



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 14, 2020

DATE: February 25, 2020
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: James Conway, Court Administrator 325-6543,
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THROUGH: Ryan Sullivan, Chief Judge, Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,
RSullivan@washoecounty.us
SUBJECT: Recommendation to waive six month cooling off period for independent contractor Noelle Parks and to approve an independent contractor agreement for Ms. Parks to perform casework services retroactive to February 2020, [annual cost will be 20% of each Specialty Court Grants award]. Reno Justice Court. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

Independent contractor Noelle Parks has been providing support to the Reno Justice Court's Specialty Court programs (Court Assistance Program, Community Court Program and DUI Court) since 2013. As an employee of Washoe County, she was stationed at the Reno Justice Court and worked closely with Chief Judge Ryan Sullivan, Judge Scott Pearson and Judge Peter Sferrazza until being pulled by Washoe County Human Services Agency on November 2018.

The Court recommends an independent contractor agreement versus a professional services agreement because the majority of Mrs. Parks's work will be clerical. Noelle Parks was a former Washoe County employee, retiring December 13, 2019, therefore a waiver of the cooling off provision is retroactively recommended. Salary expenses will come directly from Grant monies previously awarded to the Court and approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts limited to a maximum of twenty percent of each grant award.

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

AGENDA ITEM # _____

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action.

BACKGROUND

Reno Justice Court currently operates three Specialty Court Programs: 1) Court Assistance Program (CAP) since 2000, focusing its efforts on defendants with substance abuse issues, 2) Community Court Program (CCP) 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. Part of the Community Court Program is the “GT Court” Give Everything to the Opportunity Court, which focuses on 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 and 3) finally, the DUI Court. It follows the National Association of Drug Court Professionals’ Adult DUI Court Best Practices and Standards. The DUI Specialty Court Program will help criminal Defendants overcome their alcohol dependency, gain and maintain sobriety, and live clean, healthy lives.

Washoe County Human Services Agency provided assistance to the Courts’ Specialty Court programs by appointing a Social Worker, Noelle Parks, to support the court with Participant needs. From 2013 to November of 2018, Mrs. Parks worked closely with the Judges and Specialty Court Staff to aid the clients of the programs in meeting requisites mandated by the Court. This work included, but was not limited to: a) attending the Court’s Staffing and Hearings to make client based recommendations to the Court, b) assisting participants with entering treatment, transitional living and residential treatment, c) aiding Defendants in applying and obtaining food stamps and Medicaid and d) partaking in weekly or bi-weekly meetings with High Risk clients to check progress and support them in their compliance with the program.

Reno Justice Court learned how crucial the social worker aid was in November 2018 when WCHSA decided to pull Noelle Parks. The position had come to be a dependable function of the Court. In May 2019, the Court entered into contract with Hannah Sweeney, case worker. She worked for seven months then resigned. Then new retiree, Noelle Parks, former Social Worker was contracted via recommendation.

The Court is recommending an independent contractor agreement with the title of case worker. As a result, this independent contractor agreement will activate the six month “cooling off” period, requiring Board approval. The ICA is conveying the route in conformance with the Board-approved action.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Judicial Council of the State of Nevada, Administrative Office of the Courts has approved a portion of the Grant funds, already awarded, be used on “Salary & Benefits-Treatment (exclude city & county paid positions)” expenses. This amount is equivalent to 20% of each Grant award. The “Salary & Benefits-Treatment” description is the title of the budgeting line item the funds will be placed under on the AOC Grant funds tracking forms. As an Independent Contractor Agreement, the classification of these funds spent in SAP will be coded to the G/L 710100 Professional Services. Should the board acknowledge this item, the FY20 adopted expenditures will be in the following accounts:

Grant	Cost Object	G/L Account	Grant Award	20% Max
Court Assistance Program	IO 20266	710100- Professional Services	\$ 125,355.00	\$ 25,071.00
Community Court Program	IO 20420	710100- Professional Services	\$ 99,764.00	\$ 19,952.80
DUI Court	IO 11404	710100- Professional Services	\$ 20,250.00	\$ 4,050.00

Reno Justice Courts will also be responsible for any PERS penalties that may result from paying Ms. Noelle Parks.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve a waiver of the cooling off period for former employee/independent contractor Noelle Parks.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to approve a waiver of the cooling off period for former employee/independent contractor Noelle Parks.”