

NEWS



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Montco Seeking Grant to Fund Inmate Re-entry Program

Norristown, PA (February 7, 2013) – The number of former inmates returning to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility is below the national average. Nevertheless, 62 percent of the inmates in Montgomery County return.

“The recidivism rate, while better than the national average is too high,” said Josh Shapiro, chairman of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, “and we want to do something about it.”

That something is a 12-month pilot program at the prison that would facilitate long-term gainful employment of inmates by enabling them to obtain resources, skills and tools necessary to get a job. The commissioners this week approved the application for a \$199,000 federal grant that would supplement \$215,250 in state workforce development funds.

The project is being undertaken by the Montgomery County Economic and Workforce Development office, the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Advisory Board, the county Adult Probation office and the prison.

“The more we can do to help people be successful when they leave prison, to be able to reacclimatize to life, to get a job, to be able to care for their families and to avoid having to go back to prison, that’s the goal of this initiative,” said Shapiro.

“If you do not give these individuals the tools to succeed, you are just setting them up to fail, and that is not good for the former inmate, our communities, or our taxpayers,” said Commissioner Leslie Richards.

The program will include job readiness, classroom instruction, individual career counseling, assessment and training, job placement, and employment-retention support, according to Warden Julio Algarin. The program will start with 15 prescreened participants, with additional participants added every quarter.