Washington DOC Gets Green Guidance

Local News

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Posted on : January 16, 2012 at 6:17 am

Olympia, WA - The Department of Corrections will be able to advance its nationally recognized sustainability initiative after winning a national green corrections competition. Washington is one of three states that competed for and will receive expert guidance on green correctional practices through the National Institute of Corrections.Experts in green corrections will be in Washington this spring and summer to develop a customized action plan for the Department of Corrections’ sustainability efforts, which has already reduced its energy and landfill costs, reduced its fuel and water consumption and increased its composting capacity.Maryland and Minnesota were also selected to receive the assistance. They will also receive similar assistance with a focus on building a sustainability plan and creating green jobs. After the two-day session Washington will be responsible for following through with the plans and will receive periodic help from the consultants to refine the plans.The three states must also report results to NIC and track the progress of the plans over the course of their implementation.

“Washington has a robust sustainability program in place,” said Stephanie Davison, one of the consultants provided by the National Institute of Corrections. “So it will be interesting to see how Washington can take its already solid system, ratchet it up and push the programs further.”In May or June consultants will be in Washington to lead a strategy session that will include input from DOC staff members and representatives from the Department’s partners including The Evergreen State College and the Department of Natural Resources. Washington DOC has had a sustainability plan since 2003 and is considered a national leader in the green corrections movement, which is a key reason the state was selected.“We use sustainability to reduce the environmental, economic and human cost of prisons,” said DOC Secretary Bernie Warner. “We are honored to get another opportunity to build on these efforts at no cost to our agency.”Washington DOC asked the consultants for assistance in developing plans for sustainable purchasing, bridging funding gaps for programs, and educating staff and offenders about the value of living sustainably.“We will be able to advance our sustainability initiatives in ways that would not be possible otherwise because of limited resources,” said Julie Vanneste, DOC’s Sustainability Coordinator.The National Institute of Corrections is working with FHI 360, a development organization that uses evidence-based approaches to improving health, nutrition, education, economic development, environment and research around the world.The Sustainable Prisons Project, a partnership with The Evergreen State College, has received several national awards, including from the National Science Foundation and Harvard University.Maryland and Minnesota were also selected to receive the assistance. They will also receive similar assistance with a focus on building a sustainability plan and creating green jobs. After the two-day session Washington will be responsible for following through with the plans and will receive periodic help from the consultants to refine the plans.The three states must also report results to NIC and track the progress of the plans over the course of their implementation.