



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
YAKIMA, WASHINGTON
AGENDA STATEMENT**

Item No. 9.F.
For Meeting of: October 15, 2024

ITEM TITLE: Resolution authorizing the City Manager to dedicate opioid settlement money to fund the cost of a Municipal Community Court Case Manager for five years, with an option to extend another five years

SUBMITTED BY: *Cynthia Martinez, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Aaryn M. Masters, Municipal Court Presiding Judge

SUMMARY EXPLANATION:

The City of Yakima Community Diversion Program (CDP) is a therapeutic diversion program designed to help criminal justice system participants overcome barriers to success and to thereby reduce recidivism within the criminal justice system. CDP engages non-violent offenders who are committing low level crimes that affects the quality of life in the City of Yakima by connecting willing participants to work opportunities and life skills programming to address the underlying issues that are driving criminal behavior. Using a combination of offender needs assessment, wrap around social services, and intensive case monitoring, CDP operates with the goal of assisting the offenders with getting the services they need to put their lives back on track and break the cycle of constant offense recidivism.

In December 2015 the Yakima City Council approved the implementation and operation of CDP, and in 2016 CDP was established, when a private donor funded a matching grant through the Yakima Community Foundation. There was a recognition that while diversion programs existed at the felony level, there was a lack of a diversion program options at the Municipal Court level. The goal was to create a diversion program that would address an individual's criminal behavior before it reaches the felony level.

To date, CDP has been a prosecutor-led diversion program. The Municipal Court is poised to implement an official court program – Yakima Municipal Community Court. Implementing a Community Court will open doors to potential grant funding opportunities and smooth the transition from prosecution to program, which we believe may increase participation and the graduation rate.

The "Community," part of the program stands for our community partners who assist and support defendants depending on their needs. Comprehensive Healthcare, People for People, and the YWCA Yakima have been regular participants at our staffing meetings. Merit, Triumph, DSHS, Neighborhood Health, and the Union Gospel Mission have attended staffing in the past. We continue to have relationships with these other organizations, and they still participate, although not in person. Establishing a court program may be an opportunity to increase in-person participation by community partners. We are also hoping to incorporate the state funded Recovery Navigator Program (RNP). Increasing the case manager from 50% to 75% time will allow the case manager to attend RNP staffing

sessions.

CDP is a six-month supervised program and includes frequent appearances before the Community Diversion Program Team (2nd and 4th Tuesdays), life skills classes, community service, mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment if indicated, and other requirements depending on the underlying charge. Participants benefit from a supportive environment, life skills and tools for crime free living, chemical dependency treatment, mental health treatment, job training, and the dismissal of pending charges if they are successful. These days most participants are suffering from opioid use disorder or poly substance use disorder. Using the opioid settlement funds is authorized for the requested purpose. Increasing the use of City diversion programs is one of the strategies for addressing the new indigent defense caseload standards.

The community benefits from community service hours performed by participants, breaking the cycle of criminal recidivism which drains the criminal justice system of costly resources, a working and contributing individual, and a healthy family environment for the next generation. We typically have a rolling 10-15-person group but could handle more (up to 25 and we are always willing to serve more) in CDP. The program has served more than 204 participants, 52 have graduated, 432 community service hours have been completed, and 80% of graduates remain crime free¹. Three graduates are now substance abuse counselors, two are currently in college, and numerous other graduates have gone on to gainful employment.

Pursuant to Council's opioid settlement funds distribution policy adopted in May of this year, we are asking that Council commit opioid settlement money to fund a 75%-time case manager for the next five years, with the option to extend another five years. People for People is committed to providing that the case manager and materials at \$73,700 in 2025, and \$79,000 in 2026. See attached PFP proposal. This is a 25% increase in time for the case manager to cover the expansion in duties. Should this request be approved, we will pursue a two-year agreement with People for People and renew accordingly if funds are available. Council will approve that agreement at a future meeting.

¹Excluding DWLS 3 and NVOL 1 charges.

ITEM BUDGETED: Yes

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 24-25: A Safe and Healthy Yakima

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Res-CDP_Opioid Funds_Contracted Municipal Court Case Mgr.docx](#)

[People_for_People_CDP_Services_Proposal_2025-26_.pdf](#)