



Dec. 15, 2009

## **U.S. Justice Department Selects San Mateo County to Develop Model Programs**

### *“Second Chance Act” Grant to Help Inmates Successfully Reenter Communities*

**REDWOOD CITY, Calif.** – To protect the public and help those who were formerly incarcerated obtain jobs and the life skills they need to succeed, San Mateo County is developing model programs for inmates with the help of a federal grant.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors today accepted a \$677,674 grant from the U.S. Justice Department through the “Second Chance Act” initiative. San Mateo County is one of just 15 agencies that received grant funding for a project that will be watched across the nation for signs of success.

The goal is to develop support systems and programs that help San Mateo County jail inmates successfully reenter our community. Successful reentry will improve overall public safety, save taxpayer money and free up space in jails.

San Mateo County has hired Shirley Melnicoe to work with the criminal justice system and community groups as the reentry coordinator. She is the former executive director of the Northern California Service League and will coordinate the implementation of the County’s re-entry plan designed to provide the services and programs that will help former inmates become law-abiding residents.

“The success of this project is largely reliant on how effectively all our key stakeholders, including County staff, providers, advocates and community partners, work together. The re-entry coordinator is the key to ensuring that we achieve the level of collaboration that is required,” said Mark Church, president of the Board of Supervisors.

Sheriff Greg Munks said inmates often need drug and alcohol counseling, educational opportunities and to learn job skills if they are going to succeed. “If we can get people working, part of the social fabric of the community, then we have helped that person and we’ve improved public safety,” he said.

Nearly every inmate serving a sentence in San Mateo County jails will be released within a year.

The Second Chance Act grant funds will also be used to offset the costs of seven contracts in the Health System and one in the Probation Department to provide substance abuse treatment, job training, reentry case management and transitional housing.

San Mateo County continues to plan for a replacement jail for the outdated Women's Correctional Center and to expand capacity for male inmates. Munks said the re-entry coordinator will help officials as they plan for a replacement jail that has space for programs and services built into a new facility.

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