

Industry Experts to Validate Criminal Justice Needs Assessment Report Findings

Poughkeepsie, NY... The Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council (CJC) has announced a contract has been awarded to RicciGreene Associates to perform a validation study of the *Dutchess County Criminal Justice System Needs Assessment* report finding. The report was originally issued in September 2012, following a request from Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro for the CJC to review Dutchess County's current inmate housing situation and provide comprehensive recommendations about the how the county should proceed in the future.

Among the recommendations in the report was the call to move forward with a new and better designed jail facility which will alleviate the serious housing out problem that has plagued the county for several years. This will be the initial construction of a transition center campus project to improve the County's ability to institute more evidence based rehabilitative and re-entry programs. RicciGreene Associates will evaluate and validate those findings, cost estimates and whether the recommendations are feasible. RicciGreene Associates is a nationally recognized planning and design firm that specializes in criminal justice projects.

Dutchess County's jail facility currently houses just over 250 inmates on an average day. Total Inmate population has been over 500 inmates per day, forcing the jail administrator to house out up to 250 inmates a day in other county jails. "Housing out" costs exceeded \$8 million in 2012 and this taxpayer expense is expected to continue to rise. A new facility, utilizing a modern design, will eliminate the need for housing out while reducing staffing and thereby lowering county taxpayer costs. Additionally, the design of a new facility can allow inmates to receive programmatic services to help in their rehabilitation.

Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro said, “If we are to proceed with the CJC’s recommendations for a new transition facility, we must be confident of the projected costs and long term savings before we can ask the Legislature and the public to embrace a solution to address both short and long term concerns. Thanks to state funding, this recognized industry expert will independently review the report to validate the findings and offer scenarios as well as next steps. We must be sure we have thoroughly considered all options, validated all findings and challenged all conclusions – I am confident in the work of the CJC but want this critical third party review. Taxpayers must know we were earnest, honest and diligent in our pursuit of the best solution to this persistent problem that is costing them far too much of their hard earned money.”

As part of its contract with the County, RicciGreene Associates will evaluate and validate the findings of the Criminal Justice System Needs Assessment including the analyses and recommendations related to jail population growth, existing jail populations, new jail models, construction costs, bonding, potential building sites and projected staffing. They will also review the analysis for installing temporary “housing pods” and validate the operational savings to be realized during construction. Finally, they will prepare and present a report with options, costs, recommendations, and suggested next steps.

Dutchess County Sheriff Adrian “Butch” Anderson said, “Our current correctional facility is overcrowded and outdated. I am extremely happy that a contract has been awarded to Ricci Greene Associates to finally do a study that will provide proper recommendations on how a new facility should be built. With a new facility, rehabilitation services will be available to everyone. And it is time to relieve our constituents of the millions of dollars that we have used in housing out inmates to other counties. Now we will be able to serve all our people and our community upon completion of a new facility.”

The CJC's Needs Assessment report also focused on the County's extensive Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, which currently divert more than 600 individuals from imprisonment each month. As part of the validation study, RicciGreene Associates will partner with Kevin Warwick of Alternative Solutions, a nationally recognized expert in alternatives to incarceration, to provide the County with suggestions for enhancing and expanding its ATI programs.

Dutchess County District Attorney William Grady said, "I would like to commend the Criminal Justice Council and its work in preparing the Criminal Justice System Needs Assessment report. The logical next step is to have those findings validated and then, based on that validation, proceed accordingly. The District Attorney's Office will continue to prosecute offenders and enforce our laws but we fully recognize that continually transporting our inmates to out of County jails is not a sustainable nor acceptable long-term practice. Hopefully this validation will position Dutchess County to finally tackle the jail overcrowding problem, ultimately saving taxpayer money."

The contract totals \$50,000 and is funded by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services' Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance (JAG) Grant Program. The validation study is expected to be completed by May, 2013.

The CJC's *Dutchess County Criminal Justice System Needs Assessment report* can be found online at :

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/CriminalJusticeCouncil/CJSystemNeedsAssessment.pdf>

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