



Legislation Text

File #: 0892-2021, **Version:** 1

This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a grant agreement with Alvis 180 in support of the Help in Reentry Employment (HIRE) program.

The HIRE program prepares restored citizens for employment through the provision of job readiness classes, job placement assistance, and wraparound case management services. Restored citizens returning to Columbus need assistance to obtain and retain employment to support themselves and their families. They face many barriers and can easily become discouraged, which can drive them to return to negative behaviors. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that “incarceration is a destabilizer, pushing families teetering on the edge into financial disaster.” The family left behind has been described as experiencing “secondary prisonization.” Most of these families live in poverty. Bruce Western (Harvard sociologist) asserts that “prison has become the new poverty trap.” These families await the return of their loved one ... who will be, unfortunately, unemployed. A job can boost their self-confidence as they earn an income to keep them from depending on government support and from returning to the corrections system. A job also stabilizes their family and builds hope as they climb out of poverty. In addition, the Alvis workforce development program includes case management services with referrals to address housing needs and food insecurities.

The most recent reports by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction show that 1,600 inmates are released annually to Franklin County from the State prison system. In addition, Franklin County has the state’s third highest population of adults being released from its corrections centers, with over 30,000 offenders released annually. Over the last 25 years, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of released adults. According to the Franklin Co. Reentry Task Force, many restored citizens are ill-equipped to live successful, productive and law abiding lives upon release. A high concentration of justice-involved adults within a community can generate huge costs as well as increase the potential for criminal activity, heightened public health issues, and higher rates of homelessness and unemployment. These men and women face a myriad of barriers to successful reentry, leaving incarceration with low levels of education and work history, poor self-esteem, and often substance abuse/mental health issues.

Upon referral to HIRE by other Alvis programs, social service providers, probation/parole, or self-referral, clients attend orientation and meet with a workforce development specialist. Together they review existing assessments and complete other assessments (including literacy) to determine readiness for employment. Clients then attend HIRE Education, a five-day job readiness and retention training conducted by workforce development specialists which includes topics such as employment goals, career paths, job market, networking, resumes, cover letters, applications, job search techniques, interview skills, cultural diversity, employer expectations, and appropriate workplace behavior and safety. Workforce development specialists meet again with participants to offer resume assistance and moral support. GED classes are available for those who have not yet earned a high school diploma.

Placement assistance in partnership with the Alvis network of area employers is offered as clients launch their job search. Wraparound services supported by other resources include case management, retention support, industry-recognized certifications, financial literacy, substance use disorder treatment/recovery, cognitive behavioral therapy, and a clothing closet.

Fiscal Impact: Funding is available within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund.

Emergency action is requested in order to avoid any risk in sustaining HIRE program services.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a grant agreement with Alvis 180 in support of the Help in Reentry Employment program; to authorize an appropriation and expenditure within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund of \$250,000.00; and to declare an emergency. (\$250,000.00)

WHEREAS, recent reports by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction show that 1,600 inmates are released annually to Franklin County from the State prison system; and

WHEREAS, over the last 25 years, there has been a fourfold increase in the number of released adults; and

WHEREAS, restored citizens returning to Columbus need assistance to obtain and retain employment to support themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, this grant will support Alvis 180's Help in Reentry Employment (HIRE) program, which provides job readiness training, job placement services, and wraparound support services for those enrolled in the program; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in that it is immediately necessary to authorize a grant agreement with Alvis 180 to avoid any risk in sustaining HIRE program services for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Development is hereby authorized to enter into a grant agreement with Alvis 180 in support of the Help in Reentry Employment program.

SECTION 2. That the Auditor is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$250,000.00 to the Department of Development within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100016, to 03-Services, per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That with regard to the action authorized by SECTION 1 of this ordinance, the expenditure of \$250,000.00 within the Public Safety Initiatives subfund is hereby authorized per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared an emergency measure and shall take effect and be enforced from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.