

DIVISION OF CORRECTION STATUS REPORT



JOINT REPORT ON PLACEMENT OF RELEASED INMATE IN PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT

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STATE OF MARYLAND

William Donald Schaefer,
Governor

Bishop L. Robinson,
Secretary

Department of Public Safety
and Correctional Services

Arnold J. Hopkins,
Commissioner

Division of Correction

July 1, 1988

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WILLIAM DONALD SCHAEFER
GOVERNOR

MELVIN A. STEINBERG
LT. GOVERNOR



BISHOP L. ROBINSON
SECRETARY

STATE OF MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

SUITE 310, PLAZA OFFICE CENTER
6776 REISTERSTOWN ROAD
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21215-2341
(301) 764-4000
TTY FOR THE DEAF: 486-0677

July 1, 1988

The Honorable Laurence Levitan
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
100 Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

NCJRS

The Honorable Charles J. Ryan
Chairman
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
131 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-19918

JUN 29 1989

ACQUISITIONS

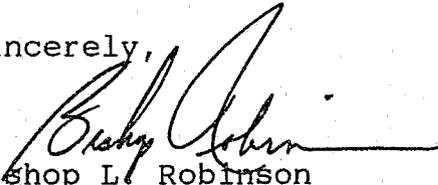
Dear Chairmen Levitan and Ryan:

It is a pleasure to submit this report on "The Placement of Released Inmates in Private Employment", as requested in the 1987 Joint Chairmen's Report (p. 160). This document was prepared by Arnold J. Hopkins, Commissioner, Division of Correction.

There are currently two vehicles for the placement of ex-offenders in private employment - Project CARE and State Use Industries' Job Placement Services. The statistics and details relating to Project CARE were provided by project staff.

We are available to answer any questions you may have relating to these materials.

Sincerely,


Bishop L. Robinson
Secretary

BLR:cac
Enclosure

cc: Delegate Timothy F. Maloney
Senator Frank J. Komenda
Arnold J. Hopkins

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The Placement of Released Inmates in Private Employment

Executive Summary

Two primary vehicles for the placement of ex-offenders in private employment are Project Care and the placement service of State Use Industries. Both services work with ex-offenders who have had skill training and/or employment experience.

State Use Industries operates in a manner similar to a private business in that its operations are funded through the profits generated by the sales of goods and services. A board which includes representatives of business and labor advises the General Manager of SUI. One of the legislatively mandated charges of SUI is the training of inmate employees in preparation for their return to the community.

State Use Industries fulfills the legislative mandate to train inmates by the provision of a production work experience which approximates real world employment. SUI provides a work experience which is similar to civilian employment in terms of: (1) established hiring criteria; (2) production-driven bonuses; (3) written work and safety rules; and (4) contemporary equipment and production techniques. In addition to the production-based work experience, SUI offers more formalized training through registered apprenticeships in meat cutting, graphic arts, cabinet making, metal fabrication and upholstery.

One important aspect of the training responsibilities of SUI is the provision of job development and placement services to inmates who worked for State Use Industries. SUI funds a full-time job developer/placement specialist who works with inmates on work release or upon their return to the community depending on the method of release. This placement service is available to all former inmate employees of SUI although apprentices have priority.

State Use Industries has established a system to follow up releasees with a minimum of one year's SUI employment with the Division of Parole and Probation. For this report period, 91 former SUI employees were released with follow ups completed on 65 releasees. Former SUI employees were successful in obtaining employment after release with 58 of 65 (89%) obtaining post release employment. Generally, releasees maintained employment during the period with 75% working at least half the time. Releasees were working in a wide variety of occupations, with a heavy concentration in semi-skilled or service occupations although significant numbers were employed in white collar occupations. Hourly wages ranged from \$3.35 to over \$10.00/hour with an average of \$5.95/hour. Eighteen percent were reported as earning \$7.50 or more per hour by their Parole Agents.

Project Care (The Cooperative Assistance and Resources for Employment) provides job readiness and placement services to recently released ex-offenders. The project operates on a referral system from Division of Correction facilities, the Division of Parole and Probation, Baltimore City Jail and other community based service agencies whose clients include ex-offenders. Project Care is designed to serve ex-offenders with significant skill training and/or a work history. The service has substantially increased communication with the Division of Parole and Probation by stationing Project Care staff in Parole and Probation offices when clients report to their agents. Additionally, Project Care advertises its service in Division of Correction facilities to both inmates nearing release and staff.

During the report period, 707 ex-offenders were referred to Project Care with 328 registering for services. Of the 328 registering for services, 177 were placed. A tabulation of the placement reports indicate that Project Care clients were largely placed in work related to their training or employment history. Project Care placements were concentrated in lower skill occupations although some ex-offenders were placed in skilled or white collar occupations. Hourly wages for Project Care placements ranged from \$3.35 to over \$10.00/hour with an average of \$4.39/hour. These hourly rates are essentially beginning wages and are anticipated to increase if the ex-offenders remain on the job. The relatively strong labor market and declining unemployment rate in Baltimore may have resulted in a higher percentage of "self placements" from the referred populations during the reporting periods.

PLACEMENT OF INMATES WHO WORKED FOR SUI

Introduction

State Use Industries (SUI) is organized under the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, its statutory authority is derived from the provisions of Article 27, Section 680 through 681M of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The Code provides, in part, that the Division of Correction may use inmate labor for the manufacturing of goods, wares, services and merchandise to be sold to the State, its political subdivisions, State-aided, owned, controlled, or managed public or quasi-public institutions or agencies; any charitable, civic, educational, fraternal, or religious association, institution or agency (for its own use and not for resale to others), or as otherwise indicated in the law. The Code also provides for an advisory committee to the Industries, consisting of State officials and members from private industry, labor unions, and contains certain other provisions regarding the training of inmates.

Program Narrative

As a business, State Use Industries seeks to approximate a real world work situation within the correctional setting and thereby generate increased production, sales and profits. Inmates hired by SUI must meet established qualifications and the overall hiring/firing process is not dissimilar to that in private industry. Likewise, inmates are awarded production-driven bonuses and are afforded performance-based promotional opportunities. Correctional officers are no longer visible in the work place, and double-shift operations have been implemented in some of the programs. An incentive-based compensation plan is in effect for managerial and sales staff and new quality control standards have been incorporated in the production process. Professional marketing studies have been utilized to help identify new industries. An attractive contemporary catalog of products and services was designed, and has been distributed by the State Use Industries sales force. A five year plan has been developed and a full capital plan is completed.

As a program, State Use Industries seeks to expand its vocational training and employment capabilities. Through registered apprenticeships and on-the-job training experiences, inmates are taught marketable skills and provided with constructive employment as well. Program participants are provided job placement assistance while on work release and upon release. The selection of new industries considers not only sales potential but also the marketability of the skill involved. Through greater use of state-of-the-art equipment and closer coordination with the Maryland State Department of Education, the training opportunities provided by SUI will remain relevant and continue to improve.

As part of the registered apprenticeship program offered by State Use Industries, related classroom instruction is provided by Hagerstown Junior College (metal fabrication, meat cutting, and upholstery), Catonsville Community College (graphic arts), and Anne Arundel Community College (cabinet making). Related classroom instruction stresses safety, measurement and technical aspects of the trade plus some "hands-on" work to supplement the inmate's production experience with SUI.

SUI has been awarded a grant from the National Institute of Correction to pilot a comprehensive upgrade of inmate training at the Maryland House of Correction's Wood Shop. This pilot program has been operating since September of 1987 and includes: (1) pre-employment training for inmates who desire to work for SUI, (2) inservice training in safety, measurement of shop skills, and (3) employment readiness training for inmates who may not be eligible for work release. Evaluations have been sufficiently positive for SUI to request expansion of the program to other locations. A grant proposal to the NIC has been prepared and submitted.

Placement Service

Since 1979, State Use Industries has funded a full time job developer/placement specialist to assist inmates who have worked for SUI in obtaining employment upon release. The job developer/placement specialist works primarily with private businesses and industry in locating employment related to the inmate's training and/or employment while at SUI. Inmates are serviced on a priority basis with registered apprentices being the first priority and on-the-job trainees the second priority. The service provided by the job developer/placement specialist includes: (1) information sessions with inmates while still in the production shop regarding employers' expectations, (2) contacts with employers to obtain interviews for the inmates eligible for work release or upon mandatory release, (3) transportation to and from interview, (4) coordination with work release counselors as appropriate, (5) follow-up with employers after the inmates are placed, and (6) additional assistance if the job is lost through no fault of the inmate (layoffs, plant closings, transportation problems, etc.)

State Use Industries views job placement assistance as critical to any training effort it may undertake. Without specialized job placement assistance inmates are dependent on the service of work release counselors, many of whom have case loads which preclude individual assistance in matching an inmates' training to the needs of private employers. For those inmates released directly to the community without the benefit of the transitional period of work release, the situation is even more serious. These inmates are released directly to the community with very limited financial resources, weak or non-existent family support and poorly developed job seeking skills.

At this point, only a single demonstration project for the placement of ex-offenders is operating in Baltimore City. The service, Project Care, was initiated in 1986 and is a cooperative effort of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland State Department of Education and the Department of Employment and Community Development.

With the planned expansion of SUI to 1,255 inmate employees by FY 1990, the service of a single job developer/placement specialist will not be sufficient to service the anticipated number of releasees. Additional staff will be requested in FY 1990 to supplement the service of the job developer/placement specialist.

PLACEMENT REPORT

Methodology

For the initial JCR report, the follow up of releasees who worked for State Use Industries was conducted on the basis of a manual review of inmate payrolls. Inmate payrolls were reviewed to obtain the names of inmates who had worked for SUI at least one year. For this report, the manual system was replaced by an automated search of OBSCIS files to obtain the names of all inmates who worked for SUI for at least one year and who were released during the period February 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988.

A minimum period of one year's employment was established to limit the follow up to inmates who had worked for SUI sufficiently long to assume that they would have earned marketable skills. SUI operates several service industries in minimum or pre-release settings where the duration of inmate employment is approximately ten weeks. Inmates working in these service industries (janitorial, warehousing and moving) are employed as unskilled workers and are not expected to learn sufficient skills to obtain employment upon release. As indicated in the previous report, these short term work assignments are seen as a bridge between transfer to pre-release status and active work release in the community. Finally, inmates who worked for SUI in medium security institutions who, because of institutional adjustment problems, medical problems or incompatibility with the work, left SUI without a year's experience, are not included in the follow up.

The pool of former SUI inmates with at least one year's employment who were released between February 1, 1987 and March 31, 1988 included 91 inmates. This follow up group included 8 inmates who had been part of the first follow up group, but, who had not obtained employment because of the limited time period since their release when the first follow up was conducted.

State Use Industries' staff contacted the Parole Agent of each releasee to conduct a brief telephone survey. The survey instrument is included in this report as Appendix A. The Parole Agents were very cooperative and helpful in providing the requested information on the releasees' employment experiences, wages and parole status.

The results of the telephone survey were tabulated and are presented in the following sections of this report. The pool of releasees increased substantially from the initial JCR report (18 to 91 releasees) and thus provides a more realistic picture of the post release employment experiences of former SUI employees.

Survey Findings

SUI staff were able to obtain information on 65 of the 91 (71%) releasees. Table I on the following page presents information on the follow up of the 91 cases.

TABLE I

Disposition of 91 cases

Follow up completed	65*
Out of State Parole	8
Released to Detainer	4
Re-incarcerated	1
No agent assigned	<u>13</u>
	91

*Two (2) warrants for re-arrest had been issued although employment follow up was obtained and one (1) releasee was pending charges for theft.

As with the original group of releasees, post release employment data could not be obtained for some releasees because twelve (12) of the inmates had left Maryland either to serve their parole in another state or to serve another sentence previously imposed. Thirteen (13) inmates had no parole agent assigned at the time of the telephone survey. These inmates will be included in the next follow up. Finally, one inmate was reported as having been re-incarcerated and warrants for re-arrest had been placed on two releasees.

Generally, releasees had been successful in obtaining post release employment with 58 of 65 (89%) of the releasees for whom employment histories could be obtained employed since their release. This was up from 64% (9 of 14) employed from the original group of releasees reported in the first JCR on the placement of SUI releasees in post release employment. Thirty eight releasees (64%) were employed for the entire time since their release according to their Parole Agents. Four (4) releasees were unemployed because of health reasons. An additional ten releasees (15%) were able to remain employed more than half the time while 8 (13%) were reported as being employed less than half the time. If the releasees who were employed all the time are combined with those who remained employed at least half time, then 75% of the releasees were reported as employed at least half the time. If the four inmates with serious medical problems are excluded from the totals, then 80% of the inmates able to work for the period were working at least half time.

Among the releasees, the Parole Agents reported one inmate releasee was incarcerated (out of state), two releasees had warrants pending and one releasee pending charges for theft, thus 4 of the 64 releasees from whom employment data could be obtained at this point in time, were in serious legal trouble. Two additional inmates had been convicted of less serious offences, one had served 60 days in a local detention center and one had payed a fine. If all the above mentioned cases are seen as "failures" then 9% of the releasees had not been successful re-entering the community. If the two (2) less serious legal outcomes are excluded (jail sentence and fine payed) then 6% of the releasees had failed in making a successful re-entry into the community.

Included in the telephone survey were questions on the type of employment secured by the releasee, the hourly wages of that employment and how that employment related to the type of employment experiences gained while employed by SUI. The results of the follow up for each of these items is presented in the following section of the report.

Inmates who worked for SUI and were placed in jobs in the community were reported by their Parole Agents as working in a wide variety of jobs as indicated in Table II below.

TABLE II

Type of Employment of Releasees As Reported by Parole Agent

Printer	2
Manufacturing	3
Truck Drivers	2
Sewing	3
Construction	9
Laborer (unspecified)	11
Mechanic, machines	3
Seafood processor	1
Janitor/housekeeper	3
Manager/sales/office	6
Painter	2
Other/unspecified	3

The range of employment types was substantially greater than for the first JCR report on SUI releasees being placed in employment after release. The initial JCR report on SUI releasees was based on nine (9) cases and six of the nine (67%) were reported as working in the construction fields. For the current report the range of employment situations was considerably more diverse, although the bulk of the reported jobs were in the semi-skilled and service occupations. The releasees included former SUI inmate employees who were participants in formalized training such as the Apprenticeship Program and others who either worked in SUI shops which lacked formalized training programs or who did not qualify for the training programs.

Table III presents data on the hourly wages of SUI releasees as reported by the Parole Agents. Nearly all inmates were reported as making above minimum wages and 66% were making \$4.51/hour or above with 18% making \$7.51/hour or above. Since these former SUI employees are all recently released from prison, these hourly wages are frequently their starting wages and should not be seen as permanent. The average wages for the 48 inmates from whom the information was available was \$5.95 per hour as compared to \$7.54/hour for the initial group of releasees. The heavy concentration of the initial group of releasees in the construction industry may account for this difference as well as the limited number of releasees in the initial report.

TABLE III

Reported Hourly Earning of Inmates Placed in Post
Release Employment

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent#</u>
\$ 3.35 - 4.50	16	33%
4.51 - 6.00	15	31%
6.01 - 7.50	8	17%
7.51 - 9.00	3	6%
9.01 -10.50	3	6%
10.51 +	<u>3</u>	<u>6%</u>
	48	99%

#Rounded to nearest percent

Parole Agents provided information on the number of jobs held by the releasees as a measure of their employment stability. Table IV which follows provides data on reported job changes.

TABLE IV

Stability of Employment: Number of Jobs
Held During Follow Up Period

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1 Job	22	42%
2 Jobs	17	33%
3 Jobs	7	13%
4 or more Jobs	<u>6</u>	<u>12%</u>
	52	100%

Over forty two (42) percent of the releasees held a single job during the follow up period. Another 33% held two jobs during the period, i.e. they changed jobs once during the period. Combining these two groups, we see that 75% of the releasees were reported as having stable employment. Despite the relatively stable employment history of most releasees, there were 12% who had held 4 or more jobs - one inmate had held at least 7 jobs during the period. Clearly this group of releasees had not made an effective transition to stable employment despite the generally positive labor market conditions in Maryland.

Finally, the telephone survey obtained information on the releasees' participation in post release education and job training. Only one releasee was involved in a training program. These results are not surprising given the economic situation of releasees, the great majority of whom come from less advantaged backgrounds and who need to obtain employment.

Conclusion

In summary, 85% of the releasees from whom employment information could be obtained, were employed after release with 75% working at least half the time the entire period since his or her release. The releasees were employed in a wide variety of employment situations with a heavy concentration in semi skilled or service industries although significant numbers were showing up in skilled, white collar occupations. Average hourly wages for the releasee was \$5.95. Three quarters of the releasees were reported as working at only 1 or 2 jobs since release although a significant minority of releasees were reported as having a very unstable employment history.

As the follow up of SUI releasees continues, a larger data base will be developed and the findings more generalizable to the industries' releasees. SUI has already applied for a NIC grant to expand their training grant being piloted at the MHC wood shop since September of 1987. This grant will address a number of the problems which this follow up has identified by improving the quality of training offered inmate employees and by providing training in job search skills.

PROJECT CARE

Introduction

During the period July 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988, 707 appointments were made with Project Care. Two hundred and twenty two (222) of these referrals were from Division of Correction institutions. In addition to referrals from the Division of Correction, Project Care received 485 other referrals including: 403 referrals from the Division of Parole and Probation, 26 referrals from the Baltimore City Jail and 26 referrals from New Directions.

Not surprisingly, there was a substantial drop in the number of ex-offenders who actually reported to Project Care after their release. Of the 707 appointments, less than half (328) of the ex-offenders registered with Project Care to receive job placement assistance. Of the 328 ex-offenders who registered with Project Care during the reporting period, 177 were placed (54% of the intake). Project Care provides a detailed report on each placement including: employer, hourly wage, nature of employment and previous training.

Placement Report

In the following sections of this report, this individual placement data is aggregated to present an overview of the placements, previous training and experience as well as earnings of ex-offenders placed by Project Care during the reporting period. Ex-offenders placed by Project Care during the reporting period were earning a wide range of hourly salaries from \$3.35/hour to \$11.15/hour with an average of \$4.39. These salaries are beginning rates and in some cases may have increased since placement. Ninety five of 177 (54% of the placements) were earning \$4.00 or less per hour. It is difficult to make a judgement as to whether these salaries are unexpectedly low given the previous experience of the clients. The previous experience listed by Project Care is based on the self report of the client and includes a diverse mix of experiences prior to incarceration and training while incarcerated. Most of the previous experience gained while incarcerated was in short term (6 months/600 hours) entry level vocational education courses provided by the State Department of Education. Additional training and experience were gained with State Use Industries and various institutional jobs such as food service and maintenance. State Use Industries provides a formalized training experience via registered apprenticeship to approximately 20% of its inmate employees with the remainder receiving opportunities to work in a production setting which approximates certain employment.

Table V found on the following page summarizes the employment areas of ex-offenders placed by Project Care during the reporting period. Although ex-offenders were placed in a wide variety of employment areas, there was a heavy concentration in lower skilled service occupations.

Table V

Project Care Job Placements

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent#</u>
Maintenance/Janitorial	57	32
Laborer	15	8
Building/Construction Trades	14	8
Clerical/Sales	10	6
Food Service	13	7
Machine Operator	10	6
Printing/Graphics	16	9
Drivers	8	5
Nursing/Health Services	3	2
Warehouser/Stock	10	6
Counselor/Caseworker	4	2
Metal/Woodworking	7	4
Other	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>
	177	101

*Rounded to nearest percent.

The largest single category of placements was in the areas of janitorial services and maintenance with 57 placements (32% of placements). Other major areas of sizable placements actively were construction trades (8% of placements), food service (7% of placements) and graphics/printing (9% of placements).

Table VI found on next page details the training and employment experiences of ex-offenders placed by Project Care during the reporting period. These experiences are a combination of pre-incarceration training and employment as well as training and employment gained while incarcerated.

Table VI

Prior Employment Institutional Jobs and/or
Education/Training of Care Placements

<u>Job/Training Area</u>	<u>Number</u> *	<u>Percent</u> **
Maintenance/Janitorial	52	18
Building/Construction Trades	61	21
Sales/Clerical	21	7
Food Service	29	10
Laborer	28	10
Automotive/Mechanic	9	3
Drafting	3	1
Printing/Graphics	7	12
Woodworking	3	1
Sewing	6	2
Driver	13	5
Warehouse/Stock	16	6
Welding	8	3
Factory work/machine operator	13	5
Counseling	6	2
Other	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>
Totals	286	100%

- * total job/training areas exceed placements
because of multiple jobs/training reported
** Rounded to nearest percent

As with job placements, the ex-offenders placed by Project Care reported a wide variety of job and training experiences of undetermined length and quality. The largest single category was in the construction trades, frequently at the "helper" level. The second largest category was as janitors or maintenance workers. By comparing the Project Care placements with prior training and employment experiences of the ex-offenders placed by Project Care the degree of congruance between the two can be determined. Table VII found on next page presents information on the match of prior training/job experience to placements.

TABLE VII

Comparison of Prior Employment/Training with
Project Care Placements

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Same Field	65	37
Related Field	40	23
Different Field	<u>72</u>	<u>41</u>
Total	155	100%

Table VII suggests that Project Care has been quite successful in placing ex-offenders in their field of work or training with 105 of 177 ex-offenders placed in the same or related field as their prior experience.

During the reporting period Project Care staff has continued to strengthen communications with referral sources with the Division of Correction, Division of Parole and Probation as well as other organizations servicing recently released offenders. Included in these efforts to strengthen communications with referral resources has been the stationing of Project Care at Parole and Probation Offices on "client report days". There continue to be problems with both the number and quality of the referrals received by Project Care. Project Care has streamlined their referral process to minimize the burden on Parole and Probation agents and established a system to provide feedback to Parole and Probation staff on the outcome of the referrals. Project Care has also re-evaluated their assignment of staff to the Baltimore City Correctional Center where the anticipated referrals have not been achieved. Another institutional location, possibly Brockbridge Correctional Facility, is being considered for the activity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Project Care has continued to refine its procedures and staff deployment to increase client referrals. Approximately half of the clients referred to Project Care took advantage of the job readiness and placement services. During the reporting period Project Care placed 54% of the ex-offenders registered. Although ex-offenders were employed in a wide range of occupations, the majority were employed in service occupations. The placements are reflective of the training and job experiences of many ex-offenders. Hourly wages ranged from \$3.35 to \$11.15 an hour with an average of \$4.39. Inmates with training were more successful in obtaining employment which payed higher hourly wages. Project Care was successful in obtaining employment for ex-offenders related to their previous training experience.