

Southern District of Florida Probation

DOWD Defendant/Offender Workforce Development Program



Mission Statement

To make a positive difference in the Supervision of defendants/offenders by preparing them to obtain educational, vocational and/or employment resources, and to prepare these individuals for successful re-intergration back into our community during and beyond the period of supervision.

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR COMMITTEE.....

The Southern District of Florida DOWD Committee would like to take this opportunity to explain the brief history of DOWD....

In 1998, the President signed into law the National Offender Workforce Development Program, allowing each state to develop prisoner reentry programs. Specifically in the State of Florida, in 2005, through Executive Order 05-28, Governor Jeb Bush created the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force. Its purpose was to help improve the effectiveness of the State of Florida reentry of former prisoners into their communities so as to reduce the incidence of recidivism.

Florida has the third largest prison population in America with over 30,000 people returning home from prison each year.

Responsibilities of the DOWD Officers:

As indicated in the Mission statement, the committee members serve the Southern District of Florida officers in assisting defendants/offenders with employment issues, as well as, researching and informing the officers of community resources within the Southern District of Florida. The Committee's form of communication has been via the Lotus-Notes DOWD icon.

Guiding Principles of DOWD

- D...Defining offenders in need of services, securing jobs and resources
- O...Providing new employment Opportunities to Offenders
- W...Working with the community in networking for services
- D...Dependable to the needs of the district

What is the Referral Process for the DOWD Program?

In order for the program to be successful, certain measures must be taken. These simple procedures will allow the committee to keep an accurate account of the defendants/offenders we service in our district. In addition, keeping these procedures will allow us to provide better statistical information to the OPPS Administrative Office and our Senior Management Division upon their request.

When an officer calls upon a DOWD committee member, the following should have already taken place:

- ❖ Lotus-Notes icon has been installed on the officer's computer
- ❖ Officer has reviewed Lotus-Notes for possible employment or community resources available through-out the district
- ❖ Officer has ensured that the defendant/offender has all documents needed to be able to obtain employment
- ❖ Officer has provided the defendant/offender with a job search log



In view of Monograph 109 and 111, the U.S. Probation Office is ultimately responsible in assisting the defendant/offender with employment and **reintegration** into our society.

Referral Process:

If the Defendant/Offender is unemployed for more than 30 days and after the assigned officer has exhausted his or her resources (i.e., job search logs, internet and classified ads); **THEN, PLEASE MAKE A REFERRAL** to a DOWD Committee Member via phone and/or email. Complete an EMPLOY OFFENDER sheet, which is located in the macro section of the WordPerfect program. Upon completion, send the form to a DOWD Committee Member.

PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THE FOLLOWING...

- ❖ Defendant/Offender must have all employment documentation available (i.e. social security card, employment authorization documents, etc.)
- ❖ Defendant/Offender must be job ready
- ❖ Defendant/Offender must be willing to work
- ❖ Defendant/Offender is NOT in violation status

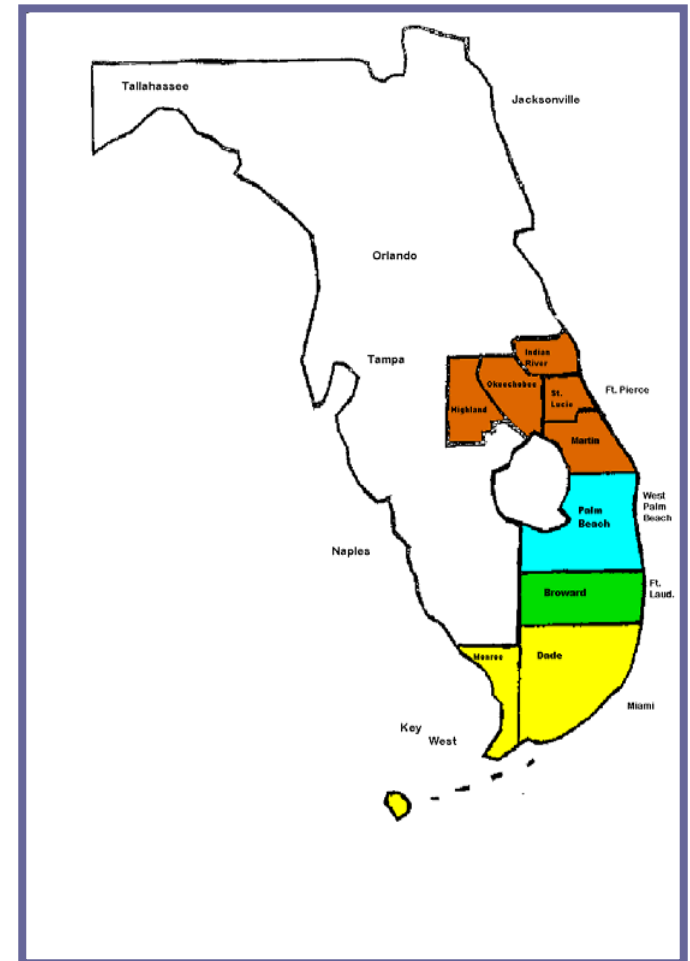


Other Services Offered by the DOWD Committee Members

- Educate future employers about the Bonding Program, as well as Tax Credit (also known as WOTC – Work Opportunity Tax Credit)
- Committee member attend local job fairs
- Committee members attend Mock Job Fairs at local BOP facilities
- Committee members attend reentry meetings in the community
- Committee members develop resources tip-guides for appropriately completing employment applications and job skills
- Develop partnership with local Bureau of Prison staff for training in offender development
- Develop partnership with Faith-based organizations
- Filter information from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) regarding laws and the reentry programs nationwide
- Committee members assist employers in filling out work opportunity tax-credit documents
- Committee members seek new employers and employment agencies
- Clothes closet located and maintained in Ft. Lauderdale office.

Future Endeavors of the Committee

- ✚ Research and develop networking among apprenticeship programs
- ✚ Web-based referral process to replace current Lotus Notes referral process
- ✚ May establish computer kiosk in each Probation office for the defendants/offenders to search for local employment



Southern District of Florida Service area is highlighted

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