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## Public Safety Committee

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### HB 2025

**Brief Description:** Requiring the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to improve offender programs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Goodman, Klippert, Pettigrew, Hayes, Griffey, Chapman and Jinkins.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for offender programs that prioritizes state funding according to specified criteria.
- Requires the DOC to discontinue ineffective programs and practices, and repurpose underspent funds according to the priorities in the plan.

**Hearing Date:** 1/9/18

**Staff:** Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

#### Background:

*Review of the Department of Corrections Programs.* The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides many agency and volunteer operated programs to inmates in order to constructively occupy inmate time and reduce recidivism. In the 2013-15 State Operating Budget, the Legislature directed the Department of Corrections (DOC) to consult with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) to categorize all existing offender programs as either evidence-based or research-based. The DOC was required to hire a consultant to develop a comprehensive implementation plan for phasing out ineffective programs and phasing in those demonstrated to be effective. The Legislature also directed the DOC to implement programs consistent with the risk-needs-responsivity model.

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The DOC contracted with Washington State University (WSU) to provide the consultation services, assist with the categorization, and provide recommendations. The WSU conducted a multi-phase program review, with priority for the legislatively funded programs offered by DOC. In addition, WSU developed the Evidenced-Based Indicator Scorecard (EBIS) to determine if the DOC program components and implementation match those components in literature reviews, consistent with evidence-based practices. The categorization process revealed that all programs funded by the legislature are either evidence-based programs or research-based as of 2015.

In the 2017-19 Operating Budget, the Legislature directed the DOC to develop and implement a written comprehensive plan for offender programming that prioritizes programs which follow the risk-needs-responsivity model, are evidence-based, and have measurable outcomes. The DOC is authorized to discontinue ineffective programs and to repurpose underspent funds according to the priorities in the written plan.

*Evidence-Based and Research-Based.* In the context of adult corrections, the WSIPP published the following definitions in 2013:

- "Evidence-based" is a program or practice that has been tested in heterogeneous or intended populations with multiple randomized and/or statistically-controlled evaluations, or one large multiple-site randomized and/or statistically-controlled evaluation, where the weight of the evidence from a systematic review demonstrates sustained improvements in recidivism or other outcomes of interest. Further, "evidence-based" means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication in Washington and, when possible, has been determined to be cost-beneficial.
- "Research-based" is a program or practice that has been tested with a single randomized and/or statistically-controlled evaluation demonstrating sustained desirable outcomes; or where the weight of the evidence from a systematic review supports sustained outcomes as identified in the term "evidence-based" in statute (the above definition) but does not meet the full criteria for "evidence-based."

### **Summary of Bill:**

The DOC must develop and implement a comprehensive plan for offender programs. Offender programs include all programs in correctional facilities and community settings using state funds. It also includes contracted offender programs provided by third-party entities and paid for with state funds.

The plan must prioritize funding for and implementation of programs that:

- follow the risk needs responsivity model;
- focus on high risk offenders, including violent and nonviolent offenders, unless otherwise required by law;
- are deemed evidence-based by the WSIPP or WSU, or are included in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices; and
- have measurable outcomes including, but not limited to, reducing recidivism and readmissions to correctional institutions below current levels.

The DOC must discontinue ineffective programs and practices, and repurpose underspent funds according to the priorities in the plan. The DOC may not cancel or discontinue a successful

program that reduces recidivism in favor of implementing a new program without empirical data showing the same or better outcomes, unless otherwise required by law.

The DOC may allocate up to five percent of appropriations provided for offender programs for the piloting and researching of programs deemed research-based or a promising practice.

The DOC must submit a report by December 1 of each year to the Washington Statewide Reentry Council, the Governor, and the appropriate committees of the Legislature regarding the DOC's compliance with the bill. The report must:

- include a summary of the comprehensive plan;
- analyze state funds allocated to programs, including percentages and amounts of funds used in evidence-based and research-based practices and the number of people being served;
- identify discontinued and newly implemented programs, including information used by the DOC in evaluating the effectiveness of discontinued and implemented programs; and
- provide recommendations to improve program outcomes, including recommended strategies, deadlines, and funding.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 4, 2018.

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