

# Okaloosa County News Release

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**Cutlines:** Counselors Randy Hunter, Liz Westby, and David Thomas pictured with Jobs Plus Mobile Unit.

Jobs Plus Programs Manager Tammy Matthews helps inmates transition into jobs.

## **Okaloosa County Corrections Initiates Inmate Re-entry Program**

Okaloosa County Department of Corrections is working with *JobsPlus* on a monthly basis, to provide inmates with a program to re-enter the workforce. Minimum and Medium security inmates that are being released within a month get an overview of the program and the opportunity to attend an upcoming class. *JobsPlus* drives their mobile unit out to the jail and inmates register in the Employ Florida Marketplace system, identify their skills and match jobs to those skills. They can also pre-register for additional assistance they may need while looking for work and be in the system, receiving benefits as soon as they are released. Veterans can also access services they are eligible for prior to their departure.

“Our Corrections staff saw an opportunity to make a difference and allow for a smoother transition from the jail back into society,” stated Paul Lawson, chief, Okaloosa County Department of Corrections. “These efforts assist inmates in getting employment or assistance which helps reduce recidivism.” In the first month, 19 inmates attended the initial briefing and 11 participated in the *JobsPlus* program held January 17, 2012. The program is funded by Employ Florida, Veterans Affairs and private industry.

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