

# Department of Social and Health Services and Department of Corrections Service Alignment

Fact Sheet  
October 2025



## Overview

The Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Corrections are committed to aligning services to support successful reentry for individuals exiting confinement. To achieve this, a service alignment administrator supports both agencies and their mutual clients by developing strategies that connect DSHS services with DOC programs.

This work contributes equally to both departments' goals of reducing poverty and recidivism. By building bridges among programs and initiatives to benefit mutual clients, and by identifying areas to improve processes within both departments, we are setting up Washingtonians for smoother transitions back with other state agencies to improve services (as per Washington state's commitment to [Reentry 2030](#) and [Executive Order 24-03](#)).

## Current Initiatives

### Reentry 2030

"[Reentry 2030](#) is a national movement driving meaningful reforms in how we support individuals returning to their communities after incarceration. By addressing barriers to employment, education, and housing, we aim to break the cycles of recidivism, homelessness, and hospitalization. Working to reform and reframe reentry empowers individuals to rebuild their lives, strengthens communities, and enhances public safety nationwide."<sup>1</sup>

Reentry 2030 aims to scale up access to supports, remove barriers to opportunities and economic mobility, and advance racial equity, so individuals can better access services and have healthier outcomes. The service alignment administrator is integral to its success by identifying and addressing whole system design issues with cumulative impacts on poverty reduction efforts.

The Washington State Reentry Council (housed within the Department of Commerce) is heading up this effort, and subcommittees are being developed. Additionally, during the 2025 legislative session, SB 5139 instructed the Reentry Council to increase its number of representatives, including adding one from DSHS.

### Parents and Families


The service alignment administrator will participate in initiatives focused on parents who are incarcerated as well as families with a parent who is incarcerated to evaluate and address child support mechanisms and other family supports from both sides of the equation. This includes connecting with parent and family navigators through both agencies, participating in and contributing to fatherhood initiatives, and actively engaging in processes concerning child support for incarcerated parents.

### Interagency Reentry Workgroup

Led by the Department of Commerce, this workgroup is intended to focus on sharing the work happening across state reentry programs and coming together to collectively support successful futures for those most impacted. This work includes sharing reentry knowledge, learning about new approaches and exploring opportunities to advance this important work. The SAA is the DSHS representative on this workgroup.

One of the primary focuses of this workgroup has been reviewing and addressing second-chance hiring processes and procedures at our respective agencies. To that end, the service alignment administrator works with a small team to review and address the "[Secretary's List of Disqualifying Crimes](#)" and [WAC 388-113-0020](#).

<sup>1</sup> Reentry 2030. Available at: [reentry2030.org](https://reentry2030.org). Last accessed June 13, 2025.



A report will be developed to describe the current hiring process and procedure for people with past convictions, issues with that process and proposed solutions to increase hiring options at DSHS for people with past convictions. In addition, partnerships are being developed within DSHS Human Resources offices to address this issue directly.

### Local Reentry Supports

Part of the process for coordinating efforts between DSHS and DOC involves connecting local reentry services. For example, the DOC reentry navigator, regional child support manager, Community Services Division local planning area group, DOC health care navigator and WorkSource team can all collaborate at the local level to support people exiting incarceration in Washington state.

### Materials, Resources and Communications

DOC and DSHS have existing publications for internal use, external use, impacted families, etc. Not all of them are up to date.

Updates to the "[Beyond the Walls: A Guide to Services for Families Affected by Incarceration](#)" publication will be completed during this annual plan's timeframe. Additionally, internal SharePoint sites are under development at both DSHS and DOC, and an external resources and information-sharing website is being developed.

### DSHS/DOC Community Transition Collaboration<sup>2</sup>

The DSHS/DOC CTC Project was created in 2017 to help individuals exiting incarceration make an application for public benefits as soon as they reenter the community, so they have the best chance to thrive. This workgroup is addressing the data access needs of DOC health services and psychiatric social worker employees for post-reentry data collection, though it could expand to other alignment initiatives in the future.

### Strengthening and Broadening the Role of TANF Local Planning Area Teams

Strengthening and broadening the role of TANF Local Planning Area teams to work with DOC institutions and reentry centers to address their unique challenges and barriers to DSHS programming and services at a systemic level. Initial contact has been made with LPAs but more in-depth involvement will be needed.

## Potential Opportunities

The following opportunities represent ideas that still require research, vetting, collaboration and logistical planning. They seem to have promise and, if implemented, would likely have a positive impact on individuals, families and communities.

### Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards Issued Upon Exit from DOC Custody

Issuing EBT cards upon exit from DOC custody would ensure people who meet eligibility for the Food Assistance Program have access to a nourishing food source immediately, regardless of their location and without needing to contact DSHS or have a mailing address to wait for a card in the mail.


Access to food and shelter are crucial elements of a successful reentry plan, specifically inside the critical 72 hours immediately after reentering the community. Even if the EBT cards were inactive until after an interview with the DSHS Customer Contact Center, having a card would positively impact the person's likelihood of a successful transition.

### Reentry Centers | Co-located Offices

State agencies and community organizations are reducing their physical footprint and closing offices. That reduces access points for individuals in the community seeking in-person services. This is a great time to consolidate services, especially in metropolitan areas where access requires planning and navigation. Bringing service providers together in central and convenient locations would provide a more efficient approach to reentry and transition services.

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<sup>2</sup> Previously known as TOAP, or the Transitional Offenders' Assistance Project, this group recently changed its name to use more human-centered, supportive and appropriate language.





## Questions

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