

RCW 72.09.450 Limitation on denial of access to services and supplies—Recoupment of assessments—Collections. (1) An inmate shall not be denied access to services or supplies required by state or federal law solely on the basis of his or her inability to pay for them.

(2) The department shall record all lawfully authorized assessments for services or supplies as a debt to the department. The department shall recoup the assessments when the inmate's institutional account exceeds the indigency standard, and may pursue other remedies to recoup the assessments after the period of incarceration.

(3) The department shall record as a debt any costs assessed by a court against an inmate plaintiff where the state is providing defense pursuant to chapter 4.92 RCW. The department shall recoup the debt when the inmate's institutional account exceeds the indigency standard and may pursue other remedies to recoup the debt after the period of incarceration.

(4) In order to maximize the cost-efficient collection of unpaid offender debt existing after the period of an offender's incarceration, the department is authorized to use the following nonexclusive options: (a) Use the collection services available through the department of enterprise services, or (b) notwithstanding any provision of chapter 41.06 RCW, contract with collection agencies for collection of the debts. The costs for enterprise services or collection agency services shall be paid by the debtor. Any contract with a collection agency shall only be awarded after competitive bidding. Factors the department shall consider in awarding a collection contract include but are not limited to a collection agency's history and reputation in the community; and the agency's access to a local database that may increase the efficiency of its collections. The servicing of an unpaid obligation to the department does not constitute assignment of a debt, and no contract with a collection agency may remove the department's control over unpaid obligations owed to the department. [2015 c 225 s 113; 1996 c 277 s 1; 1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 4.]

Findings—Purpose—1995 1st sp.s. c 19: "The legislature finds the increasing number of inmates incarcerated in state correctional institutions, and the expenses associated with their incarceration, require expanded efforts to contain corrections costs. Cost containment requires improved planning and oversight, and increased accountability and responsibility on the part of inmates and the department.

The legislature further finds motivating inmates to participate in meaningful education and work programs in order to learn transferable skills and earn basic privileges is an effective and efficient way to meet the penological objectives of the corrections system.

The purpose of this act is to assure that the department fulfills its mission to reduce offender recidivism, to mirror the values of the community by clearly linking inmate behavior to receipt of privileges, and to prudently manage the resources it receives through tax dollars. This purpose is accomplished through the implementation of specific cost-control measures and creation of a planning and oversight process that will improve the department's effectiveness and efficiencies." [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 1.]

Short title—1995 1st sp.s. c 19: "This act shall be known as the department of corrections cost-efficiency and inmate responsibility omnibus act." [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 37.]

Severability—1995 1st sp.s. c 19: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 38.]

Effective date—1995 1st sp.s. c 19: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [June 15, 1995]." [1995 1st sp.s. c 19 s 40.]