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City Council

Presentation of the Mentor Court Award to the City of Olympia by the Center for Court Innovation

Agenda Date: 10/15/2019

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Title

Presentation of the Mentor Court Award to the City of Olympia by the Center for Court Innovation

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a Committee

City Manager Recommendation:

Recognize Community Court Core Team for receiving the Mentor Court Award by the Center for Court Innovation

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a presentation of the Mentor Court Award to the City of Olympia by the Center for Court Innovation and receive an update on the Community Court Program.

Staff Contact:

Maryam Olson, Court Administrator, Court 360.709.2783

Diane Whaley, Community Court Executive/Public Defense Coordinator 360.753.8057

Presenter(s):

Diane Whaley, Community Court Executive/Public Defense Coordinator

Scott Ahlf, Municipal Court Judge

Caitlin Flood/Britt Taylor, The Center for Court Innovation

Community Court Graduate

Background and Analysis:

Olympia Community Court has been chosen as one of four mentor courts in the nation. In September 2018, the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, chose four community courts to serve as mentor courts for jurisdictions seeking to enhance procedural justice and promote the use of community justice and, where appropriate, alternatives to jail. Mentor community courts were chosen in a competitive application process. Each mentor court hosts site visits, visits other courts, answers questions via

phone and email, provides materials and suggestions, participates in conferences and workshops, and conducts webinars. The Center for Court Innovation visits each mentor court to provide insight and present an award. Other mentor courts chosen include: Orange County (Calif.) Community Court, South Dallas (Texas) Community Court, and Downtown Spokane (Wash.) Community Court.

Olympia Community Court “soft launched” on January 6, 2016 and fully launched on January 4, 2017 with a celebratory ribbon cutting, after a year of development.

In 2016, Olympia was selected as one of ten sites by the Center for Court Innovation to receive a \$200,000 Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance grant over the course of two years from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018.

With the passage of the public safety levy, Olympia has been able to sustain this program. From the levy, \$125,000 per year has been allocated to Community Court.

Community Court operates each Wednesday and provides an opportunity for criminal defendant's charged with low level offenses in the City to immediately link to social services on-site in the Community Court provider building and get their case dismissed if they are successful in the program. By providing an immediate link and an individualized plan, the goal is to stabilize the defendant so that they can become self-sufficient. The ultimate goals of Community Court are to break the cycle of low-level offending, hold offenders accountable through visible restitution, and increase public safety and trust.

Since its inception, Community Court has opted in 337 defendants and has had 156 graduates. Of those that have graduated between 2016 to present, 82% have not reoffended (i.e. not been convicted of new crimes).

The following Community Court core team members are available for questions: Scott Ahlf, Municipal Court Judge; Diane Whaley, Community Court Executive/Public Defense Coordinator; Rocio Ferguson, Chief Prosecutor; Maryam Olson, Court Administrator; Marlo Martinez, Case Manager; Diana Duch, Public Defender; Mark Baum, Public Defender; and Ben Barner, Probation Officer II.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Public safety

Options:

Briefing only; no action requested

Financial Impact:

N/A

Attachments:

Center for Court Innovation Mentor Community Courts
Quick Facts
Court Policy
Community Court Brochure
US News Article