

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Georgia Accountability Court Funding Program Grants – Western Judicial Circuit

**DATE:** April 27, 2022

**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

REVENUES:	\$145,000	(Felony Drug Court, Superior)
	\$ 70,000	(Treatment and Accountability Court, Superior)
	\$156,000	(Veterans Court, Superior)
	\$ 90,000	(DUI/Drug Court, State)
	\$141,000	(Family Treatment Court, Juvenile)
	<u>\$72,240</u>	(ACCGov 12% Required Match, approximate)
	\$674,240	TOTAL (approximate)

EXPENSES:		
ANNUAL:	\$602,000	(All Courts, approximate)
	<u>\$72,240</u>	(12% Required Match, approximate)
	\$674,240	

FUNDING SOURCE: Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (Grant), DATE (Drug & Alcohol Treatment and Education) Fund Appropriation for State Courts (Required Match), and General Fund Appropriation for Superior and State, and Juvenile Courts (Required Match)

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON:** June 7, 2022

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**PURPOSE:**

To request the Mayor and Commission:

- a. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$145,000 to continue current funding and operation of Felony Drug Court;
- b. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$70,000 to continue current funding and operation of Treatment and Accountability Court;
- c. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$156,000 to continue current funding and operation of Veterans Court;

- d. Authorize State Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$90,000 to continue current funding and operation of DUI/Drug Court;
- e. Authorize Juvenile Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$141,000 to continue current funding and operation of Family Dependency Treatment Court;
- f. Authorize staff to accept the grant funds, if awarded; and
- g. Authorize the Mayor, Superior Court Judges, State Court Judge, Juvenile Court Judge and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.

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**HISTORY:**

1. In 1981, the General Assembly (O.C.G.A. § 35-6A-2) created the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The Governor of Georgia designated the CJCC as the State Administering Agency for criminal justice and victims' assistance programs. It is comprised of 24 members representing various components of the criminal justice system.
2. In 2012, the Georgia Legislature and Governor Nathan Deal created the Georgia Accountability Court (GAC) Funding Program to provide courts with the critical funding necessary to support the growth of accountability courts in Georgia to reduce the prison population.
3. Since 2012, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCUG) has benefited greatly from this program, having received funding in excess of \$450,000 annually for all of the existing courts and funding for two new courts, Family Treatment Court and Veterans Court.
4. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the CJCC released the FY23 Solicitation Packet, which allows jurisdictions to apply for funding for new or existing accountability courts.

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**FACTS & ISSUES:**

1. Accountability Courts are designed to serve as an alternative to incarceration by providing a rigid and successful treatment program which maintains high levels of participant accountability. Participants in these programs, upon successful completion and graduation, typically receive reductions in their sentences, lower fines, and other incentives.
2. The Western Judicial Circuit has five accountability courts which receive funding through the CJCC Accountability Court Funding Program:
  - Felony Drug Court, Superior Court, directed by Judge Lawton E. Stephens;

- Treatment and Accountability Court, Superior Court, directed by Judge Eric W. Norris;
  - Veterans Court, Superior Court, directed by Judge H. Patrick Haggard;
  - DUI/Drug Court, State Court, directed by Judge Charles E. Auslander; and
  - Family Dependency Treatment Court, Juvenile Court, directed by Judge Amanda Trimble.
3. **Felony Drug Court (FDC)** was established in 2004 and has provided enhanced probation supervision and treatment for adult, non-violent, non-sexual criminal offenders with pending felony cases, substance-related probation violations, or multiple DUI offenses in the Western Judicial Circuit. Participants must complete five phases of treatment, each of which requires participants to engage in extensive counseling, reporting, and drug testing.
  4. **Treatment and Accountability Court (TAC)** was formed in 2008 and has provided enhanced probation supervision and treatment for adult, non-violent, non-sexual criminal offenders with pending felony or misdemeanor cases that have serious, persistent mental illness or co-occurring substance abuse. Participants typically have a history of failed, inconsistent, or under-treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues
  5. **Veterans Court** was established in 2013 and integrates alcohol/drug and/or mental health treatment specific to veterans with effective judicial case management. Using a multi-phase approach similar to the other accountability courts, eligible participants are promptly placed into the program and receive assistance accessing existing services for veterans, specialized treatment and rehabilitation services, and frequent alcohol and drug tests. Typically, veteran mentors assist with the programs.
  6. **DUI/Drug Court** was established in 2001. It has provided enhanced probation supervision and treatment for adult, non-violent, non-sexual criminal offenders with pending DUI or drug cases. The DUI/Drug Court currently integrates evidence-based substance abuse treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services for participants in a judicially supervised setting. Only 22% of graduates re-offend; approximately 77% of offenders who did not complete or were not enrolled in the program reoffend.
  7. **Family Dependency Treatment Court** was established in February 2013 and is devoted to cases of child deprivation that involve substance abuse by the child's parents or other caregivers. It is a collaborative effort in which the Juvenile Court, treatment providers, and child welfare practitioners come together in a non-adversarial setting to conduct comprehensive child and parent needs assessments. The purpose is to protect the safety and welfare of children while giving parents a workable case plan that provides them with the treatment and support they need to recover and become responsible caregivers. 100% of graduates have achieved reunification with their children.

8. The requested Accountability Court Grants are provided by the Georgia Accountability Court (GAC) Funding Program and administered by CJCC to encourage the enhancement of existing accountability courts.
9. The Accountability Courts partner with various agencies and local non-profits to effectively treat the participants. Partner agencies include Advantage Behavioral Health Systems, Family Counseling Services of Athens, and the Athens Area Community Foundation.
10. The grant would not result in additional employee positions or create future obligations for ACCGov to fund if awarded. The grant requires a 12% cash or in-kind match, which has been appropriated to each court through the ACCGov General Fund and/or DATE funds every fiscal year each court has been in existence. Case management assistance and treatment services are provided by ACCGov staff and on a contractual basis.
11. The grant submittal deadline was March 4, 2022. Although the Superior, State, and Juvenile Courts must submit their individual applications by the deadline, each court will accept the grant, if awarded, contingent upon M&C approval. The award period is from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Award letters are expected to be received in May 2022.
12. Mayor & Commission Goals and Strategies Area: *Provide responsive, equitable, and humane public safety services, including judicial operations, through community collaboration.*

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**OPTIONS:**

1. Mayor and Commission
  - a. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$145,000 to continue current funding and operation of Felony Drug Court;
  - b. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$70,000 to continue current funding and operation of Treatment and Accountability Court;
  - c. Authorize Superior Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$156,000 to continue current funding and operation of Veterans Court;
  - d. Authorize State Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$90,000 to continue current funding and operation of DUI/Drug Court;

- e. Authorize Juvenile Court to submit an application to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for an Accountability Court Grant in an amount of \$141,000 to continue current funding and operation of Family Dependency Treatment Court;
  - f. Authorize staff to accept the grant funds, if awarded; and
  - g. Authorize the Mayor, Superior Court Judges, State Court Judge, Juvenile Court Judge and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.
2. Mayor and Commission deny authority of the Superior, State and Juvenile Courts to accept grants for FY22 not to exceed \$650,000 from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
  3. Mayor and Commission approve general fund resources to continue funding for two authorized full-time Coordinator positions in Veterans and Juvenile, should the Accountability Court grants not be awarded.
  4. Mayor and Commission defined option.

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**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Option #1 a., b., c., d., e., f., and g.

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**DEPARTMENT:**

Prepared by: Elisa Zarate

*Elisa Zarate*

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5/5/2022

Date:

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**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** Option #1 a., b., c., d., e., f., and g.



Manager

May 11, 2022

Date: