



CTED | Community, Trade and
Economic Development

Offender Re-entry Transitional Housing Pilot Program

RCW 43.185C.200

November 2008
Report to the Legislature
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6157 which directed the Department of Corrections (DOC) to implement re-entry strategies for offenders being released from correctional facilities. The intent of the legislation is to increase public safety by supporting evidence-based programming for offenders focusing on their successful re-entry into society.

ESSB 6157 also required the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) to administer a housing pilot program for individuals exiting correctional facilities who are high-risk, high-need or are without a viable release plan. In collaboration with DOC, we are pleased to present this first annual report on the *Re-entry Housing Pilot Program* (RHPP) as required by RCW 43.185C.200.

More than 8,000 offenders return to their families and community each year. There is an imminent need to thoughtfully plan re-entry support for these individuals in order to reduce Washington’s recidivism rate.

Housing is a practical hub around which necessary protections and supports can be logically structured. To test the extent to which housing may smooth re-entry into the community, three housing pilot sites were selected in King, Spokane, and Clark counties for the 2008-09 RHPP. The pilots are projected to serve 181 high-risk offenders through June 2009. To date, more than 90 individuals are receiving comprehensive services and supportive housing through this pilot program. The following chart briefly summarizes the information as required by RCW 43.185C.200.

Table 1 – Summary of RHPP Statistics

County	Number Seeking Housing	Number Eligible for Housing (Referrals to RHPP)	Number in Housing (In RHPP)	Number Committed New Offense While in Housing
King	512	216	40	1
Spokane	127	97	25	0
Clark	94	79	23	0
TOTAL	733	392	88	1

*Another 446 seeking housing from Pierce, Yakima and Snohomish

CTED commissioned the Washington State University (WSU) to conduct an evaluation of the RHPP. Preliminary data indicates that the majority of RHPP participants have remained stable in housing while successfully complying with the terms of their supervision. This can be credited to the strong collaboration between the pilot projects

and DOC's Community Justice Centers (CJCs), Community Corrections Officers, law enforcement, landlords, and neighborhood groups.

The following chapters provide an overview of CTED's re-entry housing pilots, a review of the legislatively required data in the program, information on outcomes to date from the WSU evaluator and, lastly, information about key partners.

Re-entry Housing Pilot Program Overview

Program Requirements

RCW 43.185C.200 directed that CTED’s pilot program offer up to 12 months of supportive housing and services for program participants. After consulting with the DOC and an ad-hoc advisory group, CTED added a program requirement that participants be referred and supervised by the DOC while in the program.

Pilot Selection

CTED awarded three grants to organizations after a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in the fall of 2007. Thirteen proposals from five of the six eligible counties responded to the RFP, requesting more than \$7 million dollars to serve approximately 460 individuals. Eligible counties were those with Community Justice Centers: Snohomish, King, Pierce, Clark, Spokane and Yakima counties.

Following a careful review of applicants, CTED selected pilot sites in King, Clark, and Spokane counties. In accordance with program priorities, RHPP projects serve only high-risk individuals releasing from Washington state prisons.

Table 2 – CTED Selected Pilot Sites

County – Contractor	FY 08 Award*	FY 09 Award**	Projected Number of Participants to be Served
King – Sound Mental Health	\$156,414	\$1,145,809	85
Spokane – NE Washington Housing Solution	\$148,707	\$806,873	62
Clark – YW Housing	\$54,816	\$256,292	34
TOTAL	\$359,937	\$2,208,974	181

* Due to a FY 08 budget decrease, ESHB 2687, CTED reduced the pass-through to providers

** Due to a FY 09 budget increase, ESHB 2687, CTED increased the awards

More detailed descriptions of the pilot sites can be found in Appendix A.

LEGISLATIVE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

RCW 43.185C.200 requires CTED to report on the following data elements, in collaboration with the DOC.

The Number of High-risk Offenders Seeking Housing

For the six counties with CJs, DOC reported an estimated 1,179 high-risk offenders seeking housing in 2008.

The DOC begins the transition process for offenders 18 months prior to an Earned Release Date (ERD). The type of conviction, risk to re-offend and relevant sentencing laws dictate the processes that must be followed (according to RCW, WAC and related policies). For those offenders required to have an approved address, the Offender Release Plan (ORP) is initiated approximately six months prior to a release date.

To estimate the number of high-risk offenders seeking housing, DOC pulled fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008) data from the Offender Based Tracking System for six identified counties: King, Pierce, Spokane, Yakima, Snohomish and Clark. There were 3,008 high-risk offenders identified in this sample. The ORPs for these individuals were reviewed and of the plans identified, 644 were “denied;” 535 remained “open.” This totaled 1,179 offenders in the six counties who were determined to be seeking housing at time of release.

Table 3 – NUMBER OF HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS SEEKING HOUSING

FY 08 DOC <i>prison</i>* “High-Risk” Offender Released into the Six Eligible Counties = 3,008	
# of offenders with housing identified	# of offenders who needed housing
1,829 (61%)	1,179 (39%)

*It is important to note that not all offenders under DOC community supervision are released from the prison system. DOC can also supervise jail releases. As of January 2008, while 36 percent were from prison, 64 percent were not from prison.

Number of Offenders Eligible for Housing

In 2008, 392 high-risk offenders were found eligible for RHPP housing.

Prior to an offender's release date, a DOC counselor can make a referral to a CJC and a pilot project. The CJC and RHPP contractor can then collaborate on a placement plan based on the offender's release date, county of origin, ORP status, and any notification requirements. During this process the DOC may also determine that the offender must be released to a different county due to victim or family issues or the availability of housing to prevent homelessness.

Once the RHPP contractor receives the referral, they assess the individual's willingness to participate in the program and determine their own capacity to support that individual's specific needs. Sometimes, after learning more about the program, offenders screen themselves out and decline the opportunity to participate. Having to follow program rules, comply with treatment or find employment are some of the reasons why they choose not to participate.

The following table indicates the number of high-risk offenders referred to the RHPP from February through August 2008.

Table 4 – Number of High-Risk Offenders Eligible for Housing

County - Contractor	# of Referrals
King – Sound Mental Health	216
Spokane – NE Washington Housing Solution	79
Clark – YW Housing	97
TOTAL	392

Number of Offenders Who Receive the Housing

As of August 2008, 88 offenders were enrolled and in housing under the RHPP.

The three RHPP sites hope to serve 181 individuals over the course of the contract period through June 30, 2009. While the pilots were ready to enroll participants in January and February of 2008, the DOC had not finalized their referral process until March of that year. Additionally, information and training (of prison and CJC staff) on how to refer someone to the RHPP took longer than expected, resulting in lower enrollment levels. Despite this initial delay, referrals to the program have continued at a steady pace and the contractors are confident they will meet their year-end projections.

Administering the re-entry housing pilot program has provided CTED with an opportunity to better understand the complex needs of offenders returning to their communities. We have gained more insight into the many facets of planning for and actually releasing an individual from a correctional facility and how we can support our housing providers through the process. We feel the pilot sites have done an outstanding job in working with the CJs to secure appropriate housing and services for program participants. Examples of solid working relationships between the pilot sites and their local DOC staff, landlords, law enforcement, and neighborhoods abound.

The following table shows the number of RHPP participants in housing as of August 2008.

Table 5 – Number of Offenders in Housing

County - Contractor	Participants to Date
King – Sound Mental Health	40
Spokane – NE Washington Housing Solution	25
Clark – YW Housing	23
TOTAL	88

The Number of Offenders Who Commit New Crimes While Residing in the Housing

As of August 2008, only one participant committed a new crime while in RHPP housing.

Based on a total sample of 80 offenders who have been accepted into the RHPP as of August 14, 2008, only eight participants (10 percent of the total) have terminated from the program. The following table provides an overview of the terminations.

TABLE 6 – Reasons Participants Terminated From the Program

County	Clark	King	Spokane	Total
Terminated	2	4	2	8
New Offense /Non Compliance	2	1	0	3
Drug Use	0	0	1	1
Abscond/ Non Compliance	0	3	1	4

In the first eight months of operation, only three offenders have been terminated due to a new crime and one due to illicit drug use. Four participants have been terminated because they absconded and were not compliant with RHPP program guidelines.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH STUDY

Washington State University (WSU) was selected from a competitive Request for Qualification and Quotation (RFQQ) process to provide an evaluation of the RHPP. While ESSB 6157 did not require CTED to conduct an evaluation of the program, the Department believed it was imperative to understand if providing housing and services for high-risk offenders would reduce recidivism. The evaluators are comparing RHPP participants to a group of high-risk individuals who are not receiving RHPP support for up to two years post-program completion to determine if supportive housing made a difference in their lives.

Research Evaluation

The existing research on offender re-entry shows that there are multiple factors related to an offender's success or failure after being released from prison. The research is clear that in order for the treatment and support of offenders to be effective in reducing recidivism, it must be directly connected to an offender's criminogenic needs such as poverty, drug addiction, lack of education, and other factors directly linked to various types of offending (e.g., sex offending). It is also clear that various types of treatment programs, life skills related programs, and various community supervision approaches, all have an effect on the likelihood that an offender will be successful after release. Of most importance to the current study is the notion that access to stable housing is crucial in assisting individuals with their transition from prison to the community. Stable housing allows for an offender's primary needs to be met while they are preparing to engage in reestablishing their lives in areas related to education, employment, family, and successful DOC supervision.

Methodology

A quasi-experimental, longitudinal design is being implemented to evaluate the RHPP. In a quasi-experimental design, subjects are assigned to the treatment group (RHPP) by criminal justice decision makers and are compared to a group comprised of similarly situated subjects (high-risk offenders not participating in the RHPP). These two groups are then compared, statistically controlling for any important initial group differences, to see if the treatment group performs differently than the comparison group. This methodological design increases the ability of the evaluators to isolate the effects of the treatment and to make sure that the outcomes are due to treatment effects (RHPP) and not some other relationship that may be influencing the behavior of RHPP participants.

The longitudinal design of the proposed study is also important. Instead of capturing outcomes at any given moment in time, a longitudinal approach allows for the measurement of change over time and between groups. This is important in a study such as this one, because it measures RHPP duration (up to 12 months support), the complex changes that may occur during the RHPP period (e.g., eviction, supervision violations, jail, etc.), and the time that an offender is at risk to recidivate after completion of the RHPP (one to two years post-completion of RHPP).

Preliminary Research Findings

To date, data is only available from the RHPP Client Information Survey and from RHPP team lists of offenders that have been referred to the program by the DOC. The data is limited due to the short time-frame in which offenders have been assigned to the program. The table below summarizes the data available through August 14, 2008.

Table 7 - NUMBER OF OFFENDERS REFERRED BY DOC

County	Clark	King	Spokane	
Offenders Referred				Total
Accepted	21	34	25	80
Rejected	8	39	33	80
Client Characteristics				Average
Age	35	43	36	39
Male	12	29	20	61
Female	9	5	5	19
Employed	0	0	3	3
Housing Type				
House	21	24	3	48
Apartment	0	10	16	26
Other	0	0	1	1
RHPP Clients Live w/				Total
Alone	3	6	13	22
1 roommate	5	8	1	14
2 or more roommates	13	20	5	38
Spouse or Partner	0	0	1	1

Research Summary

RHPP Participants. Preliminary findings based on the RHPP Provider Survey show that the RHPP teams are actively reviewing cases and admitting offenders to their respective programs in Clark, King, and Spokane Counties. This data shows that approximately 50 percent of offenders who are reviewed for participation in the RHPP are accepted. Those who are accepted are on average 39 years of age, the majority are male (76%), are unemployed (96%), and are transitioning to RHPP directly from prison (72%). Data on the race and ethnicity of offenders will be available in future analyses. Those who are rejected include those who do not meet the DOC referral criteria.

Future Research. As described in the research methods, data collection will continue from each of the providers through the RHPP Provider Survey. Data from the Washington State Institute of Public Policy's Criminal History Data Base (includes DOC and AOC data) and DOC will also be used to compare RHPP offenders with a similar group of offenders who reside in each of the RHPP counties but do not participate in the RHPP program. As the sample size increases over time, multivariate analyses will be conducted to determine whether the RHPP effectively reduces recidivism, what types of offenders are most likely to be terminated, and what types of offenders are most likely to be successful due to their participation in the RHPP.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to collaborating with the DOC, we continue to strategize with key partners on how to effectively support individuals leaving prison. Often, the person being discharged has received some level of state assistance before incarceration and will do so again after release. Family members of offenders may also be receiving some form of assistance from one or more of our partner agencies.

Recognizing the inter-dependencies created by this patchwork of services, Governor Christine Gregoire applied to the National Governors Association (NGA) to participate in a Policy Academy on Re-entry in 2006. Washington State was selected and received technical assistance from the NGA in developing interdisciplinary re-entry plans and strategies. The partner agencies, now called the Washington State Re-entry Partnership (WSRP) have since broadened the initial work of the academy and are now poised to make specific recommendations on systems improvements, align services with evidence based practices, and implement policies to support successful re-entry statewide.

To further strengthen this important work, the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) has included specific re-entry housing strategies in Washington State's Ten year Plan to End Homelessness and several ICH members have been key partners and advisors to the RHPP design and evaluation. The ICH will be able to leverage the work and strategies of the new WSRP.

As the RHPP continues to grow to reach its maximum potential, both the WSRP and the ICH will play a crucial role in determining how the Department can continue in ensuring public safety by providing housing and services to offenders returning to our communities.

For detailed information about the individual Pilot Programs,
please see Appendix A – attached