

Department of Justice and Consumer Services

- **Office of Consumer Protection**

- Protects consumers against economic losses resulting from unethical or illegal business practices through mediation, investigation, regulatory enforcement and education.

- **Office of Justice Coordination**

- Administers justice system funding, contracts, grants and programs to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of justice system services.
- Conducts analysis and research on justice issues to preserve county resources.

Overview of Reductions

- Key FY10 reductions

Elimination of 2 positions within Consumer Protection (11% position reduction in FY10, 20% overall position reduction).

Elimination of 1 manager position within Justice Coordination (17% position reduction).

Reduction of several mandated and non-mandated programs supported by the Board of County Commissioners including Regional Conflict Counsel, Guardian Ad Litem, Reentry, Help-A-Child, Drug Court, and Turning Point.

Key Programs & Service Levels

● **Consumer Protection**

○ **Sixteen (16) positions.**

- **FY10 caseload is tracking at 1900 new cases.**
 - 5% of caseload are criminal investigations requiring subpoenas, bank records, and Court preparation.
- **Licensure of Adult Use Establishments and Bingo Halls.**
- **Oversight of charity, fortunetelling, moving, towing and price gouging ordinances.**
- **Annually assist over 20,000 citizens through phone inquiry, walk-ins, and business checks.**
- **Perform 150-200 speeches, telephone conferences, field visits, and informal hearings.**

Key Programs & Service Levels

- **Justice Coordination Service Levels**

- **Five (5) positions**

- **Administration of justice programs totaling \$12 million.**

- **Core Service Areas: 16.2%**
 - **Mandated Programs: 52.9%**
 - **Non-Mandated Programs: 6.1%**
 - **Grants: 24.8%**

- **Administration of over 60 justice system contracts and agreements.**

- **Administration of grants totaling \$3 million for 19 programs.**

- **Internal service functions for due diligence, cremation and autopsy fees, and livescan fingerprinting through FDLE.**

- **Perform project research, coordination and planning such as:**

- **Justice Process Study Implementation**
 - **DNA**
 - **Chronic offender analysis**

Impacts to the Public

- **FY10 reductions coupled with caseload levels, requires prioritization and thresholds.**
- **Consumer Protection case priorities.**
 - **Local consumers.**
 - **Impacts to tourism.**
- **Local business concerns, not directly impacting local consumers or tourism, receive lowest priority.**
 - **Possible impact to approximately 25% of complaints from queuing delays of close to 1 month.**
 - **Have seen several instances of upset, out-of-state consumers contacting the County.**
- **Selectively assess and target new emerging complaint concerns to reduce victimization.**

Impacts to the Public

- **Justice Coordination has prioritized and rescheduled several projects.**
 - Law enforcement data sharing is being shifted to regional effort.
 - More effort required of local law enforcement agencies.
 - Projects postponed and rescheduled
 - Example: Planned updates to minor chronic offender analysis and alternatives to incarceration research are delayed 6 months to ensure youth detention disputes and 2 earmarks meet deadlines.
 - Justice Process Study recommendations will take longer to implement, however, they are moving forward.
- **Drug Court, Help A Child, Turning Point, and Reentry each have a reduction in service levels funded by Pinellas County.**
 - Federal funding has helped to offset many immediate impacts.

Operational Changes

- **Consumer Protection**

- **Changed workflows and prioritization for complaint intake process.**
- **Established preliminary triage to resolve a percentage of cases prior to formal assignment and investigation.**
 - **In initial 4 months, triage calls were successful in resolving 59 cases without secondary investigator assignment.**
 - Received \$32,000 in refunds or an average of \$500 per complaint.
- **Federal Grant established Foreclosure Fraud Task Force.**

Operational Changes

● Justice Coordination

- Reporting alignment changed with elimination of manager position.
- Aggressively pursuing grant funding sources as a higher priority to help maintain alternatives within the justice system.
- Emphasis on cross-program coordination (ie: drug court and reentry, etc) to help programs offset impacts and maximize successful outcomes.
- Aggressively pursuing juvenile justice reforms to reduce large county mandate within department budget.

Unintended Consequences

○ Justice Coordination

- Grants to reduce justice system impacts have created greater workload for Justice Coordination.
- Greater number of requests to partner, submit, and administer grants for reentry, juvenile justice, diversion, drug court, etc.
- New requirements, federal delays, & fragmented federal approach has also created significant impact.
- This has created additional operational impacts and greater importance on prioritizing and scheduling activities.

Challenges & Lessons Learned

- **Consumer Protection**

- *Challenge to continue to monitor and address caseload trends for FY10.*

- **Justice Coordination**

- *Challenge to continue to work through and streamline grant processes.*
- *Challenge to maintain viable alternative programming.*