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**HOUSE BILL 2057**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Ryu, Leavitt, Simmons, Reed, Ormsby, Donaghy, Doglio, Riccelli, Reeves, Paul, Shavers, and Davis

AN ACT Relating to creating a pilot project to assist incarcerated veterans' transition to civilian life; adding a new section to chapter 73.08 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 73.08 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this specific purpose, the department of veterans affairs shall initiate the reintegration support for incarcerated veterans pilot project. The purpose of the project is to assist incarcerated veterans with reintegration into civilian life through education and employment, decreasing homelessness following release from incarceration.

(2) Edmonds Community College must be the first site of the pilot project. Subject to available appropriations, a second pilot project site must be located east of the Cascades and selected through a request for proposal process.

(3) The pilot project must support veterans through:

(a) Appointment of a reentry navigator.

(i) The reentry navigator shall coordinate with the department of corrections at least annually to identify all incarcerated veterans with release dates within 24 months.

(ii) The reentry navigator shall contact each incarcerated veteran at least 12 months prior to the veteran's release date and provide the veteran with information on educational opportunities, services, and resources available to the veteran following release from incarceration.

(iii) For each incarcerated veteran with a release date within three months who requests to participate in the pilot project, the reentry navigator shall develop a reentry plan. The reentry plan must include an assessment of anticipated living expenses; educational opportunities to train for employment; eligibility for programs such as basic food employment and training, educational benefits through the federal department of veterans affairs, or the incarcerated veterans transition program; and contact information for veterans services, social security, and the department of social and health services in the veteran's county of residence following release.

(b) Provision of a housing subsidy.

(i) The reentry navigator shall coordinate with the department of veterans affairs to develop criteria to determine eligibility for housing assistance.

(ii) Each eligible veteran must receive a housing subsidy not to exceed $200 per month for up to a 12-month period after release from incarceration.

(iii) Priority shall be given to veterans who enroll in an educational institution within three months of release from incarceration.

(c) Provision of a reentry subsidy.

(i) Each veteran shall receive a reentry subsidy not to exceed $2,000 during the 12-month period after release from incarceration.

(ii) The reentry navigator shall coordinate with the department of veterans affairs to identify appropriate expenses, including clothing, car insurance, cellular phone, home furnishings, or food.

(iii) The department of veterans affairs shall develop a system to timely pay an eligible expense.

(4) The pilot project may provide additional support to veterans through:

(a) Identification of housing opportunities in the veteran's county of residence following release from incarceration;

(b) Identification of training that may assist a veteran in effectively transitioning to the community following release from incarceration; or

(c) Provision of support and mentoring, life skills training, and assistance with access to local veterans' services.

(5) The department of veterans affairs shall coordinate this pilot project with the services offered to veterans by the department of social and health services, local mental health organizations, veteran-focused nonprofit organizations, and the federal department of veterans affairs to minimize duplication and assist those veterans most in need of support to avoid homelessness.

(6) The department of veterans affairs shall report to the legislature by November 1, 2025, and every year thereafter until the expiration of the pilot project, on the number of veterans assisted by the project, the number of veterans eligible for the project but unable to participate, and the number of housing subsidies and reentry subsidies provided.

(7) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as in RCW 73.08.005 regardless of discharge status.

(8) This section expires June 30, 2030.

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