

## **PROPOSED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

The Leon County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment (MHSAR) Advisory Council has identified unmet needs of the Leon County Criminal Justice Mental Health program. These needs can be addressed through the utilization of unspent grant funds from fiscal year one. The activities proposed utilizing the unexpended funds are:

### **Transition case manager (\$40,000 for two years)**

While court mental health staff is very creative in developing mental health plans that seek to link mentally ill defendants with community services, it has become very evident that the transition from incarceration to the community is sometimes hindered by the logistics involved with seamlessly implementing the mental health plan. A transition case manager would help to bridge the gaps that exist by assessing each mentally ill defendant within twenty-four (24) hours of arrest to build a rapport with the defendant and conduct a needs assessment that will assist with case disposition. The transition case manager would also assist defendants with compliance of court sanctions once released from jail. This twenty-five (25) hour a week, OPS position would work out of the Leon County Pretrial Release program and would report Leon County's Director for Probation and Pretrial Release.

### **Data entry technician (\$24,000 for two years)**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Corporation (SAMHCorp) conducted site visits for all grantees. One of the recommendations from that site visit was the need for a dedicated data entry position, as Leon County had one of the more detailed and comprehensive data designs of all grantees. This twenty (20) hour a week, OPS position would work with the Court's Mental Health Coordinator in the Office of Court Administration. This position would be dedicated to ensuring vital data for every mentally ill defendant is accurately entered into JIS in a timely manner.

### **Housing for mentally ill defendants in Leon County (\$10,000 start-up funding).**

Currently, mental health staff is referring mentally ill defendants to housing in surrounding counties to help address this need. The Leon County MHSAR Advisory Council has recommended that a portion of the unspent grant funds be used as seed money for a housing program for mentally ill defendants. It is proposed that a housing fund be established and administered by Leon County to financially assist mentally ill defendants with initial housing needs. Upon being placed in housing, mental health staff through Ability 1<sup>st</sup>, would then assist mentally ill defendants in attaining or re-establishing benefits such as Social Security and Medicaid. Once benefits have been established and the defendant receives retroactive funds, the defendant would reimburse the Leon County mental health housing fund for the amount that has been used to assist the defendant in establishing housing. This would establish a revolving fund that could be used for mentally ill defendants in the future.

### **Supplies (\$4,000 over two years)**

The Leon County reinvestment grant project managers, conducted status meetings with all established grant programs. In discussing the first year with each program, it was

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noted that all programs voiced a need for an increase in their supplies budget. Thus, it is recommended that a portion of unspent grant funds be allocated to the FSU School of Psychology, the Mental Health Pretrial Release Specialist, the Mental Health Court Case Manager, and the Community Competency Restoration Program, for supplies.