by certified instructors employed by NJDOC, OES has established partnerships with Middlesex County College and Lincoln Technical Institute to offer contracted vocational courses provided by these external agencies. Throughout FY19-23, Small Engine Repair classes from Middlesex County College have been made available to the incarcerated populations at EJSP, GSYCF, and SWSP. Looking ahead, OES is currently developing a Welding program in partnership with Middlesex County College as well as an Automotive Tech program in partnership with Lincoln Technical Institute, both of which will be piloted at EJSP during the upcoming Fiscal year.

### **Overview of Newly Implemented Programs**

In addition, the NJDOC's Community Engagement & Reintegration Initiatives (CERI) unit has implemented three (3) new innovative programs. BlocPower is a climate technology company that analyzes, finances and upgrades homes and buildings to be more energy efficient and self-sustaining. In partnership with the NJDOC and the Office of the First Lady, BlocPower is offering a six-month training program for incarcerated individuals housed in two of the Department's Residential Community Reintegration Programs (RCRPs) - Kintock Newark and Tully House. The program commenced on March 20, 2023, with a combined total of 13 participants.

The second program recently implemented, Reentry Ventures (RV), is a Locally Empowered Accountable and Determined (NJLEAD) funded agency that provides training on entrepreneurship. This ten-week entrepreneur program is taught on site by nationally renowned instructor, CJ Meehan, formally of Babson College; as well as his business partner, Tracey Syphax, known for his bestselling book, *From the Block to the Boardroom*. Since inception of the program in Fall 2022, two cohorts have graduated from the NJDOC. Currently, RV is teaching a cohort at Northern State Prison and another at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility; which are scheduled for completion in late April 2023.

The NJ Providing Access to Community Employment (NJPACE) program, under CERJ, initiated the first Barista Training Program. The purpose of the program is to provide meaningful reentry and reintegration opportunities relevant to in-demand jobs that provide livable wages, in partnership with community providers. The first cohort consists of five (5) incarcerated individuals who receive a nine (9) week training to learn the basics of being a barista, under the instruction of the manager of a local community Starbucks. Incarcerated persons who are 36 months from release are eligible to participate in the barista program.

### **CTE On-Demand Program Overview**

The Office of Educational Services (OES) has obtained approval from the Vocational Training Planning Board for implementation of a *CTE On-Demand* program that will expand opportunities for the incarcerated population to gain technological literacy, increase the overall variety of CTE opportunities that can be offered within NJDOC facilities, while also bolstering students' intrinsic motivation by making learning more personally relevant.

The combined menu of 100+ Edmentum and Metrix Learning courses includes an extremely broad range of subject areas and industries that caters to the entire spectrum of student ability levels; e.g., from basic resume writing and "Workplace Skills" to advanced Project Management and Leadership training; from Personal Family Finance to training programs in Health, Nutrition and Wellness; from professional IT certifications like CompTIA A+ to accelerated Public Speaking courses and Intro to Supply Chain Logistics. This breadth and variety has the capacity to serve two critical sub-groups within the student population: 1) those who require beginner-level academic remediation and/or soft skills training in order to succeed in more targeted CTE courses, and 2) those who may already have postsecondary credentials and/or an established career but would still benefit from an opportunity for 21st century professional growth to enhance their employability upon reentry.

Student candidates for this program will be administered a skills/interests assessment (NJ Career Assistance Navigator "NJCAN") before meeting with a CTE Lab Facilitator to review assessment results along with current education level, prior work experience, and individual goals. From there, the student will be advised to select an appropriate vocational course subject based upon their individual skills, strengths, academic level, and career interests, and the student will work collaboratively with the CTE On-Demand Lab Facilitator to design an individualized program to accommodate the student's needs and scheduling preferences.

These CTE On-Demand labs will be configured with limited internet connectivity via a secure Local Area Network, and will be staffed by qualified IT Specialists (CTE Lab Facilitators) tasked with maintaining all hardware/software, troubleshooting as necessary, providing technical support to students, monitoring student progress, reporting back to OES on program effectiveness, and overseeing lab security at all times. Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women (EMCF) and Northern State Prison (NSP) have been selected as the first locations for implementation of the Phase I pilot initiative.

### **Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) Program Overview**

The NJDOC and the Bureau of State Use Industries are working on the expansion of the current industrial programming to include technology based vocational training. Under New Jersey statute, the Bureau of State Use Industries is primarily responsible for providing incarcerated persons with job training and education through manufacturing and service enterprises. The Bureau is also responsible for the planning, selection and

management of materials, equipment and products that bolster the skills of incarcerated individuals and provide a cost savings to the taxpayer.

The training expansion would include textile, graphic and CAD/CAM Design; which are necessary trade skills for many industries as more technology is introduced into various production areas. Not only will the program provide useful skills to the incarcerated individual upon reentry, but will also allow for DEPTCOR within NJDOC to expand the line of products and services offered to State and local government agency customers; thereby fulfilling DEPTCOR's legislative charter.

In an effort to assess the current need for these vocational skills, DEPTCOR analyzed Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data to review the industrial skills that could be useful to incarcerated individuals post-release. The industry employment areas identified included fashion design, industrial design, graphic design, desktop publishers, drafters and fabricators. In addition, DEPTCOR staff met with the New Jersey Manufacturer's Extension Program (NJMEP) to gain insight into the manufacturing industry in New Jersey. NJMEP is a private, not-for-profit organization that improves the profitability and competitiveness of New Jersey's manufacturers. The organization assesses needs and opportunities, identifies appropriate resources, consults and advises on technology and best practices, and trains all levels of an organization. Through discussions, it was identified that one of the key skills that increases employability is the secondary skill-set of trainability and willingness to master the trade.

Given the research findings, DEPTCOR consulted with the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) Center for Continuing and Professional Studies, with the goal of crafting an industrial skills training program for textile/clothing design. FIT will be working with DEPTCOR to develop vocational training via on-site, remote online or through a hybrid environment, as well as develop the training necessary for program completion. Upon completion, incarcerated persons will receive a "digital badge" from FIT to signify completion of a specific training area. The digital badge is linked and will identify the skills received under the training.

The implementation of this training will increase job offerings for incarcerated individuals while in the facility, expand the DEPTCOR product line and provide modern design and technology skills for career opportunities upon release. Separate from the textile program, the skills of graphic design and CAD/CAM can be utilized in other DEPTCOR vocations such as printing, woodworking, concrete and furniture.