



**STATE OF INDIANA  
Department of Correction**

Indiana Government Center—South

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Virtual Job Fair Co-Hosted by Indiana Department of Correction Wins National Award**



*Pictured: Offenders participating in the virtual job fair conducted by DWD and IDOC*

INDIANAPOLIS, IN—The Hoosier Initiative for Re-Entry (HIRE), Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) and the Indiana Department of Workforce and Development (DWD) have been nationally recognized for a virtual job fair for incarcerated individuals.

On March 6, 2019 DWD accepted the prestigious William J. Harris Equal Opportunity Award at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA) 2019 Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C. This award is bestowed upon a state demonstrating excellence and innovation in the area of equal opportunity.

NASWA honored DWD, HIRE and IDOC as the hosts to the online virtual job fair in the fall of 2018 for 132 offenders at five correctional facilities across the state. Plainfield, Rockville, Wabash and Westville Correctional Facilities and the Correctional Industrial Facility participated in the event, believed to be the first of its kind in the nation. Six employers from throughout the state took part, including representatives from another state agency, the Indiana Department of Transportation.

“IDOC and DWD took a strategy that would normally be difficult (an in-facility job fair) and used technology and relationships with Indiana businesses to market an underserved population. IDOC’s pipeline of strong and skilled workers *will* fill in the gaps Indiana employers have in their workforce. Our in-facility clients are walking out with viable certifications that employers are seeking. I’m excited to see what’s next!” stated Hoosier Initiative for Re-Entry (HIRE) Director Carrie Heck.



*DWD's Chief Workforce Officer Mike Barnes accepts the Equal Opportunity award and poses for a photo with Jon Pierpont, NASWA Board President and Executive Director of the Utah Department of Workforce Services, at the NASWA awards banquet.*

## **Background**

Currently Indiana’s correctional facilities house about 27,000 offenders in 21 state prisons—and more than 90 percent of them will eventually be released back into Hoosier communities. Among formerly incarcerated adults in Indiana facilities, there is a 33.87% percent recidivism rate in the first three years after being released. Recidivism numbers decrease dramatically for those who are able to secure employment and stay on the job.

The Hoosier Initiative for Re-Entry (HIRE) program was created in 2012 as a collaborative initiative between IDOC and DWD to help people with past involvement with the legal system reintegrate into

society and to create career paths to give them the opportunities to improve their lives in a sustainable way through work.

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