

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to inmate reentry; amending s.
3 944.704, F.S.; authorizing the Department of
4 Corrections to increase the number of employees
5 serving as transition specialists and employment
6 specialists; requiring transition assistance staff to
7 provide job assignment credentialing and industry
8 certification information to inmates before release;
9 amending s. 944.705, F.S.; requiring the department to
10 establish a telephone hotline for the benefit of
11 released offenders; requiring the department to
12 provide a comprehensive community reentry resource
13 directory to inmates before release; requiring the
14 department to use geographic forecasting data to
15 notify inmates about reentry resources before release;
16 requiring the department to allow certain
17 organizations to apply to be registered to provide
18 inmate reentry services; requiring the department to
19 adopt policies for screening, approving, and
20 registering such organizations authorizing contracting
21 with public or private educational institutions to
22 assist military veteran inmates in applying for
23 certain benefits; authorizing contracting with public
24 or private organizations to establish transitional
25 employment programs that provide employment

26 | opportunities to recently released inmates; requiring
 27 | rulemaking; amending s. 944.801, F.S.; authorizing the
 28 | department to expand the use of job assignment
 29 | credentialing and industry certifications; requiring
 30 | the department to develop a prison entrepreneurship
 31 | program and adopt procedures for inmate admission;
 32 | specifying requirements for the program; requiring the
 33 | department to enter into agreements with certain
 34 | entities to carry out duties associated with the
 35 | program; providing an effective date.

36 |
 37 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

38 |
 39 | Section 1. Section 944.704, Florida Statutes, is amended
 40 | to read:

41 | 944.704 Staff who provide transition assistance; duties.-

42 | (1) The department shall provide a transition assistance
 43 | specialist at each of the major institutions.

44 | (2) The department may increase the number of transition
 45 | assistance specialists in proportion to the number of inmates
 46 | served at each of the major institutions and may increase the
 47 | number of employment specialists per judicial circuit based on
 48 | the number of released inmates served under community
 49 | supervision in that circuit, subject to appropriations.

50 | (3) The transition assistance specialists' ~~whose~~ duties

51 include, but are not limited to:

52 (a)~~(1)~~ Coordinating delivery of transition assistance
53 program services at the institution and at the community
54 correctional centers authorized pursuant to s. 945.091(1)(b).

55 (b)~~(2)~~ Assisting in the development of each inmate's
56 postrelease plan.

57 (c)~~(3)~~ Obtaining job placement information. Such
58 information must include identifying any job assignment
59 credentialing or industry certifications for which the inmate is
60 eligible.

61 (d)~~(4)~~ Providing a written medical discharge plan and
62 referral to a county health department.

63 (e)~~(5)~~ For an inmate who is known to be HIV positive,
64 providing a 30-day supply of all HIV/AIDS-related medication
65 that the inmate is taking before ~~prior to~~ release, if required
66 under protocols of the Department of Corrections and treatment
67 guidelines of the United States Department of Health and Human
68 Services.

69 (f)~~(6)~~ Facilitating placement in a private transition
70 housing program, if requested by any eligible inmate. If an
71 inmate who is nearing his or her date of release requests
72 placement in a contracted substance abuse transition housing
73 program, the transition assistance specialist shall inform the
74 inmate of program availability and assess the inmate's need and
75 suitability for transition housing assistance. If an inmate is

76 approved for placement, the specialist shall assist the inmate
77 and coordinate the release of the inmate with the selected
78 program. If an inmate requests and is approved for placement in
79 a contracted faith-based substance abuse transition housing
80 program, the specialist must consult with the chaplain before
81 ~~prior to~~ such placement. In selecting inmates who are nearing
82 their date of release for placement in a faith-based program,
83 the department shall ensure that an inmate's faith orientation,
84 or lack thereof, will not be considered in determining admission
85 to the program and that the program does not attempt to convert
86 an inmate toward a particular faith or religious preference.

87 (g) ~~(7)~~ Providing a photo identification card to all
88 inmates prior to their release.

89 (4) ~~The~~ transition assistance specialist may not be a
90 correctional officer or correctional probation officer as
91 defined in s. 943.10.

92 Section 2. Subsections (3) through (6) of section 944.705,
93 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (4), (5), (6),
94 and (11), respectively, and new subsections (3), (7), (8), (9),
95 (10), and (12) are added to that section, to read:

96 944.705 Release orientation program.—

97 (3) (a) The department shall establish a toll-free hotline
98 for the benefit of released inmates. The hotline shall provide
99 information to released inmates seeking to obtain post-release
100 referrals for community based reentry services.

101 (b) Before an inmate's release, the department shall
102 provide the inmate with a comprehensive community reentry
103 resource directory, which shall be organized by county and
104 include the name, address, telephone number, and a description
105 of the services offered by each reentry service provider. The
106 directory shall also include the name, address, and telephone
107 number of existing portals of entry and the toll-free hotline
108 number required by paragraph (a).

109 (c) The department shall expand the use of the Glacier
110 geographic forecasting system to provide inmates with community-
111 specific reentry service provider referrals before release.

112 (7) A nonprofit faith-based, business and professional,
113 civic, or community organization may apply for registration with
114 the department to provide inmate reentry services. Reentry
115 services include, but are not limited to, counseling; providing
116 information on housing and job placement; money management
117 assistance; and programs addressing substance abuse, mental
118 health, or co-occurring conditions.

119 (8) The department shall adopt policies and procedures for
120 screening, approving, and registering an organization that
121 applies to provide inmate reentry services under subsection (7).
122 The department may deny approval and registration of an
123 organization or a representative from an organization if it
124 determines that the organization or representative does not meet
125 the requirements of the department's policies and procedures.

126 (9) The department may contract with a public or private
127 educational institution's Veterans Advocacy Clinic or Veterans
128 Legal Clinic to assist qualified veteran inmates in applying for
129 veteran's benefits upon release.

130 (10) The department is authorized to contract with public
131 or private organizations to establish transitional employment
132 programs that provide employment opportunities for released
133 inmates.

134 (12) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
135 section.

136 Section 3. Subsections (4) through (6) of section 944.801,
137 Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (6) through (8),
138 respectively, and new subsections (4) and (5) are added to that
139 section, to read:

140 944.801 Education for state prisoners.—

141 (4) The department is authorized to expand the use of job
142 assignment credentialing and industry certifications.

143 (5) The Correctional Education Program may establish a
144 prison entrepreneurship program and adopt procedures for
145 admitting student inmates. If the department elects to develop
146 the program, it must include at least 180 days of in-prison
147 education. Program curriculum must include a component on
148 developing a business plan, procedures for graduation and
149 certification of successful student inmates, and at least 90
150 days of transitional and postrelease continuing education

151 services. Transitional and postrelease continuing education
152 services may be offered to program graduates on a voluntary
153 basis and shall not be a requirement for completion of the
154 program. The department shall enter into agreements with public
155 or private colleges, universities, or other non-profit entities
156 to implement the program. The program shall be funded within
157 existing resources.

158 Section 4. This act shall take effect October 1, 2019.