
Memo

DATE: November 17, 2023

TO: Josh Aronsen, Town Manager, Richmond VT

Todd Odit, Town Manager, Hinesburg VT

FROM: Erik Wells Town Manager, Williston VT

RE: COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER FUNDING – FISCAL YEAR 2025

Hi Josh and Todd –

The Williston Community Justice Center (WCJC) serves all our communities providing restorative services to residents. Appended to this memo is a listing of the complete services provided by the WCJC.

Since its inception the Town of Williston has provided funding to support the WCJC in addition to its primary source of funding from a Department of Corrections grant. In recent years the future of the grant funding from DOC has become uncertain, and in the forthcoming legislature session changes may occur for the future of the funding model. I have notification that the grant funding will continue for FY 25 at least. We are anticipating about \$123,000 to come from the grant down about \$20,000 from FY 24 with most of the reduction from a one-time infusion for diversity, equity and inclusion work. The Town's FY 24 budget contribution is \$52,000 plus in-kind services of space in the Police Station and overhead expenses including staff time for grant management.

In building the WCJC FY 25 budget we have identified an expense bottom line of \$195,000. After backing out the anticipated grant award it leaves \$72,000 in operating revenue required for the program. In addition, the Town's in-kind contribution for the space and overhead is valued at \$28,000. The current budget is for two full-time positions – a Director and Restorative Justice Specialist. Our former Restorative Justice Specialist left in November 2022 and we have been working with temporary staff as a bridge approach. We currently have two temporary part-time staff working through June. Our intent is to work to recruit the full-time position in the spring, as that model works the best for the operations of the WCJC. Wage and benefit cost is the driving increase year to year for the staff positions.

I'm reaching out to see if Richmond and Hinesburg would be interested in providing a FY 25 budget allocation to support the work of the WCJC. The Town of Williston is facing a nearly \$100,000 cost for the services from general fund operating costs and in-kind contributions. WCJC Director Cristalee McSweeney has been working on a weekly basis with your Police Departments and I understand the work has been beneficial in your communities.

Josh and I had a phone conversation earlier this week, and a thought is to use the population of our communities as a starting point for conversation for a possible cost

November 17, 2023

share. I have done that work below in relation to the operating and in-kind costs (one model with and one without the in-kind costs). A few years ago, the Essex Community Justice Center experienced some similar funding challenges, and has received funding from Colchester to offset some of the cost as another Town that receives services.

Williston is committed to the WCJC and I will provide programmatic funding in the FY 25 budget proposal I make. If your communities would consider any level of contribution to assist in the operating costs for the services received it would be greatly appreciated. Happy to chat more, thanks for considering this.

Possible Cost-Share Based on Population WCJC
Based on \$72,000 expense for operating costs.

Community	Population (2020 census)	Proportion Share	Cost Share
Williston	10,103	53%	\$38,160
Richmond	4,167	22%	\$15,840
Hinesburg	4,698	25%	\$18,000
TOTAL	18,968		

Possible Cost-Share Based on Population WCJC
Based on \$100,000 expense for operating and in-kind costs.

Community	Population (2020 census)	Proportion Share	Cost Share
Williston	10,103	53%	\$53,000
Richmond	4,167	22%	\$22,000
Hinesburg	4,698	25%	\$25,000
TOTAL	18,968		



What does the Williston Community Justice Center Offer?

The Restorative Justice Panel Process:

- Having the Responsible Party take ownership of the infraction
- The Responsible Party, victim(s) and community volunteers work together to make a legal contract that addresses how repair will be made to the victim, community, and to self
- Allowing the victim, responsible party, and the community to have a voice
- Our Executive Board is comprised of 9 community volunteers that oversee the long-range strategic plan to be shared with the Select Board and oversee the progress towards its goals and objectives
- Community volunteers, some of which are youth
- Collecting restitution for victim(s)
- Community Connections and Engagement

Education, Trainings, and Classes on the Following:

- Elder Bullying
- Sexting
- Social Justice Dialogue
- Racial injustice and dialogue
- Racism
- Revenge Porn
- Bullying
- Safe Driving
- Internet Safety and Cyber Civility
- Restorative Dialogue and Practices
- Restorative Circles
- Life Skill Classes
 - Living on \$2 A Day
 - Budgeting
 - Resource Networking
- Resume Building
- Employment/Housing Assistance
- Educational forums on:
 - Substance abuse and addiction
 - Restorative Parenting
 - Poverty Circles

Working in the Community:

- State and local government
- Schools
- Collaboration with Law Enforcement to address community need and injustice
- Community Organizations
- Places of Business
- Senior Housing
- Low-income Housing

Youth Leadership:

- Youth Panel
- Mentorships
- Internships
- Grad Challenge

Other:

- Mediation/ Conflict Resolution
 - Peer-to-Peer
 - Business-to-Business
 - Difficult Dialogues
- Family/ Group Conferencing
- Reparative & Restorative Panels
- Restorative Conferences
- Restorative Circles
- Peace Circles
- Volunteer Committee Work i.e. Social Justice/Community Need
 - Racial Equity Partnership
 - Housing
 - Anti-Racism work
- Book groups on Social Justice, Mental Health and Racial Justice