BSCC Updates Training Standards for Corrections, Probation Officers

SACRAMENTO (Jan. 17, 2019) – The Board of State and Community Corrections today approved a major overhaul of training standards specifically tied to the more complex demands of people serving time in local jails for nonviolent felonies.

One of the most significant changes is a training module designed to help officers handle the increased proportion of mentally ill people who are incarcerated for committing crimes of opportunity, often because they are homeless.

The update in training for Adult Corrections Officers, Juvenile Corrections Officers, and Probation Officers represents two and a half years of work by more than 300 people in law enforcement, behavior health and advocacy who analyzed every aspect of the job duties. The final product adds training in critical areas, but streamlines other areas by allowing officers to transfer between job categories without repeating core training modules they already have completed.

Since Public Safety Realignment in 2011, local corrections and probation officers have been dealing with more complex populations of criminal justice-involved individuals. Local jails now house felons serving sentences that previously would have mandated state prison time. The number of mentally ill people in jails has increased, and probation officers are supervising and arranging suitable treatment and programming for individuals who were previously the responsibility of state parole agents. With these new populations, the duties of corrections and probation officers have changed.

The Board of State and Community Corrections is required to establish and periodically amend minimum standards for the training of local corrections and probation officers.

To assess the current need, the BSCC’s Standards and Training for Corrections division conducted a comprehensive survey to determine in which ways the knowledge, skills and abilities of local corrections and probation officers had adapted to handle the new population serving time under local supervision. The results informed a comprehensive look at the BSCC’s core training program.

Most significantly, the new training adds a behavior health module that will help officers deal with people suffering from mental illness. It also provides units to help officers with their own stresses and behavioral health issues that can result from working in a high-intensity job.

The specific changes are available [here:](http://www.bscc.ca.gov/downloads/Attachment%20C-6%201-15-19.pdf)

Upon approval of the Board, the new standards will be effective on July 1, 2020. Counties agencies will have an implementation period to develop new curriculum and redesign academies. It also provides time to revise the Title 15 regulations pertaining to core training standards to reflect the new standards. At any time during the implementation period, agencies can voluntarily comply with the new standard.

For more information please contact Evonne Garner at Evonne.garner@bscc.ca.gov