

<b>FROM</b>	NAME & TITLE	Karen L. Sitnick, Director <i>KS</i>
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Mayor's Office of Employment Development 417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 468
	SUBJECT	<b>City Council Bill 08-0033R – Investigative Hearing – Hospitality Industry - Employment of the Homeless and Ex-Offenders</b>

CITY of  
BALTIMORE  
**MEMO**



DATE: May 6, 2008

**TO**

The Honorable President and Members of the City Council  
Room 400, City Hall

Bill No. 08-0033R requests that identified City government agencies explore the opportunity for employment of the homeless and ex-offenders in the City's growing hospitality industry. Specifically, agencies are requested to provide a list of employment and training services their offices provide and/or are associated with, calculate the size of the target population comprising a potential employment pool of unskilled labor and determine the respective roles of private industry and government in placing workers and providing support services to ensure their successful re-entry into the workforce and the community.

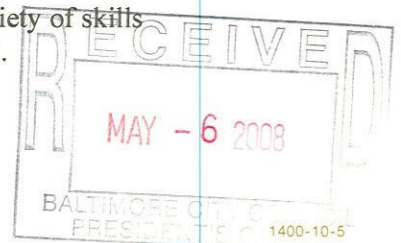
The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED), Baltimore City's workforce investment agency and one-stop career center operator, is committed to providing resources and support to promote the transition of the homeless and ex-offenders into the City's workforce. We recognize there are many challenges that both populations face in their efforts to secure employment and we are working diligently to help these individuals address these issues.

Over 9,000 men and women exit Maryland's prisons each year and return to Baltimore, where another 20,000 residents are already under state supervision. Too few of these returning ex-offenders have the necessary tools to successfully navigate the re-entry experience. Statistics also show that approximately 57 percent of probationers and 40 percent of parolees and mandatory releases are unemployed.

We know that early employment is fundamental to successfully reintegrating ex-offenders into society. Ex-offenders who are assisted in securing gainful employment lower their financial obligations and are more likely to establish stable work and family situations. Additionally, employment diminishes the likelihood of an ex-offender being re-arrested, reconvicted, and reincarcerated.

In July 2005, MOED opened the Re-entry Center ( ReC) within its Northwest One-Stop Career Center. The ReC, created specifically to facilitate the re-integration of returning ex-offenders into the workforce, was designed by MOED in concert with a city-wide task force to respond to the many and varied needs of the large number of ex-offenders who are released from prison each year and return to the City of Baltimore. Currently, more than a dozen on-site partners offer a wide range of services including: acquisition of state identification documents, literacy classes, GED; vocational rehabilitation; legal services; expungement; referrals to housing, substance abuse recovery and other health programs; motivational support; mentoring; a variety of skills training programs and assistance in finding and keeping a job. *(see attached flyer).*

*Comments*



In the two and a half years since its inception, over 9,000 ex-offenders have used the services at the ReC. More than 1,300 offenders have been placed in jobs with 85 percent of these jobs offering benefits. More than half of those placed into jobs continued to be employed six months later. Of the total number of job placements referenced above, 17 % (224) have been in the Accommodation and Food Service industry with an average wage of \$7.90 per hour.

Overall, MOED's One Stop Career Center Network, which consists of three one stop career centers (including the Northwest Career Center) and two community ports serves over 18,000 jobseekers each year. Customers access a variety of soft skills training, occupational skills training, literacy classes, basic computer skills, and job preparation. Some visitors simply come to set up an email account and to use the computer labs that are open to the public. Last fiscal year, we placed over 4,000 city residents into employment at an average hourly wage of \$10.44 with 88% of these jobs offering benefits. Additionally, through a formal partnership with the Baltimore City Department of Social Services ( DSS ), MOED provided job readiness skills to over 1,800 people applying for Temporary Cash Assistance at the local DSS offices. Jobseekers successfully completing this program were then transferred to DSS vendors for further employment and training support. As one of the DSS vendors, MOED's Workforce Reception Center served almost 4,500 jobseekers and placed placing over 2,200 into unsubsidized employment.

With regard to the homeless, MOED recently conducted a short-term effort to help these individuals find jobs. An employment kiosk was made available in one of the City's shelters, so as to assist the homeless in accessing labor market information and securing employment referrals. During the winter months of February and March, 2008, fifty-seven individuals were assessed and referred to one stop services; forty-seven individuals were assessed as job ready and were referred to employment opportunities.

As part of its charge to coordinate workforce development services for all city residents, MOED works closely with a network of partners including many community based organizations that offer valuable support to job seekers and low wage workers. These groups include Catholic Charities, Civic Works, the Living Classrooms Foundation, Goodwill Industries, St. Ambrose, and the East Baltimore Development Corp.

In looking at the hospitality and tourism industry, a primary area of focus for MOED is the current partnership it has with the Hilton Baltimore Convention Center Hotel . MOED is committed to ensure that the hotel will be staffed and ready to serve the public in time for its August 2008 opening. MOED's Business Services team, One-Stop Career Center staff, along with our many workforce partners, will help connect qualified city residents to the more than 500 employment opportunities associated with this new hospitality and tourism venue.

In order to help prepare interested Baltimore city residents for these valuable employment opportunities, MOED will be conducting a series of *Hilton Pre-Employment Workshops*. Job seekers will learn to effectively communicate, provide superior customer service, and utilize job retention skills to succeed in the workplace. Since the application process for the Hilton Baltimore will be conducted via the Internet, one workshop – *21<sup>st</sup> Century Job Search* – will teach basic computer skills, such as creating an email address, completing applications online, and uploading resumes. This type of partnership is just one example of how MOED helps Baltimore City's business community meet its employment needs, while also assisting City residents in finding attractive, sustainable job opportunities.

# the Rec

Baltimore City's one-stop career center assisting the returning ex-offender population

The Re-entry Center @  
Northwest One-Stop Career Center  
2401 Liberty Heights Avenue  
Mondawmin Mall – Suite 302  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
Phone: 410-523-1060  
[www.oedworks.com/exoffender.htm](http://www.oedworks.com/exoffender.htm)



## on-site services

employment and training opportunities, career exploration workshops, information on local employers and labor market trends, literacy workshops, referrals to partner services, and on-line computer access

- ❖ **Job Preparation Resources**  
access to voice mailboxes, self-service use of fax machines, telephones, copiers and printers, resource libraries containing job search and training information
- ❖ **State of the Art Technology**  
computerized job bank, Internet access, Digital Learning Lab, and high tech computer labs
- ❖ **Training Opportunities**  
occupational and basic computer skills training
- ❖ **Child Support**  
child support modification assistance, 48-hour driver's license reactivation, access to paternity testing
- ❖ **Legal Services**  
expungement workshops and civil and common law referrals
- ❖ **Identification**  
assistance in obtaining identification documents, including social security card, birth certificate, and Maryland photo ID
- ❖ **Housing**  
referrals to shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing
- ❖ **Other Services**  
free income tax preparation, bus passes for qualified participants, and many more

## business incentives

### Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Provides federal income tax credit for employers that hire low-income former offenders. This credit can reduce an employer's federal income tax liability by as much as \$2,400 per qualified worker.

### Federal Fidelity Bonding Program

Provides individual fidelity bonds of \$5,000 to employers at no cost for six months to protect against employee dishonesty or theft for job applicants with a criminal record.

### Customized Business Services

Assists businesses with training and hiring new workers by providing matching funds for specialized skills training, outreach and recruitment, and applicant screening.

For all of its workforce development initiatives, MOED works collaboratively with the business community. In particular, the private sector plays a vital role in identifying employment sectors that are either experiencing worker shortages or are projected to experience employment growth. The public and private sectors truly work together in preparing individuals for careers as well as placing them into attractive job opportunities.

One specific strategy, *Customized Training*, assists businesses in preparing and hiring new workers by providing matching funds for specialized skills training. MOED works with businesses to recruit and pre-screen city job seekers for these opportunities. The available positions must be full-time, permanent, offer health benefits and meet minimum salary requirements. Companies accepting *Customized Training* grants must agree to hire successful participants. The training can be employer-based, on-the-job, or offered by qualified vendors.

MOED also engages the corporate community through its partnership with the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board (BWIB). The members of this board, serve as the “voice of business” and provide guidance and direction to MOED and other workforce organizations. The primary roles of the BWIB are to identify career pipelines within the city’s growth industries, promote the use of the public workforce system and help prepare Baltimore’s youth for college and career exploration. Some of the Baltimore businesses represented on the BWIB include: the University of Maryland Medical System, Constellation Energy, the Whiting-Turner Construction Co., Verizon, Sinai Hospital, and the Hyatt Hotel.

In summary, MOED is committed to utilizing its existing range of workforce development programs, such as its One-Stop Career center network, and its Re-entry Center for ex-offenders, to assist all city residents, including the homeless and previously incarcerated individuals, in finding employment opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important public policy issue.

cc: Jeffrey W. Smith, Executive Liaison for Public Policy, MOED

**MAYOR'S  
OFFICE OF  
EMPLOYMENT  
DEVELOPMENT**

With the tools they'll need to succeed in careers in high-growth demand industries.

Youth Opportunity Centers provide a range of academic, career support services. The YO! classes, job preparation, computer classes, health services

and more. Youth Opportunity Centers are open to all youth, including those who are residents of Baltimore City.

Center  
Center  
ity

Career Exploration is a public high school program for students with academic preparation. Developed by the Center of The Johns Hopkins University and other partners, it provides an extensive menu of career services which enhance students' skills. The program was launched in fall 2004 and will continue to serve students in 2007.

Center for Career Education/ACCE Complex  
1000 N. E. Street, MD 21211

Baltimore teens can learn how to get and keep a job, explore growing occupations and tap into skills training at:

Baltimore City Career Academy  
101 W. 24<sup>th</sup> Street  
410-396-7454

Healthcare Careers Alliance  
Malcolm X Center  
2810 Shirley Avenue  
410-542-4050

Maryland Center for Arts and Technology  
2901 Druid Park Drive  
410-728-0679

Washington Village Pigtown Neighborhood Planning Council  
904 Washington Blvd.  
410-385-8494

**Dropout prevention program**

FUTURES is a year-round, multi-year program operated in partnership with the Baltimore City Public School System. FUTURES uses personal coaching and other youth development support services to assist students in reducing social problems and improving attendance and academic success. FUTURES students consistently achieve a dropout rate about half that of other students at their schools. More than 75% of FUTURES students become employed or go to college right after graduation.  
410-396-6155

**Summer jobs program**

YouthWorks is Baltimore City's summer jobs program for area teens. Each year, YouthWorks connects thousands of youth, ages 14 to 21, to "learn and earn" experiences.  
410-396-6722

**Connections enhance MOED's effectiveness**

MOED succeeds, in part, because of its strong ties to many workforce partners, with whom it coordinates and develops services and shares best practices and other resources. These partners include:

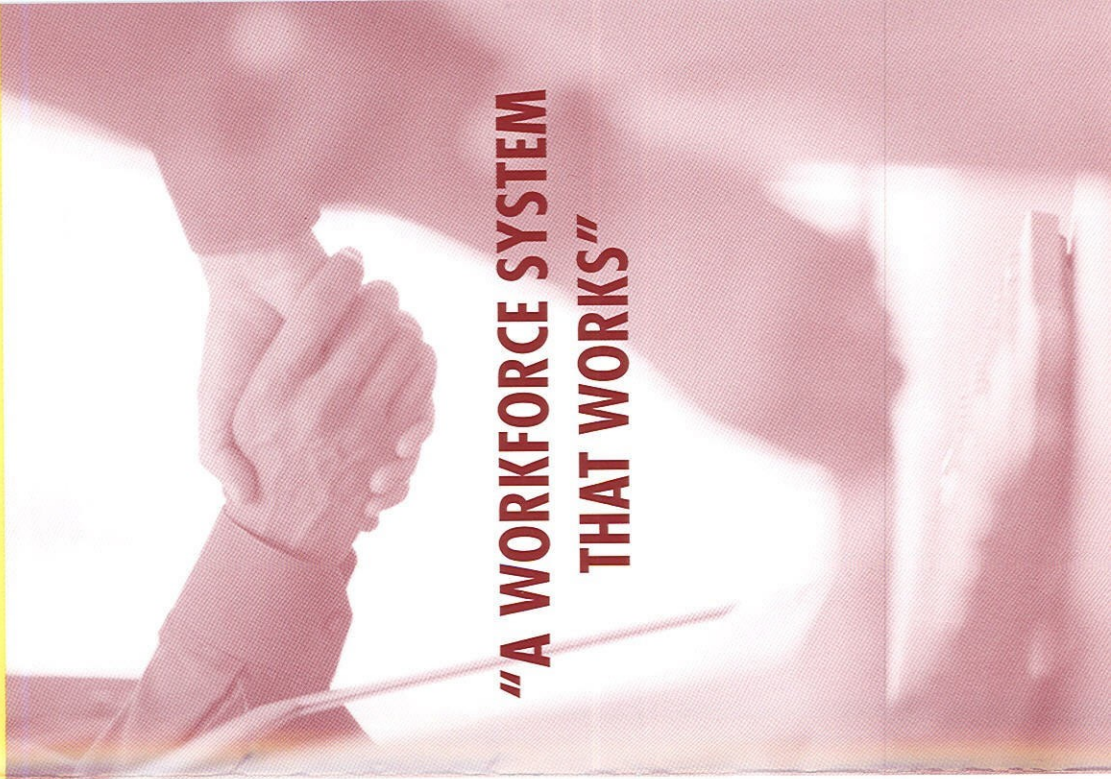


**Baltimore Workforce Investment Board**, a Mayor-appointed, business-led body that oversees workforce development.

**Baltimore Development Corporation**, the city's economic development agency.

**Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation**, the state agency providing businesses and workers with regulatory and employment and training services.

Mayor's Office of Employment Development  
417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 468  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-396-3009  
[www.oedworks.com](http://www.oedworks.com)



**"A WORKFORCE SYSTEM THAT WORKS"**

It's a simple equation . . .

For businesses

For job seekers and employed persons



**People need jobs** with benefits and opportunities for advancement, and **businesses need workers** who are educated, skilled and ready to contribute to company success. The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) works on both sides of this equation, assisting Baltimore's citizens in building fulfilling careers and helping area businesses find the qualified workers they need to gain a competitive edge.

### Mission

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) coordinates and directs workforce development initiatives responsive to the needs of Baltimore City employers and job seekers in order to enhance and promote the local economy.

A workforce system that works!

For more information about MOED or any of its programs or services, please visit [www.oedworks.com](http://www.oedworks.com) or call 410-396-3009.

For businesses

*MOED's Employ Baltimore strategy provides businesses with a pipeline to qualified, skilled job candidates and supports businesses in retaining and developing their employees. A cadre of Employ Baltimore business services representatives offer area businesses customized workforce solutions including outreach and recruitment, applicant prescreening, assessment and testing services, tax credit information, training funds for new or existing employees, and human resources support. Training funds are available through several programs:*



**Customized Training** is an employer-driven program that helps businesses train and hire people to fit their job-specific needs.

**Maryland Business Works** enables small businesses and/or businesses in growth industries to upgrade the skills of their existing workers.

**EmployerToolkit.com** – Through this website, employers can navigate more than 500 services designed to help companies build and retain their workforce. These low or no cost human resource services – from tax credits to customized training – are made available by over 200 public and non-profit organizations.

**Rapid Response** – A coordinated, comprehensive approach to help businesses support employees affected by mass layoffs and promote their quick re-entry to the workforce. Rapid Response provides access to job placement, skills training/retraining, unemployment insurance and many other services.

For job seekers and employed persons

*MOED provides citizens easy access to resources that can connect them to jobs build careers.*

**The Career Center Network** – Three community-anchored One-Stop Career Centers offer employment and placement assistance, skills training opportunities, educational support and access to computer – along with special support for veterans, disabled persons, senior citizens, youth and those who. Every year more than 18,000 Baltimore City residents use the services of the One-Stops.

### Career Center Locations:

Northwest One-Stop Career Center (The Re-entry Center) 2401 Liberty Heights Avenue Mondawmin Mall, Suite 302 410-523-1060	Eastside One-Stop Career Center 3001 East Madison Street 410-396-9030	Baltimore Works One-Stop Career Center 1100 North Eutaw Street 410-767-2148
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**Workforce Reception Center (WRC)** – A full-service career center specifically for Baltimore residents

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. The WRC from welfare to work by offering job search and placement assistance participants in its supported work experience programs (community service employment) and other training and support service programs including seminars and "dress for success" workshops. (Services are offered on Baltimore City Department of Social Services.)

**Digital Learning Labs** – Self-paced computer training labs located w Career Centers and the Workforce Reception Center offer a full menu novices and more experienced technology users.

**Ex-offender Employment Initiative** – In addition to providing job placement and support services to ex-offenders at the Northwest Re-entry Center, two One-Stop Career Centers, MOED plays a significant role in facilitating Baltimore Citywide Re-Entry and Re-Integration Steering Committee in challenges ex-offenders face linking to jobs after their release.



The Mayor's Office of Employment Development gratefully acknowledges the contributions to its work from the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board (BWMIB). By providing policy development and serving as the voice of business, the BWMIB strengthens the effective