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SYNOPSIS
Requires each county to establish inmate reentry services committee.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.
AN ACT concerning reentry services for county jail inmates and supplementing Title 30 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. a. The governing body of each county in this State shall, by duly adopted ordinance or resolution, establish a public body entitled the “County Inmate Reentry Committee” inserting all or any significant part of the name of the county. Each county committee shall consist of nine members as follows:
   (1) a member of the board of chosen freeholders;
   (2) the warden or other executive head of the county correctional facility, or a designee;
   (3) the president of a county community college, or a designee;
   (4) the head of the county board of social services, or a designee;
   (5) one public member who shall be a provider of reentry services in the county;
   (6) one public member who shall be a provider of substance abuse services in the county; and
   (7) three public members who shall represent the general public.

   The public members shall be appointed by the board of chosen freeholders, or, in the counties operating under the county executive plan or county supervisor plan pursuant to the provisions of the "Optional County Charter Law," P.L.1972, c.154 (C.40:41A-1 et seq.), by the county executive, or the county supervisor, as appropriate, with the advice and consent of the board of chosen freeholders.

   b. Of the five public members first to be appointed, three shall be appointed for terms of two years, one for a term of three years, and one for a term of four years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be made for terms of four years. Each of these members shall hold office for the term of the appointment and until a successor has been appointed and qualified. Any vacancy in the membership occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment but for the unexpired term only.

   c. The board of chosen freeholders, county executive, or county supervisor, as appropriate, may appoint other advisory members to the committee as they may deem appropriate.

   d. Members of the committee shall not receive compensation but the appointed members may, subject to the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available for these purposes, be reimbursed for expenses actually incurred in attending meetings of the committee and in performance of their duties as members of the committee.
e. The committee shall meet as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members and shall elect a chair from among its members. The chair shall serve for a term of one year and may be reelected. The committee shall establish procedures for the conduct of regular and special meetings, provided that the regular meetings shall be held at least monthly. Five members shall constitute a quorum. All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the "Open Public Meetings Act," P.L.1975, c.231 (C.10:4-6 et seq.).

f. The committee shall:

(1) identify those services available in the county that may be needed by inmates upon release from a county correctional facility, including but not limited to: housing, food, medical care, clothing, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, employment, and education;

(2) establish a health information exchange for sharing county inmate health data between the county correctional facility and appropriate medical, mental health, social service, and other providers;

(3) establish best practices for:
   (i) preparing county inmates for release;
   (ii) providing the services identified in paragraph (1) of this subsection; and
   (iii) continuing post-release services, support, and supervision for a minimum of one year; and

(4) make appropriate recommendations to the county and municipal governing bodies and boards with respect to resolutions, ordinances, and regulations needed to prepare county inmates for successful reentry into the community and reduce recidivism.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would require each county in this State to form a nine-member “County Inmate Reentry Committee.” The committee in each county is tasked with identifying those services available in the county that may be needed by inmates upon release from a county correctional facility. These services include housing, food, medical care, clothing, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, employment, and education. The committee also is to establish a health information exchange for sharing county inmate health data between the county correctional facility and appropriate medical, mental health, social service, and other providers. In addition, the committee is required to establish best practices for preparing county inmates for release; providing appropriate services to county inmates upon release; and continuing
post-release services, support, and supervision for at least one year.

Finally, the committee is to make recommendations to the county and municipalities as to laws and regulations that may be needed to prepare county inmates for successful reentry into the community and reduce recidivism.

These nine-member county committees are to be comprised of: a member of the board of chosen freeholders; the warden or other executive head of the county correctional facility; the president of a county community college; the head of the county board of social services; a public member who provides reentry services in the county; a public member who provides substance abuse services in the county; and three public members who shall represent the general public.

The county committee is to meet as soon as practicable after the members have been appointed. A chair is to be selected from among the members to serve a one-year term. The committee is to meet at least monthly and five members constitute a quorum to conduct official business. The meetings of the county committees are subject to the "Open Public Meetings Act."