



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: MARCH 6, 2018

FROM: RIVERSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDING FROM ASSET FORFEITURE SPECIAL FUND TO
ENHANCE RIVERSIDE YOUTH COURT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF
\$20,000 – SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION**

ISSUE:

Accept funding from the Asset Forfeiture Special Fund to enhance the Riverside Youth Court Program in the amount of \$20,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Accept funding from the Asset Forfeiture Special Fund administered by the Riverside County District Attorney's Office in the amount of \$20,000 to enhance the Riverside Youth Court Program;
2. Authorize a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$20,000 to Police Miscellaneous General Funds account #0000101-341190; and
3. Appropriate expenditures in the amount of \$20,000 to Riverside County District Attorney Youth Court account #9336900102-4402100.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Funds are made available for request under Health and Safety Code Section 11489(b)(2)(A)(i), which states that 15% of asset forfeiture funds shall be deposited in a special fund maintained by the county, city, or city and county of any agency making the seizure or seeking an order for forfeiture. The funds are to be used for the sole purpose of funding programs designed to combat drug abuse and divert gang activity, and shall wherever possible involved educators, parents, community-based organizations and local businesses, and uniformed law enforcement officers. It is the intent of the Legislature to cause the development and continuation of positive intervention programs for high-risk and secondary school-age students.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Youth Court was developed in 2004 and provides an innovative approach to juvenile justice and acts as an early intervention for first-time offenders of misdemeanor crimes. It is designed to give a second chance to youth between the ages of 10-17 who have broken the law and have admitted their guilt. Those who are eligible for the program will have their case(s) heard in a real courtroom, with youth serving as prosecuting and defense attorneys, court clerks, bailiffs and jurors. An adult judge will preside, but the youth jury will determine the sentence.

The Riverside Youth Court is also designed to educate youth about the juvenile justice system. Through direct participation, youth court addresses the juvenile's responsibility for his or her behavior and holds the juvenile accountable to their community and peers. Involvement in youth court, either as a respondent or as a volunteer, increases their respect for the judicial process.

The primary function of the Riverside Youth Court is to determine a fair and restorative sentence for the juvenile respondent. Disposition may include mandatory future jury duty and one or more of the following: community service, letters of apology, essays, educational workshops, counseling, restitution, drug testing, jail tours, curfew restrictions, behavior contracts and other creative dispositions. When the disposition is completed, the respondent's case will be closed. No criminal charges will be filed in the traditional juvenile justice system and the juvenile will have no record.

DISCUSSION

In May 2017, the Riverside Police Department submitted a request for funds disbursement from the Asset Forfeiture Special Fund, currently administered by the Riverside District Attorney's Office, in order to enhance the Riverside Youth Court Program, which acts as an early intervention for first-time offenders of misdemeanor crimes.

The program assists approximately 80-200 volunteers and respondents each year. A portion of the funding will be used to purchase computer tablets, charging stations, and any needed software, which will modernize the program and reduce printed paper. The automation will conform to the Paperwork Reduction Act, which was enacted to minimize the paperwork burden for local governments.

The tablets will be used to completely eliminate the need for paper copies of each youth court case for each teen jury member, teen clerk, and adult judge. RPD's goal is to present 6-8 cases each night, with 6-12 jury members per case. Under the current logistics, RPD prints approximately 40-60 copies of the cases each session. Use of the tablets will conserve at least one ream of paper for each youth court session, all of which is disposed of after the session.

The remaining funding will be used to provide additional training. RPD provides 2-4 training days each year to train potential teen jury members. There are typically up to 60 teens participating in each training day. RPD also sends a group of select Youth Court teen volunteers to the annual California Association of Youth Courts (CAYC) summit, which alternates between Northern and Southern California. Funding would be used for registration and transportation costs for Youth Court staff and teen volunteers.

Youth Court has also implemented an online educational workshop series as part of the disposition for teens having their case heard. A portion of the funding would pay the annual cost for this online system. Remaining funding would cover Youth Court related costs such as drug test kits, supplies, and shirts.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no general fund impact. Total funding received from Asset Forfeiture is \$20,000. No matching funds are required.

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