
Housing, Human Services & Veterans Committee

HB 1818

Brief Description: Promoting successful reentry and rehabilitation of persons convicted of criminal offenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Simmons, Caldier, Davis, Macri, Peterson, Santos, Wylie and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the period for which the Department of Corrections (DOC) may provide housing vouchers from three to six months.
- Allows the DOC to provide housing vouchers to any person releasing from a state correctional facility if vouchers will support the person's release into the community by preventing housing instability or homelessness.
- Eliminates supervision fees charged to persons who commit criminal offenses.

Hearing Date: 1/21/22

Staff: Serena Dolly (786-7150).

Background:

Rental Vouchers.

Before transferring an incarcerated person from confinement into supervised community custody, the Department of Corrections (DOC) must approve the person's release plan, including the proposed residence and living arrangements. The DOC may deny a release plan if the

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proposed plan, including residence and living arrangements, places the person at risk to reoffend, violates the conditions of the sentence or supervision, or presents a risk to victim safety or community safety.

The DOC may provide rental vouchers to the person for up to three months if it will help facilitate the approval of his or her release plan. The rental vouchers must be provided in conjunction with additional support services such as substance abuse and mental health treatment, and employment and educational programming. The DOC must maintain a list of housing providers that meet certain requirements for accepting rental vouchers. Rental vouchers may only be used to pay a housing provider on the DOC's list where more than two persons receiving vouchers will be residing per dwelling unit. The DOC is required to gather data, as recommended by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP), on each person receiving a rental voucher to determine if the vouchers are effective in reducing recidivism.

In addition, the DOC has separate authority to provide rental vouchers for incarcerated persons discharging from the Washington Corrections Center for Women and the Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women, for up to three months, if such assistance will support the person's release into the community. The vouchers must be provided within existing resources of the DOC. The rental vouchers are separate from the DOC's authority to issue rental vouchers for persons releasing into community custody.

Supervision Fees.

Interstate Compact for Adult Supervision.

The Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision governs the supervision of persons subject to DOC supervision who move from one state to another. Sending states must notify receiving states and obtain approval before sending a person. Receiving states must accept and supervise persons when the reasons for the move are appropriate. The DOC is authorized to charge a reasonable fee to persons for processing applications for interstate transfer. According to DOC rule, the transfer request fee is \$100.

Supervision Intake Fees.

When a felony sentence requires supervision or parole through the DOC, the person must pay a supervision intake fee. The DOC may exempt or defer all or partial payment of intake fees based on factors that include, among others, inability to obtain employment, age, student status, and other extenuating circumstances. For persons with offense dates before October 1, 2011, the supervision intake fee is a one-time fee based on a calculation of remaining supervision time left to serve, not to exceed \$600. For persons who committed their offense on or after October 1, 2011, the DOC must assess a supervision intake fee between \$400 and \$600. According to DOC rule, the current fee is \$475. All fees collected by the DOC must be deposited in the Cost of Supervision Fund, a dedicated fund in the custody of the state treasurer.

In addition, the DOC may collect a supervision intake fee when it is charged with supervising a person with a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor sentence.

Summary of Bill:

Rental Vouchers.

The maximum period for housing vouchers issued to eligible persons being released from DOC into community custody is extended to six months.

The separate authority of the DOC to issue housing vouchers in other circumstances is expanded. The DOC may issue housing vouchers to any person being released from any state correctional facility, regardless of the person's community custody status, if the DOC finds that the assistance will support the person's release into the community by preventing housing instability or homelessness. Vouchers may only be issued for up to six months.

The DOC must establish policies for prioritizing funds available for housing vouchers for persons at risk of being released into homelessness or becoming homeless without assistance, while taking into account the person's risk to reoffend. The requirement that the vouchers be funded with existing resources is removed. A person may receive vouchers under either program so long as they do not receive a combined total of rental vouchers from the DOC that exceeds six months.

The WSIPP must update its benefit-cost analysis of housing vouchers to account for expansion of the program. The analysis must consider the impacts on homelessness, recidivism, criminal justice costs, use of public services, and other factors determined to be appropriate by the WSIPP. The DOC must cooperate with the WSIPP to facilitate access to data or other resources necessary to complete the analysis. By November 1, 2025, the WSIPP must submit a final report to the Governor and the Legislature.

Supervision Fees.

The interstate transfer application fee and DOC supervision intake fees are eliminated. The Cost of Supervision Fund is repealed effective June 30, 2022, and the state treasurer must transfer all residual funds to the general fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.