

New Jersey Department of Corrections

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New Jersey Department of Corrections Launches First-of-its-Kind Job Training Program with Starbucks

Program offers practical skills to individuals preparing to return to the community

TRENTON, N.J. – The New Jersey Department of Corrections held the inaugural graduation ceremony for five incarcerated persons in recognition of their completion of a first-of-its-kind employment readiness program for barista training through a partnership with Starbucks. Five incarcerated men from Garden State Youth Correctional Facility approaching release have completed the nine-week training program.

"The New Jersey Department of Corrections is at the forefront of providing reintegration services to individuals both during and following incarceration to help them succeed in the community," said Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn. "We are committed to providing incarcerated persons with real-world job skills and training to help them become productive and fulfilled members of the community."

The NJ Providing Access to Community Employment (NJPACE) program within the Office of Community Engagement Initiatives (CERI) established the Barista Training Program. The program aims to provide meaningful reentry and reintegration opportunities relevant to in-demand jobs offering livable wages in partnership with community providers. The first graduating class consisted of five incarcerated individuals who participated in a nine-week training program to learn the basics of being a barista under the instruction of the manager of a local community Starbucks.

"The barista training program is an excellent opportunity for each participant to learn a new marketable skill in the coffee house industry," said Dr. Darcella Sessomes, Chief of the Division of Programs & Reintegration Services. "Participants not only learn how to make signature coffees, teas, and cold brews, but most important, they learn customer services, teamwork, and transferable skills such as resume writing and practice mock job interviews. These skills are critical to opening up doors for future employment as they return to the community."

Incarcerated persons 36 months from release are eligible to participate in the barista program. Plans are underway to expand the barista training program to other NJDOC facilities to accommodate 30-40 additional incarcerated persons each year.

"We believe that reentry programs are something that's really important in ensuring individuals are provided the necessary tools and skills prior to their reintegration back to society," said Cher McCall, Program Coordinator. "The barista training program provides real work experience in addition to existing programs that offer job readiness coaching, classroom instruction, and occupation-specific training."

The New Jersey Department of Corrections supports the efforts of incarcerated persons approaching release to pursue activities and programs that will enhance the experience of reentry into the

community. Vocational and job training programs include carpentry, welding, culinary arts, cosmetology, and other skills.

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About New Jersey Department of Corrections:

The mission of the New Jersey Department of Corrections is advancing public safety and promoting successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement.