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## East Bay counties prepare for influx of felons into jails, probation departments

By Paul Bugarino  
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Contra Costa and Alameda counties are lining up resources in anticipation of supervising more felons starting next month.

Beginning Oct. 1, those convicted of nonviolent and other less-serious felonies will be housed in county jails instead of going to state prisons. Newly released prisoners falling in the same categories will become the responsibility of county probation officers, rather than parole agents.

From a practical standpoint, East Bay residents shouldn't expect to see much difference, said David Muhammad, Alameda County's chief probation officer.

"No one is being released from their sentences early; there won't be this massive release into the community," Muhammad said.

Alameda County expects to inherit 848 convicts over the next three years who are completing their probations, including 80 in the first month, Muhammad said.

Contra Costa is expecting to take responsibility for about 300 felons over the next year who would normally be on parole, or about 25 a month. That number will gradually decrease, said Contra Costa's chief probation officer, Philip Kader.

County administrators were promised state funds to help implement Gov. Jerry Brown's realignment program.

Alameda County expects to receive about \$9.2 million for the next nine months, and Contra Costa is expecting nearly \$4.6 million.

Muhammad and Kader said the state's system for distributing funds is flawed. Funding is based on the number

of convicts in state prisons, which they argue penalizes those counties that do a good job keeping low-level offenders within their own jurisdictions.

Kader points out that Tulare County, which has about 400,000 residents compared with Contra Costa's population of 1.05 million, is slated to receive \$1 million more in state funds.

The formula should be based on the number of total arrests, Muhammad said.

"Hopefully, it's a formula the state adjusts next year," Kader said.

Contra Costa has received about \$687,000 to start planning for the influx of felons, including the installation of data-tracking hardware and increased costs for the Public Defender's Office to handle more revocation hearings.

Alameda County received about \$850,000 for training and preparation.

The Contra Costa Sheriff's Office continues to move staffing from various departments to the jails to meet a staff-to-inmate ratio set by law, Sheriff David Livingston said.

Alameda County Sheriff Greg Ahern said his department has the jail space ready for those sentenced after Oct. 1 and is anticipating any

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possible security issues.

"We're all getting prepared for this. We're trying to get a plan in place so, operationally, we can process them efficiently through our jail system," Ahern said.

Both counties are looking to reduce overcrowding and recidivism through programs to help inmates re-enter society.

Contra Costa officials await word on a federal grant that would allow it to start putting a re-entry strategy into place. The county does not expect to hear whether it will receive Second Chance Act money until Sept. 30.

Staff writer Robert Salonga contributed to this report. Contact Paul Burgarino at 925-779-7164. Follow him at Twitter. [com/paulburgarino](http://com/paulburgarino).



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