



South Carolina Department of Corrections

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For immediate release

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COLUMBIA, S.C. – The S.C. Department of Corrections opens its reentry unit for maximum-security offenders today, completing the agency’s goal to offer significant retraining and job skills programs for all offenders returning to society.

The “Going Home for Good” program is based at Lieber Correctional Institution, where maximum-security offenders will spend their final two years of incarceration taking classes, developing work skills, practicing for job interviews and learning how to navigate a very different world than the one they left.

About 85 percent of offenders at SCDC spend less than five years in prison, making the need for retraining crucial. Director Bryan Stirling and Deputy Director for Programs, Reentry and Rehabilitative Services Nena Staley started building the department’s extensive reentry program in 2014.

“Director Stirling’s commitment to providing reentry services to those who are committed to positively impacting their communities has resulted in South Carolina having one of the lowest recidivism rates in the country,” Gov. Henry McMaster said. “When we help someone secure a job and train them to do that job, it dramatically increases their chances of becoming a contributing member of society, which is good for all of South Carolina.”

Lieber’s name will be changed to Lieber Correctional Institution and Reentry Center to reflect its new mission. This follows a pattern started in 2016, when the agency created Manning Reentry/Work Release Center. Minimum-security offenders go to Manning for their final months to earn work certificates and the necessary skills to succeed after release. Building on that success, similar programs are offered for medium-security male offenders at Kershaw and women at Camille Graham.

The program at Lieber is longer and more intensive because many of these offenders have been incarcerated for decades. In addition to work skills, they have to learn how to navigate parts of life today that didn't exist when they came to prison. The program also will teach them how to explain their incarceration, manage their time and disappointment and give them survival skills for drug addiction and anger management.

These programs, which are based on best practices from across the country, are key to South Carolina's historically low recidivism rates and are helping address the need for workers in an ever-growing economy.

"We are helping offenders find housing, employment and the community support needed to become productive citizens," Stirling said. "We want them to succeed. It's better for them, their family, public safety and taxpayers. It just makes sense."

To help prepare offenders for release, SCDC has partnerships with multiple state agencies including the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services, many non-profits and private companies.

Some of the many skills and work certificates offenders can earn include plumbing, landscaping, carpentry, brick masonry, welding, driving forklifts and commercial vehicles and ServSafe food certification. They also can earn their GED and pursue other education goals.

"We are thankful for the partnerships that make this kind of programming successful," Stirling said. "We are knocking down the barriers that have existed to make reentry successful. This saves tax dollars, makes our state safer and gives people a second chance at a productive life."