

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE FY2023 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET FOR ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA SO AS TO PROVIDE GRANT FUNDING, IF AWARDED, FROM THE GEORGIA CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL'S (CJCC) RESTORATIVE JUSTICE GRANT PROGRAM FOR EXPENSES RELATED TO AN ADDITIONAL VICTIM ADVOCATE POSITION, A YOUTH RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERENCING PROGRAM AND ASSOCIATED OPERATING EXPENSES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

The Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia hereby ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. The Commission of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia desires to amend the Grants Special Revenue Fund to provide grant funding, if awarded, from the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's (CJCC) Restorative Justice Grant Program for expenses related to an additional Victim Advocate position, a youth restorative justice conferencing program and associated operating expenses. Said Operating budget is hereby amended as follows:

Grants Special Revenue Fund:

REVENUES:

Increase:
CJCC Restorative Justice Grant \$120,000

EXPENDITURES:

Increase:
District Attorney:
Personal Services \$65,000
Operating Expenses \$55,000
Total \$120,000

SECTION 2. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

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

SUBJECT: District Attorney's Office Restorative Justice Grant

DATE: July 8, 2022

BUDGET INFORMATION:

REVENUES: \$120,000 (Estimate)

EXPENSES:

ANNUAL: \$120,000 Grants

CAPITAL: \$0

OTHER: \$0

FUNDING SOURCE: Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Grant Program

COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON: August 2, 2022

PURPOSE:

To request that the Mayor and Commission:

- a. Approve the District Attorney's application for and, if awarded, acceptance of a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council grant in the amount of \$120,000 to be used to:
 - o fund one victim advocate position;
 - o the creation of a Youth Restorative Justice Conferencing program in partnership with the Georgia Conflict Center, and
 - o acquire necessary supplies and equipment for the victim advocate position;
- b. Authorize the creation of a new victim advocate position;
- c. Authorize staff to accept grant funds, if awarded;
- d. Adopt the attached budget amendment ordinance (**Attachment #1**); and
- e. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.

HISTORY:

1. The District Attorney's Office created a Restorative Justice working group that met for the first time in early 2022. This group consisted of The District Attorney's Office (DAO), Athens-Clarke Juvenile Court Judges, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Georgia Conflict Center (GCC), and Juvenile Offender Advocate Inc (JOA). This working group was established to research and work towards creating a Restorative Justice program.
2. Several members of the working group, including District Attorney Deborah Gonzalez and Juvenile Court Judge Hull, attended site visits to experience these programs in action to learn from their successes, best practices, and discover which model would work best for Athens-Clarke County.
3. After extensive research the working group decided that a Pre-Petition Restorative Justice Conferencing Program was the best fit for Athens-Clarke. Meaning the juvenile would be referred to the program before a juvenile petition is formally filed with the court.
4. The group continued to meet through June 2022 to determine how to make the program a success and solidify program details.
5. In June 2022 a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) was created between the District Attorney's Office and the Georgia Conflict Center with input and approval from members of the working group including Judge Trimble from Juvenile. As of July 15th 2022 it is currently being reviewed by Sherrie Hines in the Athens-Clarke County Attorney's Office.
6. On April 5th, 2022, the District Attorney's Office (DAO) met with members of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to discuss the relationship between victim services and restorative justice. CJCC then asked the DAO to submit an informal proposal detailing the proposed program and the costs associated.
7. On April 15th, 2022, the District Attorney's Office submitted the Youth Restorative Justice Conferencing proposal to CJCC.
8. On May 23rd, 2022, CJCC informed the District Attorney's Office that they would like to fund the program contingent on their discretionary funding allotments, to begin in January 2023 with funds up to \$120,000. CJCC stated their intentions to use that funding for a pilot year of the Restorative Justice Conferencing and that in subsequent years the District Attorney's Office would be able to re-apply for funding in the competitive grant cycle.

FACTS & ISSUES:

1. The Victims of Crime Act Guidelines, as outlined in 1997, include responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims, assisting primary and secondary victims of crime to stabilize their lives after victimization, assisting victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and providing victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

2. Restorative Justice is the evidence-backed philosophy that focuses on the rehabilitation of offenders through reconciliation with victims and the community at large, in which the offender takes accountability for their actions in an effort to repair harm and prevent it from happening again. Restorative Justice boasts improved outcomes for both victim and offender, as demonstrated through 85 studies done over the last 30 years. High satisfaction rates have been tracked from both offenders and victims.
3. Restorative Justice Conferencing (RJC) works by engaging the people most directly affected by a crime. This can include the offender, the victim, and the communities surrounding each individual (family, friends, supporters, and others). The program is based upon proven models already in use across the country. The Restorative Justice Juvenile Program would be a collaborative effort between the Georgia Conflict Center and the District Attorney's office. All direct service would be through Georgia Conflict Center.
4. The current responses to juvenile delinquency have proven ineffective. A staggering number of low-risk youth are being funneled into the court system, resulting in a drain on resources that should be focused on higher-risk youth for the purpose of community safety, and negatively impacting long-term outcomes for these low-risk youths. This program seeks to solve that problem.
5. This grant requires no match and there is no obligation by ACCGov to fund the program beyond the grant timeline.
6. Subject to annual federal appropriations and allocations by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, this grant may be renewed in the competitive grant cycle.
7. This grant would last for a full calendar year, beginning January 2023, allowing for reapplication in Fall of 2023.
8. These recommendations support the following ACCGov Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy:
 - Good Neighbors Goal, Strategy A: *Work to create and implement systems to identify, acknowledge, and address racism, trauma, harm, and violence in our community.*

OPTIONS:

1. Mayor and Commission:
 - a. Approve the District Attorney's application for and, if awarded, acceptance of a Criminal Justice Coordinating Council grant of \$120,000 to be used to fund one victim advocate position, and the creation of a Youth Restorative Justice Conferencing program in partnership with the Department of Juvenile Justice and Georgia Conflict Center as well as necessary supplies and equipment for the victim advocate position;
 - b. Authorize the creation of a new victim advocate position;

- c. Authorize staff to accept grant funds, if awarded;
 - d. Adopt the attached budget amendment ordinance (**Attachment #1**); and
 - e. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute all related documents.
- 2. Mayor and Commission deny acceptance of the District Attorney's application of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council grant in the amount of \$120,000.
 - 3. Mayor and Commission defined option.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION: Option #1 a, b, c, d & e

DEPARTMENT:

Prepared by: Jenna Vaisvil

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7/12/2022

Date:

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: Option #1 a, b, c, d & e



Manager

July 14, 2022

Date:

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment #1 – Budget Amendment Ordinance