

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date: March 9, 2015
	Agenda Item No. 46 Roll Call No. <u>15-0405</u> Communication No. <u>15-098</u> Submitted by: Dana Wingert, Chief of Police

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval to submit an application for the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Smart Policing initiative, FY2015 Competitive Grant.

SYNOPSIS:

The Police Department is requesting approval to submit an application to the Bureau of Justice Assistance in support of the Second Chance Diversion program. This program will offer youth of 18 years of age or younger an alternative resolution for misdemeanor offenses. The program entails mediation sessions between the youth, their parents, and all parties involved in the incident, as an alternative to youth being formally adjudicated. The program will encourage community involvement to support and encourage youth to make positive life choices and a second chance at becoming a productive member of the community without the negative stigma associated with an errant youth.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: \$542,039.20

Funding Source: A new budget would be established, if grant is awarded, under Special Revenues, Grant section on page 212 of the Recommended Budget; department Detail for Fiscal Year (FY) Ending June 30, 2016.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The concept of youthful innocence has drastically changed over the last five (5) years. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, (UCR) 1,119,950 youth 18 years and under were arrested in 2013. This number represents 12.35% of the annual total of arrests made by law enforcement agencies across the nation. Some arrests are for misdemeanor offenses such as curfew violations, fighting, or minor theft. These events leave a negative record associated with the youth and can have lasting effects on future prospects for employment, scholarships, and acceptance to institutions of higher education. However, most youth are more focused on the event at the time of occurrence without forethought to the future or the ultimate ramifications of their poor choices. Often other individuals such as bystanders, business owners, property owners, or parents, become involved in these events and can react emotionally with demands for the youth to be arrested. This leaves the issues unresolved and deteriorates relations in the community. These issues can encourage youth to have negative self-images, distrust of others, low self-esteem, and a sense of isolation.

The City of Des Moines is initiating a different approach to resolve minor instances. The Second Chance Diversion program offers an alternative to formally charging youth for misdemeanor offenses. The youth, their parent(s), and all parties involved in the incident will be summoned to attend mediation sessions in an attempt to find a satisfactory resolution to the issue and repair relationships in the community. This allows youth to gain a better understanding of the residual effect of their actions and offer an opportunity to make better choices in the future. Parents will be more informed about their children's behavior and will have the opportunity to guide and encourage youth to make better choices. All participants will have the satisfaction of being heard and will be given the opportunity to voice satisfaction with the resolution. The program does incorporate consequences for repeat offenders and noncompliant participants.

The Second Chance Diversion program is a community oriented solution to resolve minor infractions that could potentially escalate if they are not addressed. Maintaining trust with open communications is a vital component in strengthening relationships and building thriving communities. Encouraging youth to make positive life choices will help support the community and assist them to become contributing adults without the negative stigma of a criminal record. Offering youth the opportunity of a second chance after making an error in judgment can offer positive reinforcement to assist youth to succeed.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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