

**Transcript of Interview with Darryl Hallman, Director  
of the AYT Institute of Washington, D.C.  
September 14, 2010**

**SIPES:** From the nation's capitol, this is DC Public Safety. I'm your host, Leonard Sipes. We continue our conversations with a series of employers about what it takes to get employers to hire individuals under community supervision. We are the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, a Federal parole and probation agency here in Washington, D.C. Today we are talking to Darryl Hallman. He is the Director of the AYT Institute. They, interestingly enough, have 110 employees, they train auto technicians in six locations throughout the District of Columbia and virtually all of them have been caught up in the criminal justice system. And that I find is really interesting. He also trains individuals. He has about 30 people involved in training right now, again, to be an auto technician. Before we get into the interview with Darryl, our usual commercial, thank you very much all of you for contacting us, and listening to us, and watching us and interacting with us. We're up to 225,000 requests on a monthly basis for DC Public Safety radio, television, blog and transcripts. If you need to get in touch with me directly, its Leonard L-E-O-N-A-R-D dot Sipes S-I-P-E-S at CSOSA.GOV or follow us by Twitter, that's Twitter.com/LenSipes. Back to Darryl Hallman, Director of the AYT Institute. Darryl, welcome to DC Public Safety.

**HALLMAN:** Thank you for having me.

**SIPES:** OK. Now, this is interesting, virtually everybody you got employed at six places throughout the District of Columbia and the State of Maryland, they've been caught up in the criminal justice system.

**HALLMAN:** Not completely 100 percent of them, but the majority of them, yes.

**SIPES:** But the majority of them.

**HALLMAN:** Yes.

**SIPES:** OK.

**HALLMAN:** Yes.

**SIPES:** Why is it that you have decided to reach out to people caught up in the criminal justice system? I mean, quite frankly, the stereotype is let's avoid these folks and what you're doing is embracing them.

**HALLMAN:** Well, we find that AYT has been in the community for quite a while, actually 20 years.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And we felt like we wanted to give something back to the community and one way that we could do that is to bring in the local citizens and train them where they could have a career.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And decide, you know, decided to start a school and that's how we got where we are. We went after the people that have supported us for so many years.

**SIPES:** But, again, when I've talked to employers in the past some of them have expressed dismay over hiring people under our supervision. About 53 percent at the moment are hired, which means the vast majority are not hired. Now some of them are caught up in prison, and some of them are caught up in jail and some of them are not available for supervision, but we have literally thousands of people who are months if not years away from their last dirty urine who are literally years away from their criminal activity. They're pretty much solid citizens, but that criminal history is holding them back from getting a job. So that's one of the reasons why we're talking to you today is to

get the employer's perspective as to what it takes to hire folks but it doesn't sound like you need much con...much convincing. You did this because you wanted to give back.

**HALLMAN:** Well, we feel that everyone needs a second chance. And if no one else is willing to give them a second chance, then we are.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** So when everybody else is finished with them and throw them away, then we open our doors and say, ok, look, we understand. And then, you know, we have an opportunity that we'd like to introduce you to.

**SIPES:** What happens when you give that guy a second chance? So he shows up for work with this dumbfounded look on his face because he doesn't know what he's getting into and you all do what with him?

**HALLMAN:** Well, we actually train them first. They have to come in for an interview and we talk to them and let them know what is expected from them and what they can expect from us. And upon that completion of the interview if it's something that they want to do, then we set them up for training and we put them in a class and upon completion of the class we give them an apprenticeship.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And the rest is history. They're all working right now. Right now we do have 100 percent retention rate and 100 percent job placement. So...

**SIPES:** Which means they're all getting jobs elsewhere if you work with individuals to...to place them elsewhere or they're all working for the AYT Institute.

**HALLMAN:** That's correct.

**SIPES:** That's amazing.

**HALLMAN:** Yes, yes.

**SIPES:** Now why is it that you do so well when the rest of us fail?

**HALLMAN:** Well....

**SIPES:** I don't want to say the rest of us fail all the time...but...

**HALLMAN:** Yeah, yeah....

**SIPES:** But the rate of failure...

**HALLMAN:** There are some successful businesses out there as well.

**SIPES:** Yeah.

**HALLMAN:** However, we understand our community. We have compassion. We make them feel like they're important, and we give them a future and not...and a career. So when they see that there's light at the end of the tunnel and they do have a second chance and someone do believe in them...

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** Then it motivates them to do the best that they can because we going to give them our best.

**SIPES:** A lot of individuals, or the people that we talk to, they...they have a hard time hearing this and understanding this. I've met very few people coming out of the prison system....there are some.

**HALLMAN:** Right.

**SIPES:** That are going to go straight back. And they know it. They're going to go straight back and hit those streets and they're going to be high within half an hour getting there and they're going to be thugging and mugging...

**HALLMAN:** Mm-hmm.

**SIPES:** Within a fairly short amount of time. The great majority of them don't want to go back. The great majority of them want a straight life.

**HALLMAN:** That's true.

**SIPES:** But a lot of them literally, literally do not know how to accomplish that straight life.

**HALLMAN:** Well, I think that with our company...with our company and your company, if we are able to give them the information that they need and to make their transition smoother by providing them and assisting them, things would be a lot better. And, you know, just giving them the information that they require...a lot of them don't know what they want and you have to lay it out on the table for them. And once you do that they make a decision as to what they want to do and if you can accompany them, then the rest is pretty easy.

**SIPES:** The website for the AYT Institute is [www.AYTI](http://www.AYTI) (that even rhymes) [www.AYTI.us](http://www.AYTI.us) . [www.AYTI.us](http://www.AYTI.us) Darryl, what can we do? The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, what we're telling employers is that, look, I mean, if

you're looking for that individual whose drug-free, we'll give you that individual who is drug-free. We can even prove the drug-free. If you're looking for that individual who has a good attitude, who simply wants to go to work or a person with...we have a ton of people with skills, with hard skills. I mean, what can we do to make it easier for the private sector to hire our folk?

**HALLMAN:** Well, I think CSOSA is actually doing quite a job right now and if they continue to do what they're doing and let the public sector know what's available and let the employers know what's available, I think your rate will go up. I wasn't aware of a lot of things that CSOSA did until recently.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And I'm pretty happy with the response that I'm getting from CSOSA and it's been an experience for me to work with CSOSA. I think that if they went out after more employers and there's a lot of small companies like mine, as well as other companies, that just don't know what you guys have to offer.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** If the individuals coming through your program know that we're out there and we're willing to take a chance and CSOSA know that we're out there...

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And we're working together as partners, I think things will go a lot smoother.

**SIPES:** What does it take for an employer to hire somebody under supervision? I would imagine honesty about the fact that that he's committed a crime, he's not going to hide that, he knows that he's got to show up every single day, he knows that he's got to show

up sober, and if he's under CSOSA supervision, we drug test the dickens out of our folk so...so...

**HALLMAN:** Mm-hmm.

**SIPES:** You know, we're going to know if the person is doing drugs or starts doing drugs. That's what people want, right? A good attitude, show up every day, show up on time, whatever drama is going on in your life, leave it at the doorstep, give me a good solid eight hours and...and we can help them find those sort of people.

**HALLMAN:** Yeah, I think that's...that goes a long ways. You know, you want to be able to sell yourself. You don't want to over sell yourself. And I...and my experience is that some of the people that's looking for jobs over sell themselves.

**SIPES:** Agreed.

**HALLMAN:** And when you do that, you know, you kind of...you take back...take a step back and you look at these people...

**SIPES:** Yeah.

**HALLMAN:** And like, why are they trying to convince me? It's not necessary. So if they know to go out there and tell the truth and be honest...

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And...and say, hey, it is what it is and this is what it is, it would be a lot easier for employers like myself or as a school to enroll these students because we see that...that you're genuine.

**SIPES:** Mm-hmm.

**HALLMAN:** And not, you know, trying to come up with anything.

**SIPES:** Is...isn't that the issue—how genuine the person is? I mean, some folk when they come out of the prison system they're not going back and they're just filled with faith and they're just filled with whatever and...and God bless them. But, you know, I mean sometimes you wonder if they're truly in control of their...their own destiny because they're being so stoic, they're being so self-righteous. I mean, sometimes I think what employers are looking for is honesty and genuine.

**HALLMAN:** Absolutely. That's what I look at and that's what I listen to when I interview any potential student that's coming to my program. I just tell them, be real with me, I'm going to be real with you, let's lay everything on the table, let's make a decision, let's be honest with ourself. And if you know that this is what you want to do and you have faith, you will succeed. And that's how we got to the point where we are, you know. You have to believe in yourself and you have to really want it. You know, don't do it for me, don't do it for your probation officer, don't do it for your wife, do it for yourself.

**SIPES:** Do it for yourself because...

**HALLMAN:** And if you do that for yourself, then you can believe in yourself. We're going to make sure that you have everything you need. We're going to give you what it takes to be successful. It's just up to you...

**SIPES:** Amen.

**HALLMAN:** To take control of it and to run with it. We're even going to try to place you. So it's up to the individual that really wants it. There's a lot of people out there that want it that's been neglected, but there's also a lot of people that want it that's not aware that it's out there for them.

**SIPES:** And...and...and...and the point is, and we have to close the program, is that if we can increase the level of employment. Especially those people that have been off drugs for a long time, been away from criminality for a long time, they're not thugging and mugging, they're just regular Jane and John Doe citizens that are looking for a job, the crime rate would go down and our tax paid dollars would go down.

**HALLMAN:** Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And that's why AYT is in the business of training to give people not just a job, but a career.

**SIPES:** Got it. Darryl Hallman, Director of the AYT Institute. I love the address, the website address: [www.AYTI.us](http://www.AYTI.us) -- [www.AYTI.us](http://www.AYTI.us). Thank you for being with us.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is DC Public Safety, up to 225,000 requests on a monthly basis for radio, television, for the blog and transcripts. If you want to get in touch with me directly: Leonard, L-E-O-N-A-R-D, dot Sipes, S-I-P-E-S at CSOSA dot GOV ([Leonard.sipes@csosa.gov](mailto:Leonard.sipes@csosa.gov)). And I want everybody to have themselves a very, very pleasant day.