



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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### **Subject:**

Final Reports for the 2019 Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant with the Florida Department of Children and Families.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval and execution by the County Administrator of the final grant reports for the 2019 Criminal Justice, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Grant (CJMHSA Grant) with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

- The CJMHSA Grant funded “Road to Success” (RTS), an expansion of the Public Defender’s crossover youth program serving youth with dual contact in the juvenile justice and dependency systems with mental illness, substance use or co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.
- RTS was a three-year project beginning 7/1/2020.
- A three (3) month no-cost extension was granted on 06/16/2023.
- The grant concluded on 9/30/2023. Submission of the final reports requires presentation to the Public Safety Coordinating Council and the approval of the County Administrator.
- The project served 47 unduplicated clients over the life of the grant period with 66% exhibiting a decrease in mental health symptoms, such as anxiety, trauma, PTSD or other related mental health disorders at discharge. Program lifetime target was 150 youth. Some of the barriers for referrals were COVID social distancing protocols that resulted in school closures and an increased need to keep justice facility populations down. These changes created a 40 percent decrease in juvenile arrests in Pinellas County during the pandemic. In 2021 DCF transitioned to a new child welfare lead agency for Circuit 6, which serves both Pasco and Pinellas that led to a 50 percent reduction in child removals. Additionally, youth arrests and removal rates continue to be lower than pre-COVID. These declines are positive overall but reduced the pool of youth eligible to be served through the program.
- The CJMHSA Grant for RTS provided up to \$1,200,000.00 over 39-month grant period and required 100% in-kind match, which is provided by the Public Defender and Ready for Life, Inc.
- A request to reduce budget was approved by DCF on 04/10/23.
- Total payments received from DCF were \$891,000.00.
- Actual expenditures during the grant period were \$631,040.73 and required in-kind match was met. Delays in grant start-up activities because of COVID, long term-vacancies in grant funded positions and movement of the grant funded Juvenile Attorney position to a match position in Year 3 resulted in lower actual expenditures than anticipated.
- A refund of \$259,959.27 will be issued through Clerk Finance out of the Public Defender’s fiscal year 23 approved budget for the unexpended portion of the funds received.
- The program will remain sustainable at current levels through the Public Defender’s Office without grant funding using State resources.

**Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

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 move individuals and families from homelessness to permanent housing

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.1 Maximize partner relationship and public outreach

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

**Summary:**

The CJMHSA Grant funded the Public Defender's Road to Success (RTS) project. The award concluded on September 30, 2023. Final reports are required to be presented to the Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) and require the approval of the County Administrator. The final reports will be presented to PSCC on November 6, 2023.

**Background/Explanation:**

DCF's CJMHSA Grant provides funding to counties for initiatives that improve public safety, avert increased justice system spending, and improve accessibility and efficacy of treatment services for people in or at-risk of entering the justice system who have mental illness, substance use disorders, or co-occurring disorders.

The 2019 CJMHSA Grant awarded to Pinellas County funds RTS, an expansion of the Public Defender's crossover youth program, which serves juveniles with dual contact with the juvenile justice and dependency systems. The primary goal of the program is to divert these youth from arrest, prosecution, or residential commitment and into treatment and support services. Funding for RTS through the CJMHSA Grant began on July 1, 2020, and concluded on September 30, 2023.

The Board of County Commissioners approved the grant agreement with DCF, the interlocal with the Public Defender, and the Memorandum of Understanding with Ready for Life on June 23, 2020.

**Fiscal Impact:**

A refund of \$259,959.27 will be issued through Clerk Finance out of the Public Defender's fiscal year 23 approved budget for the unexpended portion of the funds received.

**Delegated Authority:**

Authority for the County Administrator to sign this Affidavit is granted under Code Section 2-62 (a)(1).

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Karen Yatchum, Director, Human Services

**Partners:**

Public Defender, Sixth Judicial Circuit  
Ready for Life, Inc.  
Florida Department of Children and Families

**Attachments:**

Final Report Certification Form  
Final Financial Report  
Final Program Status Report  
Final Appendix A Supporting Documents  
Final Appendix B Quarterly Data Report  
Final Appendix C Performance Measures Report