

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Date: 7-3-13

Via: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

From: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

Title of Item:

Sobriety Court Program Update

Requested Meeting Date: 7-9-13 Estimated Presentation Time: _____

Presenter: Elizabeth DeRuyck, CMCC Associate Director

Type of Action Requested (check all that apply)

- For info only, no action requested
- For discussion with possible action
- Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison)
- Approve/adopt proposal by motion
- Authorize filling vacant staff position
- Request to schedule public hearing or sale
- Request by member of the public to be heard
- Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute _____
- Approve under Consent Agenda
- Adopt Ordinance Revision
- Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution)
- Other (please list) _____

Fiscal Impact (check all that apply)

- Is this item in the current approved budget? Yes _____ No _____ (attach explanation)
- What type of expenditure is this? Operating Capital Other (attach explanation)
- Revenue line account # that funds this item is: _____
- Expenditure line account # for this item is: _____

Staffing Impact (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

- Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected. Yes No
- Applicable job description(s) may require revision. Yes No
- Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy. Yes No
- Item may change the department's authorized staffing level. Yes No



Supporting Attachment(s)

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) (please list) _____

Provide (1) copy of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at Noon to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. (If your packet contains colored copies, please provide (4) paper copies of supporting documentation as we do not have a color printer or copier.) Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for the Board packets.

Aitkin County Sobriety Court Program Update

Agenda – July 9, 2013

- I. Funding Update
- II. Program Overview
- III. Agent Response to Success
- IV. Participant Response to Success

HISTORY AND FUNDING

The Aitkin County Sobriety Court began in June 2006. At that time, the entire Sobriety Court Team contributed their services on a voluntary basis, with the exception of the coordinator. At that time, the coordinator was employed in a dual role (with juvenile diversion) and funded by Aitkin County. In November 2007, the program secured funding from the State Court Administrators Office (SCAO) which enabled the program to staff a full time probation agent and the part time program coordinator. Due to budget shortfalls, the program coordinator's position was eliminated on December 31, 2009. The remaining state funding was enough to reimburse Central Minnesota Community Corrections for the majority of the salary and benefits for a full time probation agent through December 2010. Beginning in 2011, the majority of the funding was provided by Aitkin County to keep the program operational.

Since 2007, Central Minnesota Community Corrections (CMCC) contributed approximately \$6500 annually for mileage incurred by the agent for the program components. CMCC also contributed other related agent costs. In 2010, the Aitkin County Sheriff's Office has donated several hours of officer time to assist with testing. This in kind contribution to supervision services has become a vital component to the program since the agent had less time for testing after taking on the additional duties of the coordinator position. Sobriety Court clients are also required to pay fees to participate in the program. The program is utilizing participant fee's to pay for the drug testing, electronic monitoring, incentives, and other various program expenses. In 2011, the majority of the funding for the agent was from county funding. Beginning in 2012 and to date, funding for the agent was through state grants.

POPULATION SERVED

Sobriety Court is for high risk drug and alcohol offenders. Since the Sobriety Court program began, a total of 72 clients entered the program. There have been 36 graduates, 9 terminations for continued violations, and 8 voluntarily withdrawals from the program due to various reasons. Currently there are 19 active participants and one pending entry into the program. The Aitkin County Sobriety Court Program has served 41 men and 31 women, ranging in age from 19 to 64.

DRIVER LICENSE INFORMATION

All participants will receive their license during the course of the program unless cancellation guidelines prevent them from doing so. In addition, some state funding assists with the costs of the ignition interlock system so participants are able to drive legally earlier than if they were not afforded the assistance.

EMPLOYMENT

As a requirement of the program, participants must be employed. Of the participants 30 were unemployed when they entered the program. Upon graduation and of current participants, only 8 participants were unemployed.

SOCIAL SERVICE EFFECTS

A goal of the Aitkin County Sobriety Court Program is to help participants become personally responsible and families become self sufficient. By requiring employment, the hope is these participants will become less dependent on public assistance.

Many of the participants have children. The 72 participants that have been involved in this program had a combined total of 77 dependent children, though not all participants were the custodial parent. This program has seen five children born drug and alcohol free, while their parent was a participant in the program, and currently one participant is pregnant.

There have been a total of six families which have been involved with Aitkin Child Protective Services when their parent entered the Sobriety Court Program. The Social Workers involved in the cases stated it is highly likely these children would have remained in foster care or placed in foster care for a much longer period of time had the Sobriety Court program not been available to their parents. In addition, Child Protective Services personal monitoring of these cases was reduced (saving man hours) because the probation agent had such an active role in monitoring the parent and thus, the families.

As we know foster care costs the county several dollars per year. This program has contributed to the reduction of foster care dollars for these particular families. Care can cost between \$23 per day to \$200 per day depending on care needs.

HOUSING

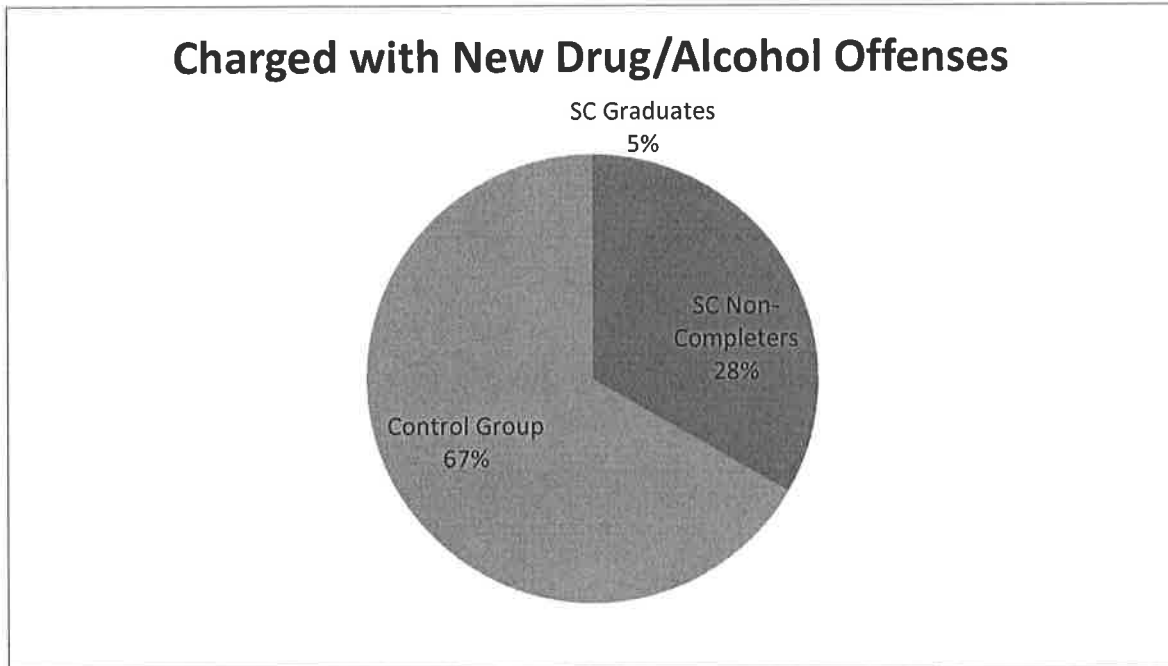
Part of being self sufficient and a responsible adult goes hand in hand with having a stable living environment. Approximately 50% of participants that have entered the program were able to go from temporary housing situations to permanent housing situations by the time they graduated.

COURT EFFECTS

The Sobriety Court Program can also conserve resources in other areas as well. For instance, the average Sobriety Court participant enters the program within 30 days of their arrest, appearing in court an average of 3 times. Data collected on a control group, for a prior evaluation, showed an average of 191 days from arrest to sentence with an average of 5 court appearances.

RECIDIVISIM RATES

The chart below compares graduates charged with new drug/alcohol offenses to non-graduates and a control group. Only one person who graduated from the Aitkin County Sobriety Court has been charged with a new drug/ alcohol offense. This program has a 97% success rate. It is clear this program has reduced recidivism rates.



OUTCOMES

In 2009, there were a total of 134 offenders who obtained a DWI in Aitkin County. According to the Department of Public Safety, Aitkin County had 5 alcohol related driving fatalities between years 2007-2009 and societal costs were high. If this program decreases the likelihood a person will get behind a wheel again while drinking, the savings will be tremendous. The main goal of Sobriety Court is to help chemically dependant people, in all areas of their life, to become responsible and productive members of society. It clear the evidence noted here is staggering with regard to making positive changes in the lives of those who successfully complete Sobriety Court. They have decreased their need for assistance with regard to food support, monetary support, foster care services, temporary housing services and unemployment. Jail days are reduced and recidivism rates are decreased. This saves long term money because the offender is most likely going to refrain from further criminal behavior. In addition, even when there are new offenses, these offenders have saved county dollars during the calendar year they were in the program.