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US Department of Labor announces \$304,116 in additional funding for Bridgeport, Conn., organization to help former offenders gain job skills

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor today announces the award of approximately \$7.2 million in funds for 18 third-generation grantees to continue assistance for adult offenders who are returning to communities from incarceration. Among the grantees is Career Resources, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn. The purpose of these grants is to provide an employment-centered approach to reintegration that improves long-term labor market prospects for former offenders.

“To successfully reintegrate into communities and find stable employment, former offenders need jobs skills and moral support,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “This continued funding aims to connect these individuals with organizations that can provide invaluable guidance as they transition into the labor force.”

Career Resources, Inc., will receive \$304,116 for a partnership to create an integrated system for serving non-violent ex-offenders in Fairfield County through Bridgeport’s One Stop Career Center. The program will emphasize job development, and will include connections to housing, substance abuse and mental health treatment, vocational training, employment readiness programs, anger management, and other needed services. Case managers will assist returning offenders access these various services. Both individual and group mentoring will also be offered to program participants.

Partners include the Center for Women and Families of Eastern Fairfield County; Family Reentry; the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport; Connecticut Department of Labor; the Fairfield County Business Council; the Bridgeport Housing Authority; Connecticut Department

of Mental Health and Addiction Services; the Bureau of Support Enforcement Services; the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services; Liberation House; Connecticut Department of Correction; The Workplace, Inc.; and various halfway houses.

The grants were initially awarded in 2009 through a competitive process open to nonprofit, faith-based and community organizations, which develop the necessary relationships and facilitate connections to rehabilitation services for program participants. Authorized by the Workforce Investment Act, these grants will provide a third year of funding to the existing grantees. Program participants are individuals ages 18 and older who have been convicted as adults under federal or state law, but who have never been convicted of a sex-related offense, with the exception of prostitution.

Each year, approximately 650,000 inmates are released from state and federal prisons and return to their communities and families. Without assistance to make a successful transition, the majority of former offenders return to criminal activity. The trend has been that almost three out of five of these individuals will be charged with new crimes within three years of their release from prison, and two out of five will be re-incarcerated, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

To see a listing of grantee organizations, visit <http://www.doleta.gov/RExO/Grantees.cfm>.

For information on the range of Department of Labor employment and training programs, visit <http://www.doleta.gov>.

U.S. Department of Labor news materials are accessible at <http://www.dol.gov>. The information above is available in large print, Braille, audio tape or disc from the COAST office upon request by calling 202-693-7828 or TTY 202-693-7755.