



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: October 25, 2016

DATE: September 22, 2016
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Dexter Thomas, Court Administrator, Reno Justice Court
325-6543, dthomas@washoecounty.us
THROUGH: Peter Sferrazza, Chief Judge, Reno Justice Court, 325-6550,
psferrazza@washoecounty.us
SUBJECT: Recommendation to acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,814.00 for FY17, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY

In April 2016, Reno Justice Court applied to the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada (JSCN) to receive funding to continue to operate a specialty court for a Community Court, Give Everything to the Opportunity Court (previously known as Young Offenders Court), and Commercial Exploitation Court (previously known as the Sex Trafficking Victims Court). On June 27, 2016, Reno Justice Court received notification that the sum of \$116,814.00 had been approved for FY17 with the first quarterly distribution of \$29,204.00 occurring on August 11, 2016. The remaining installments will be distributed in October 2016, January 2017, and April 2017. 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

The 2013 Nevada State Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 415 authorizing counties to establish Community Court pilot project within one of their Justice Court(s). Washoe County established a Community Court pilot in the Reno Justice Court in October 2013. Since that date the program has operated without specific funding from the State.⁷⁹ defendants have successfully completed the program to date.

AGENDA ITEM # 7.E

On January 12, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners acknowledged a grant award from the JCSN in the amount of \$116,814.00 to support Reno Justice Court's Community Court, Young Offenders Court and Sex Trafficking Victims Court.

BACKGROUND

Reno Justice Court has operated the Court Compliance Program (CCP) since 2000, focusing its efforts on defendants with substance abuse issues. Over the years, it has become apparent that many defendants also have significant mental health and other specialized needs that must be addressed concurrently with the substance abuse in order to be successful. In order to respond to the specific needs of the Washoe County community, the Reno Justice Court has incorporated the concepts of the Community Court model, as supported by the Center for Court Innovation and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

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 Young Offenders 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.

On October 23, 2015, Reno Justice Court was approved for funding of \$116,814.00. In August 2016, Reno Justice Court received additional funding in the amount of \$116,814.00 for FY17 to continue the Community Court, Give Everything to the Opportunity Court, and the Commercial Exploitation Court.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: Community Court, Give Everything to the Effort Court, and Commercial Exploitation 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 Give 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, Social Services, 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:	\$116,814.00 (annually)
Grant Period:	July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017
Funding Source:	Judicial Council of the State of Nevada, FY17 General Fund Allocation
Pass through From:	N/A
CFDA Number:	N/A

Grant ID Number: N/A

Match Amount and Type: N/A

Sub-Awards and Contracts: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board acknowledge this grant award and approve these amendments, the adopted budget will be increased by \$116,814.00 in both revenues and expenditures in the following accounts:

Cost Object	G/L Account	Amount
Revenue:		
IO 20420	471220 – Court Admin Assess.	\$ 116,814.00
Expenditures:		
IO 20420	710100 – Professional Services	\$ 62,000.00
IO 20420	710300 – Operating Supplies	\$ 16,814.00
IO 20420	710500 – Other Expenses	\$ 8,000.00
IO 20420	710714 – Referral Services	\$ 30,000.00

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,814.00 for FY17, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to acknowledge a Specialty Court General Fund Allocation from the Judicial Council of the State of Nevada to the Reno Justice Court [\$116,814.00 for FY17, no match required], paid in quarterly installments retroactive to July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017; and direct the Comptroller to make the appropriate budget adjustments.”