

# Job Center Now Open Inside Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center

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**(UNION GROVE, Wis.)** – A Job Center has opened at Robert E. Ellsworth Correctional Center (REECC) in Union Grove, marking the 5th collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) and Wisconsin’s Department of Workforce Develop (DWD) on an institution-based Job Center.

“We’re excited because this will allow the more than 400 individuals releasing from REECC each year to set up job interviews with employers before their release and, in some cases, have job offers waiting for them when they return to their community,” said DOC Secretary Kevin A. Carr. “This partnership between DOC, DWD, and employers is changing the lives of individuals re-entering their communities by linking them with the resources they need to be successful.”

The Job Center provides people at the minimum custody facility access to career readiness programs, job search assistance, resume development, services for veterans and registered apprenticeships. It also offers assistance for people with disabilities. Those who use the Job Center will create a Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) account, allowing them to look for jobs, apply, and set up interviews with employers while still incarcerated.

The opening of the REECC Job Center was originally scheduled for the spring of 2020. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic led to a delay. It will eventually be staffed by individuals from the Workforce Development Board of Southeastern Wisconsin, as well as local DWD Job Service staff. With access to the institution currently limited to essential personnel, DOC staff have been trained to assist those using the Job Center.

“With the opening of the REECC Job Center, DWD continues to expand the workforce readiness opportunities we are offering at correctional facilities across Wisconsin,” DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said. “This critical partnership with the Department of Corrections helps people who have been incarcerated find meaningful employment when they return to their communities.”

All three of the facilities in the Wisconsin Women’s Correctional System now have a Job Center. By the end of 2021, DOC expects to have Job Centers helping people at ten of its institutions across the state.

The growth in Job Centers is the latest evidence of the Evers administration’s commitment to reentry services and efforts to help people be successful upon return to their communities, a commitment that is reflected in the Governor’s executive budget proposal, which includes:

- More than five million dollars to expand the [Opening Avenues to Reentry Success \(OARS\)](#) program.
- \$500,000 to expand the [Windows to Work program](#).
- More than three million dollars to expand treatment opportunities to more persons in our care through the [Earned Release Program](#).
- More than four million to expand [educational opportunities](#) for persons in our care

Nearly 60% of the population at REECC has one year or less left to serve with DOC and the primary programming is the [Earned Release Program \(ERP\)](#). Participants in this program will get at least three sessions in the Job Center before ERP graduation.

DOC releases roughly 9,000 people from its care into the community each year. The Department’s increase in institution-based Job Centers, funded by DWD, helps employers find workers to fill vacant positions and grow their business.