

Contracting and Labor Practices in Washington State's Correctional Industries

The Department of Corrections (DOC) has voluntary work programs for incarcerated people. The most comprehensive and diverse set of work opportunities is operated by Correctional Industries (CI), which offers a variety of services such as institutional food service, furniture manufacturing, and production of textile goods.

Background

Under RCW 72.09.100, the legislature has vested DOC with the authority to establish voluntary work programs. The legislation defines five types of work programs, including CI (Class II), institutional support (Class III), and community work (Class IV). WSIPP was directed to describe the costs of contracts, labor and staffing, skills, and post-incarceration employment for people who participated in CI work assignments.

CI Invoiced Revenue by Division

Purchaser	Revenue
Food Service	\$41,172,286
Food Manufacturing	\$9,688,363
Furniture Division	\$22,898,740
Laundry	\$3,732,975
License Plates and Tabs	\$4,815,571
Optical	\$8,647,101
Textiles	\$30,298,225

Findings

- In FY 2023, CI offered nearly 80 work assignments. Nearly 3 million labor hours of incarcerated people generated over \$100 million in revenue. Across all DOC assignments, incarcerated people contributed over 9 million labor hours to producing goods and services, maintaining DOC facilities, supporting community projects, and performing forestry fire service.
- The largest purchaser of goods and services from CI was DOC, predominantly for food and clothing worn by people experiencing incarceration.
- Items manufactured by CI were generally priced comparably to items available through other traditional channels, except for prescription eyewear, which was almost always cheaper.
- People who had participated in CI were more likely to find employment after release, find employment sooner, work more hours, and earn more per hour.

Limitations

Cost comparisons can be difficult to construct, and pricing can vary based on timing and prioritized features. We attempted to identify comparable items, but results could vary if other selections were made. Differences in post-incarceration employment should not be interpreted as causal.

Assignment Details

Assigned in the 2023 Legislative Session
[ESSB 5187](#), Operating Budget

[Full report available on WSIPP's website](#)

Project lead: Travis A. Taniguchi, PhD
travis.taniguchi@wsipp.wa.gov
360.664.9805