



Board Agenda Item 10

DATE: July 12, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Antoinette Taillac, Public Defender

SUBJECT: Clean Slate Reentry Program Salary Resolution Amendment

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Approve Amendment to the Salary Resolution adding one Defense Attorney III and one Paralegal II to Public Defender's Org 2880, effective July 11, 2022, as reflected in Appendix "D," for the Clean Slate reentry program (4/5 vote).

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions, as the costs for the new positions will be offset by funding approved by the Community Corrections Partnership (CCP). Approval of the recommended actions will add one Defense Attorney III, and one Paralegal II for the Clean Slate reentry program. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the Public Defender will be unable to address applications to its Clean Slate Program, discussed below, in a timely manner.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions, as these positions are funded by Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109), managed by the CCP. Appropriations and Revenue have been included in the FY 2022-23 Recommended Budget request. If funding is not renewed, the positions will be deleted if an alternative funding source is not identified.

DISCUSSION:

Initiated in 2017, Clean Slate Program is a reentry program that provides free legal services to indigent and low-income individuals convicted of criminal offenses in Fresno County and are now eligible to have their criminal record cleared (i.e., expunged, reduced, dismissed, and/or sealed). The individuals to be assisted with this program have completed their sentences and have shown a history of being rehabilitated. However, their criminal record can stand in the way of employment, education, licensing, and housing access, which reduces their ability to fully reintegrate back into society as productive citizens. Studies show that:

- 60% of employers will not hire a person with a criminal record
- 73% of employers conduct background checks on employees
- 50% of former inmates and/or their families are on public assistance
- 66% of landlords and property management companies deny housing to formerly incarcerated

Ultimately, formerly incarcerated people are frequently prevented from securing employment despite the

positive impact employment has in facilitating successful reentry, and there are numerous barriers to finding stable housing for reentering citizens. However, the Clean Slate Program can assist individuals with getting jobs and housing by helping clear up their criminal records.

On September 7, 2021, the Board approved Special Services Revenue Agreement No. A-21-358 with the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board (FRWDB) to continue to compensate the Fresno County Public Defender for post-conviction relief services, associated with the Clean Slate program, rendered to FRWDB's clients. The following Extra-Help staff currently staff the program: (1) 0.5 FTE Defense Attorney III and (1) 0.5 FTE Paralegal, with a portion of each position funded by budgeted Net County Cost. However, due to the constraints of each agreement, the funding from FRWDB is limited to clients referred through their programs. The Department receives most of its applications from direct inquiries, and it does not have the staffing to address these in a timely manner. Approval of the recommended action will allow the Department to have dedicated full-time staff for this program.

Overall, the request for these two positions is consistent with the goals of AB 109 to reduce recidivism, lower costs to taxpayers, and ensure success for individuals reintegrating back into the community.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #47, September 7, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

Salary Resolution Amendment - Appendix "D"

CAO ANALYST:

Yussel Zalapa