



Washington State  
Office of  
Public  
Defense

THE SEATTLE  
LEMENCY  
PROJECT



WACDL



WASHINGTON  
DEFENDER  
ASSOCIATION

May 10, 2023

Sarah M. Ayala  
Resentencing and Release Manager  
Washington State Department of Corrections  
[sarah.ayala@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:sarah.ayala@doc1.wa.gov)

RE: Support for Continued Funding of DOC's Resentencing Team

Dear Ms. Ayala:

The undersigned organizations strongly support continued funding for DOC FTEs supporting resentencing and reentry work. As you know, in the past two years DOC has experienced a significant increase in the number of incarcerated individuals receiving a second-look at their sentences. This second-look work has resulted in new or reduced sentences for hundreds of people, and the attendant increased need for reentry services. Much of this population may be receiving new sentences that order release dates far sooner than DOC or the individual anticipated, making a robust reentry program all the more crucial. Additionally, the collaboration around resentencing between DOC and advocacy groups uncovered the need for the same kind of supports to individuals going through a clemency process or a juvenile review board hearing. The hope promised by a new sentence or clemency could be an unintended misfortune for released individuals without vigorous and healthy pre- and post-release supports.

Following the *State v. Blake* decision, DOC built an impressive and indispensable infrastructure to absorb resentencing work and the expanded need for reentry services. DOC's Resentencing Team consists of staff from various divisions within DOC to support the work of resentencing including: public disclosure staff that handle attorney requests/communication; a Health Services Lead who coordinates all needs related to health and mental health for individuals who are resentenced or granted clemency; records staff that process orders, update criminal history, and answer myriad sentencing calculation questions; fiscal staff to address Blake cost of supervision refunds; and Resentencing Navigators that work with individuals being resentenced/granted a clemency hearing to reentry plan and provide invaluable resources.

Each of these positions plays a vital role in ensuring a consistent and smooth experience for incarcerated individuals going through the resentencing or clemency process. Public disclosure staff interfacing with attorneys provide important information about an incarcerated person's programming and work efforts on the inside, which is often necessary for an attorney to build a resentencing or clemency case. The

Health Services Lead provides critical coordination in ensuring released individuals receive continuity of health and mental health care. Records staff play a key role in processing orders and updating criminal history, which is fundamental to complete relief. Records staff also ensure sentencing calculations are correct from DOC's perspective and thus accurately reflected in any resulting amended sentencing order, also fundamental to a healthy second-look system. Fiscal staff dedicated to addressing the complicated, novel questions associated with Blake refunds is necessary. Finally, Resentencing Navigators are absolutely imperative in ensuring a successful transition from incarceration, which is undoubtedly a shared goal across the criminal legal system.

Every role in DOC's Resentencing Team is no doubt fulfilling DOC's mission everyday: improving public safety by positively changing lives. Continued funding for its current staffing needs is therefore mission critical for DOC. We urge DOC to prioritize this funding.

Sincerely,



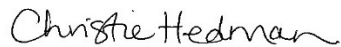
Larry Jefferson, Director  
Washington State Office of Public Defense



Jennifer Smith, Executive Director  
The Seattle Clemency Project



Amy Hirotaka, Executive Director  
Washington Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers



Christie Hedman, Executive Director  
Washington Defender Association