

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR
WESTON WAMP

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**Hamilton County Invests in Reentry Program at Jail & Detention Center
with Opening of New Inmate Vocational Programs**

Electrical and cosmetology programs up and running; welding and carpentry to launch soon

Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp and Sheriff Austin Garrett today announced the expansion of the reentry program at the Hamilton County Jail & Detention Center. Through a partnership with Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) at Chattanooga State, the electrical and cosmetology programs are the first of four to launch with a maximum of five inmates enrolled in each.

“Reducing crime and recidivism in our county requires a comprehensive approach and creative tactics, including strategies to prepare inmates for reentry into society,” said **Mayor Wamp**. “Sheriff Garrett and I share a vision of building a safer community by empowering incarcerated individuals to develop a set of vocational skills and a sense of purpose while serving time.”

Last year, Mayor Wamp proposed \$250,000 in opioid abatement funds to bolster reentry programing at the jail through the renovation of an adjacent highway department facility, which is no longer being used. The County Mayor’s office sought a partnership with Chattanooga State to provide instructors, curriculum, and college credit hours, and the McKenzie Foundation has contributed the cost of tuition at Chattanooga State while inmates are incarcerated. Upon release, participants can continue their education at Chattanooga State by transferring the hours they receive in the vocational program.

“The HCSO is proud to partner with County Mayor Weston Wamp in supporting the vocational needs of the inmates in the Hamilton County Jail and Detention Center through the use of grant funding. We appreciate his vision and willingness to partner with us to ensure the inmates in our custody receive the services and occupational training necessary to reduce recidivism, earn a livable wage, and experience a productive life upon release. The facility you see here today is part of this joint effort and we are proud of the tremendous progress we have made,” stated **Sheriff Austin Garrett**.

“Our goal is to strengthen inmates by providing them with the tools to secure a good job upon release, earn a livable wage, and really lean into their passion to create a productive life after serving their time,” said **Scott Michiels**, HCSO Reentry Programs Project Manager. “County investments were a catalyst in launching these programs, and it’s truly inspiring to witness the transformation as inmates discover new purpose and meaning in their lives.”

The welding and carpentry programs are expected to be completed next summer.

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