



Contra Costa County

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NEWS RELEASE

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Contra Costa County Reentry Program Lands \$750,000 in Funding *Grant to Fund Innovative Effort to Reduce Recidivism*

Keeping former inmates from committing crimes that would land them back behind bars is a primary goal of prisoner “reentry” programs, and Contra Costa County has just secured a significant helping hand in implementing its own program. The Department of Justice will be awarding Contra Costa County \$750,000 in grant funding to enhance its efforts under the federal Second Chance Act Reentry Program. The money will finance a pilot project providing a range of targeted services to 100 residents leaving the justice system, and then to collect and evaluate data showing the effectiveness of the concentrated efforts.

Supervisor Mary J. Piepho, Chair of the Board of Supervisors, praised the collaborative effort that resulted in the grant being awarded to the County. “Protecting the public is our highest priority, and leaders from all of our public safety departments as well as community partners jointly created the vision for helping offenders transition back into the community without committing new crimes,” Piepho said.

County Supervisor John Gioia noted that Contra Costa has been uniquely positioned to support prisoner reentry, having adopted a strategic plan in early 2011 to manage the anticipated effects of prison overcrowding. “We began working several years ago, before AB 109 shifted low-level offenders to county supervision, to create a roadmap for easing former inmates back into their communities,” Gioia said. “The joint vision of justice partners, social services, health agencies and community based organizations to improve public safety by cutting down on recidivism has set us on an important path, one worth monitoring with real data and analysis.”

County Supervisor Federal Glover noted that a close partnership with the Department of Justice was forged earlier this year to secure the grant. “Justice Department officials wanted to work with a California county because they knew about the historic shift in how the state is dealing with incarceration through realignment,” Glover said. “It took extraordinary work by many partners sharing their information and expertise to meet the stringent requirements and tight deadlines for the grant.”

Leadership and letters of support from Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and Representatives George Miller, John Garamendi and Jerry McNerney, were instrumental in persuading the Department of Justice that Contra Costa County's program has significant value. County officials praised the support from the Senators and congressional delegation.

County Probation Officer Philip Kader notes their work to secure the funding will have a tangible impact on enhancing local public safety. "This grant will allow Probation to complete a risk needs assessment and develop a comprehensive reentry case plan, all while our clients are still in custody," Kader said. "The funding will also provide for a defined and collaborative case management system for those released to the hardest hit Antioch and Richmond communities. By improving the data collection component of our program, we can refine our efforts to best protect our community, while providing direct services and support for those who might otherwise find themselves behind bars again."

Congressional leaders who assisted in the effort to obtain the grant were pleased with the outcome. Congressman George Miller, who supported the County's application and has voiced his support of innovative programs to help former prisoners successfully integrate back into their communities, congratulated the County on receiving the grant. "It takes a variety of approaches to reduce crime in our community. My hope is this funding will help enhance the County's ability to implement its strategic plan and subsequently expand on the methods that are working in our community," Miller noted. He added that he's looking forward to the results of the evaluation.

Congressman John Garamendi added that he was happy to support the County with its application for the Second Chance Act Grant. "I am very pleased that they were chosen as recipients. This grant goes toward cost-effective methods for reducing recidivism, which will save taxpayer dollars and promote public safety. I am confident these funds will aid in the overall enrichment of our community."

"Improving public safety in our neighborhoods has always been a priority of mine, and I was happy to help Contra Costa County get this critical funding," stated Congressman Jerry McNerney. "It will go a long way to not only making our streets safer, but helping decrease the amount of crime in the months and years to come."

County leaders expressed their deepest thanks to the entire delegation, and to Senators Boxer and Feinstein as well, for their continued efforts to support the Contra Costa grant application.

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