



Contact Centers

Overview

Established in 1999 through the passage of Ballot Measure 68, Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) is a semi-independent organization, whose administrator reports to the director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). OCE plays an important role in carrying out Ballot Measure 17, the constitutional mandate to engage male and female adults in custody (AICs) in meaningful work. ***By statute, OCE is funded solely through the sales of its products and services.***

The mission of OCE, in partnership with DOC, is to promote public safety by providing AICs with meaningful work experience in a self-sustaining organization. OCE plays an important role in implementing DOC's Oregon Accountability Model (OAM). The OAM is a cohesive strategy to reduce recidivism and influence AICs to make effective changes, leading to better outcomes. Through the development of positive work ethics and job skills, OCE assists AICs in their transition to realizing their potential as productive citizens, creating positive outcomes, while contributing to society and their families.

Returning Jobs to Oregon

OCE actively markets contact center services (at national contact center related trade shows and conferences) to U.S. based private partners may utilize the workforce in foreign countries such as the Philippines and India. OCE does this to bring back revenue and business to the United States. This part of the market share is not typically performed by U.S. private sector companies, but instead by prison industries. Currently, 19 states operate contact centers within detention settings, including the Federal Bureau of Prisons. If OCE passed up opportunities to bring these jobs back to the U.S., other prison-based contact centers would pursue and take advantage of the opportunities. A screening process is in place for potential clients that includes financial viability, displacement, and product/service suitability. Bringing these operations to Oregon results in a positive economic impact by increasing private sector jobs related to the supervision of these programs.

Reducing the Cost of Government

By working in partnership with state agencies to reduce their operating costs, OCE operations have contributed significantly towards meeting the voter's constitutional mandate to reduce the cost of government. State agencies advise that, while they do factor a portion the value of the program in terms of dollars, the largest factor is the enhanced customer service they are able to provide to the citizens of Oregon. In addition, during the last fiscal year, OCE's workforce of 1,320 inmates worked approximately 2.1 million hours, providing an important positive impact on reducing prison misconduct and assisting the Department of Corrections to meet inmate work goals.

Contact Center Security Measures

- All AIC applying to work in OCE contact center programs must first pass an extensive security background check. Applicants are checked for concerns regarding institution security risks, past computer or telephone fraud and identity theft convictions. No AIC with any of the above security concerns will be placed in a contact center work program.
- Workers do not have access to credit cards or financial information.
- Workers do not have telephones. Telephone calls are delivered to the inmate agents through direct dialing.
- All telephone calls are recorded. In addition, staff conducts live monitoring of each telephone agent on a regular basis for quality assurance and adherence to established policies.
- The contact center computers utilize the kiosk mode. Kiosk mode takes the AIC directly into the contact center programs and limits them to only fields within the application. When finished, the agent can only log off the system; there are no other options available. Their machines cannot get past the firewall. For example, through suppression of

information, AIC working at the DMV contact centers do not see the customer address, social security number, mother's maiden name, and place of birth. They also have no access to out-of-state driver license records, confidential records of any type, or photographs. Medical information and accident reports are also off limits.

- Workers in the contact centers do not have direct internet access – only direct portals to the partners' program applications.
- OCE staff and/or DOC security staff conduct searches of all inmate telephone agents entering and exiting the contact centers. Nothing is allowed to be removed or taken from the work area.
- Area searches and frequent floor checks are also conducted. The institutions monitor all AIC personal telephone calls and written communication outside of the contact center.

Benefiting the Citizens of Oregon

OCE purchases as much as possible of its raw material needs from Oregon companies, contributing to the success of local business. A 2018 study by ECONorthwest shows, for every million dollars produced by OCE, \$690,800 is re-spent along the supply chains in the state, compared to \$346,500 for private sector counterparts. OCE direct employees are primarily management and executive-level jobs, while the private sector includes low- and high-skill labor. In total, OCE pays more in total wages, which has a net positive induced effect on Oregon's economy.

OCE regularly evaluates its programs to discover additional ways to operate in a more environmentally-friendly manner. OCE works to align its business practices with state initiative by utilizing environmentally friendly practices to include chemicals, soy based inks, and water reclamation. Throughout our facilities we have reduced the use of harmful chemicals. We use environmentally friendly custodial cleaning products, water-based finishing stains, and vibrant soy-based printing inks. Our water reclamation system saves an estimated 10 million gallons of water per year. We also work with local recyclers to process the scrap metal, allowing it to be melted back down and made into usable products.

OCE also makes every effort to keep as many AICs working as financially possible. AICs contribute part of their earnings toward meeting obligations for child

support, state and federal taxes, court-imposed fines, and victims' assistance fund. Each year OCE reimburses DOC millions for performance recognition awards and wages for the AICs for the successful completion of their assignments. The costs of OCE programs are not funded by taxpayer dollars, yet the program still benefits the state by avoiding criminal justice system costs. A 2017 report by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission concluded for every dollar invested with OCE, the citizens of Oregon avoid \$5.20 in recidivism costs.

Contact

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