

Chapter 937

(House Bill 1037)

AN ACT concerning

Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services – Establishment

FOR the purpose of establishing the Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services; requiring the Task Force to submit a certain report to the General Assembly on or before a certain date; and generally relating to the Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) There is a Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services.

(b) The Task Force consists of:

(1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;

(2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(3) the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services, or the Secretary's designee;

(4) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the Secretary's designee;

(5) the Secretary of Health, or the Secretary's designee;

(6) the Secretary of Human Services, or the Secretary's designee;

(7) the Secretary of Labor, or the Secretary's designee;

(8) the Public Defender, or the Public Defender's designee; ~~and~~

(9) the Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee;

(10) a member of the Division of Parole and Probation in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, designated by the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services; and

~~(9)~~ (11) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

(i) one individual who was formerly incarcerated in a State correctional facility;

(ii) one individual who is the family member of a male individual who is currently incarcerated in a State correctional facility;

(iii) one individual who is the family member of a female individual who is currently incarcerated in a State correctional facility;

(iv) one representative of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association, recommended by the President of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association;

(v) one representative of the Lived Experience Advisory Committee;

(vi) one representative of Maryland Legal Aid;

(vii) one representative of Life After Release;

(viii) one representative of the Maryland Reentry Resource Center;

(ix) one representative of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative, recommended by the cochairs of the Maryland Equitable Justice Collaborative;

(x) three representatives from county workforce development programs;

(xi) two representatives from county reentry organizations; and

(xii) two representatives of a nonprofit organization focused on reentry of incarcerated individuals.

(c) The members of the Task Force shall elect a chair from among the members of the Task Force.

(d) The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(e) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) A member of the Task Force serves at the pleasure of the person who appointed the member.

(g) At the first meeting of the Task Force that occurs on or after June 1, 2024, the Task Force shall vote to adopt a code of conduct providing for the acceptable conduct of Task Force members.

~~(h)~~ (h) The Task Force shall:

(1) identify and assess the reentry services that exist in the State;

(2) identify gaps in reentry services currently provided in the State;

(3) assess the markers of successful reentry;

(4) ensure that the recommendations of the Task Force equally consider returning citizens regardless of gender;

(5) develop a plan to establish a Division of Returning Citizens within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to:

(i) assess measures of reentry success;

(ii) coordinate existing Department and community reentry programs;

(iii) remove barriers to reentry;

(iv) empower residents to break the cycle of recidivism; and

(v) connect incarcerated individuals to pre-release and postrelease assistance; and

(6) develop a plan to expand the following services for individuals in the State after release from incarceration:

(i) housing services, including:

1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;

apartment;

2. assistance in finding a halfway house, family home, or
3. transportation to an individual's home on release;
4. referral to first-time home buyer programs; and
5. other housing services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;

(ii) employment services, including:

1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;
2. employment and entrepreneur training;
3. resume assistance;
4. assistance obtaining vital documents and State identification;
5. connection to employers; and
6. other employment services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;

(iii) socialization services, including:

1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;
2. financial literacy training;
3. connection with a mentor;
4. technology acclimation and training; and
5. other socialization services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;

(iv) health services, including:

1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;
2. connection to:
 - A. a primary care provider;

- B. mental health services;
 - C. dental care;
 - D. anger management therapy;
 - E. substance abuse counseling; and
 - F. nutrition counseling; and
3. other health services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;
- (v) legal assistance, including:
 - 1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;
 - 2. assistance with obtaining child support;
 - 3. assistance with expungement of criminal records; and
 - 4. other legal services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;
 - (vi) education services, including:
 - 1. a needs assessment before an individual is released;
 - 2. connection to GED programs;
 - 3. connection to postsecondary education; and
 - 4. other education services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit;
 - (vii) coordination with county reentry programs, including:
 - 1. notification of release to a home county; and
 - 2. assistance acquiring dental and health records;
 - (viii) other services identified at the time of the trial, during incarceration, or on release of an individual who is being released from incarceration; and

(ix) other services currently provided by the Re-entry and Transition Services Unit.

~~(e)~~ (i) On or before December 31, 2025, the Task Force shall, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, submit a report to the General Assembly of its findings and recommendations.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2026, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 16, 2024.