

## Item 10



# Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** January 22, 2013

**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Kimberly Pierce, Manager, Criminal Justice Planning, 854-4764

**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:** Roger Jefferies, County Executive, Justice and Public Safety, 854-4759

**Commissioners Court Sponsor:** Samuel T. Biscoe, County Judge

### **AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

**CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITHIN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING**

### **BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:**

See attached backup.

### **ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

See attached backup.

### **FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

The department can internally fund this request through the remainder of the fiscal year and will ask for continued funding in FY 2014.

### **REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

PBO

HRMD

**AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE:** All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to Cheryl Aker in the County Judge's office, [Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us) by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

P.O. Box 1748, Austin, TX 78767, (512) 854-4415, FAX (512) 854-4417



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Travis County Commissioners Court

**Through:** Roger Jefferies, County Executive, Justice and Public Safety

**From:** Kimberly Pierce, Manager, Criminal Justice Planning

**Date:** January 15, 2013

**Subject:** CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITHIN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLANNING

Criminal Justice Planning (CJP) is requesting that a project worker assigned to the department be converted into a full-time position for continuing work within the Workforce Development Program. The department is able to internally fund this request through the remainder of the fiscal year and will request that funding be added in FY 2014 to continue the position. A departmental proposal is attached supporting this request.

If additional information is needed, please contact me at 854-4764. Thank you for your consideration.

cc:  
Katie Peterson, Analyst, Planning and Budget  
Mitchell Goertz, Financial Analyst, Justice and Public Safety

## **Travis County Criminal Justice Planning Department Workforce Development Program**

### **Background**

Research in the field of criminal justice has determined that stable employment is critical to a successful transition from prison to community and further reduces an ex-offender's likelihood of returning to prison. However, a criminal record and lack of work experience can make it difficult to find a job. With this in mind, the Travis County Criminal Justice Planning Department has focused on building a workforce development program that prepares unemployed ex-offenders for the workforce, and matches unemployed ex-offenders with appropriate employers. Recent national studies have shown reduced recidivism rates for employed ex-offenders.

### **CJP and the Ex-Offender Population**

The Criminal Justice Planning Department (CJP) currently intersects with the offender and ex-offender population in a number of ways:

1. Counseling and Education Services provides a drug treatment program at the Travis State Jail, Commitment to Change.
2. CJP provides an intensive pre- and post-release case management program, Inside Out of Travis County (IOTC)
3. CJP provides a monthly Travis County Career Resource Fair for inmates preparing to leave the Travis State Jail.
4. CJP provides a monthly job readiness program for 40 to 50 men called PREP at the Travis State Jail.
5. CJP receives calls from ex-offenders in the community seeking employment.
6. CJP offers a weekly orientation at the Counseling and Education Services Department. This "Road to Success" orientation is for any ex-offender in the community to learn what services are available to them in the community to obtain employment.
7. CJP meets individually with referred and self-referred ex-offenders to help them prepare for employment.

### **Workforce Develop Program**

To coordinate the activities of #'s 5, 6, and 7 above, CJP currently utilizes our Workforce Development Program. The primary goal of the program is to prepare unemployed ex-offenders for the workforce, and match unemployed ex-offenders with appropriate employers. The program currently includes four primary components:

1. Weekly community forum called "Road to Success" in which information is provided to attendees on various employment services in the community and potential job opportunities. Information presented includes - how to obtain and hold a job; preparing an application; resume and employment history summary; job interviewing skills; how to utilize community resources.
2. One-on-one career counseling, including up-front employment screening and assessment to help target clients' skills with appropriate services and potential job opportunities.
3. Outreach to employers to help them understand the benefit of hiring ex-offenders resulting in a network of employers willing to interview and potentially hire ex-offenders.

4. Outreach to and development of a social service referral network with other local employment and social service agencies including: WorkForce Solutions, Goodwill, Austin Community College, Ascend (formerly Austin Academy), Skillpoint Alliance, Big Austin, AIDS Services of Austin, Excel Learning Center and others.

A monthly activity report is completed that shows the volume of activity in the various components of the program. (See attached.)

### **Referrals to the Program**

Those individuals that are referred to and accepted for program services must be 18 years of age, residents of Travis County, and assessed as being able to hold down a part-time or full-time job. Those who are assessed not able to work are referred to local social service and government providers that may be best suited to address both immediate and longer term needs.

Referrals for the Workforce Development Program come from a variety of local sources: self-referrals from those recently released, community-at-large referrals, adult and juvenile probation departments, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice adult parole offices, the Travis County Counseling and Education Department and various local partners in our community services network.

### **Workforce Development Program Benefits**

1. Program benefits to the employer include: support services to increase employee stability, offense screening to reduce risk, job-matching by employment skills, opportunity for tax breaks through the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and fidelity bonding.
2. Program benefits to the community include: improved public safety through the reduction of crime, and decreased welfare and social service costs related to unemployment.
3. And finally, program benefits to ex-offenders include: access to a legitimate means of income, intensive job referral and enhancement of employment potential.

### **Proposed Staffing of the Workforce Development Program**

CJP currently has one hourly project worker in the title of Social Services Program Specialist Associate (pay grade level 13, at \$31,158, for a total yearly salary of \$46,546) assigned full-time to the Workforce Development Program. CJP is requesting that the Workforce Development Program be converted into the following option that will strengthen and make permanent the program:

We are requesting one permanent full-time equivalent staff member (Social Services Program Coordinator) to work with ex-offenders who reside in the Travis County community as described in the program summary above.

The program anticipates that with one Social Services Program Coordinator up to 180 men and women with criminal backgrounds residing in Travis County can be assessed per fiscal year. They will be assessed for employment skills and future job placement and/or referral to social service programs. The program also anticipates that up to 40 of these individuals will be placed in local full-time employment and 70 in part-time employment. In addition, this staff member will be expected to contact and engage 30 employers during the fiscal year and develop a network of at least 15 who will consider ex-offenders for employment opportunities,

and conduct 48 Road to Success seminars in the community in a year. The proposed pay grade is an 18 and salary for this position is \$42,382 for a totally yearly salary of \$60,097 including benefits.

**Anticipated Outcomes for FY 2013**

**Number of Employers Recruited to Hire Ex-Offenders in Travis County, includes recruitment to those that are successful and unsuccessful.**

- To contact 30 and recruit 15 employers to hire ex-offenders.

**Number of Anticipated Ex-Offenders to be assessed for employment and served in FY2013.**

- Assess 150 male and female ex-offenders by the Employment Specialist for employment readiness and skill level.

**Number of Anticipated Ex-Offenders to be placed in Employment.**

- Place 70 individuals in part-time employment.
- Place 40 individuals in permanent employment.

**Percent to be retained in employment for six months.**

- Target a 30% employment retention rate for six months for those individuals who obtain employment.

**Number of Anticipated Ex-Offenders to be referred to Other Employment Serving Agencies.**

- To have all those served referred to: 1) employment serving agencies, and/or 2) to social serving agencies, and/or 3) government agencies.

At an appropriate time in the life of the program, CJP will conduct an evaluation to measure the impact the program has on recidivism.

	FISCAL YEAR 2013					
	October	November	December	January (to date)	To Date	Projected
# Participated in Weekly Orientations	34	16	19	10	79	336
# of CJP Office Appointments	22	9	9	4	44	180
<b># Referred to:</b>						
Workforce Solutions-REM	0	0	3	7	10	
Workforce Solutions	18	2	3	4	27	
Skillpoint Alliance	4	1	1	7	13	
Goodwill	20	5	5	8	38	
Austin Community College	0	1	4	4	9	
Ascend	0	0	4	5	9	
Big Austin	6	1	0	0	7	
<b># Referred from:</b>						
AARP	5	2	0	1	8	
Probation	9	0	1	3	13	
Parole	4	0	1	4	9	
Southern Careers Institute	1	0	0	0	1	
Pace Setters	1	0	0	0	1	
DARS	1	1	0	0	2	
Manpower	2	1	2	0	5	
Travis Domestic Relations	0	1	0	0	1	
Friend/Family	2	0	3	3	8	
Self/PREP	0	2	3	0	5	
TDCJ /Huntsville	1	0	0	0	1	
Placements in Part-Time Employment	13	2	1	7	23	70
Placements in Full-Time Employment	6	0	2	5	13	40
# of Employers Contacted	4	0	2	4	10	30
# of Employers on Roster	4	4	3	4	4	15