



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 22, 2024

DATE: September 26, 2024

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: James Conway, Court Administrator, Reno Justice Court
325-6543, JConway@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Ryan Sullivan, Chief Judge, Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,
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 [\$96,764.00 for FY25, no match required; including up to \$5,000 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, 2024 through June 30, 2025; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget amendments. Reno Justice Court. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

On December 2023, 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 24, 2024, Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$96,764.00 had been approved for FY25 with the first two quarterly distributions of \$24,191.00 occurring in July 2024 and October 2024. The remaining installments will be distributed in January 2025, and April 2025. 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 May 21, 2024, 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: \$96,764.00

Grant Period: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

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 FY25 budget in IO 12044 already has \$43,640.08 as a carry forward from FY24. Should the board acknowledge this grant award and approve these amendments, the adopted FY25 budget will be increased by \$53,123.92 in both revenues and expenditures to bring the budget into alignment with the annual award amount of \$96,764.00 in the following accounts:

Cost Object	G/L Account	Amount
Revenue:		
IO 12044	432100 – State Grants	\$ 53,123.92
Expenditures:		
IO 12044	710100 – Professional Services	\$ 40,635.92
IO 12044	710313 – Gift Cards/Incentives	\$ 5,000.00
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 [\$96,764.00 for FY24 no match required; including up to \$5,000 for participant incentives- including gift cards] paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025; 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 [\$96,764.00 for FY24 no match required] paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget amendments..”