



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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January 16, 2020

TO: Members  
Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Bob Lang, Director

SUBJECT: Corrections: Request for the Creation of 1.0 PR Permanent Quality Assurance Research Analyst Position at Taycheedah Correctional Institution -- Agenda Item VIII

### REQUEST

On December 23, 2019, the Department of Administration (DOA) submitted a request from the Department of Corrections to the Joint Committee on Finance under s. 16.515/16.505(2) for the creation of 1.0 PR full-time, permanent quality assurance research analyst position to support substance use disorder programs (SUD) at Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI). The requested position would be funded from the federal substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant, through the state's Department of Health Services. An objection was raised to this request, therefore, it is scheduled for consideration under s. 13.10 of the statutes.

### BACKGROUND

The Department of Corrections' substance use disorder programs address risky thinking and substance use that could lead to criminal behavior. According to Corrections' Opportunities and Options Resource Guide, the program mission is "to enhance the safety in the community by providing a continuum of substance abuse treatment services." As of December 31, 2018, Corrections' had 1,190 SUD program enrollments across nearly every state correctional institution, including 40 enrollments at TCI (note that the same offender may be enrolled multiple times over a period of time, or in multiple programs at the same time).

The substance use disorder programs at Taycheedah Correctional Institution provide gender-informed programming specifically designed for women in recovery. According to DOA, the goal of the program is to "empower women to make healthier life choices and remain abstinent from alcohol and drugs." Participants are assessed for a SUD diagnosis and risk of reoffending, then placed in one of the four SUD levels of group-oriented programming (ranging from a case plan intervention with a general population social worker to a more intensive 17-week (256-hour)

program). Depending on the SUD level, group components at TCI may include: Helping Women Recover (a gender-responsive substance abuse program), Connections (a shame resiliency program), Seeking Safety (a trauma and substance abuse program), Moving On (a gender-responsive cognitive behavioral program), and/or Beyond Violence (for women with histories of violence). Currently, TCI operates four SUD groups with 10 participants each (two SUD-level 3 groups and two SUD-level 4 groups). The higher-level SUD programming is necessary at TCI as female inmate populations typically have higher programming needs and programming dosage (hours of treatment and program intensity) than the male inmate population.

## **ANALYSIS**

The requested quality assurance research analyst position would focus on SUD data collection and analysis. The position would be budgeted under Corrections' Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) continuing interagency and intra-agency programs PR appropriation (s. 20.410(1)(kx)). The DAI continuing interagency and intra-agency programs appropriation is budgeted \$2,337,600 PR in 2019-20 and \$2,336,500 PR in 2020-21 for 24.50 PR positions. Continuing appropriations are expendable until fully depleted or repealed by subsequent action of the Legislature; therefore, the Department is requesting additional position authority, and does not require additional, associated funding.

The federal substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant from the Department of Health Services provides funding in DAI's interagency and intra-agency programs appropriation for SUD programming. The grant is intended to support salary expenses for treatment facilitators and contracting services to provide residential Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) groups. The grant requires staff to observe treatment facilitators and provide feedback on a quarterly basis. The grant additionally requires staff to track relapse rates, reason for relapse, and program effectiveness at three- and six-month intervals. While TCI SUD treatment staff currently track some of this data, the additional position has been requested to more effectively comply with the grant's data collection requirements and to allow treatment staff to focus on facilitating programming. For example, the 2018-19 DAI performance report, used to track program effectiveness, noted that enrolled participants were motivated for treatment (as determined by a participant survey), displayed appropriate behavior and adjustment when compared to conduct prior to program enrollment, and achieved a 75% program participant completion rate. However, the Department has been unable to compile interval-specific data or track outcomes once participants are released. The requested position would focus on the female SUD population and is intended to allow the Department to better analyze the effectiveness of gender-informed SUD programming, in addition to more fully complying with the grant requirements.

The requested 1.0 PR permanent position would be budgeted at \$81,100 PR annually (including \$46,600 PR for salary, \$22,600 PR for fringe benefits, and \$11,900 PR for supplies and services). In both 2018-19 and 2019-20, the total substance abuse prevention and treatment block grant award was \$1,347,400 in each year. This amount is used by the Division of Juvenile Corrections and the Division of Community Corrections, in addition to the Division of Adult Institutions. The TCI SUD program recently began shifting from contract providers to existing departmental staff to facilitate SUD programming in an effort to reduce contractor staffing vacancy

issues, and in turn, to provide more consistent and in-depth SUD programming and treatment. As a result, grant funding that was previously used for contractual services may be reallocated to support the requested position. Corrections has received funding from this grant for over 15 years, and, according to Corrections, "there is no indication [the grant] will not be provided in future years."

Given the grant's evidence-based data collection requirements and the availability of grant funding for the requested position, the Committee could approve the Department's request. [Alternative 1] Alternatively, the Department has not had SUD research analyst positions in the past, and has continued to receive grant funding. As such, the Committee could deny the request. [Alternative 2] If grant funding is impacted in the future, permanent staffing could be reevaluated in conjunction with the 2021-23 biennial budget process.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the request for 1.0 PR permanent quality assurance research analyst position for the Department of Corrections' substance use disorder program at Taycheedah Correctional Institution.
2. Deny the request.

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