

By: Hinojosa, Rodríguez

S.B. No. 578

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to providing inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with information regarding reentry and reintegration resources.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 501, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 501.0971 to read as follows:

Sec. 501.0971. PROVISION OF REENTRY AND REINTEGRATION INFORMATION TO INMATES. (a) The department shall identify organizations that provide reentry and reintegration resource guides and shall collaborate with those organizations to make the resource guides available to all inmates. At a minimum, the department shall collaborate with:

(1) nonprofit entities that specialize in criminal justice issues;

(2) faith-based organizations; and

(3) organizations that:

(A) offer pro bono legal services to inmates; or

(B) are composed of the families and friends of inmates.

(b) The department shall make the resource guides available in the Windham School District libraries and in each of the following areas of a correctional facility:

(1) law libraries;

1           (2) peer educator classrooms;  
2           (3) chapels;  
3           (4) reintegration specialist offices; and  
4           (5) any area or classroom that is used by the  
5 department for the purpose of providing information about reentry  
6 to inmates.

7           (c) The department shall make available a sufficient number  
8 of copies of the resource guides to ensure that each inmate is able  
9 to access a resource guide in a timely manner.

10          (d) The department shall identify organizations described  
11 by Subsection (a) that provide information described by Subsection  
12 (e) and shall collaborate with those organizations to compile  
13 county-specific information packets for inmates. The department  
14 shall:

15           (1) within the 180-day period preceding the date an  
16 inmate is released on parole, mandatory supervision, or conditional  
17 pardon, provide the inmate with a county-specific information  
18 packet for the county that the inmate designates as the inmate's  
19 intended residence; and

20           (2) within the 180-day period preceding the date an  
21 inmate will discharge the inmate's sentence, provide the inmate  
22 with a county-specific information packet for Bexar, Dallas, El  
23 Paso, Harris, Nueces, Tarrant, and Travis Counties and any other  
24 county that the inmate may designate as the inmate's intended  
25 residence.

26          (e) At the minimum, a county-specific packet described by  
27 Subsection (d) must include, for the applicable county:

1           (1) contact information, including telephone numbers,  
2 e-mail addresses, physical locations, and mailing addresses, as  
3 applicable, of:

4           (A) workforce offices, housing options, places  
5 of worship, support groups, peer-to-peer counseling groups, and  
6 other relevant organizations or agencies as determined by the  
7 department and the collaborating organization;

8           (B) agencies and organizations that offer  
9 emergency assistance, such as food and clothing banks, temporary  
10 bus passes, low-cost medical assistance, and overnight and  
11 temporary housing; and

12           (C) agencies and organizations that offer mental  
13 health counseling; and

14           (2) information necessary for the inmate to apply for  
15 governmental assistance or benefits, including Medicaid, social  
16 security benefits, or nutritional assistance programs under  
17 Chapter 33, Human Resources Code.

18           SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.