
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 75
Author: Smallwood-Cuevas (D)
Amended: 6/17/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE LABOR, PUB. EMP. & RET. COMMITTEE: 5-0, 4/23/25
AYES: Smallwood-Cuevas, Strickland, Cortese, Durazo, Laird

SENATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/29/25
AYES: Arreguín, Seyarto, Caballero, Gonzalez, Pérez, Wiener

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 5/23/25
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab
NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0, 6/2/25
AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener
NO VOTE RECORDED: Hurtado, Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-1, 9/12/25 – Roll call not available

SUBJECT: Employment: Preapprenticeship Pathways to Employment Pilot Program

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), in partnership with the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and recognized building and construction trades councils to establish the Pre-apprenticeship Pathways to Employment Pilot Program to provide incarcerated

individuals with access to pre-apprenticeship training aligned with state-registered apprenticeships in the building and construction trades, no later than January 1, 2028.

Assembly Amendments substantially amended the bill to eliminate the reentry pilot program and instead, require CDCR to partner with DIR and building and construction trades councils to provide access to pre-apprenticeship training program.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Prison to Employment program, administered by the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), to coordinate reentry and workforce services in each of the state's 14 workforce regions so that the formerly incarcerated and other justice-involved individuals in these regions can find and retain employment. (Unemp. Ins. Code, §§ 14040-14042.)
- 2) Requires the Secretary CDCR to appoint a Superintendent of Correctional Education, who oversees and administers all prison education programs. Requires the Superintendent to set both short- and long-term goals for literacy and testing and career technical education programs, and to establish priorities for prison academic and career technical education programs. (Pen. Code § 2053.4.)
- 3) Requires a career technical education program consider to all of the following factors, consistent with the goals and priorities of CDCR:
 - a) Whether the program aligns with the workforce needs of high-demand sectors of the state and regional economies;
 - b) Whether there is an active job market for the skills being developed where the incarcerated person will likely be released;
 - c) Whether the program increases the number of incarcerated individuals who obtain a marketable and industry or apprenticeship board-recognized certification, credential, or degree;
 - d) Whether there are formal or informal networks in the field that support finding employment upon release from prison; and,
 - e) Whether the program will lead to employment in occupations with a livable wage. (Pen. Code § 2053.5.)

- 4) Establishes the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certificate Program administered by CDCR to increase employment opportunities in the construction trades for incarcerated individuals upon release. (Pen. Code, § 2716.5.)
- 5) Establishes the Prison Industry Authority (Cal PIA) within CDCR. (Pen. Code, § 2800.)

This bill:

- 1) Requires, CDCR in partnership with the DIR and recognized building and construction trades councils, to establish the Pre-apprenticeship Pathways to Employment Pilot Program (program) no later than January 1, 2028.
- 2) Requires CDCR to ensure equitable access to the program across each facility under its jurisdiction, including facilities housing women and gender-responsive institutions. Requires CDCR to implement the program in at least one men's and one women's facility.
- 3) Requires the program to include all of the following:
 - a) Instruction based on the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3), recognized by the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California. The instruction shall prepare participants for entry into a wide range of union-affiliated skilled trades, including, but not limited to, each of the following: carpentry; ironwork; sheet metal; laborers, and operating engineers.
 - b) Availability to incarcerated individuals who are within 24 months of release and express interest in careers in the trades.
 - c) Career readiness and case management services that are designed to facilitate direct transition into union apprenticeships following release. These services may be provided by existing workforce and community-based programs and shall include, but are not limited to, each of the following:
 - i. Employment and training services, including job readiness workshops, occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeship placement, and paid transitional work opportunities.
 - ii. Behavioral health and substance use services, including mental health counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, substance use disorder treatment, and peer recovery support.

- iii. Housing support services, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, housing navigation, and rapid rehousing assistance.
 - iv. Transportation assistance, including public transit passes, rideshare vouchers, and driver's license reinstatement support.
 - v. Family and childcare support, including parenting classes, childcare subsidies, and family reunification services.
 - vi. Legal services, including expungement and record sealing clinics, support with fines and fees, and reentry-related legal navigation.
 - vii. Digital and financial literacy services, including digital skills training, budgeting support, credit repair, and access to communication tools.
 - viii. Basic needs support, including access to work clothing, hygiene items, food assistance, and mobile phone access.
 - d) Classroom and hands-on instruction in construction safety, trade mathematics, blueprint reading, industry orientation, and other foundational skills aligned with state-registered apprenticeship standards. Content shall be taught by certified instructors and coordinated with local joint apprenticeship training committees.
 - e) Facilities who implement the program shall not grant preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin. Requires access be based on facility needs, proximity to release, and participant interest in skilled trades careers.
 - f) Requires participants who complete the program receive an MC3 certification from a certified training provider.
- 4) Requires CDCR to submit a report to the Legislature, beginning January 1, 2029, and each year thereafter, that includes the following information:
- a) The number of individuals who have enrolled in the program.
 - b) The number of individuals who have completed the program.
 - c) The number of individuals placed in registered apprenticeships or related employment.
 - d) The number of individuals from each participating facility and program site in categories above.
 - e) Identified barriers to access and participation.
- 5) Provides the provisions of this bill remain in effect until January 1, 2032, and as of that date are repealed.

Background

Pre-Apprenticeships and MC3 Curriculum. An apprenticeship is a program that trains a person to become skilled in a particular trade by combining hands-on experience with a classroom component. Apprenticeships are considered full-time employment. Pre-apprenticeship programs, also known as apprenticeship readiness programs, are designed to prepare participants to enter registered apprenticeship programs.

The MC3 curriculum is a standardized, comprehensive curriculum intended to prepare participants for careers in the construction industry. The curriculum requires 120 hours of classroom training and includes areas of focus such as Tools and Materials, Construction Health and Safety, Blueprint Reading, Basic Math for Construction, among others.

In a carceral setting, pre-apprenticeship programs enable incarcerated individuals to complete an initial stage of training and education, preparing them for an apprenticeship upon release.

Prior Efforts Related to Pre-Release and Post-Release Job Training. Many studies have examined the relationship between employment and recidivism. Although the formerly incarcerated face many barriers to obtaining employment, high quality employment is correlated with lower rates of recidivism. (Connell, C., et al. *Effectiveness of interventions to improve employment for people released from prison: systematic review and meta-analysis*, Health Justice 11, 17 (2023) available at

<[https://www.healthandjusticejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40352-023-00217-w](https://www.healthandjusticejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40352-023-00217-w#:~:text=Employment%20is%20associated%20with%20a,Sampson%20%26%20Laub%2C%201993)>:~:text=Employment%20is%20associated%20with%20a,Sampson%20%26%20Laub%2C%201993). Given this correlation, the State has invested in various types of in-prison job training in order to improve job prospects for the incarcerated population upon release.

Through Cal PIA's Career Technical Education program, incarcerated individuals receive work and training opportunities, including in construction and carpentry, as well as certifications for completion of that training.

(<https://www.calpia.ca.gov/workforce-development/career-technical-education-cte/>) In 2024, CDCR relaunched the MC3 pre-apprenticeship program at five prisons. (CDCR, *104 graduate construction training program* (Jan. 14, 2025) available at <<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/insidecdcr/2025/01/14/104-graduate->

construction-training-program/ .) The MC3 program was established in 2012 in partnership with the California State Building Trades Council.

In 2018, the Legislature established the Pre-Release Construction Trades Certification Program, administered by CDCR, to increase employment opportunities in the construction trades for incarcerated individuals after release. The program is overseen by a joint advisory committee, composed of representatives from building and construction trades employee organizations, the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, joint apprenticeship training programs, Cal PIA, the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and any other representatives the department determines appropriate.

The State has also invested in re-entry work training programs. As part of California's efforts to increase rehabilitative opportunities and reduce recidivism, the CWDB, CDCR, Cal PIA, and California Workforce Association created the Corrections-Workforce Partnership in 2017. This partnership linked education, job training, and work experience in prison to post-release jobs by fostering a system of coordinated service delivery to a population that faces a variety of barriers.

In 2018, the Legislature appropriated \$37 million for the Prison to Employment Initiative (P2E), administered by the CWDB. The mission of P2E is to create a pathway toward employment and away from recidivism for formerly incarcerated and justice-involved individuals. (CWDB, *Interim Report for Evaluation of Workforce Development Programs submitted pursuant to Supplemental Report of the 2018-19 Budget Act, Item 7120-101-000* (Oct. 2021), p. 1 available at <https://cwdb.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2021/10/P2E-Interim-Report_ACCESSIBLE.pdf#:~:text=P2E%20funds%20the%20integration%20of%20workforce%20and%20reentry,recidivism%20for%20the%20formerly%20incarcerated%20and%20justice-involved%20population .) P2E funds the integration of workforce and re-entry services through grants to workforce service providers across the state, including both direct and supportive services. (*Id.* at p. 2.)

CWDB's interim report evaluating the P2E program outlines the types of direct services participants receive such as interview coaching and tuition for MC3 training in the construction trades. (*Id.* at p. 2.) Additionally, supportive services help participants meet their basic needs, such as with stipends to cover participants' transportation, clothing, and food costs. (*Ibid.*) As of June 2021, P2E funds have been used to serve over 3,190 formerly-incarcerated and justice-involved individuals statewide. (*Id.* at p. 4.) In January 2023, CWDB announced

\$19 million in awards to new projects (P2E 2.0). (CWDB, *Prison to Employment (P2E 2.0) Award Announcements* available at <https://cwdb.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2023/01/P2E-2.0-Award-Announcement-Jan-2023_ACCESSIBLE.pdf .) The grant term for P2E 2.0 runs from January 2023 through December 2025.

This bill expands on current and past initiatives to increase employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals and reduce recidivism by requiring CDCR to partner with DIR and building and construction trades councils to establish a pre-apprenticeship pilot program. The bill specifies program requirements, including use of the MC3 curriculum. This bill requires that incarcerated individuals who complete the program receive an MC3 certification from a certified training provider, and includes a data reporting requirement. The pilot program sunsets in 2032.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- Annual costs in the low millions of dollars to CDCR to establish and operate the Program, including hiring certified instructors and coordinating with local joint apprenticeship training committees to provide classroom and hands-on instruction across various subject matters (General Fund (GF)). CDCR estimates implementation costs to exceed \$1.5 million per institution, with additional per-institution costs in the millions of dollars to provide career readiness and case management services absent interest from community groups to provide such services.
- Additionally, CDCR notes that several provisions of this bill are unclear, which may further increase costs. For example, the requirement to ensure equitable access to the Program across each CDCR facility may require CDCR to implement the Program at all facilities, not just one men's and one women's facility, and references to post-release case management services and data reporting may require CDCR to contact and track individuals no longer within CDCR's jurisdiction.
- Costs of approximately \$209,000 in the first year and \$197,000 annually thereafter to DIR's Division of Apprenticeship Standards to partner with CDCR to implement the Program (GF).

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/12/25)

ACLU California Action
A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project
California Legislative Women's Caucus
California Public Defenders Association
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights
Roberts Enterprise Development Fund

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/12/25)

None received

Prepared by: Stephanie Jordan / PUB. S. /
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**** **END** ****