



COMMUNITY COMPENSATION PROGRAM **Working Together for Safer Communities**

Community Member Onboarding and Orientation Guide

Welcome to the Team and Thank You!

Our sincere thanks for volunteering to join a Department of Corrections (DOC) group to aid our agency in our policy development efforts. We are committed to equitable public policy discussions that include individuals who are currently being impacted or have been directly impacted by the policy or subject matter we are addressing. Your expertise and experience will greatly improve our work. So welcome to the Team and thank you again for volunteering to assist us!

Purpose

This guidance is for community members that participate on DOC groups, such as an ongoing part-time board, commission, council, committee, or other similar group established by the DOC to function primarily in an advisory, coordinating, or planning capacity. Groups can also include one-time, low-barrier engagements, such as surveys, interviews, written feedback requests, or other types of engagement that do not require a long-term commitment and/or are low-intensity efforts.

There are several important things to know, including the role of the chairperson for your DOC group, the availability of compensation for eligible individuals, requirements if you are seeking compensation, accessibility options, and a general overview of the impacts of the Public Records Act (PRA) and public disclosure requirements.

Chairperson of Your DOC Group

The Chairperson of your DOC group or their designee (including support staff) is your primary point-of-contact for:

- Receiving a copy of the Community Compensation Program Application form and inviting you to be a member of the DOC group.
- Meeting facilitation, including providing you with meeting materials and scheduling meetings.
- Assigning work and pre-approving all work activities of the DOC group.
- For those seeking compensation, providing you with a copy of the Community Compensation Program Member Acknowledgment form, and Community Member Compensation Request form.
- Reviewing and providing pre-approval of compensation requests that are then sent to DOC Business Services for review, final approval, and payment.
- Helping you navigate available accessibility options, including:
 - American Sign Language (ASL), Communication Access Real-time Transcription (CART), and Spoken Word interpretation services.
 - Offering meeting materials in both print and digital form with large print options, and in available primary languages used by DOC group members.

Compensation Eligibility, Amounts, and Other Considerations

An Individual's Eligibility

To be eligible for compensation, an individual must meet one of the two following criteria:

- 1) **Lived Experience:** Direct personal experience in the subject matter being addressed by the DOC board, commission, council, committee, or other similar group. Lived experience is considered direct personal experience in the subject matter being addressed by the DOC group.
- 2) **Low Income:** An individual whose income is not more than 400% of the federal poverty level, adjusted for family size. The federal poverty amounts are amended annually by the Health and Human Services Department. Refer to the most current year when determining income eligibility for DOC group members. The Office of Equity has adopted the [2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) are shown below.

2024 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia	
Persons in family/ household	Poverty guideline
1	\$ 15,060
2	\$ 20,440
3	\$ 25,820
4	\$ 31,200
5	\$ 36,580
6	\$ 41,960
7	\$ 47,340
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,380 for each additional person.	

Calculation Examples:

- 400% calculation: for a family of four, household income could not exceed \$124,800 (4 X \$31,200)
- To calculate the percentage of poverty level, divide income by the poverty guideline and multiply by 100. So, a family of 5 with an annual income of \$100,000 would be calculated to earn $(\$100,000/\$36,580) \times 100 = 273\%$ of the federal poverty guidelines for 2024.

When offering compensation to someone who does not have lived experience and is seeking compensation based on low-income status, DOC is required to verify income. Examples of verification methods (income documentation) may include:

- Categorical eligibility for community members currently receiving public assistance in Washington state
- Pay Stubs from the last one to three months
- W-2
- Previous year's tax return

- Employer statement
- Self-attestation

The above are examples only and the list is not meant to be exhaustive. For example, self-attestation in writing from an individual that does not have other income documentation to verify income may be acceptable verification on a case-by-case basis. DOC will work one-one-one with each individual to find the best approach to verify income when needed.

Eligible Work Activities

Eligible individuals receive compensation only when performing statutorily prescribed duties approved in advance by the chair(s) of a DOC group, such as attending official ongoing full group meetings, subgroup, or subcommittee meetings, community feedback sessions, and related travel time. Other examples include but is not limited to reviewing and commenting on a plan, taking a survey, producing or reviewing written content such as research or reports, meeting preparation, traveling to and attending an outreach meeting, conference or training, and other one-time events.

Otherwise Compensated

An individual that is already being paid for their participation in a DOC group by another party is not eligible for compensation under DOC's Community Compensation Program. This means that if an individual participating on an ongoing DOC group or in a one-time event is *already* receiving hourly wages, salary, or any other kind of payment for their participation in the group or event, they are being otherwise compensated, and are therefore ineligible for additional. An example of this would be if someone whose full-time job is in policy advocacy and their scope of work at the job for which they are already receiving a salary includes activities such as engaging with government agencies to help inform public policy.

Compensation Amounts and IRS Requirements

- Stipend compensation for ongoing DOC groups is set at:
 - \$45 per hour, not to exceed \$200 for each day during which the member attends ongoing official meetings or performs statutorily prescribed duties approved by the chairperson of the DOC group, based on the following schedule:
 - Up to and including one hour = \$45.00
 - More than one hour and equal to two hours = \$90.00
 - More than two hours and equal to three hours = \$135.00
 - More than three hours and equal to four hours = \$180.00
 - Anything over four hours = \$200.00
- Compensation for one-time events is set at the flat rate of:
 - One-time events that are up to and including one hour = \$25.00
 - One-time events and activities that are up to four hours or less = \$100.00
 - One-time events and activities that are over four hours = \$200.00

If a DOC group member earns \$600 or more in compensation (not reimbursements) in a calendar year, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires a 1099-MISC form to be issued. If a workgroup member

receives compensation from more than one state agency for participating in multiple workgroups, this \$600 amount is applied per agency and is not calculated cumulatively.

Child and adult care reimbursement rates are set at the maximum amount as follows:

- Childcare: up to \$25 per hour for the first child and up to \$50 per 24-hour cycle for each additional child
- Adult care: up to \$34 per hour for the first adult and up to \$50 per 24-hour cycle for each additional adult

DOC group members need to submit the bill or invoice received from the provider for child or adult care services or confirmation of payment (e.g. traditional receipt or a screenshot of a money transfer through apps like CashApp or Venmo).

In certain cases, reasonable allowances (per diem) can be approved by your DOC group Chair for lodging, meals, and privately-owned vehicle mileage expenses. The most current reimbursement per diem rates are available on [Office of Financial Management's \(OFM\) website](#). These rates are updated in accordance with the [US General Services Administration](#). Per diem rates are updated in annually in October. These allowances should not be confused with stipend payments, which are compensation offered in exchange for a DOC group member's time and efforts, as opposed to compensation to cover practical costs incurred in the course of work that require reimbursement.

Payment Options and Statewide Vendor Numbers

There are several options to disburse payments to individuals working on DOC Groups, all of which have different considerations:

- Direct deposit
- State warrant (paper check)
- Pre-loaded gift card

Direct Deposit

Direct deposit into a domestic bank account is the easiest and fastest option for payments. An individual must be willing to obtain a statewide vendor number (see below) and share their bank account details with the Office of Financial Management to receive payment. Once a Community Member Compensation Request form is approved and processed, the payment deposited directly into your bank account.

State Warrant (Paper Check)

Another payment option is to request a paper check. Obtaining a paper check as payment also requires that an individual obtain a statewide vendor number. When you sign up for a statewide vendor number, you must choose either direct deposit or a warrant (paper check) option as your method of payment.

The paper check option often takes longer for payment due to mailing time. The Office of the State Treasurer (OST) has an agreement with US Bank to cash state warrants for individuals at US Bank branches in Washington State (note: US Bank may charge the payee a \$10.00 fee per paper check

cashed). Other companies such as Fred Meyer, Walmart, and others offer check-cashing services for a fee. Recipients must present valid identification at the branch when cashing the paper check.

Statewide Vendor Number

A Statewide Vendor Number is required whenever payments are made through the state of Washington's Agency Financial Reporting System (AFRS). AFRS is Washington State's central hub for accounting information and gives DOC the ability to make and receive payments and reimburse travel and accomplish many other business financial processes. Requesting a Statewide Vendor Number only needs to be done once by an individual participating on a DOC Group, when seeking payment for the first time, however Statewide Vendor Numbers can expire so group members with previously existing Statewide Vendors Numbers should check to make sure their number is still active.

You can confirm that a vendor number does not already exist by searching the [Vendor Number Lookup](#). If no vendor number exists, you can obtain a vendor number by visiting [Statewide Vendor/Payee Services | Office of Financial Management \(wa.gov\)](#), and completing the "Vendor/Payee Registration Form." For number 3 on the Vendor Registration Form, select the option Lived Experience - Class 1. When completing the form, DOC group members have the option of setting up direct deposit to a bank account or receiving a paper check via mail. Once the form is submitted, an individual's Statewide Vendor Number will be sent to the email provided within 3-5 business days.

One-Time Event Gift Cards

Gift cards that effectively operate like a debit card may be an option of compensation for DOC group members that are unbanked, or for compensation for one-time events. Electronic gift cards will be emailed, and physical gift cards provided to you directly from the chairperson or designee or mailed to your residence.

Eligibility and Amounts Impacted

Federal and state income-based programs such as those that provide assistance with housing, health care, and money for food and other living expenses typically require reporting of any earnings by the recipient of said assistance. Many people are enrolled in more than one of these programs. Please be aware that stipends and gift cards may also be considered income and could impact these benefits programs.

As allowable by federal and state law, state agencies have been directed to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the impact of stipends and reimbursements on public assistance eligibility and benefit amounts. However, please be aware of possible benefit impacts, and encourage you to contact these respective agencies for any needed benefits counseling.

Retired state employees who receive stipends may need to consult with Retirement Services to make sure there are no potential impacts on retirement payments.

Public Records Act (PRA) and Public Disclosure

Please be aware that the work of any state or local government agency is subject to the requirements of the Public Records Act (PRA), RCW 42.56. This means that all records created, owned, used or maintained in the conduct of DOC business must be provided upon request and is subject to release under the PRA, unless there is a specific legal exemption that applies. This includes records such as emails from community members participating on DOC groups sent to their chairperson and any attached documents.

In Closing

Thank you again, we deeply appreciate having your expertise and experience on our DOC group. The DOC is committed to public policy discussions that involve individuals who are being or have been impacted by that policy or subject matter. Our policy development and decision-making processes will be much stronger with the involvement of community members.

Please remember to work with your chairperson if you are seeking compensation and to help remove any barriers to your participation, including addressing accessibility needs.