

April 25 2008

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Interested Parties in the California State University System

FROM: Miguel Ceja, Coordinator, Faculty Research Fellows Program,  
Center for California Studies, CSUS

SUBJECT: Request for Proposals

PROJECT TITLE: California Employment Preparation for Prisoners

The Senate Office of Research has requested assistance from the California State University Faculty Research Fellows Program to examine and evaluate how California prepares inmates to be job ready when they leave prison and assess how these approaches compare with efforts in selected other states and by non-profit agencies, and identify “best practice” prisoner employment strategies that can be introduced at the state level.

Qualified California State University faculty and staff should submit proposals in response to this request. We prefer that the principal investigator is a full-time faculty or staff member of the CSU system, but it is not necessary. Part-time faculty and students can be included as secondary investigators and assistants. The enclosed attachment provides background on the issue, a description of the project, timeline, budget, and requirements for the submission of a proposal.

Proposals are due **May 23, 2008** and should be mailed or faxed to:

Tim Hodson, Director  
Center for California Studies  
Faculty Research Fellows Program  
California State University, Sacramento  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6081

Fax: (916) 278-5199

The decision date for funding is **May 30, 2008**.

Sign-off by the principal researcher's campus research office is required as is conformance with Chancellor's Office's Executive Order Number 890 (<http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-890.pdf>). Researcher(s)' salary, travel, and incidental expenses are usually paid through CSU, Sacramento. If researcher(s) desire the payment of travel and incidental expenses through the principal researcher's home campus, indirect cost can be paid on these items provided the total budget (including indirect cost) does not exceed \$13,500.

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY RESEARCH FELLOWS PROGRAM**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Project Title/Description**

**California Employment Preparation for Prisoners**

Examine and evaluate how California prepares inmates to be job ready when they leave prisons and assess how these approaches compare with efforts in selected other states and by non-profit agencies, and identify “best practice” prisoner employment strategies that can be introduced at the state level.

**Background:**

One of the keys to successfully reducing recidivism is for newly released inmates to secure satisfactory employment<sup>1</sup>. Each year tens of thousands of California’s 170,000 prison inmates are released, providing a potential pool of workers to fill the job demands of the state’s 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

In California’s 33 prisons, inmates have access to some training and education programs to prepare them to transition into the workforce. The Prison Industry Authority, for instance, offers a limited number of inmates training in service, manufacturing, and agricultural industries. Other in-prison programs are designed to assist inmates in preparing a resume and other basic job search skills. While individual job training efforts may be highly successful, they reach a relative small percentage of the inmate population. Indeed, it is estimated that unemployment among former offenders runs as high as 70 to 90 percent one year after release from prison<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, parolees who obtain employment often find they are only ready for low-paying service or maintenance jobs<sup>3</sup>. By increasing the employability of California prisoners, the state could lower ex-offender unemployment rates and simultaneously provide a way to lower the risk to public safety and reduce the state’s high recidivism rate.

The current proposal is interested in the following questions:

1. How does California currently prepare inmates for the workforce they will enter upon release from an institution?
2. How do prisoner employment approaches in California compare to those of other states as well as those of selected non-profit agencies?
3. How can the state improve the way it prepares inmates for jobs upon reentry into the general population?

---

<sup>1</sup> Bernstein, J., & Houston, E. (2000). *Crime and work: What can we learn from the low-wage labor market*. Washington, D.C.: Economic Policy Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Little Hoover Commission. (2007). *Solving California’s corrections crisis: Time is running out*. Sacramento, CA.

<sup>3</sup> Harlow, C. (2003). *Education and correctional populations*, NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

## **Expected Output**

1. Examine and describe workforce development programs offered to adult prison inmates by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and report available data regarding, but not limited to, the amount of funding, funding source, the number of individuals served by these programs, and program selection criteria.
2. Examine *efforts* in selected other states (i.e. Washington State and Illinois) and by non-profit agencies to provide workforce preparation services to inmates and identify best practices of successful programs.
3. Recommend strategies for improving the effectiveness and delivery of prisoner workforce preparation programs offered by CDCR.

## **Project Timeline**

Proposals are due **May 23, 2008**. Proposals should be no longer than seven pages (excluding vitas). Notification of award occurs by **May 30, 2008**. A draft report will be due on **October 31, 2008**. The entire project must be completed by **November 30, 2008**.

## **Project Budget**

- \$13,500 from 07-08 Faculty Fellows Budget

## **Proposal Requirements**

The written proposal should include the following:

1. Introductory statement that demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter.
2. Description of researcher's(s') qualifications to perform the study and applied public policy research. If available, please include evidence of successful and timely completion of projects for public sector clients.
3. Explanation of how the desired data will be gathered and reported on.
4. A specific timeline for completing the project requirements in the allotted period.
5. A proposed budget that indicates the portion to be devoted to faculty time (including incidental expenses) and any need for non-incidental operating expenses.
6. At least two references who could advise the Faculty Research Fellows staff on the quality and timeliness of the principal researcher's work.
7. Telephone and e-mail address for principal researcher(s).

8. A resume or vita for each person funded under the project.
9. Sign-off of local campus research office.

Proposals should be no longer than seven pages (excluding vitas).