



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS BUREAU OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

Procedure	PFB 6.1.204 TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS AND RENTAL VOUCHERS	
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Signature/Title:	/s/ Scott Eychner, Rehabilitation and Programs Chief	

This procedure is applicable to all FPB contracted facilities; however, this procedure is referenced as **ACCD 5.1.202 Prerelease Stipend and Special Needs Funding** in Section 1.G.1.c. Standard Contract Terms; Compensation/Billing; Compensation; Special funds, in the following contracts: Alternatives, Inc., Butte Prerelease, Gallatin County Reentry Program, Helena Prerelease, and Passages.

I. PURPOSE

Staff of the Department of Corrections and the contracted facilities of the Community Corrections Facilities and Programs Bureau (FPB) will follow this procedure when requesting funds that are available to assist eligible persons with financial needs.

II. DEFINITIONS (see Glossary)

III. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE/RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR OFFENDERS

A. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR OFFENDERS

1. The Department maintains funds to provide financial assistance to eligible offenders for:
 - a. *Transitional Assistance (see III.B below)* – The requested funding must be reasonable, justifiable, and specifically allocated for a service, equipment, or other need:
 - 1) to expedite an offender’s discharge from a prerelease center;
 - 2) to help in an offender’s completion of a program;
 - 3) for an offender being released from prison; and/or
 - 4) for an offender’s ongoing need in the community.
 - b. *Rental Vouchers (see III.C below)* – The requested rental voucher will be specifically allocated to aid in securing initial living arrangements that are suitable for eligible offenders upon their parole as stated in ARM 20.13.108.
2. The offender must be eligible for the funds based on established criteria for the type of assistance requested.
3. Violations of supervision and/or facility write ups are not automatically disqualifying factors for transitional assistance or rental vouchers; however, these will be considered and may result in funds being denied.
4. An offender’s request for transitional assistance funds and/or a rental voucher is made using *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request (Request)*. Every *Request* will be reviewed and considered by the FPB. FPB staff will determine whether the offender qualifies for transitional assistance funds, a rental voucher, or a combination.

B. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR OFFENDERS

1. Transitional assistance funds may be used for:
 - a. room and board and personal care expenses for prerelease center residents:
 - 1) these funds should be requested prior to the offender’s placement whenever possible; however, if it becomes apparent during the offender’s placement that funds may be necessary, the *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request (Request)* should be submitted as soon as possible after that determination; and

- 2) funds for room and board or personal care expenses may be requested for up to 3 months prior, the current month, or future months of the offender's stay at the prerelease center;
 - b. rent assistance or rent deposit;
 - c. temporary housing (hotel/motel);
 - 1) temporary housing at a hotel/motel may only be approved for up to 1 week (7 days);
 - 2) temporary housing at a hotel/motel beyond the first week may be considered;
 - 3) damages or extra charges caused by an offender during a stay at a hotel/motel are the responsibility of the offender to pay; and
 - 4) prior to a ProCard charge for temporary housing at a hotel/motel, the Department staff member authorizing the charge to the staff member's ProCard at the hotel/motel must also complete a payment authorization form clearly stating the offender's name, the daily rate, any taxes/fees, and the dates authorized. This form is generally available from the hotel/motel, but *PFB 6.1.204 (B) Payment Card Authorization Form* can be used. A copy of the completed form provided to the hotel/motel must be submitted with the staff member's ProCard log;
 - d. extended duration housing at a hotel or motel, paid on a monthly basis;
 - e. transportation;
 - f. medication;
 - g. treatment costs; and
 - h. essential items or services without which an offender's ability to remain in compliance with the conditions of the offender's supervision is in jeopardy.
2. Eligible offenders are those:
 - a. flat discharging their sentence from prison;
 - b. being paroled or furloughed;
 - c. currently in or being released from a prerelease center, assessment/sanction center, or a treatment facility; or
 - d. currently under or being released to the direct community supervision of Probation and Parole.
 3. Funds will not be used for payment of offender's overdue expenses accrued:
 - a. at an FPB contract facility and offender has left the facility; or
 - b. while under direct community supervision of Probation and Parole (rent, utilities, etc.).
 4. For offenders on community supervision, funds may not be used for services that were court-ordered to be at the offender's expense.
 5. The following information on the *Request* must be provided for review by the FPB:
 - a. information and background explaining why the offender is in need of the funds;
 - b. information regarding the offender's case plan progress and conduct;
 - c. treatment completed or currently enrolled in, or future plans for treatment (if applicable);
 - d. the amount of money the offender has in the offender's resident account and any outstanding debts;
 - e. how long it would take for the offender to save this amount of money in the length of time the offender would have to remain in the program, should funding not be approved;
 - f. identification of needed assistance, such as estimated monthly costs, contingency plans, etc.;
 - g. the estimated timeframe that the offender will use the funds **MUST** be specified;
 - h. vendor information;
 - i. a payment type must be selected, such as "Facility Payment" (for transitional assistance funds for prerelease centers and treatment centers only) or "Vendor Invoice" or "ProCard" for all other costs. If the Vendor Invoice option is chosen, the invoice is not required for the *Request* to be approved; however, the payment cannot be made without an invoice.

6. FPB will determine the funds for which an offender is eligible during FPB's review of the *Request*.
 - a. The availability of other sources of funding will be considered, for example, Inmate Welfare Fund, rental voucher, state-contracted programs such as mental health centers and substance abuse programs, private insurance, Medicaid, etc.
 - b. Funds may not be used to pay FPB contract facilities for room and board or other debt for offenders who escape or are terminated from their placement unless a prior *Request* for those expenses was approved. Previously approved funds will be paid only for the days up to the offender's escape or termination.
 - c. Any *Request* for over \$1,000 must be approved by the FPB Chief or designee.
 - d. A maximum of \$600 may be approved for offenders who are flat discharging upon release from a facility.
7. Payments of transitional assistance funds:
 - a. may be disbursed to the vendor via a ProCard charge or upon receipt of an invoice by the Department;
 - b. may be made to an FPB contract facility for room and board and personal care expenses on behalf of the offender based on offender's need; or
 - c. may be made to an FPB facility for its payment to a vendor on behalf of the offender for allowable expenses or needs. FPB must have approved the *Request* prior to the payment made by the facility.

C. RENTAL VOUCHERS FOR OFFENDERS

1. Funds for rental vouchers are available to eligible offenders who are being paroled from prison:
 - a. directly to Probation and Parole community supervision;
 - b. to Probation and Parole community supervision upon completion of a treatment program; or
 - c. to Probation and Parole community supervision after completion of an inmate worker placement.
2. Offenders completing a prerelease center program are NOT eligible for rental vouchers.
3. The applicable Department staff member must submit *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request (Request)* for ALL offenders designated in III.C.1 above.
4. The financial eligibility of an offender will be determined by FPB staff prior to the offender leaving the prison and pursuant to ARM 20.13.108.
5. The requested funding may be specifically allocated for rent for up to 3 months:
 - a. payment for 1 month at a time will be issued on approval of *Request*;
 - b. offender must remain eligible for the program each month;
 - c. voucher may be used for a sober living home as provided in ARM 20.13.108;
 - d. voucher will not be used for rent deposits; and
 - e. voucher will not be used for temporary stays in a homeless shelter or hotel/motel.
6. Rental voucher funds will be disbursed only to a vendor:
 - a. a payment type of either "Vendor Invoice" or "ProCard" must be selected on the *Request*; and
 - b. if the vendor invoice option is chosen, the invoice is not required for *Request* to be approved; however, the payment cannot be made without an invoice.
7. Offenders approved for a rental voucher must have also been referred for services in the community such as substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, sex offender treatment, education services, employment services, cognitive behavioral programming, or other services that help reduce the risk of recidivism.
8. Offenders determined ineligible for a rental voucher may seek transitional assistance funds for rent assistance as outlined in III.B. above.

D. OFFENDER REQUESTS FOR TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS AND/OR RENTAL VOUCHERS

1. *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request (Request)* must be completed as follows:
 - a. all applicable sections of the *Request* must be filled out;
 - b. a *transitional assistance* request may be pre-approved when the offender's needs have been identified prior to placement or can be requested during the offender's placement;
 - c. a *rental voucher* request must be approved prior to offender's release; therefore, requests must be submitted at least 5 business days in advance of the release to determine if the request is appropriate and meets the criteria for rental vouchers. If approval is needed prior to the 5 days, the requestor should call FPB at (406) 444-6483 and send an email to correquests@mt.gov.
2. The *Request* is submitted as follows:
 - a. an applicable Department staff member submits the *Request* to their supervisor or designee for signature; OR
 - b. facility staff submits *Request* to Facility Administrator or designee for signature.
 - c. Captain or Facility Administrator, or designee, submits *Request* to correquests@mt.gov. Email subject line must read as follows:
"Facility name/P&P: Offender Last Name, First Name, DOC #, Transitional Assistance."
 - d. When an offender is at risk of immediate homelessness, the *Request* may be submitted as an emergency request. The person submitting the *Request* must call FPB at (406) 444-6483 and explain the urgency of the *Request*. If the emergency occurs after business hours, or if there is no response at (406) 444-6483, the person may call (406) 580-7991.
 - 1) Verbal authorization for expenditure of funds for the emergency requests may be given by FPB staff; however, the *Request* must be submitted within 5 business days of the verbal authorization.
3. Unless a *Request* has been identified as an emergency or urgent and has been staffed with FPB, each *Request* will be reviewed and a final determination will be made within 5 business days of the submission of the completed *Request*.
4. If approved, *Request* is forwarded to the staff requesting funds, the contract beds accountant, and FPB budget analyst.
5. Approved vendor(s) will be instructed to submit their invoice for processing/payment as follows, unless otherwise directed by FPB staff:
 - a. to the offender's facility case manager, applicable Department staff, or supervising P&P Officer for transitional assistance funds; and/or
 - b. to the offender's supervising P&P Officer for rental voucher.
6. Staff will send a copy of the invoice by email to correquests@mt.gov. Email subject line must read as follows:
"Facility name/P&P: Offender Last Name, First Name, DOC #, Transitional Assistance."

E. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS FOR OFFENDERS

1. A vendor is required to submit a federal *Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification* with their invoice for the first approved payment.
2. Transitional assistance funds and rental vouchers will not be disbursed to family members or friends or used for their expenses unless the family member is a bona fide landlord and submits supporting documentation showing the family member is a bona fide landlord.
3. Funds will not be disbursed for expenses incurred without an approved *PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request* unless FPB has given a verbal approval.

4. Funds not used within 120 days of approval will automatically be reallocated unless notification has been made to, and approved by, the FPB Chief or designee.
5. If an offender approved for funds has the offender's community supervision revoked before the funds are used, the funds will be reallocated by the Department.
6. Once approved, an invoice or ProCard receipt must be submitted within the time specified, but no later than 120 days after approval. If more time is needed, offender must contact the offender's case manager or supervising P&P Officer who will contact the FPB.

IV. CLOSING

Questions about this procedure should be directed to the FPB Chief.

V. REFERENCES

A. 46-23-1002, MCA; 46-23-1041, MCA; 53-1-107, MCA; ARM 20.13.108

VI. FORMS

PFB 6.1.204 (A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request

PFB 6.1.204 (B) Payment Card Authorization Form

PFB 6.1.204 (C) Notice to Landlords