

Media Release

Superior Court of Fulton County

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Superior Court Awarded \$2M Grant from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)



August 9, 2018, Atlanta, GA— The Superior Court of Fulton County is excited to announce a recent award of a \$2 million dollar grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement the Fulton County Peer Recovery Support Services Expansion Project. The expansion project is a collaboration with the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse, who will train Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist (CARES Peer Mentors) to help increase referrals and retention in the Accountability Courts. CARES Peer Mentors are individuals with real lived experience in the criminal justice system, including co-occurring substance abuse use and/or mental disorder, with proven success in recovery.

The project aims to expand services to adult felony offenders through the introduction of Peer Recovery Support Services provided by the CARES Peer Mentors at the earliest point of eligibility. Essentially, each client will receive an active and engaged accountability coach who will assist them in accepting the program and ensuring they are well prepared for the experience set forth for them over the next 18 to 24 months. Peer support and recovery services will be offered for the duration of the program with the first point of contact being initiated when a defendant is referred and/or identified while incarcerated and pending adjudication. More importantly, participants will be provided new opportunities for vocational training, job placement, and comprehensive GED training and testing to increase educational attainment through partnerships with the Goodwill of North Georgia and Atlanta Technical College.

To ensure that key performance indicators are met, project evaluation will be completed through a partnership with Applied Research Services, an Atlanta-based firm who has conducted research and evaluation throughout the country for Accountability Courts. The five-year funding initiative (\$400,000 annually) aligns with the County's Strategic Priority area "All People Are Safe and is expected to increase program retention for defendants and reduce the recidivism rate for graduates. The Court appreciates the work of all of the Accountability Court Judges to include Judge Downs, Judge McBurney, Judge Newkirk,

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YOLANDA L. LEWIS, DISTRICT COURT ADMINISTRATOR

and Judge Ellerbe. This grant opportunity was recommended and supported by now-retired Superior Court Judge Alford J. Dempsey during his tenure as an Accountability Court Judge. Special thanks and kudos are also due to the Superior Court's Planning and Development Division and Accountability Court Team for pulling a multi-million dollar grant together in less than 30 days!