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County Gets Grant to Keep Youth Offenders at Home

By Helen Silvis
 Of The Skanner News

Multnomah County has won access to federal funding for its efforts to keep youth on probation at home in their families and communities, instead of sending them away to youth institutions.

Working with youth in their own homes has been shown to produce better long-term results than sending teens to correctional institutions, says Christina McMahan, assistant director of the county's Department of Community Justice. "When we have evidence-based services ...that are holistic,

we can prevent them getting pulled deeper into the juvenile justice system or into the adult system,"

Multnomah County Commissioners heard a presentation on the funding Feb. 18. The county is the first in Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington) to get the funding for juvenile offenders.

The county plans to apply for around \$800,000 a year, delivered through the state Department of Human Services. The money will fund:

Two new caseworkers to work with youth on probation. Wrap-around services through Intercept, a program run by the nonprofit, Youth Villages.

Other programs including shelter beds and foster homes for youth.

Thousands of Oregon children and teens could benefit in future. Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Lane, Marion, Yamhill and Washington counties are now planning to apply for the funds, which come through Title IV E of the Social Security Act.

That couldn't have happened before Multnomah County, working with Oregon Department of Human Services and

Multnomah County Juvenile Court Judges, removed legal barriers to using the funds to help youth offenders.

The agencies collaborated for two years to secure the funding.

Judges had to change the wording in their court orders. Oregon Department of Human Services had to change the state plan.

"It's an understatement to say they have been crucial to this process," McMahan said.

"DHS had to get approval from the Region 10 administration. It's taken a lot of work on their side."

Researchers have found that removing youth from their families and sending them away to correctional institutions increases their risk of reoffending.

"Our kids on probation are at higher risk of ending up in a youth correctional facility bed or in the adult system," McMahan said. "So the more we can do earlier on, the better the outcomes are for the kids."

On the other hand, approaches that emphasize keeping youth with their families can reduce the risk of future failure.

Youth Villages Intercept program, for example, which has served more than 17,000 youth in 11 states, claims a success rate above 80 percent.

"We track our kids six, 12 and 24 months after they have left our services," Lynne Saxton, executive director of Youth Villages Oregon said. "It's important to know that what you do is effective and changes the lives of children and families."

Intercept works with youth and families in their own homes, making sure they have help available day and night, for as long as they need it.

"In the first moments of crisis for a family, if we can get a family intervention specialist in that home, we can assess what's going on and help keep that family together," Saxton said. "That's our first and main goal."

"We are very often the strongest advocates for the family because we know, based on years of experience and research and data, that if we do our work well, families that no-one thought they could be successful with their kids, they absolutely can be successful."

"They just need the right level of support and help."

Intercept's family specialists help parents deal with any challenges they face, including problems with work, housing and basic needs.

"If the parent has a drug or alcohol problem, we're going to get that addressed," Saxton said. "We're going to help them get the help they need."

Intercept case workers help parents create safety in the home. Sometimes that means an abusive adult has to move out.

"Because we're in the home every day - 24/7 if need be - we're going to find that solution for that mom," Saxton says.

2-19-14

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 Downtown Portland Office
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 Sub Questions due by end of day 2/28/14

Contacts Receiving Bids:
 Natasha Carroll
 (natasha.carroll@fortisconstruction.com)



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Bid documents are available for review at the Fortis office and at local plan centers, OAME, MCIP and BESThq.

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2-19-14

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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Sealed proposals are due no later than 2:00 p.m. March 13, 2014, in Metro's business offices at 600 NE Grand Avenue, Portland, OR 97232-2736, Attention: Sharon Stiffler, Procurement Analyst, RFP 2583.

Solicitation documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Oregon Procurement Information Network (ORPIN) at <http://orpin.oregon.gov/open.dll/>

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