

REALITIES PROGRAM PLACER COUNTY MAIN/MINIMUM JAIL

Summary

The Grand Jury has a mandate under California law to evaluate the conditions and maintenance of detention facilities. It is universally recognized that within those parameters is a duty to formulate recommendations, based upon findings, advocating feasible improvements of existing situations.

There are over 440 inmates in custody and over 530 in Community Corrections Programs in Placer County. There are over 1,800 individuals on probation. It is very likely, according to the Sheriff's Department, that most of these individuals will re-offend because little help is available to break the cycle of substance abuse and criminality.

Under consideration by County officials is a multi-dimensional plan, entitled the "Realities Program," designed to reduce the tendency of parolees again to commit crimes and return to custody. The essential purpose of the program is to provide meaningful and effective counseling, training, treatment and education for all inmates. The program will help the participants to become craftsmen, such as carpenters, cabinetmakers, and automotive body repairman.

Placer County does not have a residential facility for drug and alcohol treatment nor designated facilities to accommodate the Realities Program. In order to facilitate this program, three buildings in DeWitt Center need to be obtained by the Sheriff's Department and remodeled. Three buildings have been identified as ideal for this program.

There is a need to house mentally ill offenders as well. Placer County has received a 4-year, \$2.8 million grant to fund such a program.

The Main Jail does not have sufficient space for educational/vocational classrooms. However, there is an unfinished space near the kitchen that could be turned into a classroom and a multipurpose room.

The Grand Jury has five recommendations regarding the Realities Program.

Discussion

Modern day law enforcement encompasses the traditional aspect of punishment while also embracing a philosophy of rehabilitation. Ultimate goals include not only protection from crime and violence but also the decrease of recidivism.

The Sheriff's Department proposes a plan to reduce the recidivism rate within the County. In examining the proposal, the Grand Jury toured the Main and Minimum Security Jail and interviewed the County Executive Officer, the County Sheriff, the Main Jail Captain and the Director of Facility Services.

The "Realities Program" will provide the following benefits to the inmates and ultimately the County:

1. In-custody residential treatment program for up to 62 drug and alcohol offenders.
2. Mandatory basic education, life-skills training, anger management, and vocational skills training.
3. Ability to re-institute the Community Corrections work furlough program, which has been requested by the judges.
4. Ability to arrest and bring to justice misdemeanants who currently go unpunished.

Investigation reveals that the Realities Program would move each inmate through all five of the following phases with the adoption of four proposed components:

- ❖ Phase One - Inmate evaluation by a team composed of counselors, probation, staff and the jail program manager.
- ❖ Phase Two - Program assignment after the inmate is classified and receives orientation.
- ❖ Phase Three - Instructions in basic educational and life skills after determining what is best suited to the inmate.
- ❖ Phase Four - Drug/alcohol treatment and vocational training to the extent applicable.
- ❖ Phase Five - Placement in a work furlough plan.

The proposed components needed to accomplish these progressive phases are:

1. A residential drug and alcohol treatment plan would be put into effect within a portion of an existing building presently utilized as a woodshop by Facility Services. The conversion would require remodeling after which the building could house from 45 to 62 inmates with two separate classrooms for counseling and education. It is further proposed that sentenced and pre-sentenced inmates, referred to the program by the Drug Court, Probation Department or jail evaluation team, would receive four hours per day of drug and alcohol resistance education and four hours of instruction on such topics as anger control, living skills, infectious disease prevention, and computer training.

2. A woodshop and automotive body repair vocational training program would be established within a building currently used for storage. The woodshop will be used to instruct inmates in cabinet making and general carpentry. The automotive body repair training would instruct inmates as to automotive painting and bodywork. The plan includes solicitation of cooperation from local auto-body repair shops to place inmates on work furloughs under the direction and supervision of the Corrections Division.
3. Creating a non-jail transitional residential unit for up to 16 inmate patients would broaden the mentally ill offender program. Housing would be within a vacant building, which would be refurbished. The plan entails staffing by eight full-time and two part-time counselors trained to help offenders develop skills for independent living.
4. The final element is an educational program, which would include several types of instruction. The first level would be for those awaiting permanent housing assignments or those inmates who choose not to participate in regular training programs. It would involve instructional videos played on television sets within the various housing units in lieu of regular TV and recreation. The second level would be for inmates selected for instruction in drug and alcohol abuse resistance, infectious disease prevention, anger control, living skills, computer usage and other topics.

Placer County has been awarded a 4-year, \$2.8 million grant from the California Board of Corrections for the Mentally Ill Offender program.

Finding 1

There is a need for an appropriate residential facility to provide inmates undergoing drug and alcohol treatment with housing and classrooms for counseling and education.

Recommendation 1

Acquire that portion of the building used by Facility Services as a woodshop and remodel it for the housing of 45 to 62 inmates and two related classrooms.

Finding 2

More vocational training could be made available for inmates with the procurement of additional space.

Recommendation 2

Remove stored items from an existing storage building and convert it for use as a woodshop and automotive repair facility.

Finding 3

There is a need to establish stabilization housing for mentally ill inmate patients.

Recommendation 3

Refurbish a currently vacant building for the housing of up to 16 mentally ill inmate patients.

Finding 4

At least two room additions are essential to provide space for proposed expanded educational programs.

Recommendation 4

Facility Services, in cooperation with the Corrections Division, should complete the unfinished space between the Main Jail and the kitchen area to include one classroom and one multi-purpose program room.

Finding 5

The Capital Improvements Committee, primarily composed of the County Executive Officer and the Director of Facility Services, is an advisor to the County Board of Supervisors regarding the County's overall needs regarding facility improvements and associated budgetary considerations.

Recommendation 5

The Capital Improvements Committee should favorably examine the Realities Program in detail and ultimately approve its basic provisions for a recommended concurrence of the Board of Supervisors.

Respondents

Placer County Board of Supervisors
Placer County Executive Officer
Placer County Facility Services Director
Placer County Sheriff

RESPONSE REQUIRED WITHIN 90 DAYS TO:

The Honorable Larry D. Gaddis
Presiding Judge, Superior Court
County of Placer
Historic Courthouse
101 Maple Street
Auburn, CA 95603