



Northwest Kansas Community Corrections

1011 Fort Street -- Hays, Kansas 67601
Telephone: (785) 625-9192 -- Fax: (785) 625-9194

Testimony in Support of KCCA's Funding Request

October 26, 2021

Chairman Jennings and Members of the Joint Committee,

My name is Erin Geist, and I am the Director of Northwest Kansas Community Corrections. I come here today in support of the Kansas Community Corrections Associations efforts to secure additional funding.

Our office covers 17 counties which make up three Judicial Districts (15th, 17th, & 23rd) in the northwest corner of the State for a total of 16,194 square miles. These 17 counties are rural communities with limited to no treatment options or resources. In addition to our large geographical area, we are the only community corrections office that contracts with The Department of Corrections to provide parole and post release supervision. Our parole and post release client's make up approximately one third of our client population.

Covering 17 counties presents several challenges. We do our best to meet client's where they're at which requires a significant amount of travel time for our Intensive Supervision Officers (ISO's), especially those who cover the 15th and 17th Judicial Districts. Our officer in the 17th Judicial District is based out of Norton, Kansas, he may drive three hours round trip to make contact with just one or two clients who reside in Osborne County. With contact standards for community corrections and parole, this same officer may be required to make 150 contacts in one month. This wouldn't be an issue if he never had to leave his office and all of his clients were reporting to him but 85% of his contacts are made in the field which takes a considerable amount of time when traveling through several counties to make contacts. In FY21, 69% of our agency milage was from the three officers covering the 15th and 17th Judicial Districts. For FY22, we budgeted \$24,000 for fuel and vehicle maintenance.

Our limited budget also provides a challenge for us as an agency. The funds we receive through our parole contract and our community corrections budget funded by the Kansas Department of Corrections is barely enough to cover salary and benefits for our 11 staff members and basic agency operations. Limited funding and rural communities also present employment difficulties, not just for our client's but also for our agency. Finding qualified applicants in our area, especially in the 15th & 17th Judicial Districts, has been a challenge for several years. We are lucky to get one or two applicants, if any, when advertising for positions in these areas. We must be able to compete and compensate employees appropriately if we hope to retain current staff and draw qualified applicants to fill vacant positions. At this time, we simply do not have the funds available to compete and I fear community corrections will continue to lose valuable employees if we do not secure additional funding.

Norton Satellite Office
P. O. Box 70
Norton, Kansas 67654
Telephone: (785) 623-3706

Colby Satellite Office
275 N. Court Ave.
Colby, Kansas 67701
Telephone: (785) 460-3842