DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Internal Memo

Date: 04/13/2020

To: DOC Staff

From: Curtis Shanklin, Deputy Commissioner, Community Services Division

RE: COVID-19 Expanded Work Release Program (C19EWRP)

Effective April 14, the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) will temporarily expand its work release program under Minn. Stat. §§ 241.26 and 244.065. The expanded work release program will help increase social distancing practices and create additional capacity to use quarantine and containment strategies in correctional facilities due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Under the expanded work release program, low- or medium-risk incarcerated adults, who have served at least half of their terms of imprisonment, may reside in approved programs/residences in the community up to three months before their scheduled supervised release date. Approved adults must work at paid employment, seek employment, or be involved in vocational or educational programs, and be under the supervision of the work release unit, while continuing to serve the remainder of their terms of imprisonment.

This temporary policy is in effect until 12/31/2020 or until otherwise amended.

Program participants will be supervised by DOC Work Release Unit staff and will participate in at least twice-weekly virtual visits with their assigned supervisor. The program also aims to provide additional assistance and accountability by helping participants identify accessible, pro-social supports during their release. Only incarcerated men and women who have an agent-approved residence will be eligible for this program at this time.

C19EWRP Release Criteria

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- have served at least one half of their terms of imprisonment;
- have no more than 3 months remaining to release;
- have an assessment score using the Minnesota Screening Tool Assessing Recidivism Risk (MNSTARR) of medium or low risk;
- have an approved program/residence; and,
- have access to a landline or internet access with a camera-capable device at the release address.

Exclusionary criteria include:

- Currently serving a discipline sentence in restrictive housing that is not for refusing placement in general population;
- Certain other court or criminal-justice obligations
- Have a detainer or a warrant from another jurisdiction;
- Have a current sentence from a state other than Minnesota;
- Serving a sentence authorized by a statute that precludes early release;
- Planning to apply, or have applied, for interstate supervision;
- Currently serving a sentence for a person, predatory, or violent offense;
- Have an approved agent assignment to Intensive Supervised Release;
- Require predatory offender registration and/or end-of-confinement review committee (ECRC) approval.

A caseworker will screen each potential participant's electronic file to determine program eligibility, and then will provide an application to those who appear to be eligible.

Attached is a policy for review and immediate implementation.