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## Carroll Co. developing community corrections program

County advertising jobs for program director, case worker

By Ben Middelkamp For the Kokomo Tribune 13 hrs ago

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DELPHI — Carroll County is in the process of creating a community corrections program that will implement mental health and addiction service treatment for convicts needing help.

The program, now in its formative stages, will create services for those convicted in the county who don't fit the criteria for imprisonment or probation, but rather need alternative assistance, especially for combating substance abuse, Carroll County Superior Court Judge Kurtis Fouts said.

"So many of the people that we see are dealing with a life-controlling issue and that really is at the root of the criminality," Fouts said. "That's the thought at least, the hope."

The county applied for a grant through the state and will soon receive \$167,000 for a full-time director who's also a licensed clinical addiction counselor and a case manager. The need stemmed from a community advisory board, Fouts said, who determined the county could benefit from more addictions and mental health services.

Carroll County Probation Officer Justin Sheagley said the county has seen an increase in drug use and people battling addictions, specifically methamphetamine and heroin or opioid use. He said the corrections program will focus on treatment and work alongside probation.

Sheagley said recent changes in sentencing and felony laws, which has limited who can be sent to the Department of Corrections, have flooded county jails. He said the Carroll County Jail is at or exceeding capacity at any given time, and that community corrections can help alleviate that.

Pat Manahan, who's Carroll County's chief public defender, said many people who could benefit from the program suffer alcohol and substance abuse issues.

"Rather than sending someone to prison and uprooting their life and their families' lives ... [we] can provide some alternatives, that's the plan," Manahan said.

Fouts said the program will improve the chances at success and growth for those in community corrections. He added it should keep repeat offenses and recidivism at a minimum.

He's hoping the director could run an outpatient substance abuse treatment program through group sessions and individual counseling. But, those specifics will depend on who runs the program, Fouts said.

The director can also provide services to those in the jail or on probation, Fouts added. The probation officers have a heavy case load, he said, and many of those people could eventually shift to the community corrections program. Sheagley added that some inmates could also benefit from some of the additions services of the community corrections.

Fouts said he's unsure where the services will be housed, possibly at the courthouse at first. He also said the program is grant-based, so the county will have to keep relying on the state to fund the program year after year.

Despite those challenges, Fouts said he said the program has great potential to "get people turned around and put on the right track."

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