



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Raised Bill No. 875

LCO No. 2840



Referred to Committee on HOUSING

Introduced by:
(HSG)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS FOR THOSE
RELEASED FROM THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 18-81z of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

3 (a) The Department of Correction, the Board of Pardons and Paroles
4 and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch shall
5 develop a risk assessment strategy for offenders committed to the
6 custody of the Commissioner of Correction that will (1) utilize a risk
7 assessment tool that accurately rates an offender's likelihood to (A)
8 recidivate upon release from custody, and (B) become homeless upon
9 release from custody, in accordance with subsection (b) of this section,
10 and (2) identify the support programs that will best position the
11 offender for successful reentry into the community. Such strategy shall
12 incorporate use of both static and dynamic factors and utilize a gender-
13 responsive approach that recognizes the unique risks and needs of
14 female offenders. In the development of such risk assessment strategy,

15 the department, board and division may partner with an educational
16 institution that has expertise in criminal justice and psychiatry to
17 evaluate risk assessment tools and customize a risk assessment tool to
18 best meet the state's needs.

19 (b) As part of such strategy, the Commissioner of Correction shall
20 screen all offenders committed to the custody of the commissioner to
21 assess their housing needs and homelessness risk. Such assessment shall
22 include the offender's homelessness history, family and other supports,
23 prior tenancy and rental history, income and employment and
24 experience with conducting housing searches and maintaining a
25 household. Such assessment shall be used to inform the offender's
26 reentry plan under section 2 of this act.

27 (c) On or before January 1, 2009, and annually thereafter, the
28 department, board and division shall report to the Governor and the
29 joint standing committee of the General Assembly on judiciary, in
30 accordance with section 11-4a, on the development, implementation
31 and effectiveness of such strategy.

32 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2021*) (a) The Department of
33 Correction, in consultation with the Department of Housing, shall
34 establish the returning home program to provide housing assistance for
35 persons released to parole or a supervised community setting. Such
36 program shall use evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce
37 homelessness. The Department of Correction shall determine a person's
38 eligibility for the program using the risk assessment tool for
39 homelessness conducted under section 18-81z of the general statutes, as
40 amended by this act. The Department of Correction shall be given access
41 to the state's homeless management information system, as defined in
42 24 CFR 578.3.

43 (b) The Department of Correction shall contract with nonprofit
44 community or locally based organizations that are qualified to provide
45 housing search and navigation services, housing-related case
46 management and rapid rehousing and related services, provided such

47 program shall not be used to fund halfway houses. Such program shall
48 provide housing assistance to persons who lack a plan for housing after
49 release. Any housing provided under this section shall confer rights and
50 responsibilities of tenancy pursuant to a rental agreement and shall
51 meet any applicable federal housing quality standards.

52 (c) Not later than January 2, 2022, and annually thereafter, the
53 Department of Correction shall submit a report concerning the housing
54 needs and homelessness of incarcerated persons, the impact of housing
55 instability on incarceration length and the results of the program
56 established under this section, in accordance with the provisions of
57 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of
58 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to housing
59 and the judiciary. Such report shall include (1) the number of
60 incarcerated persons screened for housing status and risk of
61 homelessness relative to the total number of persons eligible for such
62 screening, (2) the number of incarcerated persons reporting a lack of
63 stable housing or a high risk of homelessness, (3) the number of persons
64 receiving housing assistance under the program established under this
65 section and the cost of service and duration per capita, (4) the number
66 of incarcerated persons identified as having housing needs, but who did
67 not receive any housing assistance, (5) the number of persons staying
68 beyond their discharge date pursuant to section 18-101b of the general
69 statutes and the length of such additional stay, (6) the rate of housing
70 placement and retention for the total population served, (7) the types of
71 housing assistance services delivered and the basis in evidence-based
72 practices, and (8) the impact of the housing assistance services provided
73 under this section on incarcerated persons' use of a correctional facility
74 or halfway house beds and incarcerated persons' release to the
75 community without parole or a supervised community setting and
76 diversion from emergency shelter programs. The department shall also
77 submit a copy of such report to the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning
78 Division within the Office of Policy and Management.

79 Sec. 3. Section 18-81w of the general statutes is repealed and the
80 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

81 (a) The Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division within the
82 Office of Policy and Management shall develop and implement a
83 comprehensive reentry strategy that provides a continuum of custody,
84 care and control for offenders who are being supervised in the
85 community, especially those offenders who have been discharged from
86 the custody of the Department of Correction, and assists in maintaining
87 the prison population at or under the authorized bed capacity. The
88 reentry strategy shall support the rights of victims, protect the public
89 and promote the successful transition of offenders from incarceration to
90 the community by (1) maximizing any available period of community
91 supervision for eligible and suitable offenders, (2) identifying and
92 addressing barriers to the successful transition of offenders from
93 incarceration to the community, including, but not limited to, lack of
94 housing, (3) ensuring sufficient criminal justice resources to manage
95 offender caseloads, (4) identifying community-based supervision,
96 treatment, educational, housing and other services and programs that
97 are proven to be effective in reducing recidivism among the population
98 served by such services and programs, and (5) establishing employment
99 initiatives for offenders through public and private services and
100 partnerships by reinvesting any savings achieved through a reduction
101 in prison population.

102 (b) The success of the reentry strategy shall be measured by: (1) The
103 rates of recidivism and community revictimization, (2) the number of
104 inmates eligible for release on parole, transitional supervision,
105 probation or any other release program, (3) the number of inmates who
106 make the transition from incarceration to the community in compliance
107 with a discharge plan, (4) prison bed capacity ratios, (5) the adequacy of
108 the network of community-based treatment, vocational, educational,
109 housing, supervision and other services and programs, and (6) the
110 reinvestment of any savings achieved through a reduction in prison
111 population into reentry and community-based services and programs.

112 (c) Not later than February 15, 2008, and annually thereafter, the
113 Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division within the Office of Policy
114 and Management shall submit a report, in accordance with the

115 provisions of section 11-4a, on the success of the reentry strategy based
116 on the measures set forth in subsection (b) of this section to the joint
117 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
118 matters relating to corrections, public safety, housing and
119 appropriations and the budgets of state agencies. Any such report
120 submitted on or after February 15, 2022, shall (1) also address the rate of
121 inmates released from incarceration who experience homelessness, and
122 (2) be posted on the Internet web site of the Office of Policy and
123 Management and presented to the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory
124 Commission, including any information obtained from the report of the
125 Department of Correction pursuant to section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	18-81z
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	18-81w

Statement of Purpose:

To require the Department of Correction to assess the risk of homelessness for incarcerated persons released from its custody and to create a program to address such homelessness and to require additional reports to measure the extent of such homelessness.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]