

NEWSRELEASE

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CCCS gets contract for revocation-sanction center

The Montana Department of Corrections has awarded the contract to operate a revocation and sanction center to Community, Counseling and Correctional Services Inc.

The contract makes an innovative pilot project into a permanent part of the state's correctional system. The START (Sanction, Treatment, Assessment, Revocation and Transition) program, which began at its Warm Springs location as a three-year experiment in December 2005, will operate out of new building that CCCS plans to build in the Anaconda area. CCCS operated the pilot project since it began.

START, managed under the Adult Community Corrections Division, is primarily designed as a means of diverting from prison those offenders who violate conditions of their community placements. The goal of the program is to use a taste of incarceration, coupled with assessment and treatment of offenders' needs, to help them get back on track and return successfully to their communities.

This program monitors and assesses offenders, and offers chemical dependency evaluations and treatment by licensed addiction counselors. After assessments are completed, the staff screens offenders for placement at appropriate community corrections programs. If an assessment determines prison is the most appropriate option, the offender is transferred there.

A request for proposals issued in June drew two responses, one of which was rejected as nonresponsive. Since then, the department has negotiated with CCCS regarding cost. The Butte-based nonprofit corporation agreed to reduce the daily rate in its initial offer from \$107.33 per offender to \$95.98. With legislative approval, the contract allows the 98-bed program to expand to 118 beds, with 10 of the additional beds reserved for offenders with mental health problems.

START is expected to begin operating at its new location in December 2009.

"During the negotiation process, the CCCS staff worked patiently and cooperatively with department staff to find ways to reduce program costs and, ultimately, provide the department and the taxpayer with a solution that was fiscally responsible and addressed all department requirements," said Gary Willems, chief of the department's Contracts and Facilities Management Bureau. "Over the years, CCCS has been a very good business partner and proponent of community corrections programs administered by the Department of Corrections."

Since it opened about three years ago, START has diverted from prison almost three out of every four offenders (73 percent) admitted to the program and returned them to community placements. In the first two fiscal years that START operated, prison admissions in Montana dropped 12.5 percent.

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