

PRERELEASE CENTERS

1. WHAT ARE PRERELEASE CENTERS?

Prerelease Centers are community based correctional facilities operated by non-profit Montana corporations under contract with the Department of Corrections. The facilities provide supervision, counseling, assistance in locating employment, life skills training and guidance. They function as a component of the correctional system. Centers provide services for adult male and female offenders who:

- A. Are released from Montana State Prison and Montana Women's Prison,
- B. Have been committed into the custody of the Department of Corrections,
- C. Are parole violators requiring less restriction than a traditional prison setting.

The programs offer an alternative to the direct release of the offender from prison or jail to the community and give the person an opportunity to adjust to the community in a gradual, controlled manner. Transitional steps are provided to prepare the offender for release into society.

2. WHERE ARE THE PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAMS LOCATED AND HOW MANY OFFENDERS DOES EACH PROGRAM HAVE THE CAPACITY TO SERVE?

There are currently five Prerelease Center Programs in Montana.

<u>Center</u>	<u>Male Beds</u>	<u>Female Beds</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>*TLP Slots</u>
Missoula	92	20	112	10
Butte	112	43	155	20
Billings	132	19	151	15
Great Falls	95	28	123	10
Helena	58		58	10
	<u>489</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>599</u>	<u>65</u>
	<u>Grand Total:</u>		<u>664</u>	

* Transitional Living Program

3. HOW ARE OFFENDERS SCREENED FOR PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY?

Offenders incarcerated at the Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, Regional Prisons and a private prison are screened by a State Screening Committee which includes a representative from the prison, a representative from the Board of Pardons and Parole, and the Community Corrections Division. Prerelease Center personnel also attend the screenings.

The process includes personal interviews with eligible offenders by the screening committee, a careful review of the offender's criminal history and his/her conduct at the institution. The intent of the screening process is to assess if the offender's placement in the community will jeopardize public safety, determine the appropriateness of the offender for a community setting and to assist in the determination of the offender's chances of success in a Prerelease Center Program.

When an offender is approved by the State Screening Committee, for referral to a Prerelease Center, a referral packet is prepared, forwarded to the prerelease center, and a thorough paper review is conducted by a local screening committee. Local screening committees are community-based teams and their membership typically includes a representative from the Prerelease Center, a member of the Prerelease Center's Board of Directors, a Probation and Parole Officer, representatives from local law enforcement and a local citizen.

Offenders committed into the custody of the Department of Corrections may be referred to a Prerelease Center Program in lieu of being incarcerated in prison. These offenders are screened by Probation and Parole personnel, via a "Risk and Needs Assessment". If the offender is appropriate for a Prerelease Center placement, the Probation & Parole Bureau prepares a referral packet, forwards the packet to the Prerelease Center and again, a thorough paper review is conducted by the local screening committee for approval or disapproval.

Offenders violating their parole may also be recommended for Prerelease rather than being returned to prison. The Board of Pardons and Parole makes this determination with input provided by the offender's Probation and Parole Officer and the center's local screening committee.

4. WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFENDERS REFERRED TO A PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAM FROM THE MONTANA STATE PRISON AND MONTANA WOMEN'S PRISON?

1. Offenders shall be within twelve (12) months of parole eligibility or discharge.

2. Offenders making application for placement at a Prerelease Center **shall not have medical or psychological problems, which require hospitalization** or extensive and costly community-based care. If an offender placed in a Prerelease Center has medical/psychological problems requiring treatment over and above what the offender can afford to pay, the offender may be returned to the state correctional facility for treatment.
3. Offenders shall be physically and mentally **capable of work**, educational or vocational training. If unable to work, offenders must be able to financially subsidize their stay at the Prerelease Center. Offenders with disabilities shall not be discriminated against. However, they must be able to financially subsidize their stay at the Center to the same extent that any other offender would be required to do, or request a waiver of contribution from the Department.
4. Offenders in need of treatment must **consent to outpatient treatment** in the community. Offenders will be required to pay for all treatment costs, if they are financially able.
5. Offenders with detainers shall secure verification that the **detainers are resolved** to the satisfaction of the state correctional facility and the Community Corrections Division prior to referral to a Prerelease Center.
6. Offenders shall be **free of felony escape convictions** for a minimum of three years before being considered for referral and/or placement at a Prerelease Center.

Factors such as escape history, detention, increase in custody or previous conduct at a Prerelease Center may be considered in determining the appropriateness of any offender placement at a Prerelease Center.

5. **WHAT SECURITY MEASURES ARE UTILIZED AT A PRERELEASE CENTER TO PROVIDE FOR OFFENDER, PERSONNEL AND PUBLIC SAFETY?**

A very high percentage of offenders entering a Prerelease Center Program have been involved in drug related crimes and have a history of chemical dependency. As a result of the high percentage of chemical abuse, **the Prerelease Centers have on-site drug and alcohol screenings.**

Offenders are required to provide urine and breath samples upon request. Generally, an offender's urine or breath sample, if determined positive for alcohol or a controlled substance, is cause for returning that individual to the prison.

Offenders are also subject to **room, vehicle and personal searches**. These searches are a means to control offender property and guard against theft, both in the facility as well as in the community. Offenders are required to develop weekly plans for all money spent in the community. This budget planning is designed to provide a safeguard against misuse of allocated funds. Twenty-four hour agendas are also planned by the offender, with assistance from his/her counselor, and monitored by Prerelease Center personnel via random "spot checks" and telephone checks.

6. WHAT ARE THE COST BENEFITS TO THE STATE?

With the state prison population continuing to expand, it is necessary to promote cost effective measures to reduce overcrowding, lower recidivism rates, and provide public safety. While no single factor within the corrections system can provide a complete solution to each of the challenges, the Prerelease Center Programs respond to these issues and are an important element of effective corrections management. The daily cost for an offender in a Prerelease Center ranges from \$41.47 to \$68.62.

A room and board charge averaging \$11.00 per day, per offender, is assessed Prerelease offenders, so they can help share the burden of the cost of their incarceration. In FY 2004, offenders paid a total of \$2,198,032.09 towards their room and board:

Prerelease Center

Missoula	\$366,691.35
Butte	\$644,391.74
Great Falls	\$384,648.00
Billings	\$626,237.00
Helena	\$176,064.00
Totals:	\$2,198,032.09

7. HOW HAVE THE COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS DIVISION AND PRERELEASE CENTERS RESPONDED TO RECENT DEMANDS FOR BED SPACE?

In November 2003, in response to prison overcrowding, the Community Corrections Division added a total of 25 "MSP Direct" beds to the five private non-profit prerelease centers. These beds were designated specifically for offenders coming directly out of Montana State Prison. From November 2003 until October 31, 2004, 354 MSP offenders out of a total prerelease population of 996 have been placed in prerelease.

In April 2004, due to on-going demands for prerelease bed space, the Community Corrections Division implemented a six-month length-of-stay limit for all offenders residing in the five private non-profit prerelease centers. This length-of-stay limit requires that Case Managers from the centers submit a written request for approval to the Division, if they determine a need to extend an offender's stay beyond six months. The request must specifically outline the reasons for the extension, which may include disciplinary sanctions, failure to complete programming, court orders, and employment difficulties.

The average length-of-stay (number of days) for an offender in prerelease during the past three fiscal years is:

FISCAL YEAR	MALES	FEMALES
2002	214	248
2003	214	216
2004	177	186

8. WHAT DO OFFENDERS CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY WHEN THEY PARTICIPATE IN PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAMS?

Offenders participating in a Prerelease Center Program are able to gain employment to help support their family. They also help pay for medical expenses, make restitution payments, pay court fines and taxes and save money for release. All these aspects of Prerelease contribute to holding the offender accountable and empowering them in accepting responsibility.

From July 2003 through June 30, 2004, male and female offenders participating in Prerelease Center programs earned approximately **\$5,884,561.28** in offender earnings, paid **\$161,998.84** in restitution and fines, paid **\$963,977.06** to income taxes, completed **26,093** hours in community services, paid **\$189,146.03** toward medical expenses, completed **911,573.43** employment hours and paid **\$313,860.82** for family and child support.

9. WHAT ARE THE CRIMES OF OFFENDERS PARTICIPATING IN PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAMS?

Fairly recent Prerelease Center statistics reflect the following basic types of crime, listed from most to least common:

MALES

theft
possession of drugs
burglary
felony DUI
sale of drugs
issuing a bad check over \$150.00
criminal endangerment
forgery
felony assault
criminal mischief

FEMALES

possession of drugs
theft
forgery
issuing a bad check over \$150.00
sale of drugs
felony DUI
drug offenses, other state
burglary
deceptive practices
criminal endangerment

*ACIS/PRO-Files data extracted 10/4/2004

10. HOW MANY OFFENDERS HAVE ESCAPED FROM PRERELEASE CENTER PROGRAMS?

FY2000 - TOTAL: 21
FY2001 - TOTAL: 23
FY2002 - TOTAL: 25
FY2003 - TOTAL: 22
FY2004 - TOTAL: 38
FY2005 - TOTAL: 20 (as of 12/28/04)

The following is a listing of escapes from the Prerelease Centers:

FY2003		FY2004	
Total escapes from Billings	11	Total escapes from Billings	11
Total escapes from Butte	4	Total escapes from Butte	9
Total escapes from Great Falls	3	Total escapes from Great Falls	12
Total escapes from Missoula	1	Total escapes from Missoula	3
Total escapes from Helena	3	Total escapes from Helena	3
Total:	22	Total:	38

Escapes typically occur from the offender's employment site or enroute to and from the employment site and in-between Center movement counts. These also occur less frequently, on a job search pass, treatment pass or community pass.

11. HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS KNOW THE PRERELEASE CENTERS ARE PROVIDING THE SERVICES STIPULATED IN THEIR PURCHASE OF SERVICE CONTRACTS?

A formal program and facility audit is conducted annually at each Center. The audits identify existing or potential problems, analyze and evaluate each Center's program to determine efficiency and contribution to the overall mission of the facility and Department, as well as the service needs of the offenders. The audits include:

- 1) an inspection of the facility
- 2) case management review
- 3) review of the security program
- 4) personnel manual and personnel policy review
- 5) financial management review including offender financial records
- 6) safety/medical/food services/sanitation inspection
- 7) purchase of service contract review and
- 8) interviews with personnel and offenders

Documentation must be available to clearly demonstrate that the Center is meeting all of the requirements of the audit standard at all times. A written audit report is provided to Prerelease Center Administrators indicating audit findings, specifically noting any existing deficiencies and deviations from prior audits. A time-line for rectifying deficiencies is stipulated in the audit report.

12. HOW HAS THE INCREASED DEMAND TO PROVIDE CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY SERVICES FOR OFFENDERS AFFECTED PRERELEASE PROGRAMS?

To respond to this demand, in March 1998, the Department contracted with the Butte Prerelease Center to provide a comprehensive pilot chemical dependency program, separate from their Prerelease Center program, for adult male and female offenders. This program, the Connections Corrections Program (CCP), has a capacity for 40 offenders, is up to 60 days in length and provides chemical dependency services for:

- 1) Offenders committed to the Department of Corrections in which it is determined that the offender is in need of chemical dependency programming.
- 2) Parolees violating a condition(s) of their parole to a level that could cause them to return to the custody of the Department of Corrections;

- 3) Offenders at MSP or MWP that are mandated by the Board of Pardons and Parole or court ordered to complete chemical dependency programming prior to release; and
- 4) Offenders participating in prerelease center programs violating as a result of alcohol/drug use.

The Department plans to expand the Connections Corrections Program by utilizing a building wing of the WATCH Program, located on the Montana State Hospital, Warm Springs Campus.

13. DOES PRERELEASE PROVIDE ANY OTHER SERVICES TO THE DOC?

Yes, the Great Falls Prerelease Center provides 30 aftercare beds for offenders graduating from the "Boot Camp" Program (Treasure State Correctional Training Center). The aftercare program assists TSCTC graduates in making the transition from the TSCTC Program to the Community. The offenders generally stay in the aftercare program from one to ninety days while awaiting sentence reduction paperwork to be processed and/or release planning to be accomplished. While in the program, the offender is required to maintain the order and routine of the boot camp, participate in treatment programming and is provided employment opportunities within the community.

The Department also has a Transitional Living Program (TLP) for adult offenders. This is a nonresidential program wherein the offender resides in the community at an approved residence and reports to the Prerelease Center daily at a time established by the offender's counselor. Offenders participating in the program complete a 24 hour itinerary and are monitored daily by Prerelease Center personnel. The Transitional Living Program allows offenders the opportunity to safely integrate back into the community, assume increased personal responsibility and ensure, to the greatest extent possible, the safety and welfare of the community.