



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/11/2023

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County
Department or Agency Name(s): Probation Department
Staff Name and Phone Number: Christine Williams, 707-565-2145
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership Court Referral Program

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize the Chief Probation Officer to execute an agreement to reimburse the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership for court referral program services that provide opportunities for justice-involved individuals to serve their community, learn job skills, and improve their employability in partnership with nonprofit and public agencies. The initial contract term will be from May 1, 2023, through October 31, 2024, in a total amount not to exceed \$450,000 for the 18-month contract period. (Majority)
- B) Adopt a resolution adjusting the Probation Department's FY 23-24 adopted budget to increase expenditures by \$300,000 with an offsetting reimbursement from AB177 state appropriations to mitigate the impact of eliminating all Probation fee revenue. (4/5 vote)

(4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

The Probation Department is requesting the Board approve the agreement for the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership (CVNL), formerly referred to as the Volunteer Center, Court Referral Program for an 18-month agreement with a total not-to-exceed amount of \$450,000. CVNL will provide Court Referral Services in the form of community service for adults and youth referred from the Superior Court, Sonoma County Probation, and other Sonoma County agencies, focused on accountability to the community and restorative practices.

Discussion:

For many years, the Sonoma County Volunteer Center has provided meaningful opportunities for adults and juveniles who have been directed by the Court to perform community service hours to satisfy their obligation. The program commonly serves mandated participants who cannot afford to pay a court imposed fine, for whom a fine or jail appears inappropriate, or where community service work is a mandated condition of sentence or diversion. Community service sanctions may be used in combination with fines, jail time, and probation as part of a total sentence. Additionally, through the statewide cooperative system California League of Alternative Service Providers, the program may serve Sonoma County residents who have been assigned community service assignments in other jurisdictions or participants residing in Sonoma County who receive referrals from other jurisdictions.

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In the fall of 2018, the Probation Department, in collaboration with the District Attorney’s Office and the Superior Court conducted a robust Request for Proposal process and the Volunteer Center was selected to continue to provide the Court Referral program locally. The Board approved a three-year agreement valued at up to \$168,000 annually in January 2019, with two optional one-year extensions for a total contract term expiring in December 2023. In addition to the County payment to CVNL, fees are charged to participants in the program based on a fee schedule within the agreement. Fees are frequently reduced for those adult clients who demonstrate an inability to pay. Juvenile clients referred by the Probation Department are not charged for services under the terms of the 2019 agreement. Within a year the Department was informed that the Volunteer Center was merging under CVNL, and the agreement was amended to reflect the organizational change. Services have continued uninterrupted even through the challenges with in-person service provision during the pandemic.

At the end of the initial 3-year term in January 2022, the first amendment to extend for a year was executed administratively. However, at that time CVNL notified the Department that the current level of funding from the County was unsustainable, and further impacted by legislative changes under AB1869. This legislation, enacted in 2021, eliminated almost all fees charged by Probation Departments across the state, and specifically prohibited charging adult clients for Work Release where people are given community service hours in lieu of jail time. These clients typically satisfy their obligation through Probation’s Supervised Work Crews, or through CVNL’s Court Referral Program. Although the law did not prohibit CVNL from charging Work Release clients, based on the legislative intent of AB1869 to relieve the financial burden placed on justice-involved individuals and the potential for disparate treatment of different groups of people for similar services, the Department instructed CVNL to stop charging Work Release fees. Of note, the annual contract amount of \$168,000 for the Court Referral Program has not increased since 2015.

In January 2023 the Department and CVNL again extended the existing agreement through April 2023, but committed to renegotiating County funding based on increasing program costs coupled with a reduction to client fees. Today’s agreement represents a monthly fee up to \$25,000 and an annual cost up to \$300,000 or a 79% increase. Annual costs may be reduced based on the number of referrals, with a corresponding increase to fee revenue from non-Probation clients as follows:

Annual Number of Referrals	Annual Payment
More than 7,000	\$250,000
6,501 - 7,000	\$265,000
5,001 - 6,500	\$275,000
4,501 - 5,000	\$285,000
Up to 4,500	\$300,000

Strategic Plan:

None

Racial Equity:**Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?**

No

Prior Board Actions:

January 8, 2019, June 23, 2015: Approved contract with Volunteer Center Court Referral Program

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$50,000		\$100,000
Additional Appropriation Requested		\$300,000	
Total Expenditures	\$50,000	\$300,000	\$100,000
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$25,000		
State/Federal	\$25,000*	\$300,000	\$100,000
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$50,000	\$300,000	\$100,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Due to the retroactive execution of this agreement, two months services or \$50,000 will be charged to the FY 22-23 Probation budget. These costs are absorbed within existing General Fund budget appropriations and are partially offset with a reimbursement from the *Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) special revenue fund. The JJCPA fund is over-extended and therefore Probation is requesting the Board adopt the attached Resolution to increase the Department's FY 23-24 adopted budget to account for the cost of the agreement, offset by state revenue associated with Assembly Bill 177. Similar to AB1869, AB177 eliminated any remaining local fees charged by Probation to clients. Beginning in FY 22-23 and ongoing, the state has allocated approximately \$630,000 to Sonoma County to preserve local services. Absent this allocation, the Court Referral program is not funded in FY 23-24 and no alternative funding source has been identified.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Professional Services Agreement with Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership
Budget Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A