

## Background

The Department of Corrections (DOC) is committed to supporting equitable public policy discussions that include individuals who are currently being impacted or have been directly impacted by the policy or subject matter being addressed. The following prerequisites and guidelines are to support executive, legislative, or judicial branches of Washington state government requesting the participation of incarcerated individuals in DOC's care and custody on Class One policy workgroups in compliance with [RCW 43.03.220](#).

## Pre-Notification of Workgroup Participants and Meeting Requests

For the safety and security of all policy workgroup participants, DOC prison facilities need sufficient time to review Class One workgroup meeting requests, and to screen participants. DOC strives to foster an open, equitable selection process for safety as well as to maximize the opportunities for incarcerated individuals to participate in workgroups.

- Workgroup meetings to be held in prison facilities or virtually, including dates and times, and must be pre-approved by the hosting prison facility to ensure that space and staffing are available to accommodate the event.
  - For meetings held in a prison facility, state agencies must provide a complete list of all individuals attending the event to screen for approval or disapproval.
  - Virtual meetings cannot include incarcerated individuals from more than one prison simultaneously.
  - Please allow a minimum of 14 business days for the review of requests due to space limitations.
  - DOC is not currently able to transport incarcerated individuals to off-site meetings due to safety and security concerns, a shortage of transport teams, and budget shortfalls.
- Consistent with the recommendations in the Office of Equity's Community Compensation program guidelines that "... agencies should avoid repeatedly partnering with the same individuals on workgroups [and] ... create an open, public application process for service on a workgroup ...", on a case-by-case basis, when there is an opportunity to participate on a Class One workgroup, the impacted prison facility will use existing sign up processes for incarcerated individuals to request participation and then utilize a random selection process to select one or more participants for the workgroup (exceptions can be considered on a case-by-case basis if an agency is requesting an incarcerated individual from a unique/underrepresented population [i.e. LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, persons with limited English proficiency, older individuals, etc.]).
- To maximize the opportunity for more individuals to participate, each incarcerated individual can only participate on a single workgroup every five years, unless other individuals are unavailable.
- Only incarcerated individuals housed in minimum security MI2/MI3 settings that are infraction free for six or more months are eligible to participate.
- DOC will make the final determination of whether or not any specific incarcerated individual can participate on workgroups. Examples of incarcerated individuals that may be screened ineligible from participation include being a threat to the operations, security, and safety of others, someone with recent serious infractions in the last year, and individuals that are under active investigation. DOC will document the specific reason for a determination of ineligibility for participation for anyone who is incarcerated.

## Compensation Amounts and Screening of Materials

- The compensation level of incarcerated individuals on Class One workgroups is set at the current Washington state minimum wage, which in 2025 is \$16.66 per hour, payable in 30-minute increments during which the individual attends one-time events, ongoing official meetings, or performs statutorily prescribed duties assigned by the chairperson of the policy workgroup. DOC may change the compensation level in the future. If the rate changes, this will not be applied retroactively. Participation on workgroups is considered volunteer not employment and should not impact employment, unless meetings times coincide with work hours. Currently, incarcerated individuals are paid minimum wage for working on Department of Natural Resources' Correctional Camps Program conducting forest firefighting, fire suppression and prevention activities (Class 4 work), \$1.00

per hour for institutional support industries (Class 3 work), and between \$0.80 - \$2.85 per hour in state-owned and operated enterprises (Class 2 work).

- Compensating incarcerated individuals at minimum wage to participate on Class One workgroups helps address the inequity between Class One workgroup compensation and gratuity paid to incarcerated individuals working Class 2-3 jobs (the majority of jobs in the prison setting), as well as helping address other related security concerns.
- A workgroup chairperson may assign an incarcerated individual statutorily prescribed duties such as reviewing and commenting on a plan, producing or reviewing written content such as research or reports, and/or meeting preparation. Any physical materials provided to the incarcerated individuals will be screened per DOC policies.
- DOC will revisit these prerequisites and guidelines (including the compensation amount) annually based on feedback from state agencies, DOC staff, and incarcerated individuals.

### **Incarcerated Individuals Compensation Payment Procedures**

Incarcerated individuals are unable to obtain a statewide vendor number required to receive a direct deposit payment in a private bank account, or cash a hard check themselves, so an alternative payment approach is needed.

- State agencies must remit compensation to DOC's Trust Accounting Unit within the Business Services division, along with a list of the amount(s) payable to each incarcerated individual, so that they can use the Inmate Payment Process to deposit the final amount into each appropriate inmate account.
- Only electronic or hard checks will be accepted, as all payments are subject to legally required deductions per RCW 72.09.111, 72.09.450, and 72.09.480, and 28 U.S.C. 1915. Gift cards will not be accepted, as the required deductions cannot be taken.
- If remitting the compensation electronically, state agencies should select DOC HQ Fund 651 A01, Statewide Vendor Number: SWV0003872-52 in the AFRS system. The corresponding list of the amount(s) payable to each incarcerated individual for the electronic payment must be e-mailed to [HQLFO-COSUNIT@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:HQLFO-COSUNIT@doc1.wa.gov).
- If mailing a hard check and list of the amount(s) payable to each incarcerated individual, please mail to the attention of: Trust Accounting, Department of Corrections, PO Box 41107, Olympia, WA 98504-1107.
- Please send any compensation questions to: [HQLFO-COSUNIT@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:HQLFO-COSUNIT@doc1.wa.gov).
- If an incarcerated individual were to be paid more than \$600 in a calendar year under the community compensation program, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires a 1099-MISC form to be issued by the paying agency. Incarcerated Individuals are generally required to pay taxes on non-gratuity income earned while incarcerated. DOC provides any necessary support to incarcerated individuals to meet this obligation.

### **Agency Contact Information**

Please contact Mike Steenhout at [michael.steenhout@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:michael.steenhout@doc1.wa.gov), or 360-789-0480 for questions, more information, or to start the process of having someone participate on a workgroup who is incarcerated.