



Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #195

Milwaukee Offender Re-entry Program (Children and Families -- Departmentwide)

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 87, #6]

CURRENT LAW

At its meeting on November 12, 2014, the Joint Committee on Finance considered a proposal by the Department of Administration to allocate federal income augmentation revenues. Under the administration's plan, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) would implement an offender re-entry demonstration program in Milwaukee. The Committee postponed consideration of the program until the 2015-17 biennial budget deliberations and lapsed program revenues in the amount of \$2,608,000, which had been proposed to fund the program, to the general fund.

GOVERNOR

The bill includes \$978,000 PR from income augmentation monies for an offender re-entry program. The administration indicates that these amounts were mistakenly included in DCF's reestimate of program revenues and should be removed from the bill.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The purpose of the offender re-entry program would be to aid the successful community transition out of incarceration. The demonstration project would employ best practices from the fields of corrections re-entry, family reunification, and workforce development.
2. The program would identify and recruit participants at the Marshal Sherrer, Felmers Chaney, and Milwaukee Women's Correctional centers to begin services approximately 18 months prior to reentry. After release, participants could remain involved for up to one year (or three years

as needed).

3. Services provided would include: substance abuse treatment, transitional jobs employment services, mentoring, mindfulness training and cognitive behavioral therapy, community building workshops, and mathematics and GED education. The program could improve offender reunification efforts, increase the likelihood of employment and child support payments, and decrease recidivism.

4. Pilot programs providing comprehensive and coordinated reentry strategies in other states have shown success in improved reintegration across a broad range of outcomes in addition to recidivism, such as employment, substance abuse, and health.

5. Under the plan considered by the Committee in November, 2014, funding in the amount of \$2,608,000 was requested to support the program over 32 months from May, 2014, through December, 2017.

6. If the Committee approves funding for the offender re-entry program, DCF could implement the program beginning January 1, 2016. The demonstration program would operate for 32 months, but only 18 months of those months would be included within the 2015-17 biennium.

7. Because the federal income augmentation monies that would have funded the program have been lapsed to the general fund, the program, if initiated, would need revenues from the general fund.

8. Funding of \$1,467,000 GPR would support the offender re-entry demonstration program over the 2015-17 biennium. On an annualized basis, \$978,000 GPR would support: (a) 1.0 project manager position (\$78,000); (b) 10.0 case manager positions having caseloads between 10 and 15 participants (\$650,000); (c) subcontracts for external services, such as mentoring, training, and workshops (\$100,000); and (d) impact evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the program (\$100,000).

ALTERNATIVES

1. As recommended by the administration, do not provide funding for the Milwaukee offender re-entry demonstration program. Decrease funding by \$978,000 PR annually to remove revenue that was mistakenly included into DCF's reestimate of program revenue.

ALT 1	Change to Bill
PR	-\$1,956,000

2. Provide \$1,467,000 GPR and 11.0 GPR positions annually to implement the Milwaukee offender re-entry demonstration program beginning January 1, 2016. Decrease funding by \$978,000 PR annually to remove revenue that was mistakenly included into DCF's reestimate of program revenue.

ALT 2	Change to Bill	
	Funding	Positions
GPR	\$1,467,000	11.00
PR	<u>-1,956,000</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total	\$489,000	11.00

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