



STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT
Twenty-First Judicial Circuit

JUDGE KENDALL O. WENZELMAN
KANKAKEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Kankakee, Illinois 60901
(815) 937-3650

June 10, 2015

Chasity Boyce
Associate Counsel
Office of the Governor.
100 W. Randolph Street, Suite 16-100
Chicago II, 60601

Dear Ms. Boyce:

I apologize for the delay in responding to your prior phone call which was a follow up to a conversation I had with Jason Barclay. Unfortunately, we did not have a readily available descriptive list of the programs that have been initiated in Kankakee County. If anything, our discussion has caused us to create such a document for future reference.

The list is enclosed and attempts to give a brief background of the programs that have either been created locally, or are programs which Kankakee was selected to participant in by outside entities. If there are any of these programs for which you would like more detailed information, please feel free to contact me and I will make every effort to procure that for you. Please also let me know if you or anyone else would like to attend any of the court sessions involving these programs, or to be apprised of graduation ceremonies that occur at various times of the year.

It is hoped that the enclosed sufficiently reflects that we are a community interested in approaching societal issues in innovative ways and in a collaborative fashion. We welcome the opportunity to be a jurisdiction considered for pilot programs aimed at changing the lives of those who come in contact with the criminal justice system. We recognize that by bringing about such change we both improve the community and enhance public safety.

I thank you for the time and consideration given to this communication.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kendall O. Wenzelman".

Kendall O. Wenzelman
Circuit Judge

LIST OF PROGRAMS

Abolish Chronic Truancy Program (ACT):

Description:

Historically, Judges of the Twenty First Judicial Circuit have served as chairman of the Truancy Review Board which is part of ACT sponsored by the I-KAN Regional Office of Education. The Truancy Review Board has been existence for more than 15 years. The Truancy Review Board sends notices and meets at the courthouse with students and their families who have failed to respond to attendance assistance intervention services. When students and their families appear at the courthouse, they are informed of the truancy laws that may apply to them. The students are encouraged to improve their attendance and families are invited to make use of all of the resources of the Board which includes health care providers, mental health professionals, school resource personnel, local police, counselors and other parents. Students are monitored and may be required to return to the meetings of the Board for further intervention. Students who improve their attendance are publicly congratulated and may eventually be removed from the program. The ACT program meets 8 times a year and there are approximately 30 families brought in each meeting. Approximately 200 families are involved annually.

Adult Redeploy Illinois Program:

Description:

Kankakee County began participating in the Adult Redeploy Illinois Program in January 2015. This program provides funding to establish programs that divert non-violent offenders from the Illinois Department of Corrections by providing community based supervision and services. This initiative fully funds two probation officers (\$178,500.00 annually) and the Intensive Probation Supervision (IPS) Program. IPS is a highly structured program and the defendant must comply with strict court ordered conditions. During the 12-month program the defendant will transition through three phases. Phase One being the most restrictive and Phase Three being the least restrictive level. The Adult Redeploy Program requires strong collaboration with Judges, States Attorney, and Kankakee County Sheriff's Department and other local law enforcement, Kankakee Community College, Olivet Nazarene University staff, and substance abuse and mental health treatment providers.

Domestic Violence Court:

Description:

The Kankakee County Domestic Violence (DV) Court was established in 1995. It was developed to improve jurisdictional response to victims of domestic violence, build a multi-disciplinary team that will track all DV cases through the system, and hold the abuser accountable for their actions. A diversion program was implemented for first time misdemeanor offenders in DV related offenses. Upon agreement of the State, 1st time offenders can enter the program. The offender has to plead guilty, undergo a drug & alcohol evaluation, and treatment as well as a 26 week abuser counseling program in exchange for a dismissal or reduction of the charges. The case is not actually dismissed until all requirements have been successfully completed. The offender's case is reviewed in court usually monthly. The program requires collaboration with State's attorney, public defender, law enforcement, probation, court services, substance abuse providers, and victim advocate programs. The Court also handles the offenders who are on DV Probation, and reviews those cases; which includes felonies. This specialty court works closely with the 21st Judicial Circuit Family Violence Coordinating Council. There have been several studies of our courtroom over time, and the studies have all shown a reduced recidivism rate compared to those who did not completed the Court program.

Drug Court:

Description:

Kankakee County established one of the first adult drug courts in the State of Illinois in 1994. The drug court conducts regular reviews of those in the drug court program. Treatment can require both inpatient and outpatient treatment. The great majority of those in drug court are post-plea pre-adjudication, but there are some defendants who are post-adjudication and have been sentenced to drug court as a condition of probation. The Drug Court Program requires collaboration with many stakeholders including but not limited to: the Presiding Judge, the States Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Probation Department, substance abuse treatment providers, TASC, mental health treatment providers, and employment agencies. In Addition, a committee, Kankakee Drug Free Inc., was formed consisting of local community leaders for the purpose of raising funds and building community support for the Drug Court Program.

Justice Mental Health (JMH)Track:

Description:

A significant percentage of arrestees have an active mental health issue, whether a previously undiagnosed mental health disorder, or a recurrence of symptoms following a lapse in taking medication. Kankakee County has attempted to address this problem by identifying those defendants not charged with serious violent crimes who are in need of mental health treatment, and then delivering appropriate mental health services. The services are made available as a result of a collaborative effort between the Kankakee County Sheriff, the Kankakee County Probation Department, the Helen Wheeler Community Mental Health Center and the court system. Typically, a defendant who is identified and found eligible for JMH services is placed on probation with a condition of JMH compliance. The court then conducts regular court status hearings to review the defendant's compliance with the JMH program.

Juvenile Redeploy Illinois Program:

Description:

Redeploy Illinois seeks to decrease incarceration of juveniles in the Department of Juvenile Justice through enhanced community based supervision. This program helps to fund treatment services in the community such as individual counseling, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, mentoring programs and cognitive based programs facilitated by probation staff (\$309,000.00 annually). The probation department partners with Indian Oaks Academy in Manteno Illinois who provides residential treatment and community based family services for minors with severe emotional and behavioral issues. In addition, this program provides services for the juvenile population in Iroquois County, which requires circuit-wide collaboration between the court, treatment providers, probation and all other community based treatment agencies provided funding through this program.

Kankakee County Renewed Opportunity (KCRO) :

Description:

The Kankakee County Sheriff's Dept. initiated a re-entry program in 2008. The purpose of the re-entry program was to establish program services that would fit the needs of parolees returning from prison to the community. These needs include substance abuse, mental health, housing and job training. A not for profit corporation, Kankakee County Renewed Opportunity (KCRO), was established in 2010 in serve the re-entry program. KCRO has been the applicant for grants and has been awarded two Department of Justice grants that have funded mental health treatment for jail inmates, as well as probationers and parolees. KCRO board membership includes law enforcement, corrections, the judiciary, local treatment providers and educators from local colleges. The DOJ grants have allowed for the creation of the Court's

mental health track. The re-entry program is responsible for making a new program, Thinking for a Change, available to jail inmates, as well as probationers and parolees.

Teen Court:

Description:

Kankakee County Teen Court is a diversionary program for first-time juvenile offenders. The basic premise is that young people respond positively to the opinions of their peers – Teen Court allows juveniles who have made a mistake to accept responsibility for their actions, understand how breaking the law will affect their future, and make amends to those they have harmed. November of 2005 the first case was presented by teen attorneys to a jury of their peers. The Kankakee County model includes teen attorneys, jurors, bailiffs, and clerks. The only adult involved in the proceedings is the judge, who is a local attorney who volunteers their time. Sessions are held every third Thursday of the month at the courthouse and trainings are generally 3-4 times per year. The recidivism rate is less than 10% and many of the defendants go on to become volunteers in the program. Candidates for the program must admit their guilt and accept their sentence. Offenders are sentenced to community service, tours of the local detention center, and must return to serve on a teen jury. In addition, they may be assigned to write an essay, make apologies, pay restitution, and have an assessment for potential drug or alcohol problems and possibly take anger management classes. They are given 3 months to complete the sentence. The Teen Court requires collaboration with local law enforcement, State's Attorney office, and the Courts. The Board of Directors comprise of representatives of local social service agencies, area schools and youth groups, and a diverse group of county residents from all walks of life. Youth are also voting members of the Board.

Thinking for a Change (T4C):

Description:

The Kankakee County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with Kankakee County Renewed Opportunity (KCRO), described above, saw a need to assist individuals who become involved with the criminal justice system in understanding the long-term effects of their decisions. In September of 2013 these agencies collaborated to get individuals trained in the use of the T4C curriculum. The T4C curriculum uses as its core, a problem solving program embellished by both cognitive restructuring and social skills interventions. While each of the concepts are presented systemically, the participant quickly learns and appreciates that cognitive restructuring does require an objective, systematic approach to identifying thinking, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and values. This program was adopted by the National Institute of Corrections as one of many cognitive-restructuring courses created to assist individuals with changes in their compulsivity thus reducing the rates of negative behaviors and incidences while incarcerated, and ultimately reducing the chances of recidivism while in the community.

Veterans Court:

Description:

In 2013, the Kankakee County Veterans Treatment Court was established to more effectively address the needs of veterans with addiction and/or mental health issues as well as other issues which may have caused them to become involved with the court system. This court represents collaboration between the 21st Judicial Circuit Court, State's Attorney, Public Defender's Office, Probation, Sheriff's Office, Veterans Assistance Commission of Kankakee County, and United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Kankakee County Veterans Treatment Court (KCVTC) recognizes that the cost of service to our country is simply not monetary and not paid in full upon discharge. In partnership with the community, the court strives to enhance public safety and reduce reoffending by criminally involved veterans by connecting them to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, community services and support to ensure appropriate disposition by considering the Veteran's needs, the seriousness of the

offence, in order to re-establish the veteran as a productive member of the community. Veterans Treatment Court will accept referrals after criminal charges have been filed and the case has been forwarded to the Kankakee County Courthouse. Referrals will also be considered for acceptance for criminal defendants who are before the court for alleged violations of existing probation/parole sentences. Veterans Treatment Court is limited to defendants who are veterans of any branch of the United States Military. Individuals can receive treatment services and other benefits if they meet eligibility set forth by the VA. Individuals, who are not eligible to receive VA benefits, regardless of the reason why, can still be accepted into the program but they are responsible for the payment of treatment and services. Each case will be considered individually but eligibility is subject to the provisions in Section 20 of the Veterans and Servicemembers Court Treatment Act (730 ILCS 167/20(b) (West 2015)). Thus far there have been four graduates from the program and there are male and female participants from Kankakee and Iroquois counties.