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| **Agenda Item No.:** | 4 | **Date:** | 22 April 2014 |
| **Proposed No.:** | 2014-0091 | **Prepared by:** | Nick Wagner |

**SUBJECT**

A motion acknowledging receipt of a plan for evaluating the 180 Program of the Prosecuting Attorney’s Office (PAO), the plan having been required in a proviso to the 2014 Annual Budget.

**BACKGROUND**

The PAO’s 180 Program is a pre-filing juvenile diversion program that was begun in 2011 and has continued on a temporary basis through 2012 and 2013 and into 2014. The program focuses on youth who are facing their first or second low-level misdemeanor offense. Instead of filing charges against the young offenders in Juvenile Court, the PAO invites them to participate in a half-day workshop sponsored by community members. At the workshop, youth hear from community speakers who have made their own 180 and changed the direction of their own lives. The youth also engage in small group exercises, where they talk about the issues affecting them and receive personal direction on how to make a change in their lives. If a youth completes the workshop successfully, the PAO refrains from filing charges against the youth. About 310-350 youth participate in the program each year.

The Prosecuting Attorney requested, and in the 2014 Annual Budget received, continued temporary funding at about the same level ($158,454) through 2014 “in anticipation of an outcome evaluation to better understand the impact of the program on the youth it serves.” If the evaluation is favorable, the PAO is expected to request funding for the program on a more permanent basis.

The appropriation for the PAO in the 2014 Annual Budget (Ordinance 17695) included the following proviso:

Of this appropriation, $250,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive transmits a plan for assessing the prosecuting attorney's office's 180 Program . . . .

The plan for completing an assessment of the 180 Program shall be developed jointly by the executive and the prosecuting attorney and should include, at a minimum, a description of how the assessment of the program's actual impact on delinquent behaviors will be conducted, what data will be relied upon, a timetable for the assessment and an estimate of the cost of the assessment.

**SUMMARY**

As required by the budget proviso, the Prosecuting Attorney has transmitted a plan for assessing the 180 Program, together with Proposed Motion 2014-0091, which would acknowledge receipt of the plan, thereby releasing the funds that are subject to the proviso. The proposed plan is Attachment A to the proposed motion.

The basic approach to the evaluation is described as follows in the plan (Att. 1-A, p. 2):

The lead evaluator, a PSB staff member, will examine youths’ individual trajectories in the juvenile justice system, and collectively compare youth who participated in the180 Program with a similar, matched group. The evaluator will further compare any available measures to determine the Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) impacts of the 180 Program in an effort to determine if the program is helping to reduce disparity in the juvenile justice system. Stakeholders will be interviewed to provide qualitative data that cannot easily be quantified.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This approach is consistent with an evaluation performed earlier by researchers at the University of Washington, which was based on subjective information, such as comments from the program participants. The UW evaluation had identified a “need for additional studies that use a comparison group to measure actual impact on delinquent behaviors.”

As required in the budget proviso, the assessment plan includes a description of how the assessment will be conducted, what data will be relied upon, a timetable for the assessment, and an estimate of the cost of the assessment. In general terms, the evaluation will compare the recidivism rates of program participants with the rates of a control group of youths who do not participate in the program. Details are provided in the evaluation plan (Att. 1-A, pp. 2‑3). The evaluation will be performed by PSB staff, with support from PAO staff, and is expected to be completed by September of this year at a cost of about $35,000 in county staff time.

**AMENDMENTS**

There are two proposed amendments to the motion:

Amendment 1 would:

1. Add to the motion a request that the Executive (1) complete the assessment and report in accordance with the plan and (2) transmit the report to the Council at the same time that the report is provided to the Prosecuting Attorney and the Director of Performance, Strategy, and Budget (the original budget proviso did not address those matters);
2. Replace the original Attachment A with a revised version, dated April 22, 2014, that clarifies certain language in the plan without changing its substance (except for the addition of the Council as a recipient of the assessment report). A redlined version of Attachment A, showing the proposed changes, is Attachment 4 to this staff report.

Title Amendment T1 would amend the title to conform to the changes made by Amendment 1.

**INVITED**

1. Leesa Manion, Chief of Staff, Prosecuting Attorney’s Office
2. Krista Camenzind, Criminal Justice Manager, Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget, King County Executive Office

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Motion 2014-0091

Att. A (Assessment Plan)

1. Amendment 1

Att. A (Assessment Plan dated April 22, 2014)

1. Title Amendment T1
2. Redline showing changes in Assessment Plan dated April 22, 2014
3. Transmittal letter
1. The second sentence of the quoted excerpt reflects a clarifying change requested by the plan authors. Proposed Amendment 1 would make the change. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)