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Gov. Rounds Announces Grant for Youth Reentry and Recidivism Reduction

Pierre, S.D. - Gov. Mike Rounds has announced that the State of South Dakota is the recipient of a Second Chance Act Youth Offender Reentry Initiative grant to assist with youthful offender reentry issues.

The state will get \$750,000 over three years to implement programs and strategies to increase public safety and reduce recidivism for those released from juvenile facilities to aftercare in the Rapid City area and for youth transitioning to the community from the West Farm program near Sioux Falls.

The state's goal is to reduce the repeat offender rate of troubled juveniles by 50 percent within five years.

"It's important that we help these young people turn their lives around and become productive members of society," Gov. Rounds said. "With the proper amount of guidance and support, they can get started on the path to becoming good citizens."

The Youth Offender Reentry Initiative will establish a transition center for each of the two project locations.

Rushmore Academy will serve as the Rapid City transition center and will serve 80 youths per year. The West Farm, a program operated by Volunteers of America-Dakotas, will serve 50 youths at that site.

The state will partner with local school districts and community-based service providers to develop and implement the program. Existing assessment processes will be enhanced by implementing employability, independent living and social skills/moral reasoning assessments to identify individual needs.

The juveniles will have access to educational services and cognitive behavioral programming. They also will receive assistance through the transition centers to prepare for employment and independent living.

The Local Interagency Team in Sioux Falls and the System of Care Coordinating Committee in Rapid City will serve as local task forces to implement the initiative in their areas.

“We have made a concerted effort over the last couple years to shorten the length of our state-run juvenile programs at STAR Academy, and employ more community-based services,” said South Dakota Corrections Secretary Tim Reisch. “The services made possible by these grants will greatly enhance those juveniles’ chances at remaining successful when they return to the community after placement.”

South Dakota earlier received a \$750,000 Second Chance Act grant for adult offenders.

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*Reisch (RYSH)