



Signature Report

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

June 7, 2018

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2018-0181.1

Sponsors Gossett

1 AN ORDINANCE related to district court; allowing the use
2 of county funds to provide incentive rewards with a
3 financial value to participants in the therapeutic courts
4 housed within district court as the district court budget
5 permits; and adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 2A.

6 **STATEMENT OF FACTS:**

7 1. King County district court administers the regional mental health court
8 and regional veterans court and is in the beginning stages of planning a
9 community court.

10 2. Mental health courts started in 1997 and veterans courts in 2008. Both
11 courts, a type of problem-solving and therapeutic courts, are being
12 implemented in jurisdictions throughout the country with over two
13 hundred fifty mental health courts and approximately two hundred
14 veterans courts in existence. Community courts started in 1993 and are
15 being replicated throughout the country with several dozen courts in stages
16 of planning and implementation.

17 3. These specialized, therapeutic courts and associated programs, as
18 established by King County government and King County courts, are a
19 proven means to change behavior, reduce recidivism, and increase

20 productivity among program participants, thus saving taxpayer dollars in
21 the short and long term.

22 4. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse: Treatment for
23 Criminal Justice Populations Research Guide (September, 2007), a
24 balance of rewards and sanctions encourages pro-social behavior and
25 treatment participation. The contingency management approaches,
26 utilized in treatment courts and evidence-based juvenile justice programs,
27 require the provision of tangible incentive rewards, such as coffee cards,
28 movie passes and similar rewards, and intangible incentive rewards such
29 as praise and encouragement as rewards for constructive activities that are
30 incompatible with crime and drug use, such as attending treatment,
31 following program guidelines, attending school and obtaining
32 employment. As is stated by a lead drug court researcher in the National
33 Drug Court Institute Benchbook (February, 2011), "failing to reward
34 accomplishments makes those accomplishments less likely to recur."
35 According to the National Center for States Courts, veterans treatment
36 courts "operate similar to other specialized courts:...rewards and sanctions
37 are appropriately applied." Similarly, according to the MacArthur
38 Foundation and the Council of State Governments Justice Center, in an
39 article entitled Mental Health Courts: A Guide to Research-Informed
40 Policy and Practice, "incentives reward adherence to the treatment plan or
41 other court conditions, motivate continued engagement, and their use,
42 paired with sanctions are considered one of the 10 Essential Elements of a

43 Mental Health Courts." According to an evaluation of the District of
44 Columbia Super Court's East of the River Community Court in 2012, the
45 program brought down rates of re-offending among misdemeanor
46 defendants.

47 6. Taxpayers benefit significantly from cost benefits generated by
48 therapeutic court programs and incentive rewards are an integral
49 component to success in the programs. Use of incentives and rewards in
50 evidence-based programs is a best practice. Use of incentives and rewards
51 contributes to successful program participant outcomes and to the
52 subsequent reduction in criminal recidivism and related cost savings to
53 citizens.

54 6. The expenditure of county funds on incentive rewards to support
55 juvenile court therapeutic programs and adult drug diversion court
56 therapeutic programs serves a fundamental government purpose. In
57 addition, incentive rewards are provided in consideration for successful
58 achievement by program participants, and not with donative intent.

59 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

60 SECTION 1. Section 2 of this ordinance should constitute a new chapter in
61 K.C.C. Title 2A.

62 NEW SECTION. SECTION 2. The district court is hereby authorized to use
63 county funds to pay for incentive rewards for participants in its therapeutic court
64 programs. The purpose of the incentive rewards shall be to recognize the achievement of
65 programmatic successes and to encourage further participation and successful outcomes.

66 The financial value of individual incentive rewards may vary depending on the program
67 and the circumstances that warrant the incentive. However, no single incentive reward
68 shall exceed twenty-five dollars, unless approved in advance in writing by the district
69 court chief administrative officer.
70

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

J. Joseph McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, _____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None