

John R. Kasich
Governor

Christiane Schmenk
Director

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Ex-Offenders Get Second Chance Through Restored Citizen Workshop

Programs provide information on how to start a business

Columbus – Ex-Offenders or those with a criminal record get the unique opportunity to turn their lives around, thanks to a partnership which includes the Ohio Department of Development. Director Christiane Schmenk announced today the fourth, “How to Start a Business As a Restored Citizen” workshop for those interested in starting their own business. The Department’s Small Business Office and the Ohio Small Business Development Centers, along with the Greater Cleveland Integrated Re-Entry Project are hosting the day-long free Entrepreneurship Workshop.

“These workshops provide these Ohioans with the information and resources they need to make a fresh start,” said Schmenk. “This program supports the desire of reformed ex-offenders to start their own business, creating a new life for themselves and gives them the tools they need to succeed.”

Ohioans with criminal records often face barriers when trying to seek employment. This workshop will assist potential entrepreneurs in gaining the knowledge and expertise that can help them be successful in today’s global economy. Moreover, a workshop of this nature is critical for Cuyahoga County since annually it receives the highest percentage of individuals returning from prison state-wide; the majority of which return to the City of Cleveland.

“In order to positively impact prison reform and reduce the likelihood of recidivism, we must explore and implement innovative practices that support the successful reintegration of this population” said Erika Forde, Project Coordinator for the Greater Cleveland Integrated Re-Entry Project (GCIRP).

The workshop was developed specifically to address the needs of people with criminal records who aspire to be business owners. The following programs will be provided at the workshop: Small Business 101, Make Your Business Legal, Welcome to the 21st Century and Money, Money, Money. Representatives and business professionals from various entities throughout Cuyahoga County will give in-depth overviews of small business programs and services available to assist potential entrepreneurs and business owners. Additionally, the workshop includes a Resource Fair which will provide participants information on additional resources available in the community to assist them with their small business needs.

In partnership, the following agencies worked together to ensure a thorough and succinct workshop for the participants: Center for Families and Children/ (GCIRP), Community Re-Entry, Inc., Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, Oriana House, Inc. and Towards Employment.

Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. The free event is open to potential entrepreneurs and small business owners:

The Center for Families and Children
4500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on June 26, 2012
(800) 848-1300 extension 4-8025

www.development.ohio.gov/WorkshopsRSVP

*The **Office of Business Assistance** leads the state's efforts to create, grow, and develop small- and minority-owned businesses resulting in job creation and a strengthened Ohio economy. The Office also provides customized services to increase the exports from Ohio companies. The Office oversees a variety of service programs including the state Small Business Develop Center network, Ohio Business Lending Clearinghouse, the Minority Business Assistance Centers, and more.*

*Working with our partners across business, state and local governments, academia, and the nonprofit sector, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to support business attraction and retention efforts by providing targeted investments that assist in job creation, as well as provides assistance and services to Ohio's communities and individuals. Engaged every day in marketing, innovating, investing, and collaborating, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to accelerate and support the teamwork that is necessary for success by providing financial, informational, and technical assistance to those making an investment in Ohio's future.*

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