

RCW 71.09.097 Conditional release to less restrictive alternative—Department developing placement—Considerations. (1) In accordance with RCW 71.09.090 and 71.09.096, the department shall have the primary responsibility for developing a less restrictive alternative placement. To ensure the department has sufficient less restrictive alternative placements to choose from that satisfy the requirements of RCW 71.09.092, subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department shall use a request for proposal process to solicit and contract with housing and treatment providers from across the state and facilitate fair share principles among the counties. In order to increase the number of housing options for individuals qualifying for a less restrictive alternative, the department shall have oversight of the vendors and providers who contract with the state, including the authority to inspect and ensure compliance, negotiate the rates charged for services, ensure adequate living conditions of housing locations, and terminate contracts. The department shall maintain a statewide accounting of the contracted community housing and treatment providers in each county and provide a biannual report to the legislature and governor by December 1st on the availability and adequacy of less restrictive alternative placements and the department's compliance with fair share principles.

(2) To facilitate its duties required under this section, the department shall use the following housing matrix and considerations as a guide to planning and developing less restrictive alternative placements. The following considerations may not be used as a reason to deny a less restrictive alternative placement.

(a) Considerations for evaluating a proposed vendor's application for less restrictive alternative housing services shall include applicable state and local zoning and building codes, general housing requirements, availability of public services, and other considerations identified in accordance with RCW 71.09.315. The department shall require the housing provider to provide proof that the facility is in compliance with all local zoning and building codes.

(i) General housing requirements include running water, electricity, bedroom and living space of adequate size, and no mold or infestations.

(ii) Availability of public services include availability of chaperones and whether the placement is within a reasonable distance to a grocery store, bank, public transportation options, and offices for public services and benefits.

(iii) Other considerations include whether the placement is consistent with fair share principles across the counties, whether the placement is within reasonable distance to other current or planned components of the less restrictive alternative, whether the placement is within reasonable distance to employment opportunities, and the reliability of global positioning system technology.

(b) Factors for evaluating less restrictive alternative options for a specific individual include sex offender treatment considerations, criminogenic needs and risk factors, protective factors, and the specific needs of the client.

(i) Sex offender treatment considerations include whether the housing is within a reasonable distance from the treatment provider, whether the treatment provider is a good therapeutic match with the

client, and whether the treatment provider has relevant experience and background to treat the client if the client has special needs.

(ii) Criminogenic needs and risk factors include consideration of the person's specific needs and risk factors in evaluating less restrictive alternative options.

(iii) Protective factors include whether housing is within a reasonable distance of family, friends, potential hobbies, potential employment, and educational opportunities.

(iv) Consideration of the client's specific needs includes assessing the availability of personal care assistance and in-home care assistance, and whether housing is within a reasonable distance of mental health, medical treatment options, and substance use disorder treatment options. [2021 c 236 s 11.]

Findings—2021 c 236: See note following RCW 71.09.020.