
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 2203

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2024 Regular Session

By House Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Ryu, Walen, Paul, Reeves, Ormsby, Hackney, Fey, Reed, Taylor, Doglio, Donaghy, Goodman, Leavitt, and Davis)

READ FIRST TIME 01/25/24.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a pilot project to assist
2 incarcerated veterans; adding a new section to chapter 43.60A RCW;
3 and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.60A
6 RCW to read as follows:

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

13 (2) Subject to available appropriations, the state board for
14 community and technical colleges will select a pilot project site
15 located west of the Cascade mountains, with consideration given to
16 Edmonds College. If a second pilot project site is selected, it must
17 be located east of the Cascade mountains.

18 (3) The department of veterans affairs shall coordinate with the
19 department of corrections at least annually to identify all veterans
20 incarcerated within the last 12 months. The department of corrections
21 shall coordinate with the department of veterans affairs to assist

1 veterans who are in receipt of federal department of veterans affairs
2 disability compensation or pension benefits with notification to the
3 federal department of veterans affairs of their incarceration for
4 more than 60 days in an attempt to prevent overpayment of veterans
5 benefits.

6 (4) The pilot project must support veterans through:

7 (a) Appointment of a reentry navigator.

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

11 (ii) The reentry navigator shall contact each incarcerated
12 veteran at least 12 months prior to the veteran's release date and
13 provide the veteran with information on educational opportunities,
14 including state registered apprenticeship programs, services, and
15 resources available to the veteran following release from
16 incarceration.

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

28 (b) Provision of a housing subsidy.

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

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

34 (iii) Priority shall be given to veterans who apply for
35 enrollment or enroll in an educational institution or a state
36 registered apprenticeship program within three months of release from
37 incarceration.

38 (c) Provision of a reentry subsidy.

39 (i) Each veteran shall receive a reentry subsidy not to exceed
40 \$2,000 during the 12-month period after release from incarceration.

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

4 (iii) The department shall develop a system to timely pay an
5 eligible expense.

6 (d) The reentry navigator shall monitor the status of each
7 veteran participating in the pilot project. If a veteran is
8 incarcerated while participating in the pilot project, the reentry
9 navigator shall promptly notify the department and immediately
10 terminate the housing subsidy and reentry subsidy effective on the
11 date of incarceration.

12 (5) The pilot project may provide additional support to veterans
13 through:

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

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

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

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

27 (7) The department shall report to the legislature by November 1,
28 2025, and every year thereafter until the expiration of the pilot
29 project, on:

30 (a) The number of veterans assisted by the project;

31 (b) The number of veterans eligible for the project but unable to
32 participate;

33 (c) The number of housing subsidies and reentry subsidies
34 provided;

35 (d) The employment status of each participating veteran at the
36 conclusion of the 12-month period after release from incarceration,
37 including part-time employment, full-time employment, temporary
38 employment, or unemployed;

1 (e) The housing status of each participating veteran at the
2 conclusion of the 12-month period after release from incarceration,
3 including temporary or permanent housing; and

4 (f) A comparative analysis of the housing and employment status
5 between participating veterans and veterans released from
6 incarceration who did not participate in the pilot project.

7 (8) For the purposes of this section, "veteran" has the same
8 meaning as in RCW 41.04.007 regardless of discharge status.

9 (9) This section expires June 30, 2030.

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