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CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MEASURE Z EXPENDITURES APPLICATION FOR FUNDING

The Humboldt County Citizens' Advisory Committee on Measure Z Expenditures is now accepting applications for funding. Measure Z, Humboldt County's Public Safety/Essential Services Measure, is a half-cent sales tax, passed by the voters of Humboldt County during the November 2014 general election.

The Advisory Committee meets on each Thursday in March to review applications and will make recommendations to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in April.

Applications for funding must be filed with the County Administrative Office BY 5:00 P.M. ON FEBRUARY 15, 2021. Postmarks are not acceptable for meeting this deadline.

Agency Name:

Humboldt County Public Defender Offices

Contact Person/Title:

Marek Reavis, Chief Public Defender

Mailing Address:

1001 4th Street

Phone Number:

707 445-7634

City:

Eureka

Zip code

95501

Email address:

MReavis@co.humboldt.ca.us

1. Amount of Measure Z Funding Requested for FY 2021-22:

\$ 200,000

2. Entity Type:

- Humboldt County Department
 Contract Service Provider to Humboldt County
 Local Government Entity
 Private Service Provider
 Non-Profit Service Provider
 Other (Describe Below)

Other:

3. Describe how the scope of your proposal fits the intent of Measure Z. Specifically, how will it maintain and improve public safety and essential services, as described on the previous page? (750 character limit)

The Humboldt County Public Defender Office ("PD") provides essential county services by representing individuals who cannot afford to hire an attorney. These essential services are officially referred to as Indigent Defense Services.

The Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution require that a person who is accused of an offense that carries jail as a possible punishment and who cannot afford to hire his own attorney is entitled, in both federal and state courts, to have an attorney provided at government expense to defend him against that prosecution. The United States Supreme Court said this is a state obligation, but left it to each state to decide how to carry out the provision of the constitutional right to counsel. In California, each County is required to provide effective indigent defense services.

4. Please provide a brief description of the proposal for which you are seeking funding. (1500 character limit)

The County of Humboldt has two offices that provide indigent defense services: The Public Defender Main office and the Conflict Counsel office. Although Conflict Counsel is formally a branch of the Public Defender department, each office operates autonomously with separate staff as required to maintain an ethical wall between the offices. The only shared activity between the offices is administrative oversight and services.

Both PD offices utilize case management software to track case management activities, including court dates, for all client files. The software allows multiple staff to access a case file simultaneously without the need to locate a traditional "paper file" that can easily be misplaced or is unavailable as needed. In addition, client files can be accessed by authorized personnel remotely allowing attorneys and investigators to access client files in court or as needed.

Currently, support staff download data from the court – two times per day, to then re-enter the data manually into the Public Defender and Conflict Counsel's case management software. With an average of nearly 7,000 cases appointed by the courts each year, in addition to cases that remain open for multiple years, the data entry required to maintain and update the PD offices' case management database is tremendously time-consuming. Unfortunately, due to limited staffing and resources, information contained in the case management software is often out of date or inaccurate. For example, it is extremely difficult to accurately determine the caseload for each attorney as there is usually a large backlog of closed files waiting to be processed. When there is a staff vacancy, support staff are forced to enter minimal data in order to process new cases, creating an additional backlog.

In order to improve efficiency, accuracy, and the long-term costs of manually entering and scanning critical data from the courts, the Public Defender is proposing a project to integrate the PD office's case management software, eDefender, with court's case management software, eCourt. Journal Technologies, who supplies and supports eDefender and eCourt case management software, specifically designed the software modules to integrate with each other.

The Public Defender has begun discussions with Journal Technologies regarding the integration of eDefender and eCourt. These discussions are preliminary and we have yet to receive a cost estimate; however, we estimate the cost of the project to be between \$250,000 and \$300,000. The PD strongly believes the benefits of integration will far exceed the cost; through increased efficiency and the elimination of extra-help employees dedicated to updating the case management software, and by redirecting permanent staff from data-entry to direct client services. In order to fund this project, we are requesting a one-time allocation from Measure Z proceeds in the amount of \$200,000.

5. How have you developed a plan for sustainability, including diversification of funding sources, for your proposal to carry on without reliance on future Measure Z funds? (750 character limit)

Yes. The additional costs of this project will be funded through departmental cost saving measures and a small grant of \$26,000.

6. If this request is for the continuation or expansion of an existing program/service, what is the current source of funding for that program/service? (500 character limit)

n/a

7. If you are awarded Measure Z funds, how do you plan to leverage these funds to secure additional grants, contributions or community support? (500 character limit)

The Public Defender office continues to seek additional funding sources which are limited. Most recently, the PD submitted a grant proposal that will provide \$26,000 towards this project. In addition, the PD intends to continue searching for additional funding opportunities, including small community grants.

8. Will the proposal require new or expanded activity on the part of another entity to be fully functional and effective? If so, name the entity and describe what participation would look like. (750 character limit)

The integration project will require the cooperation and assistance of local administrative and IT court staff. The participation of court staff will entail working with Journal Technologies to ensure that the courts data remains secure and to identify the specific needs of the courts to ensure a smooth integration process.

9. Are there recurring expenses associated with this application, such as personnel costs?

No Yes

If Yes, detail those expenses here: (500 character limit)

Budget pending cost proposal from Journal Technologies.

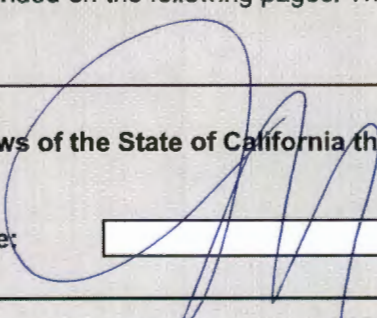
REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS - Be sure to include the following with your application

Prior Year Results: If your request is a continuation of a program funded with Measure Z in prior fiscal years, please provide the results of implementation. (one page maximum)

Program Budget: Please utilize the template provided on the following pages. This will need to be updated if your agency is approved for funding.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above statements and all attachments are true and correct.

Date: February 16, 2021

Signature: 

SUBMIT YOUR COMPLETE APPLICATION TO:

Humboldt County Citizens' Advisory Committee on Measure Z Expenditures
c/o County Administrative Office * 825 Fifth Street, Suite 112 * Eureka, CA 95501-1153 * cao@co.humboldt.ca.us