

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 61

(Senator Sydnor)

Judicial Proceedings and Finance

Government, Labor, and Elections

Division of Correction - Volunteer Services Program

This bill establishes the Volunteer Services Program in the Division of Correction (DOC) within the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). DOC must establish a protocol for registering volunteers, including formerly incarcerated individuals and organizations led by formerly incarcerated individuals, in the program to have access to State correctional facilities for the purpose of assisting incarcerated individuals with release preparation. The protocol must require (1) DOC to maintain a record of volunteers registered in the program; (2) the registration of volunteers in the program to be made available to the public, subject to specified conditions; and (3) a volunteer in the program to provide to DOC a written schedule describing when the volunteer intends to access a State correctional facility. A volunteer in the program (1) has the right to elect whether the volunteer's name is made available to the public and (2) must consent in writing if the volunteer elects the disclosure of the volunteer's name to the public. DOC may not deny a schedule provided unless the schedule interferes with the normal function of the State correctional facility.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DPSCS can handle the bill's requirements with existing resources. The bill is not otherwise expected to materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Release from Division of Correction

The Commissioner of Correction must adopt regulations (1) establishing a release plan for incarcerated individuals upon release from confinement in a State correctional facility to help identify resources to assist incarcerated individuals following release, including the provision of transportation from the facility for an incarcerated individual upon release and (2) implementing provisions concerning issuance of an identification card to incarcerated individuals on release from confinement in a State correctional facility.

Current regulations specify that, when feasible, a parole release plan must be completed before a parole hearing. A release plan must include the name of the parolee's employer or evidence of other legitimate means of financial support, the location at which the parolee will reside, and the nature of any community services necessary to meet the special needs of the parolee.

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

Chapters 936 and 937 of 2024 established the Task Force on the Creation of a Division of Returning Citizens and Expanded Reentry Services, staffed by DPSCS. The task force must (1) identify and assess the reentry services that exist in the State; (2) identify gaps in reentry services; (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 DPSCS for specified purposes; and (6) develop a plan to expand specified services for individuals after release from incarceration.

Chapters 112 and 113 of 2025 extended the termination date of the task force to June 30, 2027, and the deadline for submission of the task force's required report to October 31, 2026.

Performance Incentive Grant Fund

The Performance Incentive Grant Fund within the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy is intended to make use of the savings from the implementation of Chapter 515 of 2016, the Justice Reinvestment Act, to provide grants for specified programs and services, including providing for pretrial risk assessments, services to reduce pretrial detention, diversion programs, specialty courts, reentry programs, and ensuring that

the rights of crime victims are protected and enhanced. Money expended from the fund for programs to reduce recidivism and control correctional costs is supplemental to and is not intended to take the place of funding that otherwise would be appropriated for such purposes.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 108 (Delegate Pasteur, *et al.*) - Government, Labor, and Elections.

Information Source(s): Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Maryland Department of Labor; Maryland Cannabis Administration; Department of Social and Economic Mobility; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510