STATE OF NEW YORK

8965

IN ASSEMBLY

January 31, 2024

Introduced by M. of A. SEPTIMO -- read once and referred to the Committee on Codes

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to establishing the office of reentry services within the division of criminal justice services

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "recidivism reduction act".

§ 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 837-x to read as follows:

§ 837-x. Office of reentry services. 1. There is hereby established within the division an office of reentry services to facilitate successful reintegration into the community by incarcerated individuals.

(a) As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(i) "office" shall mean the office of reentry services; and

(ii) "incarcerated individual" shall mean a person eligible for release from a correctional facility or local correctional facility, as defined by section two of the correction law; and

(b) The head of the office of such office shall be a director appointed by the commissioner. Such director:

(i) shall exercise all powers vested in the office;

(ii) may delegate any function, power, or duty assigned to the office to an employee of such office;

(iii) may request and receive from any department, agency of the state, or public authority such assistance, information and data as will enable the office to properly carry out its functions, powers and duties; and

(iv) may hire and dismiss employees of the office for cause and in accordance with state law.

(c) Such office's principal office shall be in the county of Albany.

2. The office shall establish, promote, and administer reentry programs in the state.

(a) Such office may enter into agreements with any person, firm, corporation, municipality, or governmental agency as may be necessary or

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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convenient to carry out the functions, powers, and duties expressly set forth in this section.

(b) Such office shall provide incarcerated individuals with reentry assistance that includes, but is not limited to, establishing reentry programs inside correctional facilities and local correctional facilities and providing assistance in applying for public benefits, referrals to mental health providers and substance use disorder service providers, connections to employment opportunities and job training programs, assistance in finding stable housing options to be available upon release, and general supports and services that may be helpful for an individual reintegrating into the community. Such offices shall:

(i) screen each incarcerated individual within seven days of the start of their sentence to collect from such individual information concerning:

(1) the incarcerated individual's medical needs, including, but not limited to, medical conditions, medications, mental health care, and disabilities; and

(2) the incarcerated individual's level of education and job readiness;

(ii) ensure that a reentry preparation caseworker is available to meet with incarcerated individuals for in-person reentry preparation meetings. Such caseworker shall meet with an incarcerated individual:

(1) within thirty days of an incarcerated individual's admission to a correctional facility or local correctional facility to create a reentry plan in collaboration with such individual and connect them with available on-site reentry services and programs;

(2) when an incarcerated individual elects to meet with a caseworker for reentry counseling and support related to such individual's reentry preparations; and

(3) at least six months before an incarcerated individual's scheduled release to connect them with support in obtaining housing, employment, healthcare, and other support designed to facilitate such individual's successful transition to the community;

(iii) make reentry assistance available to incarcerated individuals for the duration of their confinement in a correctional facility or local correctional facility and up to three years after the date such individuals are released; and

(iv) ensure that incarcerated individuals have transportation to their residence within the state on the day such individuals are released.

(c) Such office shall create and maintain a public directory of reentry support services provided by the state, municipalities within the state, the federal government, and community organizations. Such directory shall be:

(i) electronically available to the public; and

(ii) provided in printed form to incarcerated individuals at least six months before such individuals are scheduled to be released.

(d) Such office shall take the necessary steps to ensure that incarcerated individuals have access to state, federal, or private health insurers, including Medicaid and Medicare, upon release.

§ 3. The annual budget submitted by the governor shall separately state the recommended appropriations for the office of reentry services. Upon enactment, these separately stated appropriations for the office shall not be decreased by interchange with any other appropriation, notwithstanding the state finance law.

§ 4. This act shall take effect on the first of January next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.