



For Immediate Release

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Arizona Second Chance Inmate Reentry Program Given National Recognition

WASHINGTON – Yesterday at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies’ (NASWA) 2019 Winter Policy Forum in Washington, D.C., Arizona’s Department of Economic Security received the prestigious Pinnacle for Workforce Development Award presented by NASWA’s Employment and Training Committee. This award is bestowed upon a state demonstrating excellence and innovation in the area workforce development.

Led by Arizona Governor Doug Ducey’s initiative to reduce recidivism and provide formerly incarcerated individuals a real second chance, the Arizona Department of Economic Security began a partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections in 2017 to connect individuals with criminal backgrounds to employment. This partnership, at the State's Second Chance Centers (SCC), helps inmates who are within 60 days of release prepare to re-enter the workforce through an intensive eight-week training and education program led by employment counselors. To date, approximately 2,000 participants have graduated from the program, and many have successfully obtained gainful employment. SCC also assists ex-offenders with job retention.

“Arizona’s program effectively connects soon-to-be released offenders and ex-offenders with resources, helping them live successful, crime-free lives,” said Scott B. Sanders, Executive Director of NASWA. “Giving ex-offenders the opportunity to become gainfully employed and providing them with the tools they need to maintain and advance in their employment enables them to sustain themselves and their families and become life-long positive contributors to society.”

“At DES, we are honored to support Governor Ducey’s Real Second Chance Initiative to reduce recidivism by providing returning citizens with pre and post-release employment services so they can be successful in Arizona’s workforce,” said Arizona DES Director Michael Traylor. “Our reentry staff not only provides inmates with holistic solutions to remove barriers that may impede successful reentry, but also gives them confidence and support. I am very proud to see our team recognized for outstanding work that is truly changing the lives of these individuals.”

For more information about NASWA’s Winter Policy Forum, visit <https://www.naswa.org/conferences/winter-policy-forum-2019> and for more information about NASWA’s Employment and Training Committee, visit www.naswa.org.