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County attorney buys into YCSO's 'Reach Out' program



Yavapai County Attorney Sheila Polk

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Yavapai County Attorney Sheila Polk has chosen to provide the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with \$224,290 to help launch its Reach Out program as soon as possible. The money has been appropriated by the state legislature to the county attorney's office specifically for pre-trial diversion programs.

Reach Out is a project initiated under the leadership of Sheriff Scott Mascher and his Chief Deputy, David Rhodes. The goal of the initiative is to create a road to recovery outside of incarceration by providing service linkage for inmates of the county jail to appropriate behavioral health and substance abuse treatment at the earliest possible moment in the criminal justice system.

"Reach Out is the most visionary program I have seen in my 35 years working in the criminal justice system in Arizona," Polk said. "Most of what we have historically done is to provide back-end services to defendants. Reach Out is ground-breaking in that the link to services will be made upon the system's first contact with an offender."

Detention facility release coordinators will screen inmates suffering from mental illness, substance abuse and/or a co-occurring disorder to determine history of substance use and mental illness, willingness for treatment and severity of charges. From there, the coordinators will link the inmate to partners throughout the county who can provide appropriate treatment to qualifying individuals.

Late last year, Chief David Rhodes obtained a \$250,000 federal Department Of Justice grant to initiate the Reach Out program.

“The goal of this program is to reduce the burden on the criminal justice system, in turn reducing overall costs with better outcomes and a safer community,” Rhodes said.

Once started this month, the program will be vigorously evaluated to determine whether or not this new way of doing business is a success, Rhodes said.

Information provided by the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office.



Chief Deputy David Rhodes, Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

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