

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to inmate transition assistance; amending  
 3           s. 944.704, F.S.; providing for specified positions for  
 4           inmate transition assistance to be created at state  
 5           correctional facilities; providing duties; providing that  
 6           certain positions should not be filled by correctional  
 7           officers or correctional probation officers; requiring  
 8           organization and funding of reentry coalition  
 9           coordinators; amending s. 944.705, F.S.; requiring the  
 10          Department of Corrections to include specified behavioral  
 11          programming within release orientation programs; amending  
 12          s. 944.707, F.S.; providing that funding for technology  
 13          enhancements should be sought for specified purposes;  
 14          requiring the Agency for Workforce Innovation to designate  
 15          specialists to provide services to ex-offenders; providing  
 16          an effective date.

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 18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 20           Section 1.   Section 944.704, Florida Statutes, is amended  
 21           to read:

22           944.704   Staff who provide transition assistance; duties.--

23           (1)   The following positions should be established and  
 24           funded on a recurring basis at state correctional facilities  
 25           ~~department shall provide a transition assistance specialist at~~  
 26           ~~each of the major institutions whose duties include, but are not~~  
 27           ~~limited to:~~

28            (a) (1) Transition assistant specialists, whose duties  
 29 include, but are not limited to: Coordinating delivery of  
 30 transition assistance program services at the institution and at  
 31 the community correctional centers authorized pursuant to s.  
 32 945.091(1) (b).

33            1. Administering in-depth needs assessments for returning  
 34 offenders.

35            2. (2) Assisting in the development of each inmate's  
 36 postrelease plan.

37            3. (3) Obtaining job placement information.

38            4. (4) Providing a written medical discharge plan and  
 39 referral to a county health department.

40            5. (5) For an inmate who is known to be HIV positive,  
 41 providing a 30-day supply of all HIV/AIDS-related medication  
 42 that the inmate is taking prior to release, if required under  
 43 protocols of the department of Corrections and treatment  
 44 guidelines of the United States Department of Health and Human  
 45 Services.

46            6. (6) Facilitating placement in a private transition  
 47 housing program, if requested by any eligible inmate. If an  
 48 inmate who is nearing his or her date of release requests  
 49 placement in a contracted substance abuse transition housing  
 50 program, the transition assistance specialist shall inform the  
 51 inmate of program availability and assess the inmate's need and  
 52 suitability for transition housing assistance. If an inmate is  
 53 approved for placement, the specialist shall assist the inmate  
 54 and coordinate the release of the inmate with the selected  
 55 program. If an inmate requests and is approved for placement in

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56 a contracted faith-based substance abuse transition housing  
57 program, the specialist must consult with the chaplain prior to  
58 such placement. In selecting inmates who are nearing their date  
59 of release for placement in a faith-based program, the  
60 department shall ensure that an inmate's faith orientation, or  
61 lack thereof, will not be considered in determining admission to  
62 the program and that the program does not attempt to convert an  
63 inmate toward a particular faith or religious preference.

64 7.(7) Providing a photo identification card to all inmates  
65 prior to their release.

66 (b) 100-hour transition instructors, whose duties include,  
67 but are not limited to, implementing the 100-hour transition  
68 training program.

69 (c) Regional coordinators, whose duties include, but are  
70 not limited to, ensuring effective program delivery of the 100-  
71 hour transition training program throughout the state.

72 (2) The transition assistance specialists, 100-hour  
73 transition instructors, and regional coordinators specialist may  
74 not be a correctional officers officier or correctional probation  
75 officers officier as defined in s. 943.10.

76 (3) The department shall organize and fund reentry  
77 coalition coordinators in each of the judicial circuits in the  
78 state. Funding should be provided to the department to contract  
79 by judicial circuit with community organizations to offer  
80 temporary housing to those offenders without immediate housing  
81 options upon release. Restrictions on eligible participants  
82 should only apply to individuals who are prohibited by law from  
83 securing such housing assistance.

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84 Section 2. Subsection (7) is added to section 944.705,  
85 Florida Statutes, to read:

86 944.705 Release orientation program.--

87 (7) The department shall provide comprehensive programming  
88 that addresses an offender's criminal thinking as determined by  
89 the offender's level or risk. Transition programming shall  
90 incorporate a cognitive behavioral approach, span 18 to 24  
91 months from release, and involve 4 to 6 months of curriculum.

92 Section 3. Subsections (3) and (4) are added to section  
93 944.707, Florida Statutes, to read:

94 944.707 Postrelease special services; job placement  
95 services.--

96 (3) Funding for technology enhancements should be sought  
97 to establish computer labs at each correctional institution. The  
98 technology will be used for various applications such as  
99 community service linkages, programming, job interviews, meeting  
100 with probation officers, visitation to aid in family  
101 reunification, telemedicine, parole hearings, and legal  
102 proceedings.

103 (4) The Agency for Workforce Innovation shall designate  
104 specialists dedicated solely to providing services to ex-  
105 offenders.

106 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008.