

EARNED RELEASE DATE (ERD) HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Earned Release Date (ERD) Housing Voucher Program facilitates the release of offenders unable to leave Prison or Work Release due solely to a lack of funds for housing. Releasing offenders at or close to their ERD is fiscally responsible and promotes successful offender transition to the community. This is not an early release program or a program designed to combat homelessness. Program acceptance and approval for benefits is required to fund an Offender Release Plan (ORP).

Requirements

1. Eligibility

- a. To be eligible, an offender must meet one of the following criteria:
 - 1) Is within 30 days of his/her ERD and has provided documentation or written justification of an illness, disability, or hardship,
 - a) The CCO may reference [Screening for Housing Voucher Benefits](#) for more details.
 - 2) Is within 30 days of his/her ERD and has secured housing,
 - a) DOC 11-012 Release Sponsor Orientation Checklist must be completed and attached to the DOC 02-336 ERD Housing Voucher Program Criteria Worksheet for review.
 - 3) Is at or beyond his/her ERD, or
 - 4) Has been found releasable by the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board.
- b. In addition, the offender must meet all of the following requirements:
 - 1) Lacks sufficient funds/resources to secure an approved release address.
 - 2) Will remain incarcerated past the ERD without assistance.
 - 3) Is willing to participate in additional transitional support programming and sign DOC 02-336 ERD Housing Voucher Program Criteria Worksheet documenting his/her willingness to comply with wraparound services.
 - 4) Will be under community supervision during the period of the housing voucher program.
 - 5) Is in compliance with:
 - a) All facility rules and his/her Custody Facility Plan while incarcerated.
 - b) All conditions of supervision and his/her Offender Supervision Plan once released to the community.

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2. Exceptions and Special Circumstances

- a. Offenders who have been unable to contribute toward their release may apply for early benefit access 30 days before their ERD if they meet one or more of the following special circumstances:
 - 1) Disability
 - 2) Illness
 - 3) Hardship
- b. The purpose of this requirement is to establish that the offender has made an honest effort to contribute to his/her own transition.
- c. The offender will provide an explanation of the special circumstances.
- d. Special circumstances must be documented on DOC 02-336 ERD Housing Voucher Program Criteria Worksheet and accepted by the ERD Housing Voucher Program.

3. Restrictions

- a. The maximum payable benefit is \$500.00 per month for a maximum period of 3 months.
- b. Benefits may not be used in an ORP until approved by the ERD Housing Voucher Program.
 - 1) ORPs without funding in place will be denied.
- c. Benefits will not be used to fund housing beyond an offender's maximum release date.
- d. Benefits will not be used to hold a room vacant for any reason.
- e. Benefits are not transferrable between offenders.
- f. The use of benefits must result in a cost savings for the Department.
 - 1) A 30 day minimum of bed-day savings is required to request a one month payment.
- g. An offender's family members, friends, or loved ones will not receive payment to provide assistance to the offender.

4. Termination

- a. Offenders who fail to comply with the following may be terminated from the program:
 - 1) Facility rules

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- 2) Custody Facility Plan
 - 3) Offender Supervision Plan
 - 4) Court ordered or imposed conditions of supervision
 - 5) Federal, state, or local laws
- b. Offenders who fail to comply with a rental contract, lease agreement, or program contract signed with a housing vendor funded through the program may be terminated from the program and subject to sanctions. Sanctions may include confinement by the Department.
- c. The Program Administrator for Housing may terminate an offender from the program for cause at any time.

Procedures

1. Prisons/Work Release
 - a. Thirty days before the ERD, employees will screen the offender using DOC 02-336 ERD Housing Voucher Program Criteria Worksheet.
 - b. If the offender appears to qualify for benefits before the ERD, the employee will document the reasons provided by the offender on the form then submit the signed, scanned copy to [ERDVoucher](#).
 - c. If the offender does not appear to qualify for benefits due to behavior or other reasons, facility employees/contract staff will not sign or submit the DOC 02-336 ERD Housing Voucher Program Criteria Worksheet until the offender meets program criteria.
 - d. The employee will verify that funding has been approved before submitting an ORP for investigation.
 - e. The employee will note in the Available Resources section of the ORP that housing vouchers will be the mode of payment for the release address.
 - f. The employee will enter an ERD Housing Voucher chrono in the offender's electronic file, noting that an ORP has been submitted using housing voucher funding.
2. Field
 - a. Upon receipt of an ORP, the CCO will:
 - 1) Verify that the offender has been accepted into the ERD Housing Voucher Program.
 - a) The ORP will be denied if benefits have not been approved.
 - 2) Investigate the ORP per DOC 350.200 Offender Transition and Release.

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3. Program
 - a. ERD Housing Voucher Program employees will facilitate all payments.

Assistance

1. Program information and a current list of employees/Regional Housing Specialists, coverage areas, and contact information are available on [InsideDOC](#).

Documentation

1. The Program Administrator for Housing will ensure records are maintained for all benefit requests, approved or denied, per the Records Retention Schedule.
2. The Headquarters Accounts Payable Unit will maintain electronic records of all transactions per the Records Retention Schedule.