ARIZONA@WORK™

PINAL COUNTY

Innovative Workforce Solutions

"Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways"

Funding Proposal

January 2024

1. **Introduction** In Pinal County, the escalating adult probation population, reaching 5,600 by the end of 2023, underscores a critical challenge in the job market for those with criminal backgrounds. In response, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County, in collaboration with Pinal County Adult Probation and various community partners, has developed the innovative "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative. This groundbreaking program, targeting to serve 50 Adult Probationers from February to June 2024, is tailored to address the unique barriers faced by individuals re-entering the workforce post-felony conviction.

   A. **Core Philosophy** Our philosophy is centered on recognizing and nurturing the potential within each individual, in the probation population. We believe in providing equitable opportunities for all to rebuild and excel. Our objective transcends mere job placement; we are committed to meticulously sculpting career pathways that not only align with individual skills and aspirations but also adeptly navigate the complexities associated with a felony conviction.
   B. **Strategic Approach** Confronting a substantial risk of re-offending, as indicated by over half of the probation population and a 17.5% revocation rate to the Department of Corrections in 2023, our approach begins with a thorough participant assessment. This step is vital in pinpointing career paths that are not only suitable but also sensitive to the participants' past, contributing to the positive trend of a 78.7% probation completion success rate observed in 2023.
   C. **Localized Focus and Community Integration** Recognizing the diverse geographical spread of the probation population, our initiative places significant focus on the Casa Grande area, home to 27% of the adult

probation population. This strategic concentration ensures that our services are accessible and effectively tailored to meet a substantial portion of the community's needs. Furthermore, we engage in extensive outreach throughout Pinal County to ensure all-encompassing support and inclusivity.

This focused approach serves to meet immediate needs while fostering broader community integration. By channeling resources into areas with higher concentrations of probationers, we enhance the impact and sustainability of our outcomes. This strategy strengthens community ties and fosters collaborations crucial for long-term success and societal reintegration.

D. **Employment and Reintegration Success** Reflecting on the 66% employment
rate among successfully exiting probationers as per Pinal County Adult Probation, our initiative is designed to further improve employment opportunities and stability. Our goal is to provide the probationers with essential tools and resources, aiding them in securing sustainable employment, thus significantly contributing to successful reintegration and a reduction in recidivism rates.

E. **Conclusion** The "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative embodies a commitment to change and opportunity. It is an expansive approach, aiming to comprehensively address the intricate challenges Adult Probationers face in Pinal County. With a proposed investment of $516,802, this initiative is set to enrich the lives of 50 Adult Probationers, offering them not just employment but a pathway to new beginnings and a brighter, more stable future. ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County currently has 20 recently enrolled adult probationers who will be included in the initiative.

2. Methodology

A. **Enhanced BOOST Curriculum** BOOST (Building Opportunities and Optimizing Success Together), ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County's three-day work-readiness bootcamp, represents a transformative journey for job seekers. It’s a service delivery model, meticulously designed to align an individual's intrinsic motivations with the in-demand occupations in Pinal County. As the foundational stage of Adult and Dislocated Worker services, BOOST encompasses a comprehensive array of services.

This intensive model includes an overview of available services, workshops on effective workplace communication, awareness of essential soft skills, and insightful activities that foster critical thinking. One of the key components is the ONET Interest Profiler, with individual results analyzed for alignment with the labor market dynamics of Pinal County and the participants targeted career pathway. Participants are also engaged in self-discovery sessions to identify connective values to career pathways to enhance the customer journey and improve the likelihood of success. Labor market insights, behaviors that drive success, along with resume writing and interview workshops are also included during BOOST.

In alignment with our current proposal, BOOST has undergone significant enhancements to better serve justice-involved job seekers. These improvements include critical topics such as addressing the stigma of having a criminal record during job hunting, an understanding of legal rights, and strategies for successful workplace integration.

A notable addition is the Career Development SWOT analysis. This tool empowers participants to conduct a self-assessment of their career-related strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Such an analysis leads to a deeper understanding of their position in the job market and identifies areas requiring development. This process is instrumental in helping participants to recognize and strategize around their unique challenges and opportunities, particularly in the context of re-entering the workforce with a criminal background.

As part of ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County's commitment to delivering comprehensive support for Adult Probationers, the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative recognizes the vital role of digital literacy in today's workforce. To this end, a specialized component focusing on digital literacy proficiency development has been integrated as a needs-based supplement within BOOST.

During BOOST, participants engage in a self-assessment aimed at gauging their career development readiness. This assessment covers various areas, including vocational skills, occupational skills, academic qualifications, and training. Crucial to this assessment are questions that specifically evaluate participants' digital literacy:

1. Can you navigate the Internet and use a computer proficiently?
2. Can you use Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint?

These questions serve as indicators to identify individuals who may require additional support in digital literacy. Recognizing that proficiency in digital tools and internet navigation is essential for effective job searching, application processes, and modern workplace competency, the Basic Computer Literacy Workshop has been developed as a direct response to these needs.

Basic Computer Literacy Workshop Overview: The workshop is meticulously designed to empower participants with the fundamental computer skills necessary for navigating workforce development activities. By the end of the workshop, participants are expected to be proficient in basic computer operations, creating and using a professional email account, accessing and using Google Docs for resume creation, saving documents on a thumb drive, completing online job applications, and uploading their resume.

This workshop is not just an educational offering but a strategic tool in bridging the digital divide that often hampers the reintegration process for many Adult Probationers. By equipping participants with these critical digital skills, we not only enhance their employability but also ensure they can confidently engage with the modern digital-centric job market.

The inclusion of the Basic Computer Literacy Workshop as a supplement to BOOST, underlines our holistic approach to career readiness. It ensures that all participants, irrespective of their initial digital proficiency, can develop these essential skills, thereby enhancing their overall career development journey and improving their chances of successful reintegration into the workforce.

This initiative reflects ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County’s dedication to addressing the complete spectrum of needs for Adult Probationers, reinforcing our commitment to offering tailored support that extends beyond traditional vocational training, and truly preparing individuals for a successful future in today's digitally-driven world.

These strategic enhancements to BOOST are tailored to instill a profound sense of self-awareness in our participants. This perspective is crucial for the development of highly personalized and effective individual employment plans. These plans are not only reflective of each participant's unique journey but are also structured to logically navigate and address significant barriers to employment.

Through these enriched components, BOOST stands as a robust, holistic front-end service delivery model that equips participants with the skills,

insights, and confidence needed to navigate the complexities of the job market, particularly for those with criminal backgrounds. It sets the stage for effective reintegration into the workforce and lays the groundwork for long-term career success.

B. **Market Alignment and Employer Engagement** Our strategy delves into analyzing appropriate career pathways in the Pinal County job market, emphasizing connections with local employers. This includes educating employers about the value of hiring from non-traditional talent pools, setting up transitional jobs, work-based learning, and other trust-building opportunities.
C. **Vocational Training and Support Networks** A key element of our strategy is selecting the right vocational training programs and subsidized employment opportunities, ensuring alignment with participants' career goals and employer requirements.
D. **Comprehensive Career and Training Plan** We develop comprehensive career and training plans for each participant, which include pre-vocational activities, resume building, interview practice, and labor market alignment analysis. These plans are geared towards smoothly transitioning participants into career pathways that may involve various combinations of subsidized employment and training opportunities.
E. **Innovative Alignment of Servies** In preparation for the successful implementation of the 'Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways' initiative, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Adult and Dislocated Worker team has strategically enhanced its service-delivery approaches for staff. These enhancements, described on pages 17-29, are integral to our service delivery structure, ensuring that our team is well-equipped to address the unique challenges faced by Adult Probationers re-entering the workforce. Our staff training focuses on in-depth participant assessments, understanding local job market trends, effective employer engagement, and selection of suitable vocational training programs. This comprehensive approach enables our team to provide tailored guidance, from initial assessments to the final stages of career development and post-employment support.
   These enhancements ensure that our staff are not only knowledgeable about the specific needs of our participants but also skilled in utilizing our resources most effectively. This preparedness is key to our strategic approach, elevating our ability to offer holistic support and thereby significantly increasing the chances of successful participant outcomes. Our team’s readiness and adaptability underscore our commitment to executing this initiative with the utmost efficiency and impact.

3. **Budget Overview** The proposed budget for this initiative, targeting to serve 50 participants with an allocation of up to $7,500 per participant, is as follows:

Budget Item	**Amount (USD)**
Staffing (3 Full-Time Career Planners)	$68,400
Participant Support (50 Participants)	$375,000
Video and Marketing Production	$15,000
Materials Development and Printing	$5,000
Equipment (Laptops)	$3,000
Staff Travel and Development (5%)	$3,420
Administrative Costs (10%)	$46,982
Total Budget	**$516,802**

A. **Staffing Plan** For the successful implementation of the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative, a strategic and efficient staffing plan is pivotal. Recognizing the ambitious timeline and specific requirements of the program, we have devised a staffing approach that leverages the agility and resourcefulness of temporary workers, supplemented by robust case management tools.

Leveraging Temporary Workers Understanding the need for a dynamic and responsive workforce, our plan involves partnering with reputable temporary agencies to onboard temporary workers. These workers will be carefully selected to align with the specific needs and objectives of our program. This approach allows us flexibility in staffing, ensuring that we can promptly respond to varying demands of the initiative, and maintain the quality and continuity of services provided to our participants.

Onboarding and Training Once onboarded, temporary workers will be thoroughly trained to understand the nuances and goals of the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative. This training will include familiarization with the specific needs of our target demographic, the Adult

Probationers in Pinal County, and an in-depth walkthrough of the program's methodologies and tools.

Utilizing WORCS: A Supplementary Case Management Tool A key component of our staffing plan is the utilization of WORCS (Workforce Opportunity Resource Coordination System), an advanced supplementary case management tool provided by Equus for ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Adult and Dislocated Worker staff. WORCS will serve as the primary case management tool, enabling our staff to manage participant data efficiently, track progress, and coordinate various aspects of the program.

Integration with Arizona Job Connection (AJC)

As part of our commitment to seamless and effective program management, all participant notes and services recorded in WORCS will be transposed into the Arizona Job Connection (AJC) system by staff who already have access to AJC. This integration ensures that all participant data and progress are accurately and consistently maintained across both platforms, facilitating comprehensive tracking and reporting.

Support for Ambitious Timeline

The combination of leveraging temporary workers through temp agencies and the utilization of WORCS as the primary case management tool, integrated with AJC, is specifically designed to support the ambitious timeline of our proposal given the availability of funding. It allows for rapid scaling of resources, efficient management of participant data, and ensures that all program activities are aligned with our goals and timeline. The staffing plan for the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative is built to ensure agility, efficiency, and effectiveness. Through this approach, we are poised to successfully meet the program objectives and make a meaningful impact in the lives of the Adult Probationers in Pinal County.

4. **Workforce System and Community Partners**

Service	Description	Service Provider
Primary referral source and participant support resource	Provide opportunities for positive change to improve probationer lives and build stronger communities	Pinal County Adult Probation
Job Training and Skills Development	Vocational training, resume writing workshops, and job-readiness training.	ARIZONA@WORK
Career Counseling and Guidance	Identifying job opportunities, setting career goals, and planning career paths.	ARIZONA@WORK
Substance Abuse Education and Relapse Prevention Programs	Ongoing education about substance abuse, coping strategies, and relapse prevention.	Corazon or Horizon
Mental Health Support	Access to counseling and therapy for underlying issues related to addiction and co-occurring disorders.	Corazon or Horizon
Peer Support Groups	Encouragement and advice from individuals who have successfully navigated the transition back into the workforce.	Corazon, AA and NA groups, CG Alliance
Legal Assistance	Assistance with legal issues that could impact employment, such as clearing criminal records.	Legal Aid – referral ARIZONA@WORK
Financial Literacy Training	Skills in financial management, including budgeting, saving, and managing debt.	Foothills Bank
Flexible or Transitional Employment Opportunities	Jobs with flexible hours or transitional roles to adjust to work schedule while managing recovery.	ARIZONA@WORK

Health and Wellness Programs	Programs focused on physical well-being, nutrition advice, exercise classes, and stress management.	Possibly CG Alliance
Transportation and Childcare Assistance	Help with transportation to and from work or interviews and assistance with childcare.	ARIZONA@WORK
Housing Assistance	Assistance in finding and maintaining stable accommodation.	ARIZONA@WORK

A. ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Partner Programs

This initiative embraces a focused co-enrollment strategy to enhance participant support for Adult Probationers. Our approach leverages the collective resources and services of various partner programs, tailoring assistance to meet the unique needs of this targeted population.

Several key programs within the system present valuable co-enrollment opportunities for Adult Probationers:

1. **Youth Program by Central Arizona College**: For Adult Probationers with young dependents, this program can provide crucial support to their families, thereby creating a more stable environment conducive to their rehabilitation and workforce reintegration. Depending on the participants age, the opportunity to co-enroll the individual may be available as well.
2. **Adult Basic Education by Central Arizona College**: Many Adult Probationers may benefit from foundational educational skills. This program complements their journey by enhancing essential literacy and numeracy skills, which are often critical in securing stable employment.
3. **Wagner-Peyser Services by the Department of Economic Security**: Offering a broad spectrum of employment services, Wagner-Peyser is an ideal match for Adult Probationers seeking comprehensive job search assistance and employment support.
4. **Vocational Rehabilitation by the Department of Economic Security**: For those Adult Probationers facing disabilities or specific rehabilitation needs, this program provides specialized support, aiding their transition into the workforce.

B. Advantages of Co-Enrollment for Adult Probationers

Co-enrolling Adult Probationers in these partner programs offers several distinct benefits:

1. **Maximizing Resources**: Co-enrollment opens access to a wider array of resources, crucial for Adult Probationers who often require multifaceted support. This approach ensures no available resource is left untapped.
2. **Streamlining Services**: By coordinating services across multiple programs, Adult Probationers experience more efficient and less fragmented support. This integration helps in simplifying their journey through various systems and services.
3. **Holistic Service Delivery**: The co-enrollment strategy ensures that Adult Probationers receive comprehensive care. From educational enhancement to specialized employment services, this approach addresses the diverse and often complex needs specific to this group.
4. **Targeted Support**: Each program offers something unique and beneficial for Adult Probationers. Whether it's family support, skill development, job search assistance, or specialized rehabilitation, co-enrollment ensures that their specific justice involved career development challenges are adequately addressed.

The proactive co-enrollment strategy for Adult Probationers in ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County's Workforce Development System signifies a targeted and effective method to support this unique demographic. By synergizing services from Central Arizona College's Youth and Adult Basic Education programs, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation, the system not only amplifies the support available to Adult Probationers but also ensures a more tailored, efficient, and holistic approach to their reintegration and success in the workforce. This collaborative strategy underscores our commitment to addressing the specific challenges faced by Adult Probationers and aiding their journey towards productive and fulfilling employment.

C. Community Partnerships

1. Partnership with Corazon

In partnership with ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County, Corazon plays a pivotal role in supporting Adult Probationers through its comprehensive range of behavioral health services. As a dynamic collaborator in the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative, Corazon stands out for its commitment to

instilling hope, promoting dignity, and improving the quality of life within the community.

Core Services and Programs

Corazon specializes in a broad spectrum of behavioral health services, tailored to meet the needs of individuals, families, and children. Understanding the diverse challenges faced by its clients, Corazon offers specialized treatment programs that address substance use and abuse. Significantly, all services are accessible via multiple channels, including in-office visits, in-home care, and telehealth options, ensuring comprehensive care and support.

Psychiatric Services

Corazon’s psychiatric services encompass evaluations and medication monitoring, conducted by a consistent group of experienced prescribers. These services are thoughtfully provided via telehealth, enhancing accessibility for those who may face transportation or mobility barriers.

Counseling

At the heart of Corazon's offerings is its counseling program, which includes individual, family, and group sessions. These are conducted by qualified and experienced staff, ensuring that every client receives personalized and empathetic care.

Substance Abuse Programming

Understanding the critical need for effective substance abuse treatment, Corazon offers Intensive Outpatient Programming, Standard Outpatient Programming, and ongoing Recovery Maintenance/After Care Support. These programs are available continuously, reflecting Corazon’s dedication to long-term support and recovery.

Skill Development Services

Corazon's Skill Development Services focus on enhancing the overall wellness, social skills, nutrition, and independent living skills of its clients. These services are crucial for individuals aiming to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into society successfully.

Employment Readiness Program

A standout aspect of Corazon’s offerings is its Employment Readiness Program. Based on SAMHSA's Supported Employment program, it is inclusive of individuals with felonies, offering them a chance to participate in community and

job readiness activities. This program is instrumental in assisting clients in pursuing and obtaining employment, aligning perfectly with the goals of the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative.

Case Management Services

Corazon provides essential case management services, ensuring coordinated care with other providers, including physical health specialists. This holistic approach promotes integrated healthcare and underscores the importance of collaboration in treatment and recovery.

Team and Mission

The team at Corazon comprises licensed counselors, social workers, case managers, behavioral health technicians, and administrative staff. United by the mission to "Instill Hope, Promote Dignity and Improve the Quality of Human Life in Our Community," they work collaboratively towards the betterment of their clients.

As a partner of ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County, Corazon not only refers Adult Probationers to ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County for career development services but also provides vital wraparound services. This partnership leverages Corazon’s extensive expertise in behavioral health and rehabilitation, ensuring that Adult Probationers receive the comprehensive support they need to navigate their journey towards a fulfilling and dignified life.

2. **Partnership with Foothills Bank, Casa Grande**

In the comprehensive framework of the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative, Foothills Bank plays a pivotal role. Recognizing the crucial intersection between financial literacy and successful reintegration, Foothills Bank's involvement is designed to empower Adult Probation participants by equipping them with essential financial skills.

Core Contribution of Foothills Bank

Foothills Bank's contribution to the initiative is centered around providing specialized financial literacy training. This program is tailored to address the unique challenges that Adult Probationers face, particularly in managing finances post-sentencing. The bank's expertise in financial management becomes a key asset in this endeavor.

Financial Literacy Training

The training offered by Foothills Bank covers a range of crucial topics:

1. **Budgeting and Money Management**: Participants learn to create and manage budgets, an essential skill for maintaining financial stability and independence.
2. **Understanding Credit**: Training includes education on credit scores, how to build and repair credit, and the importance of credit history in various aspects of life, including employment.
3. **Savings and Investment**: Participants are guided on ways to save money effectively and introduced to basic investment concepts for long-term financial health.
4. **Debt Management**: The program covers strategies for managing and reducing debt, a common challenge for many returning citizens.
5. **Impulse Spending**: A key focus is on controlling impulsivity in spending, helping participants develop discipline and foresight in their financial decisions.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

Foothills Bank's financial literacy training goes beyond immediate financial education; it aims to instill sustainable financial habits that can significantly impact participants' lives. By addressing financial management and impulsivity, the training helps mitigate common barriers that Adult Probationers face, such as the temptation to revert to old habits or make poor financial decisions that could jeopardize their reintegration process.

Integration with the Overall Initiative

Foothills Bank's role is seamlessly integrated into the broader "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative. Financial literacy becomes a crucial component of the comprehensive support structure that includes vocational training, counseling, and employment readiness. This holistic approach ensures that participants are not only prepared for the workforce but are also equipped with the necessary tools to manage their financial future effectively.

Foothills Bank’s involvement in the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative is a testament to the power of collaborative efforts in supporting Adult Probationers. By providing essential financial literacy training, Foothills Bank contributes significantly to the overarching goal of the initiative: to

offer Adult Probationers a solid foundation for a successful reentry into society. This partnership underscores the commitment to address all facets of reintegration, ensuring that financial wellbeing is a key component of the journey towards stability and long-term success.

5. **Targeted Outcomes**

   For the proposed enrollment of 50 participants through the "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" initiative, we have outlined specific, measurable outcomes. These outcomes are designed to track the progress and success of the program, focusing on key areas such as BOOST attendance, career pathway identification, work-based learning opportunities, transitional job placements, and the transition to unsubsidized employment.

Outcome Categories	**Target (Percentage of BOOST Attendees)**	**Target (Number of BOOST Attendees)**	**Timeframe**	**Rationale**
BOOST Attendance	90%	45 participants	During BOOST	Foundation for all program components
Career Pathway Identification	100%	45 participants	End of BOOST	Essential for focused career development
Work-Based Learning Opportunities	30%	13-14 unduplicated participants	Within 3 months of enrollment	Offers practical skills and experience
Transitional Job Placement	30%	13-14 unduplicated participants	Within 3 months of enrollment	Crucial step towards stable employment
Transition to Unsubsidized Employment	75%	33-34 participants	Within 12 months of enrollment	Aids in achieving long-term career success
Occupational Skills Training	30%	13-14 unduplicated participants	Within 3 months of enrollment	Enhances employability with relevant skills

Outcome Categories	Target (Percentage of BOOST Attendees)	Target (Number of BOOST Attendees)	Timeframe	Rationale
Enhanced support services	100%	45 unduplicated participants	Ongoing after enrollment	Improves employability and retention through the mitigation of significant barriers to employment
Financial Literacy Training	50%	23	Within 3 months after enrollment	Improve probability of self-sufficiency

1. **BOOST Attendance**: We aim for a 90% attendance rate, translating to 45 participants. This attendance is vital as it lays the groundwork for all subsequent program components.
2. **Career Pathway Identification**: Post-BOOST, 100% of the attendees (45 participants) will identify a career pathway by the end of the program, marking a crucial step in their career development journey.
3. **Work-Based Learning Opportunities**: Within six months of enrollment, our target is for 30% of the BOOST attendees, which equates to 13 or 14 participants (rounding off from 13.5), to engage in work-based learning experiences. These opportunities provide invaluable practical skills.
4. **Transitional Job Placement**: We aim to place 30% of the BOOST attendees, approximately 13 or 14 participants, in transitional jobs within nine months of enrollment. Transitional jobs are a key steppingstone to stable employment.
5. **Transition to Unsubsidized Employment**: Within 12 months of enrollment, our goal is to assist 75% of the BOOST attendees, roughly 33 or 34 participants, in transitioning to unsubsidized employment, supporting their long-term career success.
6. **Occupational Skills Training**: Enrolling 30% of the BOOST attendees, about 13 or 14 participants, in occupational skills training within six months of enrollment is

our target. This training is crucial for enhancing employability in the current job market.

Conclusion

The "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways" reflects ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County's commitment to fostering new opportunities and supporting transformative journeys for those seeking to redefine their professional futures. This initiative not only aims at job placement but also focuses on laying a solid foundation for long-term career success. By investing $516,802 in this service delivery approach, the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) will join our focused dedication to enriching the lives of 50 Adult Probationers and contributing to the creation of a more inclusive and empowered community in Pinal County. Through this comprehensive approach, we offer more than just employment; we offer a pathway to new beginnings and a brighter future for individuals ready to turn a new leaf in their professional lives.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Specific service delivery practices and approaches are included in the subsequent pages.

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PINAL COUNTY

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Intentional Design of Justice-Involved Career Pathways:
A Career Development Strategy

Navigating the job market can be a daunting challenge, particularly for individuals with a criminal background. Understanding this, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County has developed a comprehensive career development strategy titled "Intentional Design of Justice Involved Career Pathways." This approach is tailored to meet the unique needs of job seekers who are reentering the workforce with a felony conviction.

Our strategy is rooted in the principle that everyone deserves a fair chance to rebuild their lives and pursue meaningful careers. It's about more than just finding a job; it's about identifying a career pathway that aligns with an individual's skills, interests, and potential for growth, while also being sensitive to the complexities that come with having a felony conviction.

The process begins with a thorough assessment of the participant's strengths and preferences, leading to the identification of suitable career pathways. We then delve into evaluating these pathways in the context of the local job market in Pinal County, considering factors like demand, growth potential, and any additional qualifications required. Understanding the legal and societal landscape, we focus on identifying potential employers who may be open to hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds. This involves a structured marketing campaign to educate employers on the skills and benefits of hiring justice-involved job seekers who are skilled and fit organizational culture. Additionally, direct engagement with these employers, to foster opportunities for job seeker meet-and-greets and discussions about establishing trust building internships or work-based learning internships or training opportunities.

A critical component of our strategy is selecting the right vocational training program, ensuring it aligns with both the participant's career goals and the needs of potential

employers. Training programs may consist of Internships or Transitional Jobs, Work-Based Learning via On-the-Job or Customized Training, or Occupational Skills Training via formal classroom training. To supplement training efforts, we emphasize building a robust support and resource network, to include enhanced support services to mitigate or remove significant barriers to employment while providing participants with the mentorship and guidance they need to navigate this journey successfully.

Transitional Jobs, as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), are time-limited work experiences that help individuals with significant barriers to employment, such as those with criminal backgrounds, to establish a work history and learn the basic skills necessary for job success. These jobs are designed to lead to permanent employment and play a crucial role in reintegration and workforce development. Here's a detailed description:

Key Characteristics of WIOA Transitional Jobs

1. **Target Audience:** Transitional jobs primarily target individuals facing significant barriers to employment, including but not limited to ex-offenders, long-term unemployed individuals, and those with limited work history.
2. **Time-Limited Employment:** These jobs are temporary and typically last for a few months. The duration is strategically set to provide sufficient time for skill development and work experience, yet short enough to be a stepping stone to regular employment.
3. **Subsidized Employment:** Employers receive subsidies (partial or full) for the wages of transitional job participants. This incentive encourages employers to hire individuals they may not typically consider for employment.
4. **Skill Development and Training:** Participants receive on-the-job training along with other employment-related services. This training aims to develop the skills needed in the current labor market and may include both soft skills (like communication and teamwork) and job-specific technical skills.
5. **Support Services:** Participants are often provided with various support services like career counseling, job search assistance, and mentorship. These services are designed to address personal and professional barriers and facilitate a smooth transition to permanent employment.
6. **Goal of Permanent Employment:** The ultimate goal of transitional jobs is to lead to permanent, unsubsidized employment. Participants gain valuable experience and references that increase their employability.
7. **Community and Employer Engagement:** These programs frequently involve collaboration with local community organizations and businesses. Such

partnerships are essential for identifying suitable employment opportunities and ensuring that the training provided is aligned with local workforce needs.

Impact and Benefits

1. **For Participants:** Transitional jobs offer a pathway to rebuild work history, enhance skills, and gain confidence, significantly improving their chances of obtaining long-term employment.
2. **For Employers:** Employers gain a motivated workforce with subsidized wages and the opportunity to evaluate workers' performance before making a long-term hiring commitment.
3. **For the Community:** These programs contribute to economic growth by reducing unemployment and helping marginalized individuals become productive members of society.

Transitional Jobs under WIOA represent a practical and supportive approach to addressing employment barriers, playing a pivotal role in workforce development, especially for those who face significant challenges in securing stable employment.

Ultimately, our strategy culminates in holistic career development services for Pinal County Adult Probationers through pre-vocational activities that includes resume building, interview practice, soft skill development, labor market alignment analyses, skill and interest assessments, and techniques for positively framing criminal backgrounds. These employment readiness activities then transition into career pathways that may include any combination of subsidized employment opportunities and occupational skills training. This strategy is not just about finding immediate employment; it's about setting the foundation for long-term career success and stability.

" Intentional Design of Justice-Involved Career Pathways " is more than a strategy – it's a pathway to new beginnings, offering hope and practical solutions for those looking to turn over a new leaf in their professional lives.

Strategic Approach

Identifying Suitable Career Pathways (BOOST/CP)

1. Assess the participant's knowledge, skills, interests, and abilities to identify two or three potential career pathways.
2. Consider how the nature of the felony conviction may impact suitability for certain careers.
3. Research industries and job roles associated with these pathways that are known to be more felon-friendly.

Evaluating the Career Pathways (BOOST/CP)

4. For each identified pathway, research the Pinal County job market demand and potential for growth.
5. Discuss any additional skills or certifications required for these pathways.
6. Consider any legal or licensing restrictions in the chosen fields that might be affected by the felony conviction.

Narrowing Down to Potential Employers (CP/BSC)

7. For each career pathway, identify potential employers who may be open to hiring individuals with felony convictions. Known background-friendly employers may be a good starting point for this effort but the search should not stop there. Take the opportunity to reach out to new employers in hopes of expanding our background-friendly employer network.
8. Contact these employers by pathway priority to inquire about their policies regarding hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds.
9. Discuss with employers any specific requirements or considerations for hiring individuals with felony convictions.
10. If the employer is open to it, consider scheduling a meet and greet with the participant.
    a. Ask the employer if they would consider hiring the participant if he or she successfully participated in a paid internship, On-the-Job Training, attended vocational training, or any combination thereof.
    b. Share success stories from other participants with felonies who went on to be great employees.

Selecting a Vocational Training Program or Subsidized Employment Pathway (CP/Participant)

11. Based on the chosen career pathways, research relevant vocational training programs available on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) or Work-Based Learning, or transitional job opportunities
12. Verify with the training providers or employers their policies on admitting/hiring individuals with felony convictions.
13. Ensure the training program aligns with the requirements of potential employers in the identified career paths.

Building a Support and Resource Network (CP/Project Leadership)

14. Explore mentorship, counseling, or support groups that specialize in career guidance for individuals with felony convictions.

15. Leverage local or online resources that support workforce reentry.

Finalizing the Career and Training Plan (Participant/CP)

16. Develop a comprehensive plan including targeted training, potential employers, and
    a strategy for integrating the felony into professional narratives.

17. Create a timeline for training completion and commencement of job applications.

Preparation for Employment (Participant/CP)

18. Prepare for job applications with tailored resumes and interview practice focusing on positively framing the felony.

19. Plan ongoing professional development to enhance long-term career prospects and stability.

Ongoing Support Post-Employment

An essential component of the "Reverse Engineering Criminal Background-Friendly Career Pathways" strategy is the implementation of robust follow-up practices post-employment. This ongoing support is critical in reducing the probability of recidivism and ensuring long-term success for participants who have secured employment. Our approach includes several key elements:

Regular Check-Ins

20. **Scheduled Follow-Ups:** Establish a schedule of regular check-ins with participants who have gained employment. These could be monthly or quarterly, depending on the individual's needs.

21. **Open Communication Channels:** Encourage open and ongoing communication, allowing participants to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in their new roles.

Career Development Support

22. **Professional Growth:** Offer guidance on professional development opportunities, such as advanced training or workshops, to enhance job skills and career advancement.
23. **Career Planning:** Provide continued career counseling to help participants set and achieve long-term professional goals.

Workplace Integration

24. **Mentorship Programs:** Facilitate connections with mentors who can provide guidance and support as participants navigate their new workplace environment.
25. **Conflict Resolution Assistance:** Leverage available community-based resources that offer advice on handling workplace conflicts and challenges, reinforcing positive work behaviors and communication skills.

Support Services

26. **Access to Resources:** Ensure participants have access to necessary resources such as transportation services, childcare, dental care, eye glasses, interview clothing, work clothing, or counseling services that support their ability to obtain and maintain employment.
27. **Wellness and Stress Management:** Provide resources or workshops focused on stress management, wellness, and work-life balance to support overall well-being.

Employer Engagement

28. **Employer Feedback:** Regularly communicate with employers to get feedback on the participant's performance and integration into the workplace.
29. **Employer Support:** Through an outreach campaign that includes short videos, flyers, and hosted webinars, offer resources or training to employers on how to effectively work with and support employees who have a criminal background.

Community Support

30. **Networking Opportunities:** Encourage participation in community events or professional groups to build a supportive network.
31. **Peer Support Groups:** Facilitate or connect participants with peer support groups where they can share experiences and strategies for success with others in similar situations.

Continuous Evaluation and Adaptation

32. **Feedback Loop:** Regularly collect feedback from participants about the support services to continually adapt and improve the program.
33. **Success Stories:** Document and share success stories as a way of motivating current participants and providing real-life examples of overcoming challenges.

By implementing these ongoing support practices, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County aims to not only assist individuals in securing employment but also in thriving in their new roles, thereby contributing to their long-term success and reducing the likelihood of recidivism. This holistic approach reinforces our commitment to supporting participants every step of the way, from initial training to stable and fulfilling employment.

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Innovative Workforce Solutions

Hiring Individuals with Criminal Backgrounds as an Employer Engagement Strategy

Creating a series of short videos or campaign flyers to raise advocacy and awareness among Pinal County employers about the benefits of hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds can be a powerful strategy. The following list of topics can be included to effectively communicate the value of giving second chances:

Proposed Video Series and Campaign Flyer Topics (One per month)

1. **Success Stories: Real-Life Transformations**
    - Highlight inspiring success stories of individuals who have turned their lives around after a felony conviction.
    - Focus on their contributions to the workplace and the positive impact they've made.
2. **Myth vs. Reality: Debunking Common Misconceptions**
    - Address common myths about hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds.
    - Present facts and statistics that dispel these misconceptions.
3. **The Business Case for Inclusivity**
    - Discuss the benefits to businesses, such as diverse perspectives, loyalty, and work ethic.
    - Highlight any tax incentives or grants available for hiring individuals with criminal records.
4. **Legal Framework and Compliance**
    - Provide a clear overview of the legal aspects of hiring individuals with criminal records, including compliance with EEOC guidelines.
5. **Workforce Development and Community Impact**
    - Show how hiring individuals with criminal backgrounds contributes to community development and reduces recidivism.
    - Emphasize the role of employment in successful reintegration.
6. **Support and Resources for Employers**
    - Introduce resources and support systems available to employers, such as mentorship programs and ongoing training.
7. **Creating a Supportive Work Environment**
    - Offer tips and best practices for creating an inclusive and supportive workplace.
8. **Second Chances: A New Perspective**
    - Encourage a shift in perspective, viewing hiring individuals with criminal records as an opportunity to give second chances and support positive change.

9. **Collaborative Success: Partnerships Between Employers and Vocational Programs**
    - Showcase examples of successful partnerships between employers and vocational training programs that support individuals with criminal backgrounds.
10. **Testimonials from Employers**
    - Feature testimonials from employers who have had positive experiences hiring individuals with criminal records.
11. **Overcoming Challenges: A Guide for Employers**
    - Address common challenges employers might face and provide practical solutions or strategies to overcome them.
12. **Economic Benefits to the Local Community**
    - Highlight how employing individuals with criminal records can have a positive economic impact on the local community.

Implementation Tips for Videos and Flyers

- **Engaging and Relatable Content:** Use storytelling and relatable characters or narrators.
- **Clear and Concise Messaging:** Keep messages clear, concise, and focused on key points.
- **Visual Appeal:** Use engaging visuals and graphics to enhance the appeal and retention of the information.
- **Call to Action:** Include a clear call to action in each video or flyer, directing employers to additional resources or steps they can take.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that the content is accessible, including subtitles for videos and easy-to-read formats for flyers.

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Identifying Viable Background-Friendly Career Pathways

Determining which occupations are more likely to be 'felon-friendly' for ex-offenders involves considering several factors like industry regulations, legal restrictions, and the typical hiring practices of employers in those fields. While it's important to note that opportunities can vary significantly based on individual circumstances and the nature of the offense, some general observations can be made about the in-demand occupations in Pinal County, Arizona:

Potentially More Felon-Friendly Occupations:

1. **Construction Trades** (e.g., Carpenters, Electricians, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters): These fields often value skills and reliability over background, especially in areas with high demand for labor.
2. **Industrial Roles** (e.g., Industrial Machinery Mechanics, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Industrial Engineers): Many industrial positions focus more on skills and certifications rather than background checks.
3. **Automotive Service** (e.g., Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics): Technical skills and experience can be highly valued in these roles.
4. **Skilled Trades in HVAC** (e.g., Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers): Similar to construction trades, these areas often prioritize practical skills.
5. **Counselors and Advisors** (e.g., Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors): Some organizations value lived experience, including overcoming personal challenges, as a component of empathetic counseling.

6. **Maintenance and Repair Workers**: Practical skills and reliability can be more important than background in these roles.

Occupations That May Pose Challenges:

1. **Education and Childcare** (e.g., Elementary School Teachers, Kindergarten Teachers, Education Administrators): These roles typically have stringent background check requirements due to the nature of working with minors.
2. **Healthcare Professions** (e.g., Licensed Practical Nurses, Dental Assistants, Pharmacists): Licensure in healthcare often requires background checks, and some offenses may disqualify individuals.
3. **Legal and Financial Roles** (e.g., Lawyers, Accountants and Auditors, Financial Managers): These fields often require licensure and are sensitive to criminal records, especially those involving financial malfeasance or dishonesty.
4. **Public Safety Positions** (e.g., Firefighters, Probation Officers): These roles typically have strict background check requirements due to the nature of the work.
5. **Technology and Management Positions** (e.g., Computer Systems Analysts, Management Analysts): The response in these fields can vary greatly, but some companies may have stricter policies regarding criminal backgrounds.

General Considerations:

- **Individual Employer Policies:** Regardless of the industry, individual employer policies can vary greatly. Some employers may be more open to hiring individuals with criminal records, especially if they are part of second-chance or reentry programs.
- **Nature of the Offense:** The type of offense can significantly impact employability in certain fields. For example, a financial crime might disqualify someone from financial roles but not from construction work.
- **Local Laws and Regulations:** Some jurisdictions have laws ('Ban the Box' initiatives) that limit when an employer can inquire about criminal history, which can impact job opportunities.
- **Certifications and Licenses:** Some professions require certifications or licenses that may be difficult to obtain with a criminal record.

Ex-offenders should research and reach out to specific employers, vocational training programs, or local employment agencies for more precise guidance tailored to their unique circumstances and the nature of their offense. Additionally, legal advice can be

beneficial in understanding how a criminal record may impact employment opportunities in specific fields.