



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 21, 2024

**DATE:** April 24, 2024

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** James Conway, Court Administrator, Reno Justice Court  
325-6543, [JConway@washoecounty.gov](mailto:JConway@washoecounty.gov)

**THROUGH:** Ryan Sullivan, Chief Judge, Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,  
[RSullivan@washoecounty.gov](mailto:RSullivan@washoecounty.gov)

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to Acknowledge Community Court Program Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court for Community Court Program in the amount of [\$99,764.00 for FY24, no match required; including up to \$2,500 for participant incentives-including gift cards]. The program, also known as young offenders' court, focuses on defendants ages 18-25. Allocation will be paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget amendments. Reno Justice Court. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

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### SUMMARY

On December 2022, Reno Justice Court applied to the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada (JSCN) to receive funding to continue to operate the Court's Community Court Program. On June 28, 2023, Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$99,764.00 had been approved for FY24 with the first two quarterly distributions of \$24,941.00 occurring in July 2023 and October 2023. The remaining installments will be distributed in January 2024, and April 2024. The grant is being accepted retroactively, as funding was received shortly after notification of the award.

**Washoe County's Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Safe, secure and healthy communities.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

On September 13, 2022, the Board of County Commissioners acknowledged a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court in the amount of \$99,764.00.

AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2013, the Nevada Legislature approved authorizing legislation for any Justice Court in Nevada to establish a Community Court as a sentencing alternative for most misdemeanors (AB 415). The Legislature directed each county wishing to create a Community Court to collaborate with private, state and local governmental entities to coordinate and determine the services and treatment to be offered to defendants.

Community courts are neighborhood focused courts that attempt to harness the power of the justice system to address local problems by focusing on creative partnerships and problem solving. Through the Community Court, Reno Justice Court partners with Washoe County Department of Social Services and other nonprofit organizations to jointly coordinate efforts to rehabilitate defendants.

AB 415 requires all community courts to evaluate each defendant transferred to the Community Court to determine whether services or treatment is likely to assist the defendant to modify his or her behavior or obtain skills which may prevent them from engaging in further criminal activity. AB 415 also requires all community court participants complete community service as part of the program. The average defendant completes approximately 50 hours of community service. Finally, pursuant to AB415, all defendants that successfully complete community court may have their case dismissed and their record sealed.

In October 2013 the Washoe County Commission started the first Community Court in the State in the Reno Justice Court. The Washoe County Commission subsequently allocated funding for a Deputy District Attorney to participate in the program. The Community Court has otherwise operated without specific funding.

Governor Sandoval's 2015 budget provided for 3 million dollars for specialty courts in the State. The Reno Justice Court applied for funding for the Washoe County Community Court. The new money was used to fund three tracks; the first is the Community Court diversion track. The second is now the Commercial Exploitation Court for victims of sex trafficking. A separate docket allows for more specialized attention to be given to the mental health and medical needs of these defendants, such as trauma, PTSD, and depression. The program intends to develop safe housing options for these defendants as they receive programming designed to help them avoid future exploitation and decrease involvement in the criminal justice system.

Finally, RJC uses grant funding for a third track, the Give Everything to the Effort Court, which focuses on the special needs defendants ages 18 to 24. Research indicates that the brain is not fully developed until around age 25, helping to explain the impulsiveness and emotional immaturity exhibited by many young offenders. The Give Everything to the Effort Court will allow the Community Court Judge to work more closely with these young adults to redirect them to educational and vocational resources and avoid further criminal contact.

**GRANT AWARD SUMMARY- Community Court**

**Project/Program Name:** Community Court

**Scope of the Project:** The scope of the Community Court project is to provide an alternative to sentencing a person who is charged with a misdemeanor crime, other than a misdemeanor constituting an act of domestic violence or driving under the influence. The Giver Everything to the Effort Court and Commercial Exploitation Court tracks will provide specific intervention for those risk groups.

**Benefit to Washoe County Residents:** The Reno Justice Court Community Court will provide an alternative approach to sentencing that will reduce the number of defendants incarcerated and rehabilitate its participants to become productive members of society, in cooperation with the District Attorney’s office, Public Defenders Office, and local Law Enforcement Agencies. This program is designed to help reduce recidivism and incarceration population.

**On-Going Program Support:** On-going support of this program will be partially funded through program fees paid by participants. Reno Justice Court will continue to apply for additional grant funds from the JSCN on an annual basis.

**Award Amount:** \$99,764.00

**Grant Period:** July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

**Funding Source:** Judicial Council of the State of Nevada,  
Administrative Office of the Courts

**Pass through From:** N/A

**CFDA Number:** N/A

**Grant ID Number:** N/A

**Match Amount and Type:** N/A

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The FY24 budget already has \$37,887.70 as a carry forward from FY23. Should the board acknowledge this grant award and approve these amendments, the FY24 adopted budget will be increased by \$61,876.30 to bring the budget into alignment with the award in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

<b>Cost Object</b>	<b>G/L Account</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Revenue:		
IO 12044	432100 – State Grants	\$ 61,876.30
Expenditures:		
IO 12044	710100 – Professional Services	\$ 19,124.30
IO 12044	710300 – Operating Supplies	\$ 1,264.00
IO 12044	710500 – Other Expenses	\$ 34,000.00 (* <b>2,500.00 for incentives- including gift cards</b> )
IO 12044	710509- Seminars and Meetings	\$2,500.00
IO 12044	711210 – Travel	\$ 2,988.00
IO 12044	711212 – Meals and Lodging	\$ 2,000.00

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners Acknowledge Specialty Court General Fund Allocations from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court for Community Court in the amount of [\$99,764.00 for FY24 no match required; including up to \$2,500 for participant incentives- including gift cards] paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget amendments. (All Commission Districts)

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to Acknowledge Specialty Court General Fund Allocations from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court for Community Court in the amount of [\$99,764.00 for FY24 no match required] paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget amendments..”