



# OCE BEYOND PRISON LABOR

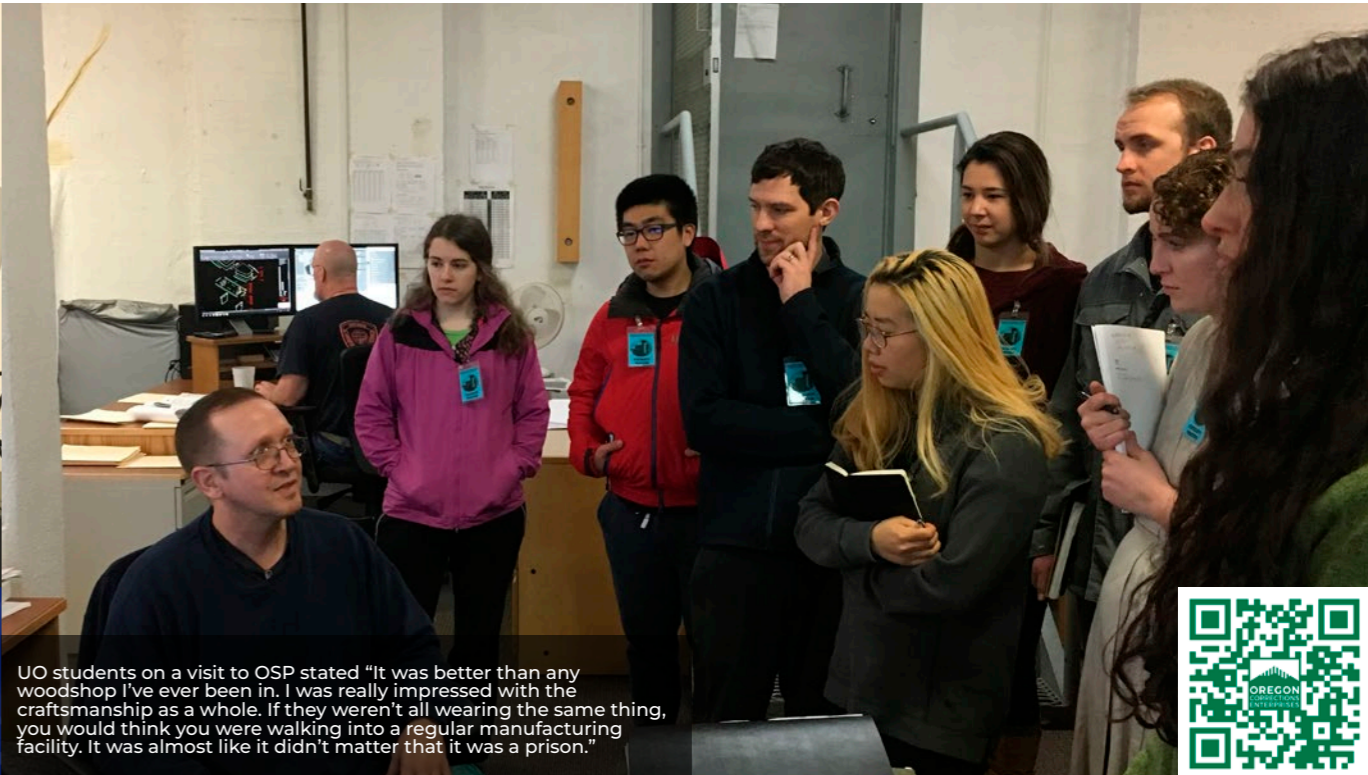


FRONT COVER: AIC Corey Emerson utilizes opportunities within the OCE laundry program to prepare himself for employment after release.



## SOCIAL IMPACT OF UTILIZING PRISON LABOR

**ARE YOU CONSIDERING USING OCE** BUT ARE CONFLICTED? OCE ACKNOWLEDGES THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IS IN NEED OF REFORM. WE BELIEVE IN TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. OCE IS NOT DIRECTLY FUNDED BY TAX PAYER DOLLARS, BUT SOLELY THROUGH THE SALES OF OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR PROGRAMS FOR THE ADULTS IN CUSTODY (AICs). OCE PROGRAMS ARE VOLUNTARY AND ARE THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER IN OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (DOC). WORKING FOR OCE IS NOT COMPELLED LABOR, BUT A PERSONAL CHOICE. BUSINESSES PARTNERING WITH OCE FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES SUPPORT THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.



UO students on a visit to OSP stated "It was better than any woodshop I've ever been in. I was really impressed with the craftsmanship as a whole. If they weren't all wearing the same thing, you would think you were walking into a regular manufacturing facility. It was almost like it didn't matter that it was a prison."



OCE programs offer a wide range of opportunities across many fields, including advanced training in careers like graphic design, computer aided drafting and design, and website remediation for ADA accessibility.

## About OCE

In partnership with Oregon Department of Corrections, our mission is to promote public safety by providing AICs with work and training opportunities in a self sustaining organization. OCE believes strongly that second chances are created and earned through the work that we do.

We recognize a need for growth and an evolution of our programs and mindset. We strive to offer meaningful skills for tomorrow's job market and build a sustainable OCE that will continue to provide critical second chances. We are acknowledging the past, addressing the present, and planning for the future.



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## Assessing the Social Impact of OCE

**Accessibility** – 37% of AICs involved in OCE programs have moderate to high level mental health needs; 19% are moderate to high risk of recidivating.

- OCE programs are at the forefront of reducing recidivism in Oregon according to an Oregon Criminal Justice Commission report published in 2017.
- The re-incarceration recidivism rate in 2022 was 8.6% for AICs with six months of OCE program participation compared to 13.2% for ODOC.

**Diversity** – the demographics of the AICs participating in OCE programs are reflective of the population in the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC).

**Displacement** – OCE seeks collaborative partnerships while taking measures to avoid competing with the private sector.

- OCE seeks partnerships with businesses who are ready to hire AICs upon release.

**Responsible Sourcing** – OCE purchases a wide array of materials, equipment, and services from Oregon private sector vendors whenever possible.

- OCE hired ECONorthwest to evaluate the economic impacts of OCE on the state of Oregon. One of the key take-a-ways was “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 in the competitive scenario.”

A cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Criminal Justice Commission found Oregon taxpayers (and the reduction of

victims) saves \$5.20 for every dollar invested into OCE. (The full reports are on our website under Transparency and Accountability; KPIs.)

**Social Equity** – Fair and equitable access to resources and opportunities.

- OCE programs are voluntary and available in 9 of the 12 institutions across the state.
- 44% of program participants will release in six years.

## Program Impacts

OCE's work and training programs are designed and carefully constructed to directly benefit those who participate. AICs are given opportunities, a place to feel valued, and an environment of humanization and respect conducive to personal growth they can carry with them, creating a pathway for their future.

OCE staff serve as mentors, encouraging and building up the people in our programs. AICs build a sense of pride in themselves, the work they perform, and the contribution they provide to the community. This foundation is a necessary component for many of the AICs in our programs. They are able to immerse themselves in a positive environment where “you can do this” is a recurring phrase. OCE offers the opportunity to choose a new future and receive valuable training opportunities in an environment where what is produced benefits both the community and the individual.



## Is it all about the compensation?

Questions often come to OCE about what AICs are paid for the work they do. OCE programs operate inside the institutions and must comply with state laws and regulations. OCE programs are voluntary.

Compensation for AICs is governed by article 1, section 41, subsection 8, of the Oregon Constitution. Essentially, it says AICs can earn a wage, but the wages they earn can only be used for specific purposes. However, none of the wages earned go directly to the AIC.

In response, DOC developed a nonwage based Performance Recognition and Award System (PRAS) for AICs to earn money. OCE programs pay at least twice the amount of an ODOC job. AICs are able to earn Team Goal Awards, Special Meritorious Awards, and Individual Meritorious Awards. OCE also pays the PRAS awards, removing that expense from tax payers.

## Their Voices Have Impact

In July of 2020, OCE asked for the AICs' perspective on prison labor and OCE programs. Voices from the Inside, an ongoing series of their letters and videos, is a platform for them on these issues. In response to the feedback provided by the AICs, OCE reviewed and implemented a change to our policies to include paid time off (vacation days). OCE continues to review and work through concerns identified by the AICs. This process is ongoing.

Learn about the project and hear from the AICs in our programs, visit Voices from the Inside, under our About Us tab at: <https://oce.oregon.gov>, on our blog page under the category: Voices.



Visit Our  
Voices Page



The men and women in OCE programs say they are thankful for the opportunity, and appreciate the work, environment, pay, and more importantly, the pride and self-esteem they develop.

Many AICs made videos to express their thoughts about working in OCE and keeping the programs going. See the videos at: <https://oce.oregon.gov/content/voices.asp>.