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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TDLR provides second chances for formerly incarcerated individuals

New agreement with other state agencies will expand opportunities

AUSTIN – As part of its ongoing commitment to reducing recidivism and supporting reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals, TDLR is working with state agency partners and stakeholders to provide a licensing pathway that previously might have been unattainable because of an applicant’s criminal history.

Thanks to a memorandum of understanding (or MOU) signed last week, **TDLR**, the **Windham School District**, the **Texas Department of Criminal Justice**, and the **Texas Workforce Commission** will help formerly incarcerated individuals get licenses and employment in cosmetology, air conditioning and refrigeration and electrical jobs. The agencies will work together to help people with criminal histories obtain employment once they’ve completed their prison sentences.

- Under the agreement, the Windham School District will help students who want to become cosmetologists, electricians or ACR technicians to obtain criminal history evaluation letters (CHELs) from TDLR before getting that training.
- TDLR will provide the CHELs for the incarcerated individuals at a reduced cost and educate Windham and TDCJ staff on the various licensing requirements and the application process.
- The Workforce Commission will help the individuals with submitting their licensing applications and align their re-entry services across their various programs.

“It’s exciting to have these four organizations work together for the betterment of our state, and I’m pleased that TDLR is involved,” said Rick Figueroa, chair of the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation.

“This MOU is a vehicle that will allow these agencies to work together instead of standing flat-footed,” said TDLR Commissioner Helen Callier. “This program will touch the lives of men and women re-entering society and enable them to contribute in a positive way.”

HB 1342 (86th Legislature) allows TDLR to issue a restricted license to formerly incarcerated individuals to work as an electrician or air conditioning technician. Work is performed while under the direct supervision of a TDLR Contact: Tela Mange | Public Information Officer | Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation
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licensee who ensures that the individual complies with the conditions of the restricted license. Each restricted license indicates where the licensee is authorized to work, and clearly indicates the restricted nature of the license.

Applicants with a criminal history that might preclude them from obtaining a license can ask the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation to issue a restricted license to them. TDLR has issued four restricted electricians licenses since the law went into effect in September 2019.

“Being able to provide for their families and rejoin society will help formerly incarcerated individuals keep from reoffending and heading back to prison. TDLR is thrilled to provide a boost to formerly incarcerated individuals who are seeking to rebuild their lives and contribute to Texas’ economy,” said Brian E. Francis, TDLR executive director.

TDLR staff have been visiting various TDCJ facilities for the past eight years, meeting with incarcerated individuals and providing information about the licensing process for cosmetologists, electricians and air conditioning technicians -- and sharing how TDLR can assist with obtaining licensure after the incarcerated individual completes their education in three of the job training pathways offered by TDCJ’s own school system, the Windham School District.

Francis said, “We expect more great things to come out of this partnership.”

About TDLR

TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency regulates 39 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 1,000,000 licensees across the state.

Visit TDLR’s [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

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