



## Guidelines: Justice-Involved/Opportunity Youth

**Effective: September 1, 2007**

**Revision History:** 5/30/2025: Updated name from Ex-Offender At-Risk Youth to Justice-Involved Opportunity Youth, full-time work moved from 30 to 35 hours, standard wages apply but can request lower wage with justification, allow life skills along with basic skills, and provide funding priority for all projects with a JI OY component. 03/02/2016 Clarifies that retrainees may exceed the 260-hour cap with an approved justification, for this and other programs. 08/010/2015 Summary: Governor Brown signed AB1270 changing the name of the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) to California Workforce Development Board (CWDB). All CWIB citations have been updated to reflect this name change. 06/07/2010 Revised to indicate program no longer a pilot and incorporated in the Panel program. 03/05/2009 Amended standard 90-day Retention criteria to remove reference to employment with up to 3 employers. 01/15/2009 Standardized Pilot templates with standardized main headings, added new logo, removed standard ETP criteria. 03/11/2008 Amended wages – can be modified up to 25% below ETO new hire wage. Amended Incidental Placement – can be increased to 35% with good cause.

These are guidelines only. If a proposal raises the need for further modifications, that will be accomplished on a case-by-case basis with direction from Executive Staff. **Unless modified by these guidelines, all other program criteria apply.**

### **BACKGROUND**

On May 2, 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill 900, the Public Safety and Ex-Offender Rehabilitation Services Act (Rehabilitation Act). This legislation fundamentally reformed California's penal system, and gave the State a means to reduce prison overcrowding, and lower recidivism. A goal of the Rehabilitation Act was to release prisoners with tools to prevent recidivism.

On May 25, 2007 the governor also proposed a new initiative to combat gang violence in California. The California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Program (CalGRIP) will target over \$48 million toward local anti-gang efforts, including job training, education and intervention programs. The Governor's budget investment in career technology education, equipment and teachers (\$227 million), as well as after-school programs and school counselors will give at-risk youth alternatives to gang life. CalGRIP redirects millions of dollars in uncommitted Workforce Investment Act funds to expand job training for current gang members, gang-involved and at-risk youth in fiscal year 2007-08. The proposal combines funding, coordination, and a balanced approach of suppression, intervention, and prevention strategies to fight the gang problem.

To support these efforts, effective September 1, 2007, the Panel implemented a new ETP pilot program, pursuant to UI Code, Section 10214.5, under the Special Employment

Training (SET) category, serving workers with multiple barriers to employment. The Panel was to approve up to \$2 million in FY 2007-08 for Ex-Offender/At-Risk Youth projects. The program addressed the Panel's Strategic Plan goal of supporting hard-to-serve populations through the implementation of a pilot project to provide critical job skills training and jobs to ex-offenders and youth at risk of becoming involved in gangs and/or criminal activities. The pilot has since been incorporated into the Panel program.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Contractor:**

- The contractor must be eligible to contract with the Panel, under Unemployment Insurance Code Section 10205 (c) as one of the following:
  - An employer or group of employers;
  - A training agency;
  - A local California Workforce Development Board (CWDB); or
  - A grant recipient or administrative entity, pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act.
- Contractors must demonstrate past success in training and placing Justice-Involved (formerly known as ex-offenders) and/or Opportunity Youth (formerly known as At-Risk Youth) in skilled jobs through referrals from federal and state corrections, justice, or employment agencies. In addition, the contractor must describe its recruitment, training, and placement plans for the proposed ETP training project.
- All projects with a Justice-Involved/Opportunity Youth component will receive funding priority.

### **Participating Employer:**

- Employers must be subject to the Employment Training Tax, per UI Code, Section 10201 (b).
- Employers are not required to meet the Panel's out-of-state competition eligibility requirements set forth in UI Code, Section 10200 (a)(1).

### **Trainees:**

- Trainees can be either employed or unemployed Justice-Involved individuals, or employed or unemployed Opportunity Youth.
- Young adults between 18 and 23 years of age may be deemed to be an Opportunity Youth if they are not in school or employed full-time at time of recruitment, and meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - Previously involved in or heavily exposed to gang activities
  - Homeless
  - History of drug addiction
  - Have child on public assistance
  - Emancipated foster youth (can be younger than 18)

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- Physical or mental disability
  - Parent is incarcerated
  - High school dropout
  - The Justice-Involved/Opportunity Youth trainees will all be enrolled in SET job numbers, as these Guidelines are an outgrowth of the SET Multiple Barriers Regulation 22 CCR 4409(a)(7).
  - **Proof of Trainee Eligibility:**
    - *Opportunity Youth* - The contractor must retain written documentation and certify that the Opportunity Youth trainee has at least one of the identified at-risk factors.
    - *Justice-Involved* - The contractor must certify that the Justice-Involved trainee has a criminal record, and is on probation, parole, or is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or retaining secure employment, due to the trainee's Justice-Involved status.
- A Contractor must obtain/maintain evidence of trainee eligibility on file for ETP review. As the trainee's ETP eligibility is based solely on their Justice-Involved status, the contractor is responsible for obtaining written proof of the trainee's eligibility from the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, or other written documentation. Since all Justice-Involved individuals are assigned a parole or probation officer, the trainee may obtain written documentation from their parole/probation officer. At a minimum, such documentation must identify the following:
- Justice-Involved individual's name and case number (or other ex-offender identifier);
  - Parole or Probation Officer's name and phone number; and,
  - Indication that the trainee is a Justice-Involved individual with a record from a Division of Juvenile Justice or Department of Corrections institution.
- The regional office analyst must review contractor files to ensure that evidence of trainee eligibility is being maintained as described above.

### Training Delivery

- Standard Training Delivery Requirements apply.

### Training Hours

- The minimum and maximum training hours are 8 and 260. An approved justification is required to exceed the maximum training hours.

### Curriculum

- Training may consist of classroom, laboratory, videoconferencing, and computer-based training.
- At least 50% of trainee's total training hours must consist of vocational skills training. In conjunction with vocational skills training, training may also include basic skills, life skills, and literacy skills.

- The standard cap on training hours for retrainees (200 hours) does not apply.

### **Retention Requirements**

- Full-time employment is required for a minimum of 35 hours per week during the consecutive 90-day employment retention period.
- Retention may be 500 hours within 180 days with one or more participating employers.

### **Wage**

- Standard ETP wages apply. Contractors may request a lower wage with sufficient justification, subject to Panel approval.

### **Reimbursement**

- Multiple employer contractors (MEC) may receive up to 12% for support costs.
- The standard cap on new-hire trainee costs may be exceeded for good cause.

### **Additional Information**

- **Program Evaluation:** ETP will work with contractors to obtain trainee data, which can be used for analysis of the effectiveness of Justice-Involved/Opportunity Youth training.

ETP will follow-up on trainees after the completion of training and employment retention (e.g., using EDD's Base Wage File, surveys, etc.), to determine the effectiveness of the training in helping trainees obtain and keep secure, good-paying jobs.

- **Program Parameters:**
  - Projects may be funded to serve either unemployed or employed individuals with a criminal record who are currently, or have been in parole status; or young adults who are deemed to be at risk for becoming involved in anti-social activities.
  - Projects must emphasize training to support the long-term job preparation and job security of the Justice-Involved trainees, and/or training to assist Opportunity Youth in learning work skills, and helping them find and succeed in a career path.
  - All projects with a Justice-Involved/Opportunity Youth component will receive funding priority.
  - All training provided to Justice-Involved or Opportunity Youth will be separated from other training in a combined project by distinct job numbers.
- **Recruitment and Collaboration**
  - The contractor must identify a plan for recruiting and screening trainees, which must be submitted with the proposed training project.
  - The contractor must describe other program funds and resources that will be used in collaboration with ETP funds to serve project trainees (e.g., wage subsidies, transportation costs, supportive services, employer tax credits).

- **Incidental Placement:** Incidental placement of Justice-Involved and Opportunity Youth with public and non-profit entities is permissible, but placements generally should not exceed 25% of the number to retain in employment, by job number. With showing of good cause, incidental placements may be increased up to 35%.