

	<b>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS</b>
	<b>DWS Operational Guidance Number: OG 01-2023</b>
	<b>Date: February 01, 2023</b>
	<b>Subject: Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program</b>
	<b>From:</b>  <hr/> <b>Chet Mottershead</b> <b>Assistant Secretary for Workforce</b>

**Purpose:** To promote the Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program, which focuses on the emotional and social development of Justice-Involved (JI) individuals as they transition from correctional facilities into communities across the state, and to assist with transmitting an application for the program.

**Background:** The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) ensures that underserved populations receive meaningful assistance with work readiness assessments, job seeking skills workshops, training and education assistance information, resume preparation assistance, job seeking assistance and job referrals, career counseling, and information about hiring events and job fairs. The JI population is considered an underserved population. The DWS has actively administered the NC Commerce Reentry Initiative for several years. The Reentry Initiative provides training to NCWorks Career Center staff, resource information for JI individuals, and works with partners and stakeholders to ensure assistance is relevant and focused on removing barriers to employment and improving recidivism rates across the state.

The Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program will provide life and soft skills training for JI individuals in select NCWorks Career Centers around the state. Activities will provide participants with the opportunity to address barriers to employment and improve employment retention by providing the individual with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to maintain order, to build strong family ties, to encourage community engagement and meaningful sustainable employment. Training will be provided by Fierce Fellows, LLC. The training consists of 40 hours of participant class time over a 4-week period. Participants will attend class 10 hours a week, which will be scheduled over multiple days. In addition to the Fierce Fellows training, participants will have access to NCWorks Career Center services including career counseling, mentoring, supportive services and other employment related opportunities, as appropriate.

Potential participants for the Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program will be recruited through the following sources:

**Department of Adult Correction (DAC) Correctional Pre-Release Program**

DAC will contact the state Reentry Coordinator to provide information on those eligible for pre-release and who will be contacted.

**DWS Reentry Office**

DWS Applicant Services will serve as a point of contact for call-ins for those in post release status that are interested in the training.

**NCWorks Career Centers**

Walk-ins to the NCWorks Career Centers will be provided information on the training and will be referred to the state Reentry office for coordination of services.

**Fierce Fellows, LLC**

Fierce Fellows, LLC will recruit potential participants internally and will contact the state Reentry Office for coordination of services.

**Action:**

Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) interested in participating in the pilot program should submit an Interest Information form (Attachment 1) to DWS Applicant Services stating their interest in participating in the project. Funding support will be distributed to Boards on a first come first served basis.

The DWS will notify Boards by letter of their inclusion in the project and of funding amounts.

The WDBs that participate in the program are to utilize the Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program Administration Task Flow (Attachment 2), which outlines the various steps in the administration of the program.

DWS will be responsible for the tuition expenses of the JI individuals that are enrolled in the Fierce Fellows training. The WDBs that administer the program will be entitled to 5% of the total award for administration fees, which will be based on the number of participants within the local area that are enrolled in the training.

**Effective Date:** Immediately

**Expiration:** June 30, 2024

**Contact:** DWS Reentry Coordinator

- Attachments:**
1. Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program Interest Information Form
  2. Fierce Fellows Reentry Pilot Program Administration Task Flow