

# Issue Brief

## OREGON CORRECTIONS ENTERPRISES



# Contact Centers

## Overview

Established in 1999 through the passage of Ballot Measure 68, Oregon Corrections Enterprises (OCE) is a semi-independent organization, whose administrator reports to the director of the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). OCE plays an important role in carrying out Ballot Measure 17, the constitutional mandate to engage male and female adults in custody (AICs) in meaningful work. ***By statute, OCE is funded solely through the sales of its products and services.***

The mission of OCE, in partnership with DOC, is to promote public safety by providing AICs with meaningful work experience in a self-sustaining organization. OCE plays an important role in implementing DOC's Oregon Accountability Model (OAM). The OAM is a cohesive strategy to reduce recidivism and influence AICs to make effective changes, leading to better outcomes. Through the development of positive work ethics and job skills, OCE assists AICs in their transition to realizing their potential as productive citizens, creating positive outcomes, while contributing to society and their families.

## Returning Jobs to Oregon

OCE actively markets contact center services (at national contact center related trade shows and conferences) to U.S. based private partners may utilize the workforce in foreign countries such as the Philippines and India. OCE does this to bring back revenue and business to the United States. This part of the market share is not typically performed by U.S. private sector companies, but instead by prison industries. Currently, 19 states operate contact centers within detention settings, including the Federal Bureau of Prisons. If OCE passed up opportunities to bring these jobs back to the U.S., other prison-based contact centers would pursue and take advantage of the opportunities. A screening process is in place for potential clients that includes financial viability, displacement, and product/service suitability. Bringing these operations to Oregon results in a positive economic impact by increasing private sector jobs

related to the supervision of these programs. Working in these positions and talking to the general public develops prosocial interactions, helping these individuals on their path to being a prosocial citizens, making better neighbors for all of us.

## Reducing the Cost of Government

By working in partnership with state agencies to reduce their operating costs, OCE operations have contributed significantly towards meeting the voter's constitutional mandate to reduce the cost of government. State agencies advise that, while they do factor a portion the value of the program in terms of dollars, the largest factor is the enhanced customer service they are able to provide to the citizens of Oregon. In addition, during the last fiscal year, AICs in OCE programs worked approximately 2 million hours, providing an important positive impact on reducing prison misconduct and assisting the Department of Corrections to meet AIC work goals.

## Contact Center Security Measures

- All AICs applying to work in OCE contact center programs must first pass an extensive security background check. Applicants are checked for concerns regarding institution security risks, past computer or telephone fraud and identity theft convictions. No AIC with any of the above security concerns will be placed in a contact center work program.
- Workers do not have access to credit cards, social security numbers, financial information or any other critical information.
- Workers do not have telephones. Telephone calls are delivered to the AIC agents through direct dialing.
- All telephone calls are recorded. In addition, staff monitor the telephone agents on a regular basis

for quality assurance and adherence to established policies.

- The contact center computers utilize a safe and secure kiosk mode. Kiosk mode takes the AIC directly into the contact center programs and limits them to only fields within the application. When finished, the agent can only log off the system; there are no other options available. Their machines cannot get past the firewall. For example, through suppression of information, AIC working at the DMV contact centers do not see the customer address, social security number, mother's maiden name, and place of birth. They also have no access to out-of-state driver license records, confidential records of any type, or photographs. Medical information and accident reports are also off limits.
- Workers in the contact centers do not have direct internet access – only direct portals to the partners' program applications.
- OCE staff and/or DOC security staff conduct searches of all AIC telephone agents entering and exiting the contact centers. Nothing is allowed to be removed or taken from the work area.
- Area searches and frequent floor checks are also conducted. The institutions monitor all AIC personal telephone calls and written communication outside of the contact center.



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