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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 10, 2012

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Department of Probation–Personal Services
Probation Officers

Dear Honorable Members:

The Erie County Probation Department in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division have developed a program that will reduce caseloads for Juvenile Intensive Supervision Probation Officers in order to focus on and improve services to high risk youth.

Enclosed please find a proposed resolution and an accompanying memorandum requesting authorization to create three (3) Probation Officer positions. These positions will be funded through an interdepartmental billing relationship with the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division, and the Department of Mental Health. These departments are able to receive reimbursement for the services to be provided through Probation. The reimbursement will continue into the 2013 budget.

Should your honorable body require further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Brian McLaughlin at the Probation Department. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/bb
Enclosure

cc: Brian McLaughlin, Probation Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: The Erie County Probation Department
Re: Department of Probation–Personal Services Probation Officers
Date: July 10, 2012

SUMMARY

The attached resolution requests authorization to create three (3) Probation Officer positions within the Erie County Department of Probation. The officers will be utilized to reduce caseloads for Juvenile Intensive Supervision Probation Officers in order to focus on and improve services for high risk youth.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Erie County Probation Department will bill the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division and the Department of Mental Health for the services of two existing Probation Officers totaling $87,711 for the balance of the year. The interdepartmental reimbursement will be budgeted in the Probation Department in order to create three (3) Probation Officer Trainee positions. The new officers will be able to take on the caseload of less serious offenders thereby freeing up the time of the more experienced officers to concentrate on high risk juvenile offenders.

Additional supervision of high risk offenders will result in providing diversion from costly residential treatment facilities which will provide an additional savings to Erie County Residents.

No additional County funding is required. It is anticipated that this funding will continue throughout 2013.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Erie County Total System of Care employs a team approach concept to address the needs of our youth and families at the Intake and Diversion stage. The System of Care approach consists of two multi-departmental teams consisting of staff members from the Probation Department, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Mental Health. The Family Services Team (FST) addresses our Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) population and The Juvenile Delinquency Services Team (JDST) serves our Juvenile Delinquent (JD) population.

The result of the team approach is the successful diversion of juveniles from further system penetration; however the current high caseload inhibits the effective diversion of some high risk or very high risk juveniles. High caseloads have resulted from prior year

staffing cuts in the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program and an increase in the number of juvenile offenders.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In addition to the cuts in Probation intensive services staffing and the resulting increased caseloads that have occurred over the last two years, there has been a significant increase in the number of placements to Residential Treatment for juvenile delinquent youth. The average number of annual JD placements for the years 2007 through 2010 is 71, while the average between 2011 and best year end projection for 2012 is 116. This increase of forty five (45) represents a 63.4% increase in annual placements. This increase in placements projects an approximate annual increase in residential bed days of 9,800 costing up to an additional $1.67 Million in county expense.

The Department of Probation is requesting the addition of three Juvenile Intensive Supervision Probation Officers needed to reduce caseloads to a level consistent with staffing levels before 2011. The results expected are reductions in the number of youth with violations of probation, improvements in youth functioning, and significant reduction in Residential Treatment placements back to normative levels achieved in the time period between 2007 through 2010. The success of the proposed increase in staffing will be assessed and reported quarterly.

NEGATIVE ACTION

Without the addition of three Juvenile Intensive Supervision Probation Officers the average number of annual JD placements in Erie County will continue to rise, costing Erie County millions of dollars, while available state aid remains un-utilized.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

Certified copies of this resolution will be forwarded to the Division of Budget & Management, the Office of the Comptroller, the Division of Personnel, the County Attorney, the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division, the Department of Mental Health, and the Probation Department c/o Dina Connors Room 112, 1 Niagara Plaza.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
ERIE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

RE: Department of Probation–Personal Services Probation Officers

WHEREAS, the Erie County Total System of Care employs a team approach concept to address the needs of our youth and families at the Intake and Diversion stage, utilizing two multi-departmental teams consisting of staff members from the Probation Department, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Mental Health; and

WHEREAS, prior year staffing cuts and a higher number of juvenile offenders have significantly increased juvenile caseloads per officer, especially Intensive Supervision caseloads designed to supervise the high risk youth who are most likely to re-offend and enter placement; and

WHEREAS, the creation of three additional Juvenile Intensive Supervision Probation Officers will free up the time of more experienced officers who will be able to reduce per officer caseloads, provide much closer supervision of high risk youth, and work more effectively in implementing the balanced approach which has proven to reduce criminal activities, probation violations, out-of-home placements, and minimize recidivism; and

WHEREAS, the average number of annual JD placements for the years between 2011 and 2012 is projected to increase by 63.4% and this increase in placements projects an approximate annual increase in residential bed days of 9,800 costing up to an additional $1.67 Million in county expense; and

WHEREAS, these positions are funded for the balance of 2012 through an interdepartmental billing relationship with the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division and the Department of Mental Health.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the following budget adjustment is hereby authorized in order to establish three (3) positions of Probation Officer (JG 11 trainee salary level) in the Department of Probation:

2012 Budget - Fund 110

Probation - Fund Center 12610

Expense		Increase/(Decrease)
500000 - Full Time Salary		48,087
501000 – Overtime		8,100
502000 - Fringe Benefits		31,524
912600 - ID Probation Services		(87,711)
	Total Expense	0

DSS- Youth Services Division - Fund Center 12530

Revenue	Increase
408065 - State STSJP Aid Youth Services	41,918
Expense	
912600 - ID Payment Probation Services	41,918
Net - Revenue - Expense	0

Mental Health Program Administration - Fund Center 12410

Expense	Increase/(Decrease)
516010 - Contract Payment Non-Profit Purchase Services	(45,793)
912600 - ID Payment Probation Services	45,793
Total Expense	0

and be it further

RESOLVED, that three (3) Probation Officer, (JG 11 trainee) positions are created within the Department of Probation, (B-100 control number 6912) effective July 28th, 2012 pay period 17; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Probation Department will sign Interdepartmental Memorandums of Understanding with the Department of Mental Health, and the Division of Youth Services to establish program goals and objectives; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office, the Division of Budget and Management, the County Comptroller, the County Attorney, the Department of Social Services' Youth Services Division, the Department of Mental Health, the Personnel Department and the Probation Department c/o Dina Connors Room 112, 1 Niagara Plaza.