



Legislation Text

File #: 17-1374, **Version:** 1

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the North Port Commission

FROM: Peter D. Lear, CPA, CGMA, City Manager

TITLE: County-Wide Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) for Behavioral/Mental Health Court

Recommended Action

Approve the expenditure of the County-Wide Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) for Behavioral/Mental Health Court and for the Mayor to sign the County-Wide JAG Support Letter.

Background Information

Office of Criminal Justice Grants (OCJG) administers the JAG Program for the State of Florida. The JAG Program replaced the Byrne Formula and Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) programs with a single funding mechanism that simplifies the administration process for grantees and allows states and local governments to support a broad range of activities to prevent and control crime and to improve the criminal justice system.

Each county is allocated a sum of money for use by all local governments within the county. This amount is determined through a funding algorithm established in the administrative rule. Chapter 11D-9, Florida Administrative Code, requires that units of government in each county reach consensus concerning the expenditure of these funds, including projects to be implemented and the agency responsible for such implementation.

Furthermore, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) requires that units of government in each county reach consensus concerning the expenditure of the JAG funds, including the projects to be implemented and the agency responsible for such implementation. Each county must document this consensus by submitting letters from at least 51 percent of the units of government, which also represent at least 51 percent of the population located in said county.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) wishes to ensure that recipients are aware of several areas of national focus and priority and to encourage recipients to maximize the effective use of JAG funds. One area of use is for improving behavioral/mental health services. BJA recognizes that disproportionate numbers of people with mental illness are involved in the criminal justice system often as a result of untreated or undertreated mental illness. This is an issue that impacts numerous facets of the criminal justice system. States have aimed to enhance mental health screening services to identify emerging mental illness in children and adolescents and to ensure adequate access to care. BJA encourages states to utilize JAG funding in support of programs and policy changes aimed at the following: identifying and treating people with severe mental illness before they reach crisis point; training law enforcement and correctional officers on mental health and mental health related crisis-intervention; increasing justice system diversion strategies to divert offenders with mental illness from unnecessary arrest and incarceration to more appropriate and cost-effective community-based treatment and supervision; mental health courts, allowing inmates to continue psychotropic medication in jails; and improving oversight of mental health care in jails, increasing post-jail housing options and enhancing community mental health services.

In compliance with State of Florida Rule 11D-9, F.A.C., and following the consensus requirement set forth in the county-wide JAG Program, it is recommended that the City of North Port approve the distribution of \$110,778 of Federal Fiscal Year 2017 Justice Assistance Grant Program funds to Sarasota County Government for Behavior/Mental Health Court and have the mayor sign the attached letter supporting such expenditure. Approval of this expenditure does not affect any JAG funds received directly by the City of North Port. It is only designating the JAG-County funds.

Strategic Plan

Financially Responsible City Providing Quality Municipal Services

Financial Impact

Loss of funding for the Behavior/Mental Health Court may require additional law enforcement response. Individuals in need of this service get the proper court ordered treatment to assist them and by receiving such treatment, reduce the need for law enforcement and criminal justice intervention.

Procurement

N/A

Attachments:

1. County-Wide JAG Support Letter

Prepared by: Pete Lear

Department Director: Pete Lear