BSCC Launches Grant Prep, Jail Construction Efforts

The Board of State and Community Corrections today moved forward two statewide grant programs designed to steer offenders away from the criminal justice system.

The Board also approved establishment of an Executive Steering Committee for a new round of local jail improvement funding that will make medical and mental health beds a priority.

Senate Bill 844 authorizes $250 million in competitive state lease-revenue bond financing for eligible counties that have not yet received jail-improvement funding, or received partial funding. Realignment has kept low-level offenders in local jails rather than state prisons, which has created a statewide need for more modern facilities that include space for rehabilitative programs and room to serve the medical and mental health needs of offenders. The ESC will write and the BSCC will release the Request For Proposals by the end of the year.

The Board approved the tentative roster for the Executive Steering Committee that will begin work on a pilot project to divert low-level offenders directly to available social services, rather than book them into jail. The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program (SB 843) authorizes $15 million from the General Fund to three jurisdictions and would allow law enforcement officers to deliver willing low-level drug offenders and those arrested for prostitution to treatment and counseling. It is modeled after a similar program in Seattle. The pilot project will last for two years and will include participation by an outside evaluator to gauge effectiveness. The BSCC plans to release the RFP on Nov. 18, 2016.

The Board also approved an Executive Steering Committee to oversee development of an RFP for the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention grant. Since 2008 the Budget Act annually has appropriated $9.25 million from the State Restitution Fund to help cities develop regional responses to thwart gang involvement and activity. The grant requires that recipients contribute a 100 percent match. The RFP will be released in February 2017.

In other action the Board authorized BSCC staff to move forward with selection of an Executive Steering Committee to oversee development of an RFP for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant, federal funds designed to prevent and reduce crime and violence. BSCC Chair Linda Penner will chair the committee. The BSCC will ask for statements of interest from those interested in serving.

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