

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:

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

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

5 § 837-x. Office of reentry services. 1. There is hereby established
6 within the division an office of reentry services to facilitate success-
7 ful reintegration into the community by incarcerated individuals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (a) Such office may enter into agreements with any person, firm,
29 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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1 convenient to carry out the functions, powers, and duties expressly set
2 forth in this section.

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

12 (i) screen each incarcerated individual within seven days of the start
13 of their sentence to collect from such individual information concern-
14 ing:

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

18 (2) the incarcerated individual's level of education and job read-
19 iness;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

44 (i) electronically available to the public; and

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

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

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

55 § 4. This act shall take effect on the first of January next succeed-
56 ing the date on which it shall have become a law.