I. PURPOSE:

Staff of the Department of Corrections and the contracted facilities of the Programs and Facilities Bureau will follow established procedures when requesting funds that are available to assist eligible offenders with financial needs.

II. DEFINITIONS:

PFB-Programs and Facilities Bureau – The Bureau oversees the facilities providing assessments and sanctions, prerelease, and treatment services.

PPD-Probation and Parole Division – The Division oversees the Probation & Parole regional offices and interstate transfers.

III. PROCEDURES:

A. GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. The Department maintains funds to provide financial assistance to eligible offenders for:
   a. Transitional Assistance (see Section B) – 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 4) for an offender’s ongoing need in the community.
   b. Rental Vouchers (see Section C) – 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 §20.3.108 A.R.M.

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. A request for transitional assistance funds and/or a rental voucher is made using PFB 6.1.204(A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request. Every Request will be reviewed and considered by the PFB. PFB staff will determine whether the offender qualifies for transitional assistance funds, a rental voucher, or a combination.

5. Disbursement of Funds:
   a. 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.
   b. 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 he/she is a bona fide landlord.
   c. Funds will not be disbursed for expenses incurred without an approved PFB 6.1.204(A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request unless PFB has given a verbal approval.
   d. Funds not used within 120 days of approval will automatically be reallocated unless notification has been made to, and approved by, the PFB Bureau Chief or designee.
   e. If an offender approved for funds has his/her community supervision revoked before the funds are used, the funds will be reallocated by the Department.

6. Once approved, an invoice or Pro-card receipt must be submitted within the time specified, but no later than 120 days of approval. If more time is needed, offender must contact his/her case manager or supervising Probation & Parole Officer who will contact the PFB.

B. TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS:

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 his/her placement that funds may be necessary, the request should be made as soon as possible after that determination; and
      2) funds for room and board or personal care expenses may be requested for up to three (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 one (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;
      4) prior to a Pro-card charge for temporary housing at a hotel/motel, the Department staff member authorizing the charge to his/her Pro-card 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 Pro-card log.
   d. transportation;
   e. medication;
f. treatment costs; and
g. essential items or services without which an offender’s ability to remain in compliance with the conditions of his/her 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 and sanction center, or a treatment facility; or
   d. currently under or being released to the direct community supervision of PPD.

3. Funds will not be used for payment of offender’s overdue expenses accrued at a PFB facility and offender has left the facility or accrued while under direct community supervision of PPD (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 must be provided for review by the PFB:
   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 his/her 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 only) or “Vendor Invoice” or “Pro-Card” for all other costs. 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.

6. PFB will determine the funds for which an offender is eligible during the review of PFB 6.1.204(A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request.
   a. The availability of other sources of funding will be considered: 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 PFB 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. Requests for over $1000 must be approved by the PFB Bureau 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 Pro-card charge or upon receipt of an invoice by the
Department;
   b. may be made to a PFB 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 a PFB facility for its payment to a vendor on behalf of the offender for
      allowable expenses or needs. PFB must have approved PFB 6.1.204(A) Transitional Assistance/
      Rental Voucher Request prior to the payment made by the facility.

C. RENTAL VOUCHERS:

1. Funds for rental vouchers are available to eligible offenders who are being paroled from prison:
   a. directly to PPD community supervision;
   b. to PPD community supervision upon completion of a treatment program; or
   c. to PPD community supervision after completion of an inmate worker placement.

2. Offenders completing a prerelease center program are NOT eligible for rental vouchers.

3. The prison Institutional Probation & Parole Officer (IPPO) must submit PFB 6.1.204(A)
   Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request for ALL offenders designated in section C. 1
   above.

4. The financial eligibility of an offender will be determined by PFB staff prior to the offender leaving
   the prison and pursuant to §20.13.108, A.R.M.

5. The requested funding may be specifically allocated for rent for up to (3) three months:
   a. Payment for only one (1) month will be issued at a time upon approval of PFB 6.1.204(A)
      Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request;
   b. Offender must remain eligible for the program each month;
   c. Voucher may be used for a sober living home as provided in §20.13.108, A.R.M.;
   d. Voucher will not be used for rent deposits; and
   e. Voucher will not be used for 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 “Pro-Card” must be selected on the Request;
      and
   b. If the vendor invoice option is chosen, the invoice is not required for a 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 Section B above.

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

1. PFB 6.1.204(A) Transitional Assistance/Rental Voucher Request must be completed as follows:
   a. All applicable sections of the Request must be filled out.
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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 offender’s placement.

c. A *rental voucher* request must be approved prior to offender’s release; therefore, requests must be submitted at least 5 (five) 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 PFB at (406) 444-4333.

2. *Request* is submitted as follows:
   a. IPPO/Probation & Parole (P&P) Officer submits *Request* to Deputy Chief (DC) or designee for signature; OR
   b. Facility staff submits *Request* to Facility Administrator or designee for signature.
   c. DC or Facility Administrator, or designees, 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 PFB at (406) 444-4333 and explain the urgency of the request.
      1) Verbal authorization for expenditure of funds for the emergency requests may be given by PFB staff; however, the *Request* must be submitted within two (2) business days of the verbal authorization.

3. Unless a request has been identified as an emergency or urgent and has been staffed with PFB, all requests will be reviewed and a final determination will be made within 5 (five) business days of the submission of a completed *Request*.

4. If approved, *Request* is forwarded to the staff requesting funds, the contract beds accountant, and PFB budget analyst.

5. Approved vendor(s) will be instructed to submit their invoice for processing/payment as follows, unless otherwise directed by PFB staff:
   a. to the offender’s facility case manager, facility IPPO, 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.

IV. CLOSING:

Questions regarding this procedure should be directed to the Programs and Facilities Bureau.

V. 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 Landlord