

City of Moorhead Victim/Witness Coordinator Proposal

Current Situation

The City of Moorhead operates with one part-time Victim/Witness Coordinator. Currently this individual also performs the duties of a legal assistant and receptionist. The coordinator oversees an average of 652 cases per year. Victim/Witness Coordinators are required to attend plea and sentencing hearings with victims involving crimes against the person.

Clay County Courts hold Domestic Violence Court every Wednesday from 9 am-noon. Victim/Witness Coordinators must also attend plea and sentencing hearing scheduled outside of Domestic Violence Court for non-domestic crimes against the person. The City's half-time position has never had time to attend court with victims with the exception of trial. It is the City's intention that a full-time equivalent position will attend all required court appearances with victims.

Additionally, Clay County has developed a drug court program. This alternative justice program is designed for youth and first-time offenders. It routes them away from the traditional justice system to reduce recidivism rates in the community.

Proposal

The City of Moorhead proposes that 75% of the allocated \$19,535 awarded JAG grant will go to partially fund the creation of a second Victim/Witness Coordinator position. The remaining 25% of the award will be allocated to Clay County to help fund their drug court program.

Projected Benefits

The City Prosecutor has requested a second Victim/Witness Coordinator to assist with the caseload, amounting to one full-time equivalent dedicated to this function. This will allow better coverage of the total caseload and will spread this demanding workload to two employees, which will allow for greater services to victims and witnesses and reduce the threat of burnout currently caused by having this important responsibility on the shoulders of a sole individual. The City of Moorhead needs a second Victim/Witness Coordinator to provide the proper level of service to its community.

Clay County projects that funding the drug court program will alleviate recidivism in the community.

If you have comments or questions about this proposal, email mike.rietz@moorheadmn.gov.