



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #240

Technical Mobile Labs and Vocational Training Equipment (Corrections -- Adult Correctional Institutions)

[LFB 2019-21 Budget Summary: Page 101, #12]

CURRENT LAW

The Department of Corrections currently operates one technical mobile lab at Racine Correctional Institution. Base funding for the technical mobile lab is \$120,000 annually for the cost of the instructor and supplies and materials.

GOVERNOR

Provide \$440,000 GPR annually to support technical mobile labs and vocational training equipment, including: \$200,000 GPR annually for updating and replacing program equipment and \$240,000 GPR annually for instructional costs at two technical mobile labs. Instruction for the welding lab began in March, 2019. Instruction for the electrical/mechanical lab is anticipated to begin in June, 2019.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Technical mobile labs are self-contained classrooms inside a trailer located on institutional grounds. The Department currently operates one computer numerical control (CNC) mobile lab located at Racine Correctional Institution. Instruction in the CNC mobile lab began in January, 2015. The CNC program began operating eight hours per day, four days per week, for 19 weeks. In 2017-18, 23 students earned a 16-credit CNC Operator Certification from Gateway Technical College in the CNC mobile lab. The current CNC cohort is operating under an expanded, 19-credit program, which operates seven hours per day, four days per week, for approximately 25 to 30 weeks.

2. Given the number of inmates successfully completing the CNC mobile lab program, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) funded the costs to purchase two additional mobile labs (approximately \$1 million). The Department of Workforce Development also provided additional instructional start-up funding that will expire at the end of the current fiscal year (\$140,000). Finally, after submitting the 2019-21 agency budget request in September, 2018, the Department also received a DWD Fast Forward grant for the mobile labs totaling \$400,000 (\$15,000 for supplies and operating expenses and \$385,000 for instructional and training costs).

3. Under the bill, funding is provided to operate the two new technical mobile lab sites, including one welding mobile lab to share between Taycheedah Correctional Institution and Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution (KMCI) and one electrical/mechanical mobile lab to share between Jackson Correctional Institution and New Lisbon Correctional Institution (NLCI).

4. The welding mobile lab is intended to train eight students in each cohort, with a total of three cohorts per year. The Department anticipates 24 students will successfully complete the welding certificate program annually. [The Department indicates that a small percentage of participants may not complete the program due to withdrawal or termination, but the Department "will make every effort to ensure [students] successfully complete the program"]. The first welding cohort began in March, 2019, with classroom instruction inside the institution. This instruction is being funded by the DWD grant, set to expire at the end of the 2018-19 fiscal year. The welding program will likely occur for six hours per day, five days per week, for 14 weeks (worth 11 credits). The welding lab is currently on-site at TCI, but electrical work and testing of the lab and equipment is still being done to ensure the lab is fully operational.

5. The electrical/mechanical mobile lab is intended to train 12 students in each cohort, with a total of three cohorts per year. The Department anticipates 36 students will successfully complete the electrical mechanical industrial maintenance certificate program annually. [As with the welding lab, the Department indicates that a small percentage of participants may not complete the program due to withdrawal or termination, but the Department "will make every effort to ensure [students] successfully complete the program"]. The electrical/mechanical program will likely occur for six hours per day, five days per week, for approximately 12 to 15 weeks (worth 12 credits). The electrical/mechanical lab is on-site at JCI, but the equipment is still being delivered and set up. The Department anticipates instruction will begin in June, 2019. It is important to note that operational dates for labs are flexible, given the complex nature of the equipment and the testing that needs to be completed before programming within the lab can begin. As a result, the June, 2019 date for JCI serves as the Department's estimate at this time.

6. To be eligible for these programs, inmates must have adequate reading and math scores. The welding lab requires high school level reading and math capabilities and the electro-mechanical lab recommends a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading score of 597 to 616 (equivalent to a 10th grade reading level) or a National Reporting System (NRS) reading score of Level 5 (Level 6 is the highest), along with high school level math capabilities. In addition to the educational requirements, participants are screened and selected based on release dates (priority is given to those closer to their release date upon completion of the program). The recruitment and screening of eligible inmates is done by the institutions, in collaboration with the technical college staff.

7. Both of the new labs are mobile, and can be driven from TCI and JCI to their partner institutions (KMCI and NLCI). Taycheedah is approximately 20 miles from KMCI and JCI is approximately 50 miles from NLCI. The current agreement is for the mobile labs to transition to the partner location after one year (three cohorts of classes). This rotation schedule may continue yearly, or the labs may be moved to another institution, if placement at another institution is deemed more suitable. The Department anticipates it will be able to cover fuel costs for transporting the mobile labs with existing funds.

8. Under the bill, funding includes \$240,000 GPR annually for instructional costs at the two new sites (\$120,000 GPR for each teacher, including salary and fringe benefits). The instructors have both been contracted for from the local technical college programs (Moraine Park Technical College for TCI/KMCI and Western Technical College for JCI/NLCI). Funding also includes \$200,000 annually for vocational training program realignment, which involves updating and replacing program equipment. These funds may be used for mobile lab equipment replacements or updates, but may also be used for any other vocational program that the Department operates (for example, it could include industrial ovens for the food services program). Funding would be allocated as supplies and services under the Becky Young community corrections appropriation.

9. Given the number of participants successfully completing the RCI mobile lab program, the Committee may wish to provide staff and realignment funding to operate the two new mobile labs and maintain equipment in other vocational programs, as recommended under the bill. [Alternative 1]

10. However, as mentioned previously, the Department received DWD grant money to cover some of the mobile lab start-up and instructional expenses. While some of this funding has already been used in 2018-19 to equip the labs and begin instruction, the Department anticipates that the \$385,000 Fast Forward grant money for instructional costs will not be fully depleted until late in calendar year 2020. As a result, the Committee may wish to provide \$200,000 GPR annually for updating and replacing program equipment and \$120,000 GPR in 2020-21 for instructional costs. [In total, this would reduce funding in the bill by \$240,000 GPR in 2019-20 and \$120,000 GPR in 2020-21.] [Alternative 2]

11. The Committee could also take no action. Under this alternative, the mobile labs could potentially be used until Fast Forward funding is gone. After grant funding expires, the Department may choose to reallocate funds from other programs by eliminating or downsizing those programs or end the mobile lab program. In the latter case, the mobile labs would remain on-site, unused. [Alternative 3]

ALTERNATIVES

1. Provide \$440,000 GPR annually to support technical mobile labs and vocational program equipment.

ALT 1	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$880,000	\$0

2. Provide \$200,000 GPR in 2019-20 and \$320,000 GPR in 2020-21 to support technical mobile labs. Funding includes: (a) \$200,000 GPR annually for vocational program equipment; and (b) \$120,000 in 2020-21 for mobile lab instructional costs.

ALT 2	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$520,000	- \$360,000

3. Take no action.

ALT 3	Change to	
	Base	Bill
GPR	\$0	- \$880,000

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