

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1207 Operation New Hope
SPONSOR(S): Shoaf
TIED BILLS: IDEN./SIM. BILLS: SB 1198

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Justice Appropriations Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Smith	Keith
2) Judiciary Committee	21 Y, 0 N	Padgett	Kramer
3) Appropriations Committee	27 Y, 0 N	Smith	Pridgeon

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Operation New Hope (ONH) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide support, life and job skills training for individuals with a history of involvement with the criminal justice system; with an ultimate goal of placement in sustainable employment. ONH currently delivers pre-release services to 30 facilities across the State of Florida and has assisted more than 9,000 individuals since 1999.

Section 944.706, F.S., provides that any inmate eligible for release is eligible for transition assistance. The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) may contract with the Department of Children and Families, the Salvation Army, and other public or private organizations, including faith-based service groups, for the provision of basic support services for releasees.

The bill creates s. 944.7071, F.S., to authorize the FDC to contract with ONH, in accordance with s. 944.706, F.S., to provide reentry services including, but not limited to, counseling, job placement, money management assistance, and programs that address substance abuse, mental health, and co-occurring conditions. Such contracts must be authorized by and consistent with funding appropriated in the General Appropriations Act.

The bill does not appear to have a fiscal impact on state or local government.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Reentry Programming

The Transition Assistance Program Act¹ directs the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) to assist incarcerated individuals who are re-entering society, and in accordance with adopted administrative rules², FDC is authorized to pay contractual services in support of such re-entry programs and activities that address the needs of individuals re-entering society, subject to the requirements of chs. 215, 216, and 287, F.S.³

Section 944.706, F.S., provides that any inmate eligible for release is eligible for transition assistance. The FDC may contract with the Department of Children and Families, the Salvation Army, and other public or private organizations, including faith-based service groups, for the provision of basic support services for releasees.⁴

FDC currently contracts with a number of organizations, including Operation New Hope (ONH), to provide pre- and post-release reintegration services. Funding is provided for these programs through recurring and nonrecurring appropriations provided in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).⁵

Operation New Hope

ONH is a nonprofit organization exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The FDC currently contracts with ONH to provide reentry services and implement the following three programs: Ready4Release, Ready4Work, and Ready4Success.

ONH, through the contractual purchase order with FDC, provides reentry services, including, but not limited to case management, career development, life skills training, job skills training, family reunification, financial assistance, and job placement assistance. ONH provides both pre- and post-release services to currently incarcerated individuals within twelve months of release and ex-offenders within traveling distance of ONH locations. ONH currently serves individuals in Duval, Columbia, Gadsden, Volusia, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties.⁶

Ready4Release

Ready4Release is the primary program within ONH that works to provide services leading up to an inmate's release from incarceration in 30 of Florida's correctional facilities. Those enrolled in the program receive a direct connection to an experienced case manager on the outside who will aid in reentry, development of an Individualized Release Plan, coordination of housing prior to release, transportation from a Greyhound Station to the Ready4Work location (when available), program acceleration by receiving credit for completed Compass100 courses, and a welcome home package.⁷

¹ Ss. 944.701–944.708, F.S.

² R. 33-601.504, F.A.C.

³ Chapter 215, F.S., provides general provisions related to financial matters, including transparency in government spending requirements; Chapter 216, F.S., provides provisions related to overall state planning and budgeting; and Chapter 287, F.S., provides provisions related to the procurement of personal property and services, including competitive procurement requirements.

⁴ S. 944.706, F.S.

⁵ Florida Department of Corrections, Agency Analysis of 2023 House Bill 1207, p. 2 (Mar. 13, 2023).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Operation New Hope program pamphlet, <https://operationnewhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ready4Release-Brochure-4.13.21-compressed.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2023)

Ready4Work

Ready4Work is a program within ONH, serving the areas surrounding Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa. The program works to provide job placement services to inmates reentering the workforce. Services to inmates include: transitional housing, bus passes, individualized plans for success, career development, resume writing, counseling services, vocational training, job connections, and stipends. As of 2020, 370 clients have completed this program and were placed in full-time jobs.⁸

Ready4Success

Ready4Success is a program of ONH that works to provide case management, career development, and other crucial program services in a blended service model that is primarily virtual, during incarceration. Specific services include online employability skills training, job placement assistance, vocational training opportunities, transitional housing assistance, bus passes, case management, clothing resources, healthcare support, and financial incentives.⁹

State Funding for Operation New Hope

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015-16, ONH began receiving a recurring appropriation of \$2,225,000 in the GAA.¹⁰ Prior to Fiscal Year 2015-16, ONH had received different recurring appropriation amounts. Contracts for commodities or services may be awarded without competitive procurement if state or federal law prescribes with whom the agency must contract or if the rate of payment or recipient of funds is established during the appropriations process.¹¹

Additionally, ONH requested and received \$3,450,000 in nonrecurring funding as “appropriations projects” in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 GAA.¹² Legislative Joint Rules require, for an “appropriations project” to be included in a budget conference committee report, the project must be included in a bill or an amendment placed into a budget conference and specified information about the project must have been published online.¹³ Funding of an “appropriations project” is limited to nonrecurring funds. Appropriations for projects are not subject to the “appropriations project” requirements and limitations if specifically authorized by statute.¹⁴

Effect of the Bill

HB 1207 creates s. 944.7071, F.S., to authorize the FDC to contract with ONH, in accordance with s. 944.706, F.S., to provide reentry services to inmates including support and skills training prior to, during, and after release from incarceration. The contract must be authorized by and consistent with funding appropriated in the GAA.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

SECTION 1: Creates s. 944.7071 F.S., relating to Operation New Hope.

SECTION 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

⁸ Operation New Hope program pamphlet, <https://operationnewhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ready4Release-Brochure-4.13.21-compressed.pdf> (last visited Mar. 29, 2023)

⁹ Operation New Hope – Ready4Success, <https://operationnewhope.org/our-programs/ready4success/> (last visited Mar. 29, 2023)

¹⁰ Specific Appropriation 766, Ch. 15-232, Laws of Fla.

¹¹ S. 287.057(10), F.S.

¹² Specific Appropriation 726, Ch. 22-156, Laws of Fla.

¹³ Joint Rule 2.3, Joint Rules of the Florida Legislature (2022-2024).

¹⁴ Joint Rule 2.2(4)(b), Joint Rules of the Florida Legislature (2022-2024).

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

The bill does not appear to impact state government revenues.

2. Expenditures:

The bill does not require the expenditure of funds.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

To the extent the bill allows Operation New Hope to be eligible for additional funding, the bill could positively impact the program.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. The bill does not appear to require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds, reduce the authority that counties or municipalities have to raise revenue in the aggregate, or reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES