

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY PROGRAM EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

January 28, 2009

INSTRUCTIONS: For each program, list the Scheduled Review Date, the Department, the Department Mission Statement and the Program Title at the top of the page, and answer the following questions for each program. The overall response for each program must be no greater than two (2) pages in length and in Arial Font size 10.

SCHEDULED REVIEW DATE: February 16, 2009

DEPARTMENT: District Attorney

DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Sheboygan County Office of the District Attorney is to prosecute all crimes occurring within the County on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. In addition, this office is charged with prosecuting all non-criminal traffic and ordinance citations on behalf of the Wisconsin State Patrol, the Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department and the Department of Natural Resources [DNR] that occur in the County. Finally, the office is charged with prosecuting a variety of juvenile matters including delinquencies, Children/Juveniles In Need Of Protection or Services [CHIPS/JIPS], Truancies, Termination of Parental Rights [TPR], Guardianships, juvenile ordinance violations and inoculation violations.

PROGRAM: CHECK FRAUD UNIT

1. Describe the program, its purpose and goals.

The purpose of this program is to investigate and evaluate "worthless" checks issued to merchants and individuals in this County to determine if the case is appropriate for the Check Diversion Program or to prepare criminal complaints for prosecution.

The goal of this program is to provide an efficient method of reviewing the large number of worthless checks issued in this County, obtain restitution for those defrauded by this crime and, through the Check Diversion Program, to significantly lessen the number of these type of cases that are filed in court, as well as to generate revenue through that diversion program to help pay for the operation of this Unit.

The program is administered by two County part-time employees who have no benefits, assisted in the collection of the administrative fees of the diversion program by our office's support staff.

2. Who is the program intended to serve? How many are served?

This program primarily serves area merchants, but is also available to individuals defrauded by worthless checks. Approximately 80 merchants in Sheboygan County routinely use this service.

3. Are the program benefits long-lasting and essential to the service populations?

This program is very popular with merchants as it affords them an efficient way to recover their worthless check losses. If a person qualifies for the diversion program, they are given an opportunity to avoid criminal prosecution and conviction, which program generates revenue in the form of an administrative fee.

4. Is this program directly or indirectly related to or does it support any other program in this department or another department? If so, how?

This program directly supports our prosecution program as it provides an efficient and cost effective system of addressing potential criminal worthless check cases, both by the investigation and processing of these cases. The check diversion program benefits the District Attorneys department, the Clerk of Courts department and well as the Sheboygan Sheriff's department as it results in significantly lower numbers of criminal cases filed, easing the case numbers with which our courts must deal. In 2008, 172 people completed the Check Diversion Program prior to any court action.

- 5. How does this program make the department or county government more effective or efficient, including any intergovernmental relationship?**
This program has removed the investigation of worthless check cases from local law enforcement agencies including the Sheboygan Sheriff's Department, freeing them to address more serious crimes. As these investigations are now centralized in one County unit, the process has become much more efficient, cost effective and standardized.
- 6. How do you determine/measure if this program has been effectively provided and implemented?**
By feedback from merchants who are very pleased with the program and our office notes over a five year period, an annual average of \$58,754.15 returned to merchants and \$14,787.79 revenue to the County generated by the diversion fee. To date, this program has returned in excess of a total of \$358,800 to area merchants, and has collected county revenue through its fees in the total amount of more than \$74,000.
- 7. Could the county cost-effectively subcontract this program?** No
- 8. State the numerical ranking of this program compared to all discretionary programs in your department and briefly explain.**
This program is the only discretionary program in our department.
- 9. Are there current alternatives to this program available in the community? Can this program be provided through alternative arrangements with other providers?** No
- 10. If this program were eliminated, what would be the ramifications for the County (i.e., added risk, liability or legal issues)?**
The elimination of this program would result in returning the investigation of worthless checks back to our county law enforcement agencies including the Sheboygan Sheriff's Department. In addition, our office's only recourse would be to issue criminal complaints in court as we could not administer the diversion program.
- 11. What is the program impact and effectiveness related to the program cost? (Provide data if available.)**
The check diversion program over a five year period from 2004 through 2008 generated revenue from administrative fees in the amount of \$73,907.95, which represents 86% of this program's total costs including salaries. The average Tax Levy over a five year period was \$2.278.45 per year.
- 12. Is this program currently duplicated by another county department or provider in the community?** No
- 13. What adjustment or plan of action would you implement if funding is reduced?**
If the budgeted \$2,889 in levy is reduced for the year of 2009, the hours of the Check Fraud Unit Investigators would need to be reduced therefore resulting in reduction of revenue.