

Oregon Youth Authority

NEWS RELEASE

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Oregon receives grant to help youth offenders transition back into communities

SALEM – The Oregon Youth Authority and Oregon Juvenile Department Directors' Association have received a \$750,000 award to work with counties to reduce recidivism rates among youth offenders with alcohol and drug problems.

“This is an exciting opportunity for Oregon,” said OYA Director Colette S. Peters. “The partnerships and collaboration this grant supports will further strengthen the state’s juvenile justice system and enhance public safety. We are very pleased this grant application was approved.”

The award from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention will be used to establish a Statewide Reentry Advisory Council and five local councils to guide development of reentry planning. Council members will represent families and youth offenders, juvenile justice organizations, addictions and mental health treatment programs, education and vocation programs, and housing services.

The councils will oversee development of community infrastructures in three distinctly different regions of the state – the Portland metropolitan area, Lane County, and central and eastern Oregon. The goal is to develop an infrastructure that will work throughout Oregon for delivering needed services to youth coming out of correctional facilities.

“Youth are much less likely to reoffend if they are able to find jobs and housing,” said OYA Assistant Director Philip Cox, who oversees OYA’s community-based programs. “Our data also show that youth offenders with substance abuse problems are 4.5 times more likely to return to close custody than youth offenders without those problems. This grant will enable communities to develop local capacity to provide job and housing supports as well as addiction and mental health treatment to help youth offenders avoid relapse and recidivism.”

The three-year grant will pay for training in evidence-based case management and transition planning for staff within OYA, juvenile justice departments and other agencies throughout Oregon. The grant also will pay for an independent evaluator to assess grant outcomes based on measures prescribed in the grant application. The project will begin once OYA has received final legislative approval to accept and expend the grant funds.

OYA serves nearly 2,100 youth through a combination of close custody facilities and community-based residential programs.

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