

**RCW 4.100.060 Compensation awards—Amounts—Proof required—**

**Reentry services.** (1) In order to obtain a judgment in his or her favor, the claimant must show by clear and convincing evidence that:

(a) The claimant was convicted of one or more felonies in superior court and subsequently sentenced to a term of imprisonment, and has served all or any part of the sentence;

(b) (i) The claimant is not currently incarcerated for any offense; and

(ii) During the period of confinement for which the claimant is seeking compensation, the claimant was not serving a term of imprisonment or a concurrent sentence for any conviction other than those that are the basis for the claim;

(c) (i) The claimant has been pardoned on grounds consistent with innocence for the felony or felonies that are the basis for the claim; or

(ii) The claimant's judgment of conviction was reversed or vacated and the charging document dismissed on the basis of significant new exculpatory information or, if a new trial was ordered pursuant to the presentation of significant new exculpatory information, either the claimant was found not guilty at the new trial or the claimant was not retried and the charging document dismissed;

(d) The claimant did not engage in any illegal conduct alleged in the charging documents; and

(e) The claimant did not commit or suborn perjury, or fabricate evidence to cause or bring about his or her conviction. A guilty plea to a crime the claimant did not commit, or a confession that is later determined by a court to be false, does not automatically constitute perjury or fabricated evidence under this subsection.

(2) Any pardon or proclamation issued to the claimant must be certified by the officer having lawful custody of the pardon or proclamation, and be affixed with the seal of the office of the governor, or with the official certificate of such officer before it may be offered as evidence.

(3) In exercising its discretion regarding the weight and admissibility of evidence, the court must give due consideration to difficulties of proof caused by the passage of time or by release of evidence pursuant to a plea, the death or unavailability of witnesses, the destruction of evidence, or other factors not caused by the parties.

(4) The claimant may not be compensated for any period of time in which he or she was serving a term of imprisonment or a concurrent sentence for any conviction other than the felony or felonies that are the basis for the claim.

(5) If the jury or, in the case where the right to a jury is waived, the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the claimant was wrongly convicted, the court must order the state to pay the actually innocent claimant the following compensation award, as adjusted for partial years served and to account for inflation from July 28, 2013:

(a) Fifty thousand dollars for each year of actual confinement including time spent awaiting trial and an additional fifty thousand dollars for each year served under a sentence of death pursuant to \*chapter 10.95 RCW;

(b) Twenty-five thousand dollars for each year served on parole, community custody, or as a registered sex offender pursuant only to the felony or felonies which are grounds for the claim;

(c) Compensation for child support payments owed by the claimant that became due and interest on child support arrearages that accrued while the claimant was in custody on the felony or felonies that are grounds for the compensation claim. The funds must be paid on the claimant's behalf in a lump sum payment to the department of social and health services for disbursement under Title 26 RCW;

(d) Reimbursement for all restitution, assessments, fees, court costs, and all other sums paid by the claimant as required by pretrial orders and the judgment and sentence; and

(e) Attorneys' fees for successfully bringing the wrongful conviction claim calculated at ten percent of the monetary damages awarded under subsection (5)(a) and (b) of this section, plus expenses. However, attorneys' fees and expenses may not exceed seventy-five thousand dollars. These fees may not be deducted from the compensation award due to the claimant and counsel is not entitled to receive additional fees from the client related to the claim. The court may not award any attorneys' fees to the claimant if the claimant fails to prove he or she was wrongly convicted.

(6) The compensation award may not include any punitive damages.

(7) The court may not offset the compensation award by any expenses incurred by the state, the county, or any political subdivision of the state including, but not limited to, expenses incurred to secure the claimant's custody, or to feed, clothe, or provide medical services for the claimant. The court may not offset against the compensation award the value of any services or reduction in fees for services to be provided to the claimant as part of the award under this section.

(8) The compensation award is not income for tax purposes, except attorneys' fees awarded under subsection (5)(e) of this section.

(9)(a) Upon finding that the claimant was wrongly convicted, the court must seal the claimant's record of conviction.

(b) Upon request of the claimant, the court may order the claimant's record of conviction vacated if the record has not already been vacated, expunged, or destroyed under court rules. The requirements for vacating records under RCW 9.94A.640 do not apply.

(10) Upon request of the claimant, the court must refer the claimant to the department of corrections or the department of social and health services for access to reentry services, if available, including but not limited to counseling on the ability to enter into a structured settlement agreement and where to obtain free or low-cost legal and financial advice if the claimant is not already represented, the community-based transition programs and long-term support programs for education, mentoring, life skills training, assessment, job skills development, mental health and substance abuse treatment.

(11) The claimant or the attorney general may initiate and agree to a claim with a structured settlement for the compensation awarded under subsection (5) of this section. During negotiation of the structured settlement agreement, the claimant must be given adequate time to consult with the legal and financial advisor of his or her choice. Any structured settlement agreement binds the parties with regard to all compensation awarded. A structured settlement agreement entered into under this section must be in writing and signed by the parties or their representatives and must clearly state that the parties understand and agree to the terms of the agreement.

(12) Before approving any structured settlement agreement, the court must ensure that the claimant has an adequate understanding of the agreement. The court may approve the agreement only if the judge

finds that the agreement is in the best interest of the claimant and actuarially equivalent to the lump sum compensation award under subsection (5) of this section before taxation. When determining whether the agreement is in the best interest of the claimant, the court must consider the following factors:

(a) The age and life expectancy of the claimant;

(b) The marital or domestic partnership status of the claimant;

and

(c) The number and age of the claimant's dependents. [2013 c 175 § 6.]

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 10.95.040 through 10.95.901 relating to "death sentence" was repealed by 2023 c 102 § 21.