

Hiring Workers from Georgia's Transitional Centers

The GUCA has partnered with the Department of Corrections Transitional Centers for addressing the immediate placement of their residents with employers to address workforce needs. One function of Transitional Centers is to provide "work release," allowing the offender to obtain and maintain a paying job in the community while requiring him or her to conform to the structure of the program. The offender lives in the center, participates in a number of programs, and completes assignments to contribute to the upkeep of the center. The wages earned by work release offenders are sent directly to the center.

After serving time within the state's prisons, selected offenders are slowly reintegrated back into society with a job and enhanced prospects for stability through placement within one of the state's Transitional Centers. Research has shown that offenders who have the opportunity to reenter the community after a stay in a Transitional Center are up to 1/3 more likely to succeed in maintaining a crime-free life.

There are 13 Transitional Centers in operation statewide, two of which are designated to house female offenders. A total of 2,674 transitional beds are available, of which 346 are designated for female offenders. To have the opportunity to transfer to a Transitional Center, an offender must receive a referral from either the Board of Pardons or Paroles or the Classification Committee within a state prison. The decision about which offenders are selected is based on criminal history, behavior while incarcerated, release date, and a number of other factors.

Employers are required to deduct taxes as appropriate. A portion of the wages is applied to room and board and another portion to any outstanding fines or fees. If the offender has minor children, he or she is required to provide family support for them. The offender may have a small allowance for transportation and incidentals, but all other funds are placed in an account until he or she is released from the center. Most offenders stay in a work release program for approximately six months and are then released on parole. Those who are not eligible for parole will be released when the entirety of their sentence has been fulfilled.

The daily cost to house an offender in a Transitional Center is off-set by the offender's contribution to their room and board provided by the state. In addition, offenders on work release contribute to the local tax base and to their families' support.

WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

1. Payroll checks will be mailed to the facility or picked up by facility staff. Residents are not allowed to get their paychecks, borrow money or ask for a loan until payday.
2. All payroll deductions apply which includes SUTA, FUTA, Social Security etc.
3. Residents, if laid off, fired or otherwise no longer employed will not receive the State Separation Notice and they are NOT allowed to draw unemployment.
4. Per the policy of the Georgia Department of Corrections ALL residents must be covered under the employer's worker's comp policy.
5. Residents are allowed and encouraged to participate in health benefit programs.
6. Each Transitional Facility has different rules for placing their Residents. Please check with the Resource Office at the facility of which you want to utilize for their Resident Rules prior to hiring.

Check out the Department of Corrections Fact Sheet on Transitional Centers at http://www.gdc.ga.gov/sites/default/files/Info_Sheets_Probation_Transitional_Centers.pdf

For profiles of the inmates within the Transitional Centers, which include statistics on demographic, correctional, educational, psychological, physical, criminal history, and medical information, please visit http://www.gdc.ga.gov/Research/Monthly_Profile_transitional_center_inmates

Contract GUCA Workforce Development Director Vicki Temple for further information on how you can be a part of this program.