



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
1115 Washington Street SE, Olympia, Washington 98504-5010

April 15, 2020

TO: DSHS Community Services Division
DOC Prisons Division
DOC Reentry Division

FROM: Babs Roberts, Director
DSHS Community Services Division

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Robert Herzog, Assistant Secretary
DOC Prisons Division

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Danielle Armbruster, Assistant Secretary
DOC Reentry Division

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SUBJECT: Expedited Access to Public Benefits for Rapid Reentry

As part of our statewide response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Corrections (DOC) will begin to implement rapid reentry transfers to a portion of the prison population that meet a specified criteria. Over the coming weeks, a number of incarcerated individuals will be transferred into our communities.

To ease and aid in that transition, the DSHS Community Services Division has entered into a temporary agreement with the DOC to expedite the application for public benefits programs for this group of individuals. Below is a high-level overview of the process that will be put into place immediately, enabling individuals transferring from prison to complete and submit their application for benefits prior to transfer. Upon transfer, they will need to contact DSHS to complete their interview in order to determine their eligibility for assistance and gain access to benefits. Timely access to vital reentry resources plays a key role in an individual's transition, and furthers the missions of both agencies; to transform lives by reducing poverty in a way that eliminates disparity, and keeping communities safe.

Expedited Access to Public Benefits for Incarcerated Individuals

The following outlines the process to access public benefits for the population identified for rapid reentry.

1. DOC will provide an application for cash and food assistance to the incarcerated individual. Identified staff may be asked to assist an individual with the process of filling out the application based on the individual's ability to complete on his/her own accord.
2. Upon completion, the application will be given a designated facility Point of Contact (POC).
3. POC will scan/email application to DSHS HIU Applications Unit. Once received, DSHS HIU will enter application information into the ACES benefit system. (Email address will be active week of 04/13/2020 – Faxed applications will be accepted if email box is not operational)
4. Incarcerated individual will call DSHS/CSD Customer Service Contact Center no sooner than their day of release to complete the interview portion of the application. Unless there are outstanding circumstances that need to be verified, an approval or denial of benefits will occur immediately upon completion of the interview. If an individual has access to a telephone post-release, they should be instructed to call the DSHS/CSD Customer Service Contract Center as soon as possible to complete the interview. If the individual does not have access to a telephone post release, the facility will need to make accommodations to facilitate the telephone call on the day of release.
5. After benefits are approved, an EBT card will arrive at the address provided by the applicant within 2 days. Individuals that have general delivery as an address will need to make arrangements to pick up their EBT card at an identified DSHS Community Service Office.

DSHS Call Center Interview Phone Number: 1-877-501-2233

DSHS Fax Number in lieu of email address: 1-888-338-7410

Thank you for your continued efforts during this time of crisis. It is truly amazing to see the power of our organizations work together to protect and provide for our most vulnerable.