



# Oregon

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **Oregon Youth Authority strengthening alcohol and drug counseling for youth**

The state's juvenile corrections agency plans to begin dramatically increasing the number of staff members formally certified to deliver alcohol and drug counseling to youth offenders when it begins training counselors this month.

Twenty-five Oregon Youth Authority staff members from the North Coast and MacLaren youth correctional facilities in Warrenton and Woodburn, respectively, will begin formal training at the Warrenton facility March 10.

Although the agency has a number of staff members with training in alcohol and drug counseling, only two staff members at these facilities are certified by the Addiction Counselor Certification Board of Oregon.

"Alcohol and drug issues are a challenge for two-thirds of the youth offenders we serve," said Colette S. Peters, OYA director. "This will not only strengthen our correctional and behavioral services for youth but also provide a career opportunity for staff members who want to be certified as alcohol and drug counselors."

The training will assist the Oregon Youth Authority in fulfilling its mission of protecting public safety and reducing crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments.

The training will be delivered by Gary O. George, Ph.D., of Redmond, a retired clinical psychologist and regional drug abuse treatment coordinator who holds the highest certification available in alcohol and drug counseling. An Oregon native who worked with the Federal Bureau of Prisons for more than two decades, George has 30 years' experience in alcohol and drug training, supervision and administration, was an associate warden at two federal prisons and has delivered training previously at three OYA facilities.

Staff members enrolled in the training will be in class one day a month for five months, read three textbooks and have phone and e-mail access to George at other times.

Besides receiving the training, North Coast and MacLaren staff members will be required to do 1,000 hours of clinically supervised counseling before sitting for the exam to be certified as an alcohol and drug counselor, or CADC I.

The training is being offered in response to state legislation requiring public agencies to use certified counselors. Peters said she would like to have 50 staff members certified, although training at other OYA facilities will be contingent on availability of budget resources.

OYA has custody of approximately 900 youth offenders ages 12-24 in correctional and transitional facilities in Albany, Burns, Florence, Grants Pass, La Grande, Salem, Tillamook, Warrenton and Woodburn, and supervises approximately 1,100 youth on parole and probation in communities throughout Oregon.

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