

Issue Brief

OREGON CORRECTIONS ENTERPRISES



Social Impact

Questioning the social impact of utilizing prison labor?

Is supporting OCE socially responsible?

To address these questions one must consider societal concerns surrounding *the criminal justice system* and the *"prison industrial complex."* It is important to note laws and regulations on the prison system differ between states, private prisons (Oregon has none), and federal prisons. The treatment of adults in custody (AICs), pay, and lifestyle can vary greatly.

Assessing the Social Impact of OCE

Accessibility – 32% 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 2021 was 9.9% for AICs with six months of OCE programming compared to 19% 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.

Human Rights – While incarcerated, rights of AICs are protected by the eighth amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The basis of human rights is the recognition of inherent dignity and equal treatment.

- OCE programs offer a humanizing experience in what can feel like an inhumane environment.

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 eight (8) of the 13 institutions across the state.
- 47% of program participants will release in six years.

Program Impacts

When assessing disadvantaged populations, those incarcerated fall on the lowest rungs of society. Social and economic disadvantage can crystalize while incarcerated, sustain over one's life, and transmit over generations.

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. They build a sense of pride in themselves, the work they perform, and the contribution they provide to the community. Businesses partnering with OCE for products support the personal development and growth of incarcerated men and women.

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. Allowing them to recognize that one CAN be successful and that success is more a product of attitude than circumstance.

Is it all about the compensation?

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, the Department of Corrections developed a Performance Recognition and Award System (PRAS) (non-wage based) for the AICs to earn money. OCE programs operate inside the institutions and must comply with state laws and regulations. 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.

| AIC Monthly Awards | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| DOC Jobs | PRAS ONLY | Examples are based on a 20 day work month | |
| Low Skill: | \$12.50 | | |
| High Skill: | \$112.50 | | |
| OCE Jobs | PRAS & TGA | SMA | IMAP |
| Low Skill: | \$62.50-\$125 | \$0-160 | \$0-110 |
| High Skill: | \$102.50-\$205 | \$0-325 | \$0-110 |
| *PIECP: | \$130-\$500 | | |
| *AICs may be eligible to receive PRAS & TGA when not working a full day on a PIECP project. | | | |

In July of 2020, OCE asked for the AIC's perspective on prison labor and OCE programs. Voices from the Inside, a series of letters and videos, is their voice 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. Learn about the project and hear from the AICS in our programs, visit [Voices from the Inside](#), under About Us on our website.

When speaking to the men and women in our programs, they are thankful the opportunity is available. They appreciate the work, environment, pay, and more importantly, the pride and self-esteem they develop as they progress through our programs.

Is OCE Socially responsible?

Social Responsibility is the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior. We acknowledge the criminal justice

system is in need of reform. OCE believes in transparency and accountability. We want you to know how we are engaging the community and the importance of our programs for the AICs.

We offer the most sought after positions in ODOC. Our programs are voluntary. AICs are not forced to work for OCE. They have to apply and interview to better prepare them for skills they will need after release. OCE programs reduce idle time, making the institutions safer.

OCE is not directly funded by tax payer dollars. We are funded solely through the sales of our products and services. Doing business with OCE supports the normalization and humanization of incarcerated men and women in Oregon.



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