



Governor
Chris Gregoire

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GOVERNMENT WORKING SMARTER

2010 POLICY BRIEF

REFORMING HOW WE REHABILITATE OUR YOUNG OFFENDERS

Other states have long looked to Washington as a model for its treatment of young offenders and success in turning them away from a life of crime. Washington's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration has pioneered therapeutic treatment that yields results — and Governor Gregoire is proud that Washington has reduced its juvenile detention population by almost half in the past decade.

Yet, with far fewer youngsters in detention, Washington still maintains nearly the same state juvenile institutions that it did 10 years ago.

Governor Gregoire believes it's again time for Washington to set an example for the nation, and move more juvenile offenders out of state institutions and into secure community facilities, closer to the youth's home and family. Juvenile justice experts agree that in most cases, young offenders are less likely to reoffend when families are involved in their treatment and progress.



The Governor has carefully considered recommendations from a study ordered by the 2009 Legislature to reduce the number of beds in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration system by 235. The study consultant was directed to consider construction costs, economic impacts on communities and effects on facility staff. As a result, the Governor proposes to downsize large state institutions for juvenile offenders, and do so in two phases to make sure it is done right for both young offenders and the public.

In the first phase, the Governor proposes to take actions that will save taxpayers \$5.4 million over the next three years while maintaining public safety. The actions, to be carried out by the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, will:

- » Fill all capacity in existing, under-used community residential facilities;
- » Reopen two community residential facilities;
- » Downsize Naselle Youth Camp near Long Beach to accommodate only the 50 youth there who participate in the camp's forestry program; and
- » Close two wings at Green Hill in Chehalis and one cottage at Maple Lane in south Thurston County.

In the second phase, the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration will begin identifying potential sites for smaller facilities in communities. These facilities will be sited in counties where the majority of young offenders live. The Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration will also work with colleagues in other states to identify the most appropriate facility design to meet the treatment needs of juvenile offenders.

The Governor believes the money invested in juvenile rehabilitation benefits the state through lower recidivism, and less crime and victimization. Research shows that by reaching juvenile offenders early, fewer become offenders as adults. By moving our youth offenders into secure community settings and offering proven treatment, the Governor believes we can make our communities even safer, save money and offer brighter futures.