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**DBEDT TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF  
ESTABLISHING A TRAINING AND MENTORING PROGRAM FOR  
QUALIFIED PRISON INMATES (RAFTER), TO FACILITATE THEIR  
REENTRY INTO SOCIETY PURSUANT TO ACT 227 (16)  
SB2630, SD1, HD1, CD1.**

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A Report to the Hawaii State  
Legislature

Submitted by

**The Department of Business,  
Economic Development & Tourism**

**January 2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2016, the State of Hawaii Twenty-Eighth Legislature passed Act 227 (16) SB2630, SD1, HD1, CD1 that requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's Community-Based Economic Development Technical and Financial Assistance Program to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a training and mentoring program for qualified prison inmates, to be called the Reentry Academy for Training and Entrepreneurial Resources (RAFTER), that would facilitate the reentry of qualified prison inmates into society. In conducting the study, the department was directed to cooperate with the visitor and resort industries, labor unions, the construction industry, community colleges, and UH, to identify the kinds of training and mentoring required to succeed in various professions, industries, vocations, and trades. The department was also asked to develop a component to offer inmates training in life skills such as personal hygiene and grooming, etc.

The purpose of this study is to assist the Hawaii legislature in evaluating the chances of success for a training and mentoring program for qualified prison inmates before the program begins by examining the main factors that could affect the outcome of the desired training and mentorship program. The study will allow Hawaii's legislature to determine what can be realistically accomplished locally in terms of funding the development of a program that would provide the tools prison inmates need to find meaningful employment upon release and thereby decrease the burden of recidivism and incarceration. The study will also indicate the most effective means of developing a training and mentoring program for qualified prison inmates in Hawaii.

## **SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) No. RFP-BDSD-CBED-RAFTER was issued with a submission date of May 12, 2017. DBEDT received three (3) proposals (University of Hawaii, Herndon Business Consulting, LLC and Rand Corporation). The proposal with the highest score from the RFP evaluation committee was the University of Hawaii, which was awarded the contract. The Principal Investigator is Orlando García-Santiago, Ph.D. M.P.H. R.N., Associate Professor of Sociology, Division of Social Sciences, UH-West Oahu and Co- Principal Investigator, Konstantinos Zougris, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Sociology, Division of Social Sciences, UH- West Oahu.

## **FEASIBILITY REPORT STATUS**

The University of Hawaii research team has conducted most of its interviews and research and in December 2017 submitted a first draft report for review with DBEDT. The draft report had a two-dimensional approach. It was designed to: (1) identify the processes, key actors, qualified participants, designated practices, as well as the operational challenges of several reentry programs, and (2) detect and describe the set of skills, as identified by local employers, and the kinds of training and mentoring required to succeed in various professions, industries, vocations, and trades.

Studying two independent types of organizational entities -reentry programs and industry- was vital for this feasibility study because it provided the opportunity to learn whether or not, there is procedural solidarity or a functional continuum between the reentry training and mentoring practices, and the employable skills as identified by the employers of several industries in Hawaii.

The reentry program research consisted of conducting site visits and semi-structured interviews with local and non-local organizations already involved in training and mentorship reentry programs. The industry inquiry dimension involved one-on-one survey questionnaires with local key actors in the visitor and resort industries, labor unions, the construction industry, agriculture, food service, corrections, retail industry, community colleges, and the University of Hawaii. Program site visits and semi-structured interviews were conducted with two local organizations and reentry program representatives - Hope Services Hawaii and Maui Economic Opportunity; and four mainland organizations and reentry program representatives - The Prison Entrepreneurs Program in Houston, Texas; The Alaska Native Justice Center and the Alaska Partners Reentry Center in Anchorage, Alaska; and The Delancey Street Foundation in San Francisco, California to learn what are the best approaches and strategies for success, challenges experienced by each agency, and what would be a reasonable timeline for developing, implementing and evaluating a training and mentorship reentry program for qualified prison inmates.

The UH research team is currently conducting its final interviews with the Department of Public Safety (Corrections Division, Hawaii Correctional Industries Division and the Re-entry Office). A final comprehensive report to the Legislature is anticipated to be completed by March 30, 2018.