

Overview and Update FreshStart Employment Program

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Values of Service: Empathy | Ethics | Excellence | Equity



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FreshStart History and Overview



- Established in 2018 to support hard-to-employ individuals achieve full-time employment opportunities within the City of Dallas
- Program incorporates wrap around services, including case management, job readiness, skills training, job placement, and self-sufficiency resources
- Eligibility criteria guides the participants through each phase of the program to become “work ready” and stably employed
- Partnerships include non-profits, faith-based organizations, education and workforce agencies
- Program is currently housed under the new Small Business Center, Workforce Development division.



Why the FreshStart Program?



- Interrupt the reoccurrence of recidivism
- Advocate and champion for individuals returning to their communities from incarceration, and others that are underrepresented and/or economically challenged
- Support program participants with coordinated programs that provide training and other comprehensive wraparound services such as (case management, budgeting skills, job skills training and soft skills, etc.)



Recidivism Data



Demographics	Nationally	Statewide (TDCJ)	Dallas County
Incarcerated Population	332,915,073	250,000 163,000 (State) 55,000 (Local) 27,000 (Federal)	5,669 (MTD)
Released back to community	650,000	5,729	145 (MTD)
Recidivism Rate	45%	20.3-44.3%	42.32 (MTD)

- https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_reentry.html#:~:text=Over%2010%2C000%20exprisoners%20are%20released%20from%20America%E2%80%99s%20state,rearrested%20%20%20within%20three%20years%20of%20release.
- <https://www.dallascounty.org/departments/criminal-justice/jail-population.php>



Best Practices Re-entry Programs vs Employment



TEXAS CITIES

Components	City of Dallas	City of Desoto	City of Houston	City of Austin	City of San Antonio	City of Lubbock
Re-entry Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Re-entry Employment Program (Hires program participants)	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

OTHER CITIES

Components	City of Dallas	City of New Orleans	City of Philadelphia	City of Baltimore	City of Los Angeles	City of San Chicago
Re-entry Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Re-entry Employment Program (Hires program participants)	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓



Program Partners



Current Participating City Departments



Dallas Water
Utilities

Parks &
Recreation

Sanitation
Services

311

Public
Works

Code
Compliance



Target City position classifications



- Laborer B
- Laborer IIC
- Truck Driver II
- Seasonal Maintenance Worker
- Customer Service Agent



Employment Process



- City Departments work with Human Resources to create inventory of positions available for program clients
- FreshStart case management team provides job readiness/training sessions and pre-employment services
- Participants receive support throughout the application and interview process
- Case managers provide ongoing follow-up, monitoring, and other referral services during first year of employment
- Background check process timeframe shorten

EMPLOYMENT



Employment Process - Eligibility Criteria



- FreshStart clients are considered eligible, by meeting all criteria below:
 - Must be at least 18 years of age
 - Considered by pre-assessment and referral
 - Released from incarceration a minimum of one (1) year ago (if applicable)
 - Have other arrests on criminal background report (without incarceration)
 - A minimum of 6 months stable housing
 - Have attended training or job readiness workshop, or agrees to attend required training
 - Apply via the City of Dallas Employment site for “FreshStart” tagged positions
 - Have sufficient relevant work experience
 - Have entry-level relative work experience/or no work experience
 - Must be coachable and/or willing to learn



Employment Process – Background Checks



- The COD modified its employment eligibility criteria to accommodate FreshStart participants with infractions by:
 - Reducing wait time from release to employment eligibility
 - Allowing deferred adjudication to be considered
 - Allowing all misdemeanors
 - Allowing certain felony offenses to be considered on a case-by-case basis
 - Reducing education requirement from HS Diploma to a minimum of 8th-grade education
 - Removing related work experience requirement to no work experience required



Employment Process - Criminal Background Checks



CURRENT

- All misdemeanors are welcomed
- Non-violent felonies will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- All aggravated cases of any type and other violent felonies **will not be considered**
- Pending cases will not be considered until the case is dissolved

PROPOSED

- Misdemeanors and Non-aggravated Misdemeanor crimes **(Change from 1 Year to NO Waiting Period)**
- Felony Charges – Non-Aggravated – **(Change from 1 Year Waiting Period to 6 month Waiting Period)**
- Felony Charges - Aggravated **(Change from 3 year Waiting Period to Require a 1-year minimum Waiting Period with Re-entry)**
- Other Felony Charges – **(Change from NOT Eligible to Require a 3-year minimum Waiting Period with Re-entry)**



Case Management Services



Services Provided	City of Dallas	Texas Workforce Solutions
Job Readiness and training		✓
Provide regular check-ins with employees for the first year of employment	✓	
Provide emotional support, practical advice and help solve any issues that may arise	✓	
Provide emotional support, practical advice and help solve any issues that may arise	✓	
Advice on dealing with potential personality disputes, handling supervisor feedback and criticism and otherwise navigating the social environment of their new professional life.	✓	

Performance Metrics

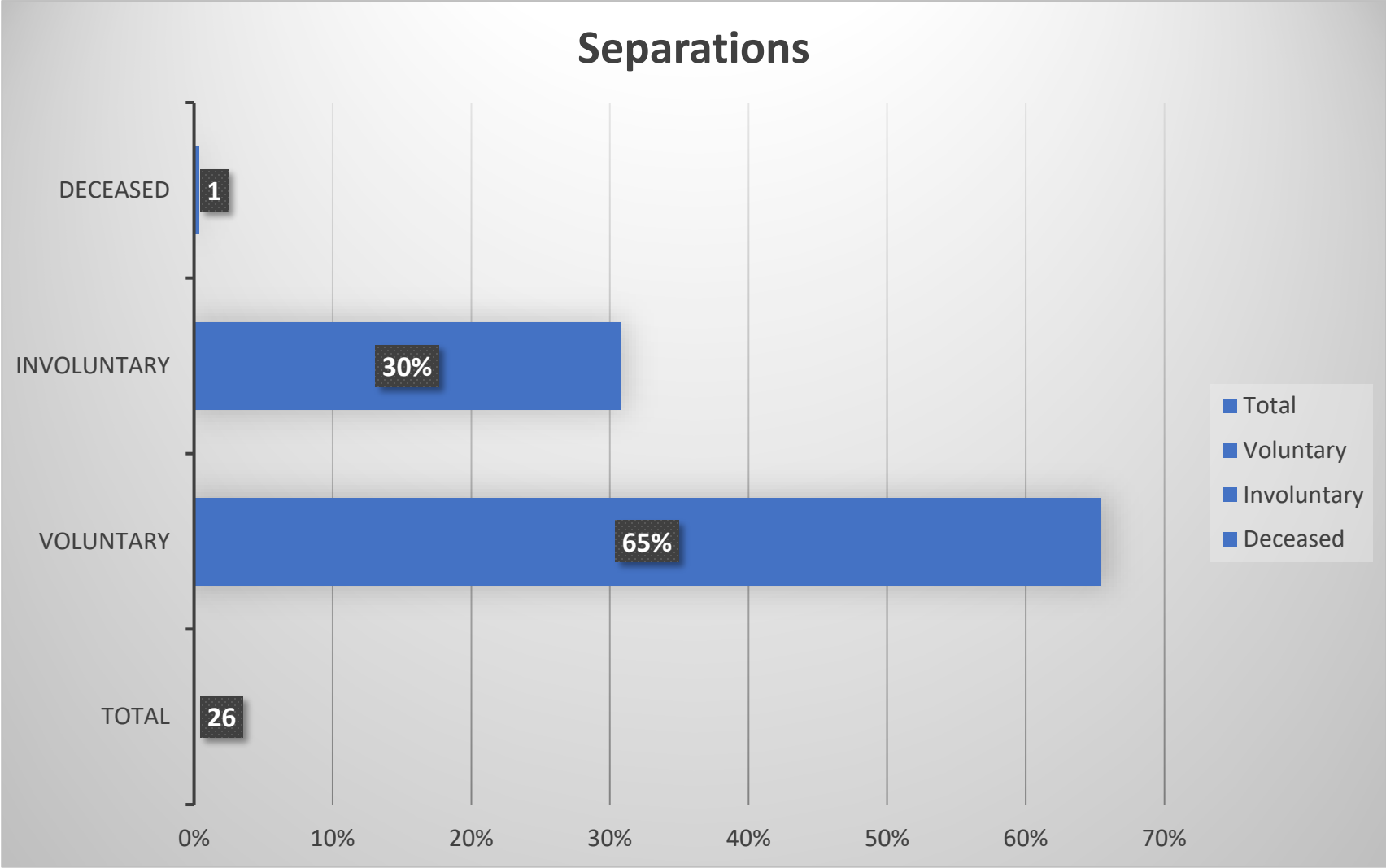
- Year One 2019 - 2020 (200 Placements in a Year)
- Year Two 2020 – 2021 (200 Placements in a Year)
- 70% of hires to remain employed for at least 6 months



FreshStart Employment Data from 2019-Present (10/2021)



FreshStart Employment Stats from 2019-Present (10/2021)



Demographics



Male	Ages 18-35	Ages 35-55	Ages 55 & Above	% of total hires
Black	40%	54.29%	.04%	67.30%
Hispanic	50%	50%	.0%	11.54%
White	.0%	66.67%	33.33%	5.7%
Men Overall	37.77%	57.78%	6.67%	

Female	Ages 18-35	Ages 35-55	Ages 55 & Above	% of total hires
Black	42.86%	54.14%	.0%	3.64%
Hispanic	100%	.0%	.0%	.02%
White	N/A	N/A	N/A	.0%
Women Overall	42.86%	57.14%		



Next Steps



Challenges	Recommendations	Implementation of improvements
Eligibility Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify for best practice improvements • Reduce restricted charges • Reduce post release time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase qualified participant eligibility
Departmental Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute positions on a continual cycle • Support the purpose • Support inclusion and belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of successful hires
HR/FreshStart Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support inclusion and belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve consistency and productivity • Functioning within the 4E climate
Internal Policy and Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and present for council approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function under written guidelines





Appendix



Ongoing Focus

