

Kane court services to get \$300K grant for probation services

By BRENDA SCHORY Published: Friday, Jan. 3, 2014

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP – Kane County Court Services will receive a \$300,000 state grant to help nonviolent offenders complete probation and not go to prison.

Kane is one of 18 grant recipients in 31 counties to receive nearly \$7 million through Adult Redeploy Illinois, administered through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Kane County Court Services Director Lisa Aust said the grant will cover the cost of hiring three more probation officers who specialize in high-risk defendants – those who are more likely to go to prison because they cannot complete the terms of their probation.

“They are missing their appointments because maybe they don’t have transportation,” Aust said. “Maybe they do not have employment, so they are not paying their fines.”

The temporary probation officers are hired only for the length of the grant, which ends June 30, Aust said, adding they hope to apply for another grant by then.

Program manager Deanna Cada, who wrote the successful grant, said the program is for adults 18 and older. The probation department has identified about 100 people in the county who would benefit from this type of intensive service.

“These are not people committing serious crimes, they are not violent offenders,” Cada said. “Somehow, they have had this stumble, this barrier to being successful, and then

they spiral downward. ... This is to have those barriers removed, so they can be successful [and] stop the downward spiral.”

Aust said keeping people out of prison benefits them and their communities.

“They’re employed, paying taxes, taking care of their kids, their families, paying rent, supporting the local economy,” Aust said. “And it’s not costing us by having to house them in prison.”

Cada said one of the things the Department of Corrections looks at in considering grant applications is the annual cost of incarceration versus how much it costs to help one person.

“It’s still more reasonable than sending somebody to the Department of Corrections,” Cada said. “We’re not keeping a hardened criminal in the community. We’re keeping people in the community who are contributing to it.”

Tom Shaer, a spokesman for the Department of Corrections, said the program already has demonstrated its impact on the criminal justice system.

“We’re still tabulating 2013, but for part of 2011 and in 2012, the 10 sites in full implementation diverted 838 nonviolent offenders – which is the equivalent of two cell blocks of a prison,” Shaer said. “It’s an average cost of \$21,500 to incarcerate an individual for a year. Of those enrolled since it began, 91 percent avoided prison altogether and did not commit another offense.”

State officials have estimated the savings at more than \$17 million in incarceration costs. Kane County State’s Attorney Joe McMahan said the county will see the benefit from the grant.

“The research has shown the people who go back to work are less likely to find themselves back in the system for reoffending,” McMahan said. “This grant will help court services work with people who are on probation. ... We’ll all see a benefit. This is great work.”
