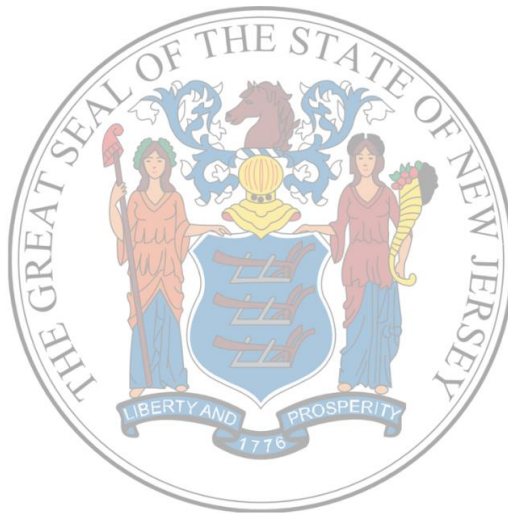




STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APRIL 2025

# Vocational Training Planning Board Annual Report



## About the New Jersey Department of Corrections

The mission of the New Jersey Department of Corrections is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, gender-informed, and rehabilitative environment supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce enhanced by community engagement. The mission is realized by ensuring the safety and security of staff and incarcerated persons, providing the highest quality rehabilitative and reintegration programs guided by gender-informed care and trauma services with the support of community partners.

The Department operates nine institutions: eight facilities providing custody for adult men and one for women with a total of approximately 13,000 incarcerated persons. The Department is responsible for the inspection of all county correctional and municipal detention facilities, the operation of specialized treatment units, and the regulation of residential community reintegration programs. The Department employs about 6,000 persons, with an operating budget of approximately \$975 million for the fiscal year 2024.

Vocational training is an important component in the rehabilitation and community reintegration process. With the incarcerated population remaining consistent at approximately 13,000 for the last three years, approximately 5,700 releases in calendar year 2024, and a consistently low recidivism rate of under five percent (5%), the value of vocational training, as well as education, social services, and other rehabilitative efforts is notable.

## Vocational Training Planning Board

The Vocational Training Planning Board was established in 2016 by an Act of the Legislature (P.L.2015, c.241) to provide for vocational training to “enhance and supplement the current vocational programming available at a State correctional facility.” The Vocational Training Planning Board is charged with improving upon the facility's most successful vocational programming offerings; introduce new vocational programming offerings to inmates of the facility; and provide vocational programming which is consistent with actual post-release employment opportunities and reflects the State’s emerging industry and business workforce needs.

The Vocational Training Planning Board is to consist of the Commissioner of Corrections; the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development; the Commissioner of Education; a representative of the New Jersey Business & Industry Association; a representative of the New Jersey State Building and Construction Trades Council; a representative of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools; and three public members. One public member is to be appointed by the President of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and one by the Governor.

## About DEPTCOR

DEPTCOR is New Jersey's correctional industry program. An entity within the New Jersey Department of Corrections, DEPTCOR provides high quality products and services manufactured and offered by adults incarcerated in New Jersey's correctional system. DEPTCOR's factories and service industries throughout the state train over 1,000 incarcerated males and females annually. These individuals are voluntarily assigned to meaningful work assignments that help incarcerated persons develop useable skills and

positive work habits. Through the development of these work habits, individuals prepare themselves for the challenges and opportunities in post-release employment.

In 1918, New Jersey led the nation in providing industrial skills to incarcerated persons (IPs) by creating the Bureau of State Use Industries, later to become DEPTCOR. The first-of-its-kind industrial and manufacturing skills training led to more successful IP reentry and became the model for the next 107 years. With over 1,000 incarcerated persons participating annually, DEPTCOR offers necessary skills for today's industrial training.

Industrial and trade skill development has evolved to include a highly skilled, technology-driven, and adaptive workforce. The manufacturing industry faces a significant labor shortage and increased market demand for trained industrial and trade employees. The DEPTCOR industrial training program seeks to take early advantage of this shortage in the labor market by preparing incarcerated persons with job training and development for their return to the community post-release with successful careers in the industrial trades.

DEPTCOR has created the opportunity to advance industrial training from floor production to 'concept to production' manufacturing. Future industrial employees must be trained in and understand all components of today's manufacturing process. Technology has taken a front seat in most industrial applications, and this is an opportunity to lead in the development of a groundbreaking institutional vocational training model by integrating today's necessary technology into our industrial training.

This technology-based industrial training is not a new DEPTCOR industry; it aims to enhance our current industrial training by incorporating essential technology-related skills within existing industries. These are necessary trade skills for many industries as technology is introduced into various production areas. DEPTCOR is eager to provide these industrial skills to help IPs be better prepared for reentry. This also enhances the



DEPTCOR industrial training program overall by providing a better and expanded line of products and services for our state and local government agency partners.

Through their positive development, incarcerated persons can better prepare themselves for post-release employment by providing:

- Enhanced skills training;
- Meaningful activities and employment;
- Safer environment for NJDOC staff, and IPs;
- Cost savings for the taxpayer;
- Job opportunities to those having received DEPTCOR training once released; and ultimate,
- Reduced recidivism.

DEPTCOR industries operate from a revolving fund, from which all operating expenses are paid. DEPTCOR is administered without appropriated funds, and is self-supported.

### **Edna Mahan Correctional Facility Design Studio**

DEPTCOR has contracted with Pratt Institute, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, for a technology-based, state-of-the-art, industrial, commercial textile and clothing design training program for the incarcerated women at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (ECMF). The launch of the training program is planned for September 2025. This program, EMCF Design Studio, will be a competitive,



industrial training experience that provides the opportunity to embrace life-changing skills. This 'hands-on' industrial training and production facility will enable participants to develop creative and conceptual design skills, convert them to digital and schematic design, and bring those designs to final production in the DEPTCOR textile and related industries.

This program is a very different approach to vocational training within the Department. This program will be a professional environment requiring significant dedication by the participants, including a desire to learn and the ability to collaborate with peers and staff. This training program will be an opportunity to embrace life-changing skills, gain knowledge of industrial business collaboration, and realize production output. An information brochure has been developed to garner interest among the population.

The initial first-year program will have 12 participants, with the possibility that the program can expand its future capacity to a maximum of 20 participants. The participants will be selected through an internal application process to help determine participant commitment to the training program. Acceptance into the program does not require participants to have skills in the textile industry; instead, they must demonstrate a desire to learn and collaborate with others. A background balance of creative, technical, and production-oriented people is preferred.

The program aims to include a mix of mid- and long-term participants to establish a "train the trainer" model. This approach allows longer-term participants to assist in training newer participants.

This 10-month Fashion Design and Production program is part of a workforce development initiative to equip incarcerated women with the skills they need to reenter society successfully. The curriculum emphasizes technical design, essential business skills, and creative expression, featuring hands-on experience in pattern making, draping, garment construction, and digital design tools.

Students will engage in the complete process of uniform redesign, from initial concept development to final production. The program culminates in a project that showcases their ability to create functional and visually appealing garments.



Throughout this program, students will engage in an integrated learning experience combining creative design with practical technical skills. The course emphasizes mastering foundational techniques such as flat patternmaking, draping, and machine sewing while fostering students' ability to think critically and creatively about fashion. The practical business component covers essential topics like creating a business plan, understanding production flow, and marketing fashion products. The digital aspect of the course will introduce students to industry-standard software for patternmaking and design. By focusing on redesigning their uniforms, students will apply their learning to a real-world, meaningful project while gaining valuable professional skills, ensuring the practical application of their training.

The primary goal of this program is to equip students with the technical, creative, and business skills needed to succeed in the fashion industry, with a focus on production and uniform design. Students will learn to create balanced slopers, manipulate fabric for desired fits, and apply industry-standard garment construction techniques. By the end of the program, they will be able to design and produce garments independently, develop a business plan for future fashion endeavors, and present a professional portfolio. The capstone project, which involves redesigning their uniforms, will showcase their mastery of technical skills, creative problem-solving, and an understanding of design within a practical, real-world context.

Among some of the many topic areas to be covered, the syllabus includes:

- Introduction to Design & Uniform Redesign
- Fashion as a Business
- Fitting & Draping Basics
- Introduction to Adobe Illustrator
- Refining Uniform Design Concepts
- Building a Brand Identity
- Patternmaking and Adjustments
- Advanced Digital Drawing in Illustrator
- Exploring Different Fabrics
- Building a Marketing Plan
- Garment Construction Techniques
- Digital Patternmaking
- Exploring Proportions & Design Iteration
- Branding for a Niche Market
- Advanced Patternmaking Techniques
- Creating Technical Flats
- Innovative Fabrication & Design Enhancements
- Developing a Production Strategy
- Sewing Techniques for Specialty Fabrics
- Digital Portfolio Creation
- Prototype Development
- Portfolio Development
- Capstone Project & Presentation



The instruction will be provided online via TEAMS to teach the curriculum/program. In addition, a full-time support staff person/graduate student will be placed by Pratt on-site to enhance and put into practical application the provided instruction. Pratt had 44 respondents on the initial request for applicants, demonstrating a significant interest in the program.

The first step in the development of the program will be to focus on clothing redesign, specifically for incarcerated persons at EMCF. DEPTCOR will then use these skills to develop the textile product line further to better serve existing markets and the potential for short-run, custom clothing for state and local government partners (recreation programs, DPW, school shirts, etc.). This will have a number of benefits:

- Valuable and modern, vocational design and technology skills for reentry jobs;
- Additional training opportunities created at EMCF;
- Refresh of IP clothing at EMCF, which has not been done in decades;
- Provide an opportunity to revise fabric, feel, form, and function of clothing for the IPs at EMCF and other institutions; and,
- Expanded DEPTCOR product line, thereby providing more industrial opportunities for additional participants.

This program links directly with the Department's goals:

- advance the availability of vocational programming within the NJDOC;
- build connections within the community and organizations to connect incarcerated persons, both inside the walls and those being released, with vocational programs and services outside of the NJDOC;
- advance job fairs and community connections to assist incarcerated persons with establishing jobs and/or careers on the outside; and ultimately,
- build a vocational bridge for the population, from the NJDOC vocational programs (and other services) to outside employment opportunities, to enable individuals to leave with a skill set that will connect them with steady employment in the community.

### **What's next?**

With the vision and forward thinking from the administration, DEPTCOR is always striving to find "What's Next?"

Recognizing DEPTCOR's industrial and manufacturing skills training role is more important than ever. Upon the successful launch of the EMCF Design Studio in the Fall, DEPTCOR will pivot to a broader scope in our ability to train incarcerated persons for successful reentry. The model can be replicated throughout the other DEPTCOR training areas by developing this same technology-based industrial training, with technology leading the way.

In addition, DEPTCOR has identified a partnership with the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program (NJMEP). NJMEP has committed to placing 100 incarcerated persons in meaningful manufacturing jobs following the completion of industrial training.

DEPTCOR is developing a 2-phase concept program that can be implemented in our shops:

### **Phase 1 MSSC Training Certification**

Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC) – 51 organization nationwide consortium

MSSC is an industry-led, training, assessment, and certification system focused on the core skills and knowledge needed by the nation's front-line production and material handling technicians.

Certified Production Technician (CPT) program with focus on four modules:

- Safety

- Quality Practices & Measurement
- Manufacturing Processes & Production
- Maintenance Awareness

The training is hands-on in the shop or production area within the facility.

## **Phase 2 – Specialty Training OSHA 10**

Training in OSHA-10 (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)

OSHA 10-hour training teaches basic safety and health information to entry-level workers in industry. Entry-level workers with this credential have industry-specific knowledge and skills that help prevent injuries and keep workplaces safe and productive.

Incarcerated persons can earn a United States Department of Labor (DOL) OSHA 10 card, a common requirement for employment in industry and manufacturing.

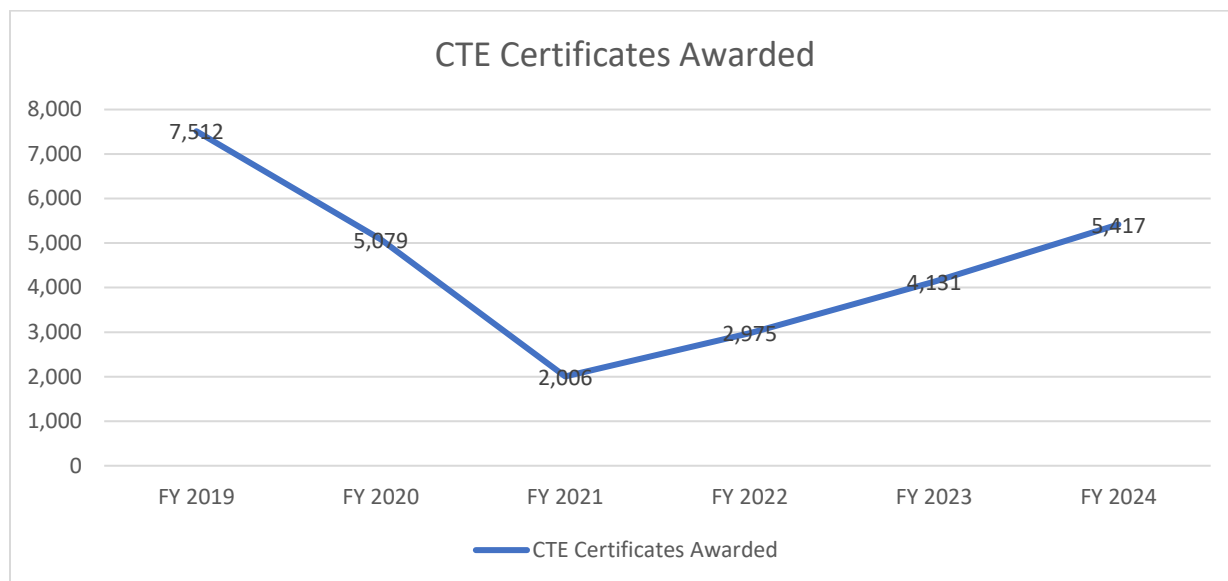
## Office of Educational Services (OES)

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program Overview- Current Course Offerings**

The Office of Educational Services is committed to providing a broad range of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to ultimately pursue a career pathway that meets at least two of the three following criteria, as established by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) via Perkins V legislation: 1) high-wage; 2) high-skill; and/or 3) high demand. CTE programs offered in NJDOC facilities include long-term programs such as Carpentry, Computer Literacy and Information Processing (CLIP), Cosmetology/Barbering, Electrician training, Horticulture/Landscaping, HVAC, Masonry, Plumbing, and Welding, as well as short-term training programs such as CPR/First Aid, Forklift Operator, OSHA10, ServSafe certification.

July 2023	Aug 2023	Sept 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	Total
507	392	490	434	408	444	462	405	455	422	485	513	5417

### CTE Certificates Awarded: Fiscal Year 2012-Fiscal Year 2024 Comparison



\*Please note: the decrease in CTE certificates awarded in FY 2021 & 2022 is a result of the overall decrease in the population due to the Public Health Emergency Credits awarded to incarcerated individuals.

Office of Educational Services (OES) strives to provide CTE programs that will allow students to earn industry- recognized credentials; for instance, all of the construction trades vocational programs offered in NJDOC facilities are accredited by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and students who complete these programs earn industry-recognized NCCER certifications. Our CPR/First Aid/AED training program leads to certification from the American Safety & Health Institute (ASHI), our culinary programs lead to ServSafe certification from the National Restaurant Association, and our OSHA training programs provide students with an opportunity to earn an OSHA certification card backed by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL).

Prioritizing programs that lead to employer-valued credentials, OES works to ensure breadth and depth of CTE programming that can accommodate a diverse and transient student population. In addition to the rigorous long-term CTE programs which may require participants to have previously obtained their high school credentials, OES has developed a menu of short-term programs that can be completed in a matter of days or weeks. These courses (e.g. Forklift, OSHA, ServSafe) are designed to serve students who may lack the literacy or numeracy skills to enroll in the long-term CTE programs that come with academic prerequisites.

To supplement CTE courses taught by certified instructors employed by NJDOC, OES has established a partnership with Middlesex County College to offer contracted vocational courses. Small Engine Repair and Welding classes from Middlesex County College have been made available to the incarcerated at EJSP.

#### **Overview of Newly Implemented Programs**

In addition, the NJDOC's Community Engagement & Reintegration Initiatives (CERI) unit, through its is a Locally Empowered Accountable and Determined (NJLEAD) funded partners continues with innovative



training programs, in entrepreneurship, computers coding, and entrepreneurship opportunity specific for women.

### **CTE On-Demand Program Overview**

The Office of Educational Services (OES) Career Technical Education continues with the implementation of a CTE On-Demand program that will expand opportunities for the incarcerated population to gain technological literacy, increase the overall variety of CTE opportunities that can be offered within NJDOC facilities, while also bolstering students' intrinsic motivation by making learning more personally relevant.

The combined menu of 100+ Edmentum and Metrix Learning courses includes an extremely broad range of subject areas and industries that caters to the entire spectrum of student ability levels; e.g., from basic resume writing and "Workplace Skills" to advanced Project Management and Leadership training; from Personal Family Finance to training programs in Health, Nutrition and Wellness; from professional IT certifications like CompTIA A+ to accelerated Public Speaking courses and Intro to Supply Chain Logistics. This breadth and variety has the capacity to serve two critical sub-groups within the student population: 1) those who require beginner-level academic remediation and/or soft skills training in order to succeed in more targeted CTE courses, and 2) those who may already have postsecondary credentials and/or an established career but would still benefit from an opportunity for 21st century professional growth to enhance their employability upon reentry.

Student candidates for this program will be administered a skills/interests assessment (NJ Career Assistance Navigator "NJCAN") before meeting with a CTE Lab Facilitator to review assessment results along with current education level, prior work experience, and individual goals. From there, the student will be advised to select an appropriate vocational course subject based upon their individual skills, strengths, academic level, and career interests, and the student will work collaboratively with the CTE On-Demand Lab Facilitator to design an individualized program to accommodate the student's needs and scheduling preferences.

These eagerly anticipated CTE On-Demand labs are taking shape, designed to operate on a secure Local Area Network with limited internet access. These labs will be staffed by skilled CTE Lab Facilitators, who will provide comprehensive technical support to students, maintain all hardware and software, and monitor student progress. The Facilitators will also play a key role in ensuring lab security and reporting on program effectiveness to OES.

EMCF and NSP have been chosen as the pioneering locations for the Phase I pilot, and significant strides have already been made, including the hiring of IT staff and procurement of all necessary CTE Lab equipment. In partnership with NJDOC IT staff, the OES IT team is currently collaborating with Edmentum to finalize the list of approved URLs, a crucial step towards program implementation. Once this is complete, rigorous testing of the program on the new equipment will commence, paving the way for the launch of this promising initiative.