



Department of County Management

MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Budget Office

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TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Christian Elkin, Principal Budget Analyst

DATE: November 19th, 2014

SUBJECT: General Fund Contingency Request of \$100,000 for a Feasibility Assessment for Mental Health Jail Diversion

The Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) is requesting \$100,000 of General Fund contingency for consultant fees and future planning for mental health jail diversion.

Jail diversion programs focused on stabilization, integration of health care, and the public safety system's ability to direct people with mental illness away from jails and into appropriate treatment have been successful around the Country. In places like Bexar County, Texas, thousands of people have been diverted from jail into more appropriate treatment facilities, saving millions of dollars annually in jail and emergency room costs.

The \$100,000 would provide additional staffing support and facilitation necessary to augment current evaluation and programmatic efforts for evaluating Mental Health Jail Diversion opportunities within the County. The additional facilitation provides capacity to evaluate current Multnomah County and other jail diversion programs, gaps, and opportunities; convene multidisciplinary teams; and prepare a report for the Board in December, 2014.

General Fund Contingency Policy Compliance

The Budget Office is required to inform the Board if contingency requests submitted for approval satisfy the general guidelines and policies for using the General Fund Contingency.

In particular,

- Criteria 1 states contingency requests should be for one-time-only purposes. **This request is for one-time-only funding to fund a Mental Health Jail Diversion Feasibility Assessment.**
- Criteria 2 addresses emergencies and unanticipated situations. **This item is not an emergency and was anticipated during the FY 2015 budget process.**
- Criteria 3 address items identified in Board Budget Notes. **This item was identified in a Board Budget Note for Fiscal Year 2015 that states:**

The Board remains concerned about the number of people with mental health issues being housed in the county's jails. It remains a questionable and expensive way to address the mentally ill who come in contact with the public safety system. Jail diversion programs focused on stabilization, integration of health care, and the public safety system's ability to direct people with mental illness away from jails and into appropriate treatment have been successful. The Chair's proposed pilot programs for jail diversion in this year's budget are commendable. In places like Bexar County, Texas, thousands of people have been diverted from jail into more appropriate treatment facilities, saving millions of dollars annually in jail and emergency room costs.

The Board will set aside \$100,000 in General Fund Contingency to evaluate current efforts and further investigate opportunities for Mental Health Jail Diversion efforts in Multnomah County.

By December 31, 2014, the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC) will provide the Board with an assessment of the feasibility of increasing jail diversion programs in Multnomah County. LPSCC will coordinate with a facilitator to convene stakeholders and produce the assessment, which should include:

- evaluation of current jail diversion pilot programs;*
- findings and recommendations from successful jail diversion programs in other municipalities, including elements central to a successful jail diversion program;*
- an estimate of the number of people currently in Multnomah County jails or on community supervision in need of such services;*
- existing community capacity to implement and sustain a holistic jail diversion program, including identification of any new infrastructure that would be required by government or non-government service providers;*
- recommendations for the size and annual caseload for the jail diversion program and programmatic components;*
- an estimate for the annual costs for running a jail diversion program, including who might incur these costs;*
- estimated savings from reduced use of the jails; and*
- grant opportunities to improve services for clients in the public safety system experiencing mental illness.*