



Montana Department of Corrections
FACT SHEET
Reentry Budget Package

Reentry case manager	\$112,880	1
Reentry development IT staff	\$272,008	2
Vocational education FTE (MSP, MWP)	\$274,740	2
Reentry Team (MSP)	\$320,672	3
Inmate programming	\$120,000	0
Totals	\$1,100,300	8

Reentry case manager (adult community corrections)

Community corrections oversees 17 programs with 1,780 offenders. The case manager will focus on the target population of offenders who are at greatest risk to return to prison. The manager will recruit help from the community in finding housing and jobs for offenders when they are released, developing positive support systems for offenders, and involving faith-based community organizations to assist offenders in transition.

Reentry IT development staff (administrative)

This requests a developer position and network support position. The department is undertaking a major reentry initiative and these efforts require support from information technology staff to ensure corrections officials have the ability to track the targeted offender population and offender progress in ways not done before.

The existing offender management database needs to be modified to capture and analyze data relating to new and existing reentry-related programs. Offender participation and achievement in enhanced reentry programs is necessary to determine effectiveness of the reentry initiative and whether they should be modified or discontinued. Key components of the reentry initiative include helping offenders obtain stable housing and employment.

This request will support expansion of efforts to increase offender digital literacy so they are better prepared to reenter a society where housing and employment searches are increasingly online functions, rather than reliant on paging through classified ads in newspapers. The additional IT staff also is necessary to allow the department to change the way it administers GED testing. Beginning in 2014, the department will no longer be able to utilize paper exams and must use online testing. In addition, the high school programs at Pine Hills and Riverside youth correctional facilities also need to have access to and teach the students about computer technology.

Two additional staff members are needed to provide and maintain the necessary equipment, access and security for these new IT functions.

Vocational education (Montana Correctional Enterprises)

The traditional methods of doing business continue to shift to the utilization of computerized and online methods and in many cases are being phased out so the only access available is online.

These advances in technology are also creating challenges for the Department of Corrections and the adult and juvenile offenders under our supervision. A digital divide is being created, one that must be bridged if we are to continue to meet our mission of promoting positive change in offender behavior and reintegrating offenders into the community.

The requested FTE will allow continuation of technology education classes at both Montana State Prison and Montana Women's Prison. These courses initially were funded with a federal grant. The result will be the prisons' continued ability to provide to all those offenders wanting them the computer skills that are necessary for success in most jobs they will seek when they are released.

Reentry team (Montana State Prison)

This request is for three additional staff to aid in reentry efforts at Montana State Prison. Montana prisons release about 1,200 offenders a year and preparing them for successful return – long before they leave – is critical to reducing their chances of recidivating. The request is for three reentry case managers.

These staff additions will improve management of inmates in the targeted population while incarcerated and ensure they are completing necessary programming that benefits them upon release. Ensuring that mental health, medical and spiritual needs are met are crucial steps of the reentry preparation process. Developing a reentry plan at time an offender enters prison, monitoring an inmate's progress and actively working with the inmate while incarcerated increase their chance of success both in prison and on release. The trained administering of risk assessment tools that measure an inmate's chance of re-offending is also critical to the development of a reentry plan and associated programming.

The ultimate goal of reentry efforts is to reduce recidivism. The annual cost of incarcerating an inmate is \$33,372 per year. If five inmates do not re-offend and return to prison each year, this request will pay for itself, with substantially more savings to Montana taxpayers for each additional inmate that is released and does not return to prison.

The longer an inmate is incarcerated the harder the transition barriers are upon release. These barriers include limited access to appropriate housing, adequate transportation, effective job linkages, and knowledge of faith-based options, community assistance, educational opportunities, substance abuse support networks and overall life coping skills. All of these barriers are detrimental to an offender's ability to remain and function

adequately in society. These barriers would be targeted by the reentry effort and the work of staff to aid the inmate prior to release from prison.

The department used a vacant position to create a reentry program manager, but does not have the staff support necessary to implement reentry efforts on the scale needed to have a significant and permanent effect on improving offenders' reentry success. This request will provide for some of the needed staffing for MSP to focus on identified reentry issues. Various states (Vermont, Delaware, Ohio and Michigan) have implemented successful inmate life skills and re-entry programs through allocation of funds and resources to specifically address this need. These states have experienced a reduction in their recidivism rate due to inmates being better prepared for release and better able to overcome the barriers and perceptions they encounter in communities.

Inmate Programming (Montana State Prison)

The ability of offenders to change how they think is the key to changing the way they behave. And changing offender behavior is the path to reducing the likelihood they will commit new offenses or violate conditions of their community supervision. Changing offender's thinking can lead to less recidivism and, therefore, less money spent on corrections.

Montana State Prison has used for several years a motivational program developed by The Pacific Institute to encourage inmates to alter their criminal thinking and improve their behavior while still incarcerated. This voluntary, behavior-based program is a powerful tool in the reentry effort and should be included in the prison's base budget, as are work skills and education programming.

The requested funding would make the course available to 300 inmates annually. If participation in the program helps just two offenders avoid returning to prison each year, the project would more than pay for itself.

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