

Support PROMISE: The Program for Returning Offenders with Mental Illness Safely and Effectively



The Problem: Each year more than 6,000 parolees suffering from serious mental illness are returned to prison for periods ranging from a few months up to one full year (or longer if they receive a new term). These parolees are usually returned due to technical violations of parole conditions or other criminal behavior that can result from mental illness. Homelessness is a key contributor to the high recidivism rate of mentally ill parolees. Parolees without homes are much less likely to attend medical or counseling sessions and stay on medications, thereby exacerbating symptoms and increasing parole violations.

An Expensive Proposition

Returning mentally ill parolees to state prisons is an extremely expensive proposition!

Average Annual Costs to House Inmates in State Prison

General inmate = \$43,287
Mentally Ill inmate = \$110,000

The Solution: PROMISE seeks to transition homeless offenders with mental illness who are exiting prison into permanent supportive housing with integrated services. PROMISE aims to successfully reintegrate these homeless individuals into the community, increase public safety, and reduce state costs from recidivism. PROMISE will provide enhanced case management and “in-reach” services to mentally ill inmates prior to their release with the goal of ensuring identification, services, and income.

Program Highlights

- Because parolees cannot be served by Proposition 63 funds, PROMISE will provide transitional supportive housing and necessary services to participants while they are on parole.
- The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) will contract with integrated service providers within the counties.
- Participants will pay 30% of their income toward rent.
- Services provided to participants will include:
 - Conflict resolution and life skills
 - Mental health services
 - Medically necessary medications to treat severe mental illnesses
 - Alcohol- and drug-treatment services
 - Transportation
 - Supportive housing
 - Vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services
 - Money management assistance for accessing other health care, federal income and housing support, and veterans’ services

Pilot Program

Subject to available funding, the CDCR will roll out the program in select locations within three counties, serving up to 100 participants in each county. After three years, the department will evaluate outcomes of the program, including the lessons learned and the cost savings to the state. The goal is to implement PROMISE statewide within five years.

How You Can Help

Please send a letter of support. (Download a sample letter at www.housingca.org/action/send.)

