

## Buncombe County Agenda Item Information Sheet

**AGENDA ITEM:** Buncombe County Justice Resource Coordination

**MEETING DATE:** February 21, 2017

**REQUESTED BY:** Amanda L. Stone

### Background information

Court and County officials have expressed an interest in investing in evidence-based diversion programs for non-violent offenders to prevent/delay the need for a capital investment in a jail expansion as well as to remove barriers to education and employment that result from a conviction. In addition, the growing population of justice involved individuals has created a burden on existing pretrial resources which has resulted in a dramatic increase in caseload sizes.

Buncombe County currently supports an array of services to assist low-level, non-violent offenders escape a pathway that can lead to repeated incarceration, inability to secure employment, housing, and stability due to substance abuse (SA), behavioral and physical health problems, including mental illness.

Nationally, the rate of serious mental illness in the incarcerated population is 2 to 6 times higher than the general public. Most of these individuals are not engaged in treatment that could provide the mechanism for stability and a productive life. Nearly 70% of jail inmates are involved in substance abuse. This coordination project will provide targeted programming to fill gaps and create a more comprehensive jail diversion system. The Justice Resource Center coordinator will work with current and additional resources to provide accountability and support to this specific population impacted most by substance abuse and behavioral health issues. In addition, 3 additional Pretrial Release Coordinators and 10 additional electronic monitoring units will allow defendants to receive community supervision rather than incarceration.

### Pro's

Protect community safety, formalize coordination, invest in system gaps, and provide infrastructure support in order to delay or eliminate need for new jail.

### Con's

There are no known cons

### Funds required in current budget:

Allocation of \$228,226 in Federal inmate reimbursements to support the national best practice model of a Justice Resource Center; including: 1 additional County FTE for a Justice Resource Coordinator; an AOC contract to hire an Assistant District Attorney and Victim Witness Assistant; a contractual purchase of pre-conviction diversion programming; funding for a case management data system; 3 additional County FTE's for Pretrial Release Coordinators; and 10 additional electronic monitoring units.

### Alternatives

Continuing with the current, fragmented system.

### Action recommended:

Approve the creation of the Justice Resource Center by establishing one county position as the coordinator and approving allocation of program funding which totals \$228,226 from the Federal inmate reimbursement program to support the program through the remainder of FY17.