



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 17-1452A, **Version:** 1

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### **Subject:**

Interlocal Agreements with the Public Defender related to jail diversion, SOAR, information technology, and juvenile case managers.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval and execution of four (4) Interlocal Agreements with the Public Defender to fund the Jail Diversion Recovery Program; SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR); an information technology (IT) position; and two juvenile case managers for the Juvenile Crossover Court.

### **Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community.

2.2 Be a facilitator, convener and purchaser of services for those in need.

2.4 Support programs that seek to prevent and remedy the causes of homelessness and more individuals and families from homelessness to permanent housing.

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support.

### **Summary:**

The four (4) agreements with the Public Defender outline the programs funded by the Board of County Commissioners (Board). Each year, the Board reviews agency budget requests for funding. Under the Public Defender, both required and discretionary programs are funded to aid with operations and assist clients in need.

The County contracts with the Public Defender to fund the following programs/positions:

1. Interlocal governing of the Jail Diversion Recovery Program assists individuals whose involvement in the criminal justice system may be a result of untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders. This program includes Chronic Inebriate and Incompetent to Proceed offenders. Funding is for program services and the salaries of two (2) community care managers within the Public Defender office.

2. Interlocal for SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery) benefit assistance program. The Public Defender assists clients with obtaining Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. This Interlocal agreement funds a case manager that connects clients to available benefits. The goal of the program is to assist clients with reintegration into the community to reduce recidivism.

3. Interlocal for an Information Technology Position. The Public Defender will provide a State

employee occupying a current full time employment position to perform necessary on-site installation and support services for computer equipment and peripherals purchased by the County.

4. Interlocal for Juvenile Crossover Case Managers. Juvenile Crossover Court provides representation to children whose cases cross over both dependency (foster care) and delinquency (juvenile justice system) divisions of the Unified Family Court System. The Case Managers will work with foster children who are assigned to the Juvenile Crossover Court. This is a pilot program which was implemented per Board direction at August 3, 2017 budget information session.

**Background Information:**

The Public Defender's Office provides legal advice, counsel, and defense services to needy and indigent citizens in the County accused of crimes. The programs funded through these agreements are designed to help stabilize clients by connecting them to services and community resources. Programs are in collaboration with the Public Defender, State Attorney, Sheriff, the judiciary and local services providers.

The Jail Diversion Recovery Program services include assessments, transportation, transitional housing, psychiatric evaluations, treatment plans, prescription medication therapy, intensive case management, court liaison, and community resources.

From 2004 to 2016 the total number of clients served was 5,819, with 397 clients being served in 2016. From 2004 - 2016, arrests before jail diversion totaled 46,203 and arrest after jail diversion total 3,106. The percentage decrease in arrests following jail diversion is 93% from 2004 - 2016 and 96% in 2016.

The SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Program allows the Social Security disability benefits to be received in three to six months, as opposed to one to three years on a regular application. SOAR assists clients in having benefits when they are released from jail. In Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18), Human Services will seek to collaborate with the Public Defender on SOAR as part of the County's coordinated SOAR effort.

Article V of the State Constitution requires the County to provide all reasonable and necessary technology and communications functions for the Public Defender. The County will provide the salary and benefits for a state employee to be hired by the Public Defender to perform necessary on-site installation and support services for computer equipment purchased by the County.

Established in 2006, the Juvenile Crossover Program allows for juveniles with concurrent dependency and delinquency cases to be represented by a single attorney and appear before a single judge. The need for additional case managers is due to a 73% turnover rate in case managers working with foster children. The goal of the funding is to reduce caseload on case managers throughout the program by hiring the additional case managers.

In FY17, the Public Defender's Office collaborated with Human Services to help identify crossover clients between jail diversion and the Pinellas County Health Program to help plan for continuity of care. Additionally, their office has participated in the Top 33 Pilot Program to further system discussions and solutions. In FY18, Human Services will continue to work with the Public Defender's Office to further collaborate and connect clients to services.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Funding for the agreements is included in the Public Defender's appropriation request for FY18 and is contingent on final budget approval. The County shall deposit into the Public Defender's Grants and Donations Trust Fund a total of \$1,041,990.00 distributed as follows:

\$800,270.00 for the Jail Diversion Recovery Program services

- Recovery Program Services - \$626,750.00
- two (2) Incompetent to Proceed Community Care Managers - \$173,520.00

\$66,450.00 for the SOAR Program

\$50,270.00 for the Information Technology Position

\$125,000.00 for the two (2) Juvenile Crossover Care Managers

The Public Defender shall submit invoices to the County for any approved expenses as designated in the agreements. Each agreement is effective October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Lourdes Benedict, Human Services Director

**Partners:**

Public Defender

**Attachments:**

Jail Diversion Interlocal Agreement

Jail Diversion Exhibit 1 Budget

SOAR Program Interlocal Agreement

SOAR Exhibit 1 Budget

IT Position Interlocal Agreement

IT Position Exhibit 1 Budget

Crossover Case Manager Interlocal Agreement

Crossover Case Manager Exhibit 1 Budget