



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1110

April 30, 2021

Joanna Carns  
Office of Corrections Ombuds  
2700 Evergreen Parkway NW  
Olympia, WA 98505

Dear Ms. Carns:

The Washington Department of Corrections appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OCO investigation into 'DOC's denial of a person's placement with his wife while on the graduated reentry (GRE) program' completed by the Office of Corrections Ombuds.

| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
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| <p>OCO recommends that DOC update the GRE policy in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More clearly define the pathway for review of GRE decisions, including the internal decisionmaking process and any additional review that could be requested by the incarcerated person if they are denied GRE.</li><li>• Update the GRE policy with more detailed criteria regarding qualification (or disqualification) for GRE placement.</li><li>• Update the GRE policy to either discount older (20+ year) convictions or identify pathways for the individual to demonstrate rehabilitation.</li></ul> | <p>The department agrees with the Ombuds Office and will modify the current graduated reentry (GRE) policy to include additional information as well as relevant information from the recently passed ESSB 5121.</p> <p>While the Department must acknowledge that policy cannot articulate all scenarios, it is intended to inform staff and the incarcerated of proper procedures and guide decisions regarding processes and the revised policy will include more detail.</p> <p>There is also an attachment that has the criteria and identifies behaviors so that counselors can make informed decisions about referrals. This, and all forms, will be reviewed in the process of the policy updates that are scheduled to take place during summer 2021.</p> |
| <p>OCO recommends that DOC create a workgroup to update the GRE forms to allow for the incarcerated individual to speak in their own words, take accountability for any past actions, and provide information on how they have worked while in prison or otherwise to overcome them, such as through a GRE application packet. The community custody officer (CCO) would be in the role of verifying information and providing their own</p>  | <p>The department agrees and commits to forming a workgroup, which will include participation from the Office of Corrections Ombuds. The workgroup will consider in its review process the graduated reentry concerns the Ombuds Office has raised and the concerns can be robustly discussed. The workgroup will review all graduated reentry processes, forms and policies.</p>  |



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| assessment. This would serve multiple purposes of reducing bias and subjectivity in the language, allowing the incarcerated individual to demonstrate positive actions to address concerns, and also would reduce CCO time, creating a more efficient process. |  |
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The information provided by the OCO was useful to ensure the Department of Corrections is doing everything it can to ensure an incarcerated person's time in the agency's custody is fair and focused on rehabilitative programs and actions for all incarcerated individuals.

We also appreciate your team's understanding of the unique processes across the correctional system and the addition of policies and procedures being put in place to address them. We are working towards proactivity and improving quality assurance processes throughout the department. Moving forward, Washington Department of Corrections will continue to collaborate with the Office of the Corrections Ombuds to strengthen procedures and practices that positively impact individuals' health, safety and welfare.

Sincerely,

on behalf of

Steve Sinclair, Secretary  
Washington Department of Corrections