



OPERATIONAL INSTRUCTION

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Employment Referrals to VOTEE, Services, and Verification

I. PURPOSE

One of the strategies employed by CSOSA to aid offenders in the successful integration process is assisting offenders to become gainfully employed. The Agency has invested considerable resources to assist the offender in obtaining employment. The purpose of this operational instruction is to reinforce existing practice and policy with regards to offender employment and verification.

II. GUIDANCE

A. Referrals to VOTEE

All unemployed offenders who are able to work are to be referred to the Vocational Opportunities, Training, Employment, and Educational (VOTEE) Program.¹ Community Supervision Officers (CSOs) shall receive reports detailing the offender's compliance with the VOTEE scheduled appointments and will sanction offenders who refuse to attend pre-arranged scheduled meetings with VOTEE staff. The CSO must be diligent in encouraging and directing the offender to keep scheduled VOTEE appointments, and must actively review and monitor the VOTEE reports detailing the offenders' efforts to obtain employment and record the offender's compliance or non-compliance in seeking employment in the SMART running record.

B. Non-compliance With VOTEE Referrals and Services

If the offender consistently refuses to maintain scheduled VOTEE appointments, and/or refuses to obtain gainful employment within a reasonable period of time (i.e., 60 days), the CSO shall discuss the offender's non-compliance with the Supervisory Community Supervision Officer (SCSO) in an SCSO case conference. If the SCSO determines that the offender should be referred back to the releasing authority, the SCSO must document in the running record the reason why the offender should be referred back to the releasing authority.

¹ For newly assigned cases in which the offender is unemployed, the referral to VOTEE is to be made within 15 calendar days of assignment.

This documentation must include specific instructions to the CSO with regards to addressing the offender's employability issue.

C. Employment Verification

- 1) **Documented Employment.** As is current policy and practice, the CSO must verify the offender's employment status on a monthly basis. The following verification methods are acceptable:
 - a) Employment site visit with the offender or employer;
 - b) Review of information from the offender's pay stub; or
 - c) Telephone call to the employer (i.e., to verify hours worked and wages).

- 2) **Undocumented, Cash Employment.** There are occasions when an offender is employed by a family member or friend, and the payment for hours worked is in cash (i.e., family carpentry, landscaping business, odd jobs). These types of employment situations are less desirable for the offenders and present several verification challenges for the CSO.

To provide further guidance on this latter issue, the preferred practice is as follows:

- a) The CSO is to obtain from the offender the employer's taxpayer identification number.
- b) The offender is to provide a written statement signed by the employer providing the hours worked by the offender, location of the job and weekly wages (the offender will be responsible for providing the statement);
- c) The CSO is to make a follow-up phone call to the employer to verify the content of the written statement; and,
- d) Once every two months and, if feasible, the CSO is to make a pre-arranged employment site visit.

The CSO is to encourage the offender not to accept as a full-time job, work for which payment is in cash, and the employer is not paying the standard payroll taxes and withholding deductions. If an offender holds a cash job, the job should only be held for a short duration, with increased efforts directed to VOTEE staff to assist the offender in obtaining documented full or part-time jobs.

NOTE: The CSO is to verify monthly that the offender is employed and by whom, or that the offender is unemployed, with the reason why. The employment status is to be documented in SMART under the Employment Verification screen.