



# Transforming Corrections: *Employment and Employability*

**CORCAN**, a key rehabilitation program of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), is mandated to provide employability skills and training to offenders in federal correctional institutions.

Enhancing employment and employability of offenders both inside the institution and in the community is a key theme of CSC's Transformation Agenda. As a result, we are strengthening the way offenders are assessed when they arrive at reception sites and enhancing the way offenders are matched to training and work experiences in institutions.

## Making CHOICES

In the fall of 2009 **CORCAN** introduced **Choices 2009**, which is a pilot project in 11 locations across Canada that assists offenders in identifying vocational training interests and aptitudes, and offers training and work assignments that are better suited to the offender. This ultimately contributes to giving offenders the job skills needed to find work in the current labour market. **Choices 2009** has been implemented in jurisdictions across Canada and the United States. It is provided to all offenders arriving at the pilot sites who are serving four years or less, and who have some language capacity in either French or English.

## Apprenticeship Training

In fiscal 2008-09, **CORCAN** Pacific Region launched a program for offenders to become apprentices in a variety of trades, including cabinet making, culinary arts, heavy duty equipment technician and residential construction framing. Operated in collaboration with the Industrial Training Authority (ITA) of British Columbia (BC), the program has clocked over 60,000 work-based training hours earned by offenders registered as apprentices in institutions. The hours are tracked by the ITA and applied toward a government-recognized credential with a BC or inter-provincial Red Seal trade certificate or ticket.

## A partnership with the Canadian Welding Bureau



In the summer of 2009, five inmates at Dorchester Penitentiary in New Brunswick obtained their Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) tickets through the new program.

The welding shop in Dorchester Penitentiary runs a business which requires serious commitment and cooperation between instructors and inmates in order to succeed. The product line includes foot lockers, stacking chairs, bed rails, and garbage cans. A similar operation also exists at Springhill and Collins Bay institutions.

## Partnering with the Wood Industry to Deliver Industry-Recognized Training

Ten offenders at Stony Mountain Institution graduated from Woodlinks, an industry-recognized training program, with third-party certification. These credentials helped each offender find and keep employment upon release to the community. To access this training, **CORCAN** partnered with the Wood Manufacturing Council of Canada, which manages the Woodlinks program. As part of its National Steering Committee, the Council met with companies across Canada, outlining the benefits of hiring these graduates. In addition, in 2009, four aboriginal offenders at the pathways unit in Stony Mountain also graduated from Woodlinks.

One of the main benefits Woodlinks offers offenders is the credibility of a recognized third-party certification, in a sector looking for workers. Having industry partners who know and support Woodlinks training – and who are also willing to hire successful graduates – motivates offenders to enter and succeed in the program.



## Masonry Training

Thirteen offenders at the Federal Training Centre in Quebec recently completed a 100-hour semi-skilled workers' training course in brickwork-masonry, delivered in co-operation with the Quebec Ministry of Education and la Commission scolaire de la Seigneurie des Mille-Îles. Graduating offenders were the first in North America to receive this certificate. Officials from the Entrepreneurs en Maçonnerie du Québec noted that this type of skills training has been in demand for years. This endorsement from industry underlines the fact that this training course meets the needs and expectations of industry, and offenders will have the chance to obtain quality employment upon release.

## Employment Training That Cooks

A mutually beneficial partnership between Liaison College, **CORCAN** and Frontenac Institution has resulted in a program that provides offenders with employment skills and a diploma from the Liaison College Culinary program. The training follows provincial apprenticeship curriculum standards and is structured in a way that allows students to continue education or employment related to the industry upon release to the community.

## Roughneck Training Lands Offenders Jobs

**CORCAN** Atlantic Region delivered a 20-day course to offenders in Pre-Employment Floorman (Roughneck), offering intensive training in drilling for both land and offshore, hands-on rig training, and industry safety programs. Graduates receive a "Safety Passport", which serves as the industry standard for proof of the safety courses.

Courses include training and certification in occupational health and safety, first aid, hazard communications and materials handling, offshore transportation, fire safety, and emergency response -- all skills sought after by employers in a variety of industries, and transferable outside the petroleum business.

One graduate of the roughneck program was released to a halfway house in Halifax, and the next day found a job with a company that services heating and ventilation systems on drilling rigs. Other graduates of the program have gone on to work in Alberta's oil sands projects, on offshore rigs, and in urban communities with well-drilling businesses.

## Community Employment Centres

Of the close to 9,000 offenders who found work through **CORCAN** Community Employment Centres between 2001 and 2009, 85 per cent did not return to federal institutions.

The top jobs for male offenders were in construction and related fields, such as general installers, general labour and repair, which accounted for 35 per cent of all job placements.

For women offenders, food and beverage service accounted for 17 per cent of placements, followed by retail and sales (13 per cent), cleaners and janitors (12 per cent).



For more information on CSC's Transformation Agenda and **CORCAN**, please visit [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)

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