

# AMERICAN INDIAN REENTRY PROGRAM LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

## BACKGROUND

As part of its Senate Joint Resolution 3 study of increasing access to tribal resources for tribal members involved in Montana's criminal justice system, the committee learned about efforts by Montana tribes, the Department of Corrections (DOC), and local reentry organizations to support American Indian offenders who are returning to communities after a period of incarceration. During the March State-Tribal Relations Committee (STRC) meeting, a member requested the committee consider developing an American Indian reentry program. This paper outlines several topics the STRC might need or want to discuss and answer when considering whether to request a committee bill to create an American Indian reentry program and when determining the content of a bill draft.

## QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose of the reentry program?
  - To provide direct services to offenders through local organizations, tribes, or the state?
    - Direct services could include: case management, peer mentoring, possibly including an elder program, resource guides, cultural programming? Others?
  - To develop and support community resources for offenders, such as housing, transportation, behavioral health treatment?
  - To develop and support DOC resources and capacity to support reentry efforts or to provide services to offenders?
  - To require the DOC to provide certain resources or take certain actions?
    - Consult with tribes to accomplish a certain purpose?
    - Provide certain training to DOC staff?
      - Training could include cultural competency courses
      - Others?
    - Provide certain services to offenders in prison and/or while on community supervision?
    - Create and maintain a resource guide?
    - Others?
  - Others?
- Does the STRC want to provide funding for a reentry program? If so, what type of funding?
  - Direct appropriation?
  - Grant funding?
  - Ongoing funding or one-time-only?

Over →

May 2018

American Indian Reentry Program Considerations  
State-Tribal Relations Committee  
Rachel Weiss

- Does the STRC want to specify eligibility criteria for offenders and/or service providers?
  - Preferences for certain regions or types of offenders?
  - If a grant program is developed, which entities would be eligible to apply?
  - Preferences to support existing reentry programs and service providers or to develop new programs/providers? Preferences for urban or rural programs and services?
- What type of legislative oversight, if any, would the STRC like to include in a reentry program?
  - Periodic written or verbal reports to the STRC and/or the Law and Justice Interim Committee?
  - Data collection? If so, what types of data?
- Other considerations?

CI0429 8115rwx.docx