

Improving Public Safety by Positively Changing Lives

Reentry Housing Assistance Program

Fact Sheet
October 2024



AT A GLANCE

Total Vouchers Issued for 7/1/23-6/30/24

ERD: 7,180
Reentry: 1,850
GRE: 1,695
CPA: 136

Release Plans Requiring Voucher Assistance for 7/1/23-6/30/24

52% (2,976) of Investigative ORPs used ERD Housing Voucher benefits
23% (2,057) of Notification ORPs used Reentry Housing Voucher benefits

Housing Vendors by County

26 of 39 counties have at least one housing vendor

Number of Residences Accepting Housing Vouchers

Approximately 749 residences statewide accept DOC Housing Vouchers

Housing Voucher Funding for 7/1/23-6/30/24

ERD: \$5,602,628
Reentry: \$655,000
GRE: \$2,821,350
CPA: \$34,740

Summary

In 2009, through the passage of Senate Bill 5525, the Washington State Legislature established housing vouchers for incarcerated individuals who were at risk of remaining in prison past their earned release date (ERD). The vouchers were enacted as a cost-saving measure during the Great Recession by reducing the prison population.

Program Overview

The Reentry Housing Assistance Program (RHAP) provides housing assistance to individuals transferring to partial confinement or releasing to the community. The level of service provided by the program is determined by an individual's situation and specific need. Services may be limited to simple housing referrals or include funding through the Department's housing vouchers. The program currently offers four types of housing vouchers:

- *ERD Housing Vouchers*
- *Reentry Housing Vouchers*
- *Graduated Reentry (GRE) Housing Assistance*
- *Community Parenting Alternative (CPA) Housing Assistance*

Individuals releasing to the community may be eligible for the ERD or Reentry Housing Assistance. To request housing assistance, the assigned case manager must submit Reentry Housing Assistance Program Application. Housing Assistance may provide a maximum benefit of \$700 per month for a period of up to six months.

Individuals transferring to partial confinement either through the GRE Program or the CPA Program may be eligible for housing assistance. To request housing assistance, the corresponding program specialist will notify the RHAP of the need. This housing assistance may provide a maximum benefit of \$700 per month. GRE participants may receive up to six months of housing assistance, while CPA participants may receive housing assistance for the length of the program.

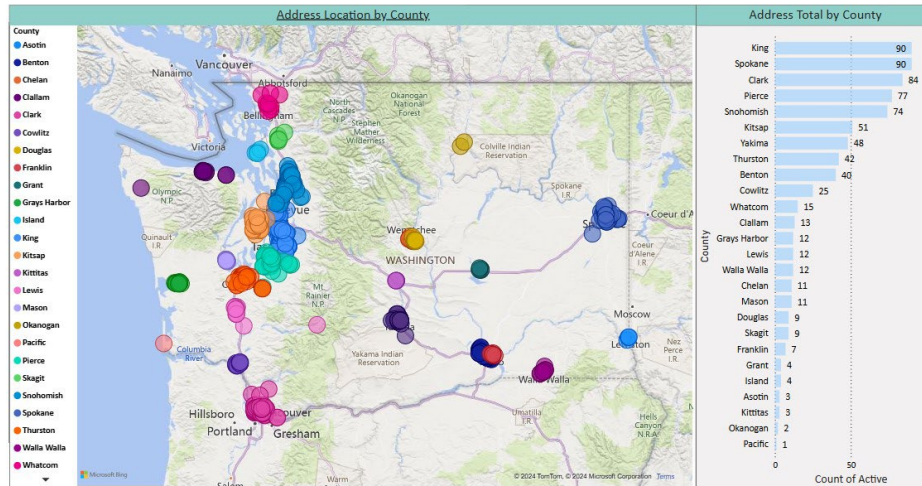
Housing assistance will be provided if the individual meets the program's defined criteria, remains in compliance before and after release, and continues to have a genuine need for the services while in the community.

Statewide Transitional Housing Directory and Housing Vendors

Regional Housing Specialists complete an orientation with potential housing vendors. To receive vouchers, housing vendors agree to maintain a clean and safe residence and abide by local city codes and regulations. Housing vendors are not contracted with the Department of Corrections (DOC) and only receive a payment if the voucher participant is residing in their home. The Regional Housing Specialist will make introductions and facilitate conversations between the vendor and the local DOC field offices. Local law enforcement may also be notified of the new vendor/address once the orientation and/or the address is approved, it is added to the Statewide Transitional Housing Directory (STHD). The STHD is updated regularly and is a

resource for DOC staff to locate housing for both voucher and non-voucher individuals. As part of the Reentry Expansion, RHAP was approved for a Management Analyst to update the STHD from a PDF document into a SharePoint list. This update is intended to make the STHD more user-friendly by having sorting and filtering functionalities and is updated in real-time with changes that will allow for quicker transition planning.

Washington DOC Statewide Traditional Housing Directory Map



2022 Legislative Session Impacts

Substitute House Bill 1818 impacted the RHAP in two significant ways. First, it extended the length of our housing vouchers from three months to six months. This increase will allow individuals to save money, engage in other reentry programs, and focus on other pro-social activities. Second, House Bill 1818 expanded eligibility for those who may receive financial housing assistance. Historically, the RHAP could only assist financially those individuals who required an approved release address to release prior to their maximum incarceration date. House Bill 1818 created the Reentry Housing Voucher, which now allows anyone releasing from a DOC facility to be eligible for a Reentry Housing Voucher, this includes individuals releasing with no supervision.

Expanding Voucher Eligibility

With the reduction in prison population and increased funding for vouchers, the RHAP is underutilizing its budget. To increase participation, we have requested expanded eligibility for housing assistance to include allowing individuals to receive all six voucher payments regardless of maximum incarceration dates, allowing individuals not directly released to supervision due to warrants, treatment, or other matters, allowing individuals to request voucher benefits at 60 days prior to ERD, and allowing individuals to remain eligible for their 10-day early release.

Outlook

Transitional housing continues to be an important piece of reentry. Stable housing is recognized as a launching pad for success. Without this basic need, individuals have a much more difficult time accomplishing their other goals. Housing costs continue to make it prohibitive for many individuals releasing from prison to secure permanent housing. As a result, we do see individuals remaining in transitional housing for longer periods of time. This does create housing availability issues for people releasing. We continue to work with local housing authorities and governments to identify, support, and assist in the creation of affordable and attainable housing.

For more information:

Amanda Lease, Housing Program Administrator, amanda.lease@doc.wa.gov

Reentry Housing Assistance Program Email box: DOCReentryHousingAssistance@doc1.wa.gov