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**HOUSE BILL 1161**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2025 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Ryu

Prefiled 01/03/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the veteran employability  
2 training and career advancement for reentry program; adding a new  
3 chapter to Title 28B RCW; and providing an expiration date.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The definitions in this section apply  
6 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires  
7 otherwise.

8 (1) "College board" means the state board for community and  
9 technical colleges created in chapter 28B.50 RCW.

10 (2) "Community college" has the same meaning as in RCW  
11 28B.50.030.

12 (3) "Correctional facility" has the same meaning as defined in  
13 RCW 72.09.015.

14 (4) "Department" means the department of corrections.

15 (5) "Immediate family" has the same meaning as defined in RCW  
16 72.09.015.

17 (6) "Justice involved" has the same meaning as "inmate" as  
18 defined in RCW 72.09.015 and includes currently or formerly  
19 incarcerated individuals and defendants participating in pretrial  
20 diversion programs 18 to 24 months in length in Pierce, King, or  
21 Snohomish county.

1 (7) "Participant" means an eligible justice involved veteran who  
2 has been approved and accepted to participate in the program.

3 (8) "Program" means the veteran employability training and career  
4 advancement for reentry program created in section 2 of this act.

5 (9) "Veteran" means any person who, regardless of discharge, has  
6 served in any branch of the armed forces of the United States.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for  
8 this specific purpose, the veteran employability training and career  
9 advancement for reentry program is established within the college  
10 board to provide individualized transitional and soft skills to  
11 justice involved veterans and their families to improve economic  
12 well-being, reduce recidivism, prevent homelessness, improve  
13 reintegration, and provide a workforce that is educated and trained  
14 for living-wage careers of the 21st century.

15 (2) In administering the program, the college board shall select  
16 one community college west of the crest of the Cascade mountain range  
17 to participate in the program by serving participants. Community  
18 colleges with demonstrated records of providing similar services must  
19 be prioritized.

20 (3) The selected community college shall:

21 (a) Make use of available programs, courses, and methods to  
22 deliver transitional employment and reentry readiness materials to  
23 participants; and

24 (b) Employ a full-time equivalent reentry and educational  
25 navigator to determine eligibility and, in collaboration with the  
26 department, establish contact with eligible justice involved  
27 veterans. The navigator shall provide participants individualized  
28 transitional reentry and employment readiness services including,  
29 where applicable:

30 (i) Requesting written permission from participants to contact  
31 and offer services to their immediate family;

32 (ii) Conducting intensive intake interviews with participants and  
33 approved immediate family;

34 (iii) Verifying eligibility by obtaining proof of military  
35 service in any branch of the armed forces of the United States;

36 (iv) Collaborating with the department and other relevant  
37 agencies to deliver individualized prerelease programs through  
38 correspondence, approved textbooks, or core curriculum objectives;

1 (v) Assisting in preparing and updating program-specific  
2 individualized transitional reentry and employment readiness plans  
3 based on assessment scores of the employment readiness scale;

4 (vi) In collaboration with the department, assisting in  
5 developing a postrelease transitional support system with timely and  
6 measurable steps that supports a participant's transitional reentry  
7 and employment readiness plan created in (b) (v) of this subsection;

8 (vii) Providing approved immediate family support services  
9 outlined in section 3 of this act;

10 (viii) Conducting regular virtual or in-person check-ins to  
11 measure progress of soft skills development;

12 (ix) Assisting with career development skills; and

13 (x) Utilizing funding from federal, state, and local agencies to  
14 support participants or their immediate family.

15 (4) To be eligible for services under the program, an individual  
16 must:

17 (a) Be a justice involved veteran:

18 (i) Within 24 months of release from incarceration or within 24  
19 months postincarceration; or

20 (ii) Participating in a pretrial diversion program 18 to 24  
21 months in length in Pierce, King, or Snohomish county;

22 (b) Complete the employment readiness scale biannually to measure  
23 self-efficacy and outcome expectancy; and

24 (c) Complete a career research project.

25 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for  
26 this specific purpose, the college board and the selected community  
27 college shall collaborate with the department of veterans affairs to  
28 develop eligibility criteria for approved immediate family of  
29 participants to receive funds to assist in:

30 (a) Rental support not to exceed \$1,000 per month up to 12 months  
31 paid directly to the landlord, housing provider, or mortgage holder;

32 (b) Food assistance not to exceed \$500 per month up to six  
33 months;

34 (c) Driver's license fees including unpaid fines, auto insurance  
35 premiums, auto registration fees, public transportation, and auto  
36 repair expenses not to exceed \$1,000 within 24 months; and

37 (d) Purchasing work appropriate clothing and training  
38 certificates not to exceed \$1,500 within 24 months.

1 (2) No funds allocated under subsection (1) of this section may  
2 be used for unpaid child support or legal financial obligation fines.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** Subject to amounts appropriated for this  
4 specific purpose, the department shall:

5 (1) Develop and implement processes by which it can identify and  
6 approve participation of any qualifying justice involved veterans  
7 incarcerated in a correctional facility or under department  
8 supervision in the program;

9 (2) Assist participants incarcerated in a correctional facility  
10 with receiving correspondence, textbooks, and other curriculum; and

11 (3) Document participation of justice involved veterans  
12 incarcerated in a correctional facility in the program to ensure  
13 sufficient recordkeeping and facilitate uninterrupted participation  
14 in the program in the event a participant is transferred to another  
15 correctional facility.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) Subject to amounts appropriated for  
17 this specific purpose, the department of veterans affairs shall:

18 (a) Assign two full-time equivalent veteran service officers or  
19 staff members trained in the benefits available to veterans to  
20 collect data on veterans entering a correctional facility and  
21 veterans under department supervision; and

22 (b) Share data collected under (a) of this subsection with the  
23 college board and the selected community college.

24 (2) A national veterans organization may provide the veteran  
25 service officers or staff members assigned in subsection (1)(a) of  
26 this section.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** An interagency work group of the college  
28 board, the department of veterans affairs, and the selected community  
29 college is created to analyze the feasibility of expanding the  
30 program statewide. By December 1, 2025, the work group must submit a  
31 report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature  
32 pursuant to RCW 43.01.036.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** In compliance with RCW 43.01.036, the  
34 college board, in collaboration with the selected community college  
35 and the department of veterans affairs, shall report to the

1 legislature by November 1, 2025, and by July 1st annually thereafter  
2 on:

3 (1) The number of participants and immediate family participating  
4 in the program;

5 (2) The level of educational attainment of participants;

6 (3) Employment statistics of participants;

7 (4) Recidivism rates of participants; and

8 (5) The nature and extent of assistance participants received  
9 under the program.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** Sections 1 through 7 of this act expire  
11 August 1, 2031.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** Sections 1 through 8 of this act  
13 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

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