



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 20-4558, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED GRANT AWARD

Department: Cook County Sheriff's Office

Grantee: Cook County Sheriff's Office

Grantor: Bureau of Justice Assistance

Request: Authorization to accept grant

Purpose: The Cook County Sheriff's Office ("CCSO") is requesting authorization to accept a new grant award in the amount of \$458,198.00, from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, for the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding program through the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The overall strategy of the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding program, implemented by the CCSO, is to provide grant-funded personnel to identify alternative housing partnerships and engage in ongoing support for detainees re-entering the community from Cook County Department of Corrections ("CCDOC"), while navigating COVID-19 obstacles. The grant will fund four Reentry Care Coordinators that will work with community agencies and EM to coordinate service delivery, recipient care plans, and referrals for service recipients. They will be responsible for locating housing opportunities and building relationships with facilities open to housing justice involved individuals. They will also complete assessments with clients to determine needs and barriers to placement on EM housing, determine best fit housing options, make all referrals and complete all necessary steps to insure placement with both EM and the facility. Funds will support housing services through subrecipients and partnerships to address housing needs of EM participants that are deemed No Place To Stay or difficult to place due to their criminal offenses. Funding would help the CCSO and its' partners to offer housing services that have not been available due to costs or other restrictions, and to meet the practical needs of individuals leaving CCDOC custody in order to remove them from the congregate setting and control and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Grant Amount: \$458,198.00

Grant Period: 10/1/2020 - 9/30/2021

Fiscal Impact: NONE

Accounts: N/A

Concurrences:

The Budget Department has received all requisite documents and determined the fiscal impact on Cook County, if any.

Summary: While from a public health perspective the CCDOC, along with criminal justice organizations and community groups, has successfully worked with the Court to reduce the jail population, allowing for increased social distancing through single-celling and overall mitigation and control of the spread of COVID-19. Such wins have had an impact on the CCSO Community Corrections Electronic Monitoring Unit (EMU) resources. The target population for this grant proposal are detainees who are eligible to re-enter communities, either through discharge, bond court, or the EM program by court order, but who cannot be accepted or placed in available housing due to housing providers being at capacity, disqualifying factors within their criminal background that hinder existing contractual housing arrangements, or specialized medical needs that cannot be supported due to the high costs associated with housing these individuals.

As a continued control and mitigation measure, the importance of properly transitioning eligible detainees from the jail to the community is more urgent than ever before. This proposed program aims to address the numerous obstacles that confront individuals who are eligible to leave the jail, either through EM or a bond. First and foremost is ensuring that persons ordered to community corrections have appropriate housing and then complimenting housing arrangements with services that will help prevent individuals from running afoul of the legal system or being ensnared by other impediments to their rehabilitation.

The process of placing an individual on EM has several hurdles to overcome. The process begins when the court orders participants to be placed on electronic monitoring. Before a would-be participant is moved to EM, the CCSO reviews records to ensure the participant will not be placed with an alleged victim (e.g. a domestic partner who was allegedly abused by the participant). The CCSO also contacts the host to inquire whether they will accept the participant to live in their residence. In the aftermath of COVID-19, the CCSO also explains COVID-19 safety precautions and the potential for exposure to the host as part of the procedure.

Should a potential host decline to house the detainee, which is increasingly common during the pandemic, the detainee loses the ability to reside at that host location. In these situations, the CCSO does try to work with potential EM participants and service providers to find housing. The proposed program would help CCSO and providers respond to the combined challenges of more individuals participating in the EM program and COVID-19 precautions that must be implemented by housing providers and notably, will expand the housing support network as funding would be available to house persons for example, with greater medical needs and costs.

By providing housing to EM participants, this grant would help meet the practical needs of individuals who otherwise would have to remain in the jail, contributing to crowding which ultimately places a strain on the Department's efforts to socially distance detainees as best as we can, within a correctional setting. Providing them with housing helps to protect them and the communities from the spread of COVID-19 and removes them from congregate settings which inherently, carry greater risks of exposure during pandemics.