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Governor's May Revision: Expansion of Inmate Rehabilitation Programs

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Overview of May Revision Proposal to Expand Rehabilitation Programs

(In Millions)

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Arts-in-Corrections	$4.0	$6.0	$6.0
Substance Use Disorder Treatment	3.8	7.5	7.5
Internet Protocol Television	3.7	0.4	0.4
Innovative Programming Grants	3.1	3.2	3.2
E-Reader Program	3.0	3.0	3.0
Third Watch	2.5	5.1	5.1
Career Technical Education	2.3	4.5	4.5
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	2.2	4.3	4.3
Career Technical Education Media Evolution	—	10.3	3.0
Totals	**$24.5**	**$44.4**	**$37.1**

☑ The Governor's May Revision proposes a $24.5 million General Fund augmentation for various inmate rehabilitation programs. As shown in the figure, the proposed augmentation would increase to $44.4 million in 2017-18 and decline to $37.1 million in 2018-19.

☑ Nearly all of the proposed funding is for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). However, the proposed $3 million (Proposition 98) for the E-Reader Program would be provided to the California Community Colleges (CCC).

Background on Expanded Programs

☑ ***Arts-in-Corrections.*** The Arts-in-Corrections Program currently provides inmates with training in the arts at 19 prisons. The administration proposes to expand the program from $2 million to $4 million (General Fund) to offer the program at all prisons.

☑ ***Substance Use Disorder Treatment (SUDT).*** CDCR currently provides SUDT at 23 prisons and in the in-state contract facilities. The Governor's January budget proposed $15 million in 2016-17 to expand SUDT programs to the remaining 11 prisons that do not offer SUDT programs. The May Revision proposes $3.8 million in 2016-17 to further expand SUDT, with the intention of serving all inmates with an assessed need for SUDT.

☑ ***Internet Protocol Television Integration (IPTVI).*** Currently, CDCR provides six television channels with rehabilitation programming content to inmates. The May Revision proposes $3.7 million in 2016-17 to develop video content and provide the hardware and software needed to expand access to the television service.

☑ ***Innovative Programming Grants.*** These grants provide funding to volunteer or nonprofit organizations to expand programs currently offered in CDCR prisons. Grant recipients receive temporary funding with the intent that the programs will continue operating with private funding and/or volunteers after the grant is expended. The grants have been funded with one-time monies for the past couple of years. The May Revision proposes extending funding for the program annually for three years.

☑ ***E-Reader Program.*** The May Revision proposes $3 million to purchase electronic content for inmate-students enrolled in CCC courses. This content would be loaded onto 7,000 existing CDCR e-readers. The department reports that the existing content on these e-readers is only available for a limited amount of time before it expires and can no longer be accessed.

Background on Expanded Programs

(Continued)

☑ **Third Watch Custody Overtime.** The Governor proposes $2.5 million in 2016-17 for overtime for correctional officers to guard inmates so that they may attend rehabilitation programs between 2:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M. (a period of the day known as third watch). According to CDCR, most prisons cannot expand programs offered earlier in the day due to space constraints and insufficient staff to guard inmates participating in programs during third watch.

☑ **Career Technical Education (CTE).** CDCR provides 293 CTE programs in 19 different disciplines, including auto repair and masonry. The administration proposes $2.3 million in 2016-17 to add 12 new CTE programs. According to the department, these programs would be located at prisons where access to CTE programming is currently limited.

☑ **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Program.** CDCR provides CBT programs at 18 prisons. These programs focus on addressing certain needs that, if left unaddressed, can increase recidivism. These programs include anger management and family relations. The administration proposes $2.2 million General Fund in 2016-17 to expand CBT programs to all prisons.

☑ **CTE Media Evolution.** Currently, inmates participating in CTE programs do not have access to online certification exams. Some programs, like auto repair, only offer certification exams online. Accordingly, inmates in such programs are not able to complete their certification before leaving prison. In April, the Governor proposed $4.1 million in 2016-17 to provide wireless Internet service to CTE programs with online-only certification exams. The May Revision proposes $10.6 million in 2017-18 to provide wireless Internet services to all other CTE programs.

LAO Assessment

☑ **Some Programs Appear to Be Promising Strategies for Reducing Recidivism . . .**

■ Research has shown that SUDT, CTE, and CBT services—if implemented according to best practices—can be effective ways at reducing recidivism. Because the Governor's proposal would expand access to these programs, this portion of the proposal could eventually reduce both state costs and inmate recidivism.

☑ **. . . But Effectiveness of Other Programs Remain Uncertain**

■ Based on our review of existing research, we find little evidence to suggest that the Arts-in-Corrections Program is cost-effective at reducing recidivism.

■ It is unclear (1) how many of the programs previously funded with the Innovative Programming Grants have been able to continue operating and (2) whether the programs achieve desired outcomes, such as reducing recidivism.

■ It is also unclear whether programming provided through the existing ITPVI system (1) is actually utilized by inmates or (2) is delivered effectively.

■ CDCR has yet to implement the first phase of the CTE Media Evolution project to provide CTE programs with wireless Internet service. Thus, it is uncertain whether this is an effective method of providing Internet access to all CTE programs.

LAO Assessment *(Continued)*

☑ **Some Proposals Lack Sufficient Detail**

- CDCR has not provided any analysis of which prisons lack sufficient program space to deliver programs before third watch or information on the amount or type of programming that will be delivered during third watch.

- It is not clear how many CCC courses being offered to inmate-students have e-reader content available that is compatible with the e-readers used by CDCR or whether this approach is more cost-effective than using traditional textbooks that may be usable for longer periods of time.

LAO Recommendations

☑ ***Approve Programs That Appear Effective.*** We recommend the Legislature approve funding for those programs that appear effective. Specifically, we recommend approving the expansion of (1) CBT, (2) CTE, and (3) SUDT. To the extent that the Legislature (1) rejects some of the other rehabilitation proposals (such as those discussed below), and (2) is still interested in further expanding rehabilitation programs, it could use some or all of the freed-up resources to expand CTE and CBT programs, or other programs demonstrated to be cost-effective at reducing recidivism.

☑ ***Reject Proposals With Unclear Effectiveness.*** We recommend rejecting the proposed expansion of programs for which there is not clear evidence on their effectiveness. Specifically, we recommend rejecting the proposed funding for (1) Arts-in-Corrections, (2) Innovative Programming Grants, and (3) IPTVI. If CDCR were to pursue such proposals in the future, it should first evaluate each of these existing programs.

☑ ***Reject CTE Media Evolution May Revision Proposal.*** While we recommend approving the April Finance Letter proposal to provide wireless Internet services with online-only certification exams, we recommend rejecting the May Revision proposal to expand that service to all CTE programs. If the smaller-scale implementation is successful and additional CTE programs require wireless Internet service in the future, the department can request additional resources at that time.

☑ ***Reject Proposals That Lack Sufficient Detail.*** We recommend that the Legislature reject the funding for third watch custody overtime and the E-Reader Program, due to the lack of detail provided for these proposals, such as the amount and type of programming that will be offered during third watch.