



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCH Receives Grant Award from State CJC for Return to Work Efforts

Wilmington, DE – On Wednesday, the Delaware Center for Horticulture (DCH) was awarded a two-year grant totaling almost \$150,000 from the State of Delaware’s Attorney General and Criminal Justice Council to support DCH’s Return to Work: Growing New Opportunities in Horticulture Program. The funds will be awarded through the newly created State Reentry Funding Program, supporting nonprofits for the development or continuation of model reentry programs that sustain an individual’s transition to and stabilization in the community.

“We are so proud to be among the first recipients of the CJC’s grant program, which serves as a testament to the strength of our now seven-year old Return to Work program,” said Vikram Krishnamurthy, DCH Executive Director. “This funding will provide additional programmatic stability and allow us to provide horticultural on-the-job skills training to more individuals, translating to greater job prospects and opportunity for those we serve.”

Since 2009, DCH’s Return to Work Program has hired and trained unemployed individuals, including veterans and recently released incarcerated men and women, for entry-level positions in the landscaping and horticulture industry. As of August 2016, 60 men and women successfully completed Return to Work training, and an encouraging two-thirds of the graduates went on to secure employment. The CJC funding will allow for the continuation of job placement services and support the development of two new program tracks: an educational track to support candidates in pursuing a formal degree, and small business training to support entrepreneurs in starting new businesses.

The program supports and is supported by all four of DCH’s primary program areas: Community Forestry, Urban Agriculture, Public Landscapes, and Education, and provides participants with solid landscaping and horticultural skills that translate to employment in the field. The curriculum combines classroom-based training sessions, hands-on skills development, and character-building experiences, supervised by industry experts. Graduates leave with marketable skills, valuable certifications, personal satisfaction of improving their communities, and employer references. The curriculum is endorsed by the Delaware Nursery and Landscape Association as an Introductory Horticulture Training Program, and the program earned national recognition, winning the National [Arbor Day Foundation](#)’s 2014 Award for Education Innovation, which recognizes inventive horticultural programming.

The Delaware Center for Horticulture cultivates a greener community, inspiring appreciation and improvement of our environment through horticulture, education, and conservation.