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Innovative Program Allows Female Inmates to Get On the Job Training

Inmate Workers Learn Carpentry Skills and Significantly Reduce their Chance of Returning to Prison

Corona - Today, 11 female inmate workers at the California Institution of Women (CIW) in Corona graduated from California Prison Industry Authority's (CALPIA) Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program.

This program and other CALPIA Career Technology Education (CTE) programs significantly reduce recidivism among its graduates by teaching job skills and increasing the employability of paroling inmates. Inmates in the state's general prison population return to prison at a rate of approximately 55 percent, while CALPIA CTE graduates return to prison approximately 18 percent.

"Thanks to the Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship program, today's graduates have a much greater chance of success on the outside," said Matthew Cate, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Secretary. "The job skills they learned in this program will help them get employed and stay employed once paroled."

Students receive real-world training in various construction skills, including concrete work, finished carpentry, site grading and the installation of lighting fixtures. CALPIA also partners with trade unions to help place eligible ex-offenders in apprenticeship jobs.

In addition to their training, CALPIA provides each paroled graduate with a set of tools, a tool belt and pays union fees for one year so that they are ready the first day of their new job.

"CALPIA does more than save taxpayers money and provide quality products for our customers," said Chuck Pattillo, General Manager, California Prison Industry Authority. "Our innovative career technical education programs prepare the graduates to be productive, law abiding members of society."

Under the supervision of skilled instructors and supervisors these students learn on the job by building new facilities and rehabilitating older ones to be used by other inmates and the CDCR staff. Currently the students are working on the construction of an education center for vocational training and educational classes.

In order to increase the chances of employment, all CALPIA inmate employees are required to obtain a high school diploma or complete a GED within two-years of beginning the program.

CALPIA is a self-financed state entity that receives all of its revenue from the sale of products it manufactures. The recidivism rate among CALPIA inmates is 25 percent lower than the general prison population, a success attributed to the job skills that they receive by working in CALPIA business enterprises.

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