



HANS NELEMAN PHOTO

About 15,000 former inmates reenter Kentucky society annually, said Kerry Harvey, an advisor to the governor.

‘Second chance’ at employment sought for Kentuckians leaving incarceration

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN

Gov. Andy Beshear has established a council aimed at promoting employment of Kentuckians reentering society after incarceration. Beshear signed an executive order Thursday to establish the Governor’s Council of Second Chance Employers. The 15-member council will “educate employers and local communities on the benefits of second-chance hiring,” according to Beshear’s office. The council will also “advocate for laws and investments to improve reentry outcomes and develop best practices for effective reentry programming,” Beshear said. Members are to meet quarterly and provide an annual report to the governor’s office including their findings and recommendations. “Investing in second chances makes us safer and addresses some workforce challenges that we’re seeing all across the country,” Beshear said during a Thursday press conference.

The initial council will have these members, with two-year terms, according to the executive order:

- Tyler Stegall with BlueOval S
- Barbara Aker with More than a Bakery
- Steve Powless with Lifeline Recovery Center
- Rob Perez with DV8 Kitchen
- Stephen Johnson with Martin Contracting
- Nick D’Andrea with UPS
- John Estus with Amazon
- Chad Mills with Kentucky State Building and Construction Trades Council
- Ryan Quarles, pres-

ident of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System

- Tami Wilson with Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
- LaKisha Miller with Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

The remaining four members will be the governor and the secretaries or designees of three cabinets — Health and Family Services, Education and Labor, and Justice and Public Safety. The council will “give us folks that not only can communicate the success that they have had with second chance employment, but they also can provide feedback for us and our programs to make sure we’re doing it right, to make sure that the skills that we’re providing while someone is incarcerated match up with the jobs that are on the other end and to create a flow of communication where we can try to do better

and better and better in real time getting that feedback,” Beshear said. Kerry Harvey, special advisor for reentry programs, said about 15,000 former inmates reenter Kentucky society annually. And, he said, “successful reentry programming offers an enormous return on investment to taxpayers” and can help prevent recidivism. “Everybody wins if those who reenter society from prison succeed,” he said. “And in this context, success means that our reentering inmate does not commit a new crime, does not reoffend.” “It means that our reentering inmate obtains meaningful employment at a living wage and can support their families, both financially and emotionally,” Harvey said. “It means that they become role models for their children and their grandchildren.”

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Bargo named SCC Health Sciences Student of the Month

BY CHRISTEN GIBSON
KCTCS.EDU

A student currently enrolled in studies in the Somerset Community College Medical Assisting Program has been named the recipient of the SCC Health Sciences Division’s Student of the Month for October. Mandy Bargo of London received the award and is now a candidate for the Division’s Student of the Year Award, to be announced in May 2025.

Bargo had already completed a Bachelor of Science degree in occupational therapy before enrolling in SCC’s Medical Assisting Program. “The flexible class schedule as well as the amazing instructors have helped me to succeed in my course work while continuing my role as a wife and mother.”

The Medical Assisting Program prepares students to become integral members of a healthcare delivery team. Medical assistants serve as liaisons between the doctor and patient and play an important role in diagnosis and treatment. Graduates find employment in administrative offices, examining rooms and physicians’ laboratories and are eligible to earn the credentials of Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) through the American Medical Technologists organization. RMAs are in high demand regionally.

Bargo was recommended for the award by Program Director



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Somerset Community College Medical Assisting Program student Mandy Bargo was named the recipient of the SCC Health Sciences Division’s Student of the Month for October.

Debra Elam and Director of Clinical Education Tina Meier.

“Mandy consistently performs well academically, demonstrating a deep understanding of her subjects and a strong commitment to her studies,” states Elam. “She consistently goes above and beyond, demonstrating dedication, reliability, and strong work ethic. She has demonstrated her ability to work well with others, fostering a positive and productive environment in group settings, contributing to the success of team projects through her resilience and willingness to help others.”

Meier describes Bargo as a “wonderful student,” with leader-

ship and teamwork as strengths. With a positive attitude, Bargo commented on her experience at SCC. “SCC has given me the opportunity to pursue my dream of becoming a medical assistant after being a stay-at-home mom for nearly 20 years,” states Bargo. She and her husband Kyle are parents to seven children: Noah, Ethan, Janna, Luke, Levi, Kaylee, and Jessa.” In the Spring, Bargo will complete a practicum at an assigned healthcare facility while studying to complete the national credentialing exam. She is scheduled to graduate in May 2025.

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