

	<b>NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS</b>
	<b>DWS Operational Guidance Number: OG 10-2022</b>
	<b>Date: December 22, 2022</b>
	<b>Subject: Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Grants</b>
	<b>From:</b>   <hr style="width: 30%; margin: auto;"/> <b>Chet Mottershead</b> <b>Assistant Secretary for Workforce</b>

**Purpose:** To announce that the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) will be the lead agency for the Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Grants, providing oversight for the initiative, financial management, reporting, monitoring, and technical assistance to all subgrantees. The purpose of the grant is to increase federally incarcerated individuals’ work readiness at the time of release, increase employment in sustainable wage positions after release, and reduce recidivism through the initiative’s three-stage program approach.

**Background:** The PROWD grant program is a 100% federally funded collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The joint initiative provides targeted employment services to federally incarcerated individuals as they approach community reentry. The initiative seeks to better align job training and skills development services provided to program participants to the specific labor market needs of the communities where they will live.

In September 2022, USDOL awarded \$9.9 million in First Step Act funding to North Carolina to partner with community organizations and minimum- and low-security federal correctional institutions to provide coordinated services across three stages: during incarceration in federal prisons, during time spent in Residential Reentry Centers (RRC), and after release into the community.

Although incarcerated people return to all of the state’s 100 counties, this program will focus on individuals returning to 10 specific counties in proximity to the Butner federal prison complex: Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Lee, Person, Vance, Wake, and Warren. The

DWS selected these counties because most of them are rural areas, facing specific economic challenges, and have poverty rates ranging from 8.4% in Wake County to 26.3% in Vance County.

The DWS is committed to ensuring that the North Carolina workforce is equipped to meet individuals' and employers' needs and closing the gap between unemployed ex-offenders and businesses by collaborating with partners who identify and work with businesses willing to provide "second chances."

**Action:**

The DWS will award grants to Capital Area, Durham, and Kerr-Tar Local Area Workforce Development Boards to operate the PROWD grant program. The WDBs will use NCWorks Online and NCcareers.org to assist participants with career exploration and applying for jobs, as well as for reporting purposes for the respective WDBs. As applicable, WDBs will enroll individuals in asynchronous training modules to accommodate flexibility; virtual motivational groups, tutorials, and technological bootcamps. The WDBs will serve 125 participants, collectively, per year with a total of 375 for the life of the grant. Individuals will remain enrolled for an average of 24 months (6 - 12 months before release, 6 -12 months in RRC, and 6 months post release).

The WDBs will implement the program in three stages that consist of various comprehensive services. Stage one occurs during the last twelve (12) months of incarceration at Butner. It includes expounding on the facility's needs/risk assessments, job readiness and/or industry credentialing as well as initiating applications for vital documents, benefits, etcetera, in addition to the coordination of mental, medical and behavioral health services. Stage two occurs while residing in RRC and/or home confinement. Individuals will be provided with basic needs and support necessary upon release from the federal facility, including re-instatement and possession of vital documentation, mental, behavioral and medical health systems navigation, training and education, employment, support services, etcetera. Referrals for family restoration and legal services will also be provided. Stage three occurs after release from RRC/home confinement. Case managers will work with clients to continue to develop occupational skills and to seek employment.

As a partner in this grant, the Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) will ensure that current, high-quality labor market information is thoroughly available and accessible throughout the three implementation stages. To ensure proper use of this data, LEAD will also provide labor market information training to all Case Managers and Career Counselors.

The WDBs will provide follow-up services designed to ensure job retention,

wage gains, and career progress. The WDB staff will continue to track participants for a minimum of six months, in which contact to participants will occur at a minimum of once per month after placement in an unsubsidized job to check on employment status, assist with any issues that have the potential to impact tenure, and other needs of the clients based on their Individualized Employment Plan.

Additional information regarding reporting and enrollments is forthcoming and will be provided by DWS.

**Effective Date:** Immediately  
**Expiration:** March 30, 2026  
**Contact:** DWS Grants Management