
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1161

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Postsecondary Education & Workforce (originally sponsored by Representatives Ryu, Obras, Paul, Davis, Ormsby, and Hill)

READ FIRST TIME 01/23/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the veteran employability
2 training and career advancement for reentry program; adding a new
3 chapter to Title 28B RCW; and providing an expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply
6 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
7 otherwise.

8 (1) "College board" means the state board for community and
9 technical colleges created in chapter 28B.50 RCW.

10 (2) "Community college" has the same meaning as in RCW
11 28B.50.030.

12 (3) "Correctional facility" has the same meaning as defined in
13 RCW 72.09.015.

14 (4) "Department" means the department of corrections.

15 (5) "Immediate family" has the same meaning as defined in RCW
16 72.09.015.

17 (6) "Justice involved" has the same meaning as "inmate" as
18 defined in RCW 72.09.015 and includes currently or formerly
19 incarcerated individuals and defendants participating in pretrial
20 diversion programs 18 to 24 months in length in Pierce, King, or
21 Snohomish county.

1 (7) "Participant" means an eligible justice involved veteran who
2 has been approved and accepted to participate in the program.

3 (8) "Program" means the veteran employability training and career
4 advancement for reentry program created in section 2 of this act.

5 (9) "Veteran" means any person who, regardless of discharge, has
6 served in any branch of the armed forces of the United States.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for
8 this specific purpose, the veteran employability training and career
9 advancement for reentry program is established within the college
10 board to provide individualized transitional and soft skills to
11 justice involved veterans and their families to improve economic
12 well-being, reduce recidivism, prevent homelessness, improve
13 reintegration, and provide a workforce that is educated and trained
14 for living-wage careers of the 21st century.

15 (2) In administering the program, the college board shall select
16 one community college west of the crest of the Cascade mountain range
17 to participate in the program by serving participants. Community
18 colleges with demonstrated records of providing similar services must
19 be prioritized.

20 (3) The selected community college shall:

21 (a) In partnership with the employment security department and
22 local WorkSource office, make use of available programs, courses, and
23 methods to deliver transitional employment and reentry readiness
24 materials to participants; and

25 (b) Employ a full-time equivalent reentry and educational
26 navigator to determine eligibility and, in collaboration with the
27 department, establish contact with eligible justice involved
28 veterans. The navigator shall provide participants individualized
29 transitional reentry and employment readiness services including,
30 where applicable:

31 (i) Requesting written permission from participants to contact
32 and offer services to their immediate family;

33 (ii) Conducting intensive intake interviews with participants and
34 approved immediate family;

35 (iii) Verifying eligibility by obtaining proof of military
36 service in any branch of the armed forces of the United States;

37 (iv) Collaborating with the department and other relevant
38 agencies to deliver individualized prerelease programs through
39 correspondence, approved textbooks, or core curriculum objectives;

1 (v) In partnership with the employment security department and
2 local WorkSource office, assisting in preparing and updating program-
3 specific individualized transitional reentry and employment readiness
4 plans based on assessment scores of the employment readiness scale;

5 (vi) In collaboration with the department, assisting in
6 developing a postrelease transitional support system with timely and
7 measurable steps that supports a participant's transitional reentry
8 and employment readiness plan created in (b) (v) of this subsection;

9 (vii) Providing approved immediate family support services
10 outlined in section 3 of this act;

11 (viii) Conducting regular virtual or in-person check-ins to
12 measure progress of soft skills development;

13 (ix) Assisting with career development skills; and

14 (x) Utilizing funding from federal, state, and local agencies
15 including the federal workforce innovation and opportunity act and
16 WorkSource partners to support participants or their immediate
17 family.

18 (4) To be eligible for services under the program, an individual
19 must:

20 (a) Be a justice involved veteran:

21 (i) Within 24 months of release from incarceration or within 24
22 months postincarceration; or

23 (ii) Participating in a pretrial diversion program 18 to 24
24 months in length in Pierce, King, or Snohomish county;

25 (b) Complete the employment readiness scale biannually to measure
26 self-efficacy and outcome expectancy; and

27 (c) Complete a career research project.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for
29 this specific purpose, the college board and the selected community
30 college shall collaborate with the department of veterans affairs to
31 develop eligibility criteria for approved immediate family of
32 participants to receive funds to assist in:

33 (a) Rental support not to exceed \$1,000 per month up to 12 months
34 paid directly to the landlord, housing provider, or mortgage holder;

35 (b) Food assistance not to exceed \$500 per month up to six
36 months;

37 (c) Driver's license fees including unpaid fines, auto insurance
38 premiums, auto registration fees, public transportation, and auto
39 repair expenses not to exceed \$1,000 within 24 months; and

1 (d) Purchasing work appropriate clothing and training
2 certificates not to exceed \$1,500 within 24 months.

3 (2) No funds allocated under subsection (1) of this section may
4 be used for unpaid child support or legal financial obligation fines.

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Subject to amounts appropriated for this
6 specific purpose, the department shall:

7 (1) Develop and implement processes by which it can identify and
8 approve participation of any qualifying justice involved veterans
9 incarcerated in a correctional facility or under department
10 supervision in the program;

11 (2) Assist participants incarcerated in a correctional facility
12 with receiving correspondence, textbooks, and other curriculum; and

13 (3) Document participation of justice involved veterans
14 incarcerated in a correctional facility in the program to ensure
15 sufficient recordkeeping and facilitate uninterrupted participation
16 in the program in the event a participant is transferred to another
17 correctional facility.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for
19 this specific purpose, the department of veterans affairs shall:

20 (a) Assign two full-time equivalent veteran service officers or
21 staff members trained in the benefits available to veterans to
22 collect data on veterans entering a correctional facility and
23 veterans under department supervision; and

24 (b) Share data collected under (a) of this subsection with the
25 college board and the selected community college.

26 (2) A national veterans organization may provide the veteran
27 service officers or staff members assigned in subsection (1)(a) of
28 this section.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** An interagency work group of the college
30 board, the department of veterans affairs, the employment security
31 department, and the selected community college is created to analyze
32 the feasibility of expanding the program statewide. By December 1,
33 2025, the work group must submit a report of its findings and
34 recommendations to the legislature pursuant to RCW 43.01.036.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** In compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the
36 college board, in collaboration with the selected community college,

1 the employment security department, and the department of veterans
2 affairs, shall report to the legislature by November 1, 2025, and by
3 July 1st annually thereafter on:

4 (1) The number of participants and immediate family participating
5 in the program;

6 (2) The level of educational attainment of participants;

7 (3) Employment statistics of participants;

8 (4) Recidivism rates of participants; and

9 (5) The nature and extent of assistance participants received
10 under the program.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act expire
12 August 1, 2031.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act
14 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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