

# Issue Brief

## OREGON CORRECTIONS ENTERPRISES



# Metal Manufacturing

## 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.

## Quality

OCE products and services are sold at competitive rates but the real value is found in the quality and workmanship. In OCE programs, AICs are taught to build and deliver quality products and services to exceed customer needs. Learning skills with both state of the art equipment and manual processes, participants in the program learn the different techniques needed to work with different materials. Working in a production line, each AIC is taught to check the quality of the work from the previous station. This bolsters the idea of teamwork and enhances soft skills, such as communication, necessary to be successful when re-entering the job market.

## Outdoor Furnishings and Equipment

### Parks and Recreation

If you visit any Oregon State Park, as well as several counties and cities in Oregon, you will most likely see or

use an OCE product to make your visit more enjoyable. OCE supplies these parks and recreational spaces with high quality products such as picnic benches, fire rings, ash receptacles and even boat docks, the AIC's in the wood and Metal Manufacturing program's learn valuable transferrable skills through our hands on training programs.

### Department of Transportation

If you have followed a road sander or ODOT truck with a dump bed, chances are you have seen one of OCE's quality fleet services products. These industrial quality products are produced at the Oregon State Penitentiary in our manufacturing training programs. These programs teach valuable metal fabrication and woodworking skills while providing Oregon with affordable and high quality products that help keep Oregon roads safe. The dump beds are fabricated at the OSP manufacturing facility, then are installed at the Mill Creek Correctional Facility, both located in Salem. The AIC in both programs take pride in the work they do and it shows through the unmatched fabricated quality produced in our programs. Some see it as a way to make up for past mistakes by making Oregon roads safer for the public. Others see it as a way for their children to see a product on the road or in a news story and feel proud of their fathers.

### Refurbishing

In 2013, OCE added trailer refurbishing to its catalog. This allows AIC to learn additional techniques of repair and replacement in sometimes challenging situations. The training provided in this trailer refurbishing program includes fabrication, welding, painting, electrical wiring and hydraulics. Besides saving state agencies money, this service reduces materials sent to landfills and recycling centers by utilizing falloff to extend the life of existing products.

### Customization

The staff and AICs in the OCE operations pride themselves in their ability to create products suited for each individual customer. With an in-house computer-aided drafting program, trainees learn up-to-date techniques in drafting and design. Custom projects are used to help participants develop problem solving and

team work skills. These skills are essential in the job market and help contribute to re-entry success.

## **OCE's Contributions**

### **Contributing to Public Safety**

When AICs have productive activities to occupy their time, Oregon's prisons are safer. Working with DOC, OCE seeks partnerships with other agencies and private organizations to provide work and training programs for AIC that mirror real-world job experiences as much as possible. OCE holds AICs accountable for their actions, and these adults understand a prerequisite for participating in OCE programs is to maintain good institutional conduct. Based on the OAM, DOC, and OCE staff members help AICs by role modeling, redirecting inmate behavior, and reinforcing positive performance.

### **Work Skills Certification and Re-entry**

Similar to the Federal Job Corps model, participating AICs gain entry-level experience with technical and industry-specific skills as well as develop pro-social skills and work ethic. They learn decision-making, social interaction, teamwork, reliability, and accountability. The programs strive to duplicate a real-world experience to prepare AICs for job readiness on the outside.

OCE administers industry-recognized Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) training programs. Through these programs, qualified AICs develop the skills and attitudes needed to enhance their opportunities to secure employment upon release

### **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.



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