

Private Industry Partnerships

In Iowa, private companies may hire offenders while they are still incarcerated under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections (DOC). Since the Private Industry Enhancement (PIE) program began in 1992, private companies and the DOC have worked in partnership at locations throughout the state. Offenders have worked millions of hours in fields such as manufacturing, printing, and call center operations, at facilities located on and off prison grounds. Our first private sector partner was established nearly twenty years ago and is still going strong!

Research across the country has consistently shown that offenders employed by private companies have the lowest rate of recidivism. These inmates are more successful in returning to society as productive taxpayers, which has obvious benefits to citizens and offenders alike.

For employers, the PIE program offers a productive, reliable, and motivated workforce. Offenders are paid market based wages, and by law are allowed to retain 20% of their earnings. The balance is used to pay taxes, child and family support, victim restitution, and room and board. As a result, inmates are able to build some savings before they are released, while at the same time giving back to society.

Although inmates are paid market based wages, the benefits paid by employers are significantly reduced:

- ✓ Employers pay no medical or dental benefits;
- ✓ Employers pay no sick time, vacation or holiday pay;
- ✓ Employers pay no unemployment insurance;
- ✓ Employers pay no workers' compensation;

In addition, training assistance and training wage programs may be available, making the PIE program a very cost effective solution for many private employers.

Inmate employees are carefully screened by the Department of Corrections, and are then interviewed and selected by the employer. As the employer, you retain the right to hire, promote or dismiss offenders, ensuring that you can operate your business successfully.

The PIE program for private sector operations is administered by Iowa Prison Industries. IPI can help you determine if the PIE program is right for your company, and will work with you at every step along the way to get started.

The PIE program is in no way intended to replace civilian employees, and an important first step is to establish that the employer is unable to fill all of its open positions with qualified civilian workers.

For further information, please contact Iowa Prison Industries at (515) 725-5705 or visit www.iaprisonind.com.