

2013-14 ND COMMUNITIES TOPICAL CALL SERIES

CALL RECAP

PREPARING YOUTH FOR THE WORLD OF WORK: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2013

- **CALL RECORDING:** [HTTP://AIR.ADOBECONNECT.COM/P3PBSDMJSEL/](http://air.adobeconnect.com/p3pbsdmjssel/)
- **CALL SLIDES:** [HTTP://WWW.NDCOMMUNITIES.ORG/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/CALLS/NATIONALPERSPECTIVE.PPTX](http://www.ndcommunities.org/sites/default/files/calls/nationalperspective.pptx)

While the first priority of programs for youth who are neglected or delinquent is to help them achieve academic outcomes similar to their non-N or D peers, this series of calls will explore the complimentary goal of preparing youth for meaningful employment. The [“Preparing Youth for the World of Work” topical call series](#) explores connecting N or D youth to two-year colleges, trade schools, and other vocational and career/technical (CTE) opportunities. The series addresses the national landscape of career/technical training, ways to enhance traditional CTE programs, and ways to connect youth to meaningful employment or further training after system involvement.

This document provides a summary of the first topical call in this series. It discusses:

- Common characteristics and unique needs of youth of transition age and young adults involved in the justice system
- The national perspective of career/technical training in justice systems, including a reentry model for supporting education and career advancement, evidence-based and promising practices for reducing recidivism and promoting job readiness, and issues of employability

OVERVIEW

During the call, Liann Seiter and Simon Gonsoulin of NDTAC reviewed information from a recent publication on youth of transition age in the justice system and demonstrated their prevalence in Title I, Part D programs. John Linton of the Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education then discussed the importance of education and vocational training for justice-involved individuals. He enumerated the challenges facing these individuals, including issues of employability and employer resistance. Mr. Linton highlighted some efforts at the national level to address these challenges.

TOOLS, TIPS AND TAKE-AWAYS

Justice Involved Youth of Transition Age

- A large proportion of students served by Title I, Part D, are of transition age (ages 16–25).

- Youth of transition age in the justice system face many barriers to successful human development, including high rates of mental health disorders and learning disabilities and/or histories of school failure.
- As justice-involved youth of transition age move through multiple systems (e.g., child welfare, mental health), their needs are not always met due to lack of coordination. As these youth age out of child services, they face barriers to accessing adult services that can appropriately address their unique needs.

Importance of Education for Individuals involved in the Justice System

- A 2013 RAND study shows that prison education reduces recidivism and improves employment. A section on juvenile justice will be released in February 2014.
- According to a multi-State study, 94 percent of prisoners surveyed identified education as a personal need for reentry success.

Employment Challenges Facing Individuals involved in the Justice System

- Finding employment post-release is problematic, especially during periods of poor economic conditions. Few formerly-justice-involved individuals have jobs, and of those who do, most work as temporary workers and half make less than \$5,000 annually.
- A recent study found justice-involved individuals face employability challenges, including a lack of job skills, qualifications, and contacts. They had little or no work experience, low literacy skills, behavioral problems, and had difficulty adjusting to the routine of work.
- Individuals with a criminal record also face employer resistance, as such records, including juvenile records, often deter employers from hiring formerly-justice-involved individuals.

Tackling the Employment Challenges at the National Level

- The Department of Education has developed a [blueprint](#) for what makes high quality career technology education.
- The Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services have committed to a connected system that integrates education, training, and support systems that prepare justice-involved individuals for employment.
- While there are many challenges facing CTE in institutions, a focus on employability development is useful. OVAE has provided a framework for employability skills and Pennsylvania has made significant strides in assisting their justice-involved population.

The Re-entry and Employment Project provides policymakers and practitioners with resources and tools to improve reentry and employment outcomes for individuals with criminal histories.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Transition age youth with mental health challenges in the juvenile justice system](#) describes the critical issues facing justice-involved youth of transition age with mental health problems and provides effective policies and practices for these youth.
- [Serving Time or Wasting Time?](#) shows that prison education reduces recidivism. For more information and upcoming research by RAND on correctional education in juvenile justice see RAND's web pages on [prisoner re-entry](#) and [juvenile delinquency](#).

- [Investing in America's Future: A Blueprint for Transforming Career and Technical Education](#) provides some guidelines for quality Career Technology Education.
- ["Career Pathways" Letter of Joint Commitment](#) highlights the joint commitment of the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor to promote the use of career pathways approaches among public agencies and with employers.
- [OVAE Employability Skills Framework Project](#) provides a framework for defining, validating, and measuring employability skills.
- [Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Training Alliance Manual](#) provides guidance on individual portfolio development, and has information specific to juvenile justice.
- [The Reentry and Employment Project](#) includes a white paper and toolkit developed to provide policymakers and practitioners with the resources and tools to improve reentry and employment outcomes for individuals with criminal histories.