

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 7, 2010

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Federal Grant to Aid Kansas' Offender Reentry Efforts

Kansas Secretary of Corrections Roger Werholtz announced today that the Department of Corrections will receive \$289,768 under the federal Second Chance Act Prisoner Reentry Initiative to further advance the Kansas Offender Risk Reduction and Reentry Plan.

"This grant will provide funding to create the Wyandotte Offender Reentry Treatment & Housing Initiative (WORTH), a housing reentry program for special-needs offenders in Wyandotte County," Secretary Werholtz said. "The grant also will aid in strengthening job and training development throughout the state through the Offender Workforce Development (OWD) Initiative."

The federal funds were awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs to provide services and programs to promote offenders' successful reintegration into society.

Among those who will be served by WORTH are offenders diagnosed with mental illness, anti-social personality patterns or developmental disabilities and who also have a history of substance abuse, homelessness, hospitalizations and confinement in jail and prison. WORTH will augment the work already begun by an existing program in Wyandotte County that is establishing a system of housing and supports for this special-needs population in order to increase their likelihood of success.

Through the OWD Initiative, the grant will fund the creation of a staff position which will be housed at the Kansas Department of Commerce to increase offender support in local workforce development centers. The position will develop and oversee vocational training programs to aid offenders in achieving employment. The newly created position will work closely with state and regional workforce development boards, vocational training providers, chambers of commerce and employers.

In addition, the grant will make matching funds available to use in partnering with local workforce development centers, corrections agencies and their partners to establish offender liaison positions in regional workforce development centers.