



ALAMEDA COUNTY



SKILLUP SERVES A GROWING SOURCE OF WORKFORCE TALENT IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Hidden behind the bars of correctional facilities are glimmers of solutions that can reform patterns of recidivism while expanding the workforce talent pool. Metrix Learning deploys resources to rehabilitate justice-impacted individuals with a tailored virtual education plan.



We are still evolving today with basic strategies for prisoners, and we now have the innovations brought forth by Metrix Learning. Our participants were evidently engaged in the program as it opened their vision for job possibilities.

Charles Turner, Re-Entry Manager

PILOT PROGRAM EMPOWERS JUSTICE-IMPACTED WORKERS

The Metrix Learning mission to empower the workforce aligns with Alameda County's Road to Re-Entry, a strategic plan to uplift post-incarceration outcomes more than a decade in the making. This strategic plan aims to provide a positive support system for adults re-entering their communities after release from imprisonment. In 2019, Metrix Learning piloted the concept for a cohort of the Santa Rita Jail to introduce an innovative approach to realizing the county's strategic plan. This skills development pilot program at the jail went beyond providing 11 participants with access to Metrix Learning's online portal, SkillUp. At the surface, participants had a new form of education at their fingertips, developing their skills to become certified in the areas of:

- Job Readiness**
- Information Technology**
- Construction**
- Automotive Mechanics**
- Culinary Arts**
- Warehousing & Logistics**

At its core however, the collaboration between Alameda County and Metrix Learning demonstrated an organic, human-centered approach to tapping into the intrinsic motivation of incarcerated learners. The areas of study were determined in part by the participants' desires for learning, allowing an element of autonomy amongst the group in deciding their futures. A foundation of trust initially built on one to two hour-long sessions of freedom from their prison pods developed into growing possibilities for their post-release future.



What we've been able to do here is a holistic approach to make this work. Making sure to cover all their needs from health, mental health, substance abuse, family needs, and then addressing career aspirations before they become returning citizens.

**Charles Turner,
Re-Entry Manager**

Metrix Learning developed customized curricula in the SkillUp portal to align with the needs of the Alameda County labor market, while prioritizing the aspirations of the participants. After completion of the first cohort, the program continued to serve a total of 24 learners.

Digital Literacy Byproduct

Thanks to the flexibility of the SkillUp platform, incremental learning added continuous layers of skilled trade competence, strengthened social connection, and broadened digital literacy. For prisoners with long-term sentences, the technological advancements are a stark contrast from their outdated e-skills, creating barriers for many as they embark into new and foreign digital territories upon release.

The ability for participants to connect their new skills to SkillUp's career pathways instilled a hopeful confidence rarely witnessed in prison facilities. This pivot in mindset, paired with the human-centered design (HCD) implemented by the Road to Re-Entry program, ignited a redirection from statistical odds. According to the [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation](#), about 43% of offenders released are re-convicted within three years. Thankfully, topping the HCD with a layer of ongoing skills development takes participants on a career journey far from the path to recidivism.

The [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#) released a study showing a 43% reduction of recidivism in inmates who underwent education and training programs.

The pilot revealed all-around instances of success while uncovering minor areas of opportunity on the technical side. Of the 24 participants, three have since been released and reported employment aligned to the modules absorbed during the Metrix Learning and Alameda County partnership. All participants were granted continued access to the SkillUp portal for ongoing learning opportunities.

Additionally, the early success of the program demonstrated the power of community collaboration and innovation against traditional methods of rehabilitation. The statistics within the Alameda Correctional Facility show drastic reductions of incarcerated individuals, due largely in part to the ongoing partnerships in the community as part of the Road to Re-Entry strategic plan. Over 15 partners, including Metrix Learning, have contributed to the incremental success of wrap-around services addressing recidivism and the quality of life of justice-involved individuals.

Program Statistics

24
Total Participants

6
Total Customized Learning Tracks

3
Total Hired Upon Release

2
Total Cohorts

20
Metrix Learning Re-Entry Programs Nationwide

LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES MAKE WAY FOR ADVANCED SOLUTIONS

As with any early efforts in solution-building, setbacks are inevitable, but in this case, challenges in logistical setup revealed a surprise discovery within the inmate population's drive to succeed. Given its virtual nature, Metrix Learning required a need for stable internet connection. The county's IT team at the prison facility was tasked to design a high-security system to allow participants access to the online learning platform. Access was granted, but not without some tactical overrides that hacked through the security to allow access to non-approved social media sites. The issue was promptly patched and addressed within the population, however it revealed a technology skillset among the participants that simply needed redirection to convert into gainful employment and ongoing advancement. A well-equipped IT team prepared for the likelihood of security breaches could quickly remedy a potential internet security hack. The lesson learned revealed a positive aspect in highlighting the participants' untapped potential.

Future program efforts will consider extending learning timelines and condensing course content to ensure participants reach a 100% completion rate. In the pilot launch, some participants were unable to complete past the job readiness soft skills section. A newly elected Sheriff of Alameda County is prioritizing the prison population, including the launch of another Metrix Learning cohort.



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