



## **Pilot Program Aims to Prevent Released Inmates from Returning to Crime**

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CASTAIC, Calif. (KABC) –

A new hands-on program aims to train soon-to-be-released inmates with skills they need to succeed and prevent them from returning to a life of crime.

The program is called “Back on Track LA.” The state is testing the new program with 90 men who have been convicted of crimes that aren't serious, violent or sexual at the Pitchess Detention Center in Castaic.

“We’re doing as much as we can while they’re here to stand them up, so they can walk out of here and be productive,” said California Attorney General Kamala Harris, who announced the initiative Wednesday.

Participants will be given life-learning skills and job training in hopes that once they complete the program they will have the resources they need to adjust to life outside of prison. Coaches will be assigned to released inmates, helping them find housing, jobs and continuing education.

Despite being a felon, James Williams said the program gives him hope for the near future when he is released from prison at the end of the year.

“I’m happy and grateful I’ve been given the opportunity to change my life,” Williams said.

The program comes on the heels of Proposition 47, which calls for the release of many non-violent offenders from jails statewide.

Federal and private money is used to fund the program for the next three years. If it works in Los Angeles, the state plans to introduce the program to jails throughout California.

“If we can reduce recidivism by even 20 percent, we will save Los Angeles County approximately \$11 million over two years,” Kamala said.