

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF

Memorandum

To: Deputy Chief Jarrod Millsaps
CC: Sheriff James Lee Berrong, Chief Deputy Jeff French
From: Deputy Chief Chris Cantrell
Date: April 30, 2018
Re: New Position

I would like to request the creation of a new position for the Blount County Sheriff's Office. The position is a Criminal Justice/Mental Health Coordinator.

Currently the Sheriff's Office receives this type of service through a grant position but it's shared with other jurisdictions. Over the past few months our Coordinator has been pulled from our facility to spend more time in other correctional facilities. The need for the services that can be offered by the Coordinator has not declined in our facility. This position will work closely with the DA's office, Public Defenders Office and Private Counsel in assisting with release plans for inmates who have drug or mental health issues. This position will also assist in early identification of persons with mental illness.

The level of service we are currently receiving from the grant position is not appropriate based of the needs we have. A full time position that works for the Sheriff's Office will greatly assist in helping those with drug or mental health issues find appropriate placement and follow up.

Criminal Justice/Mental Health Liaison Job Description:

The objective of the Criminal Justice/Mental Health Liaison is to reduce the number of adults with mental illness or substance abuse disorders in the jail. Responsibilities include but are not limited to; communication with the criminal justice and mental health systems, the coordination of inmate drug and mental evaluations, communication with the jail medical staff on appropriate medications or dealings with Mobile Crisis, and to provide a release plan to Court. Release plans often consist of follow up medication appointments, substance abuse placements and mental health follow up appointments. Services provided by the Criminal Justice/Mental Health Liaison are provided at all levels of the criminal justice process. These include early identification of persons with mental illness, diversion, continuity of care while incarcerated and consultation with the court regarding a course of action. In addition to services provided for inmates in the facility, the Criminal Justice/Mental Health Liaison will also provide training to deputies on mental health conditions, de-escalation, suicide prevention, and other related subjects.

OFFICE OF THE
Public Defender



DISTRICT PUBLIC DEFENDER:
Mack Garner

ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDERS:
Stacey D. Nordquist
Shawn G. Graham
George H. Waters
Tiffany L. Kourofsky
J. Matthew Elrod
Candace R. Garner

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

419 High Street
Maryville, Tennessee 37804

Office: (865) 981-2395
Fax: (865) 981-5280

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:
Jeannine Wells
Connie Loy

April 23, 2018

Honorable Ed Mitchell
Blount County Mayor

Blount County Commissioners

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter is in support of the Sheriff's request to create the position of Blount County Criminal Justice Coordinator. As I understand it, the duties of this position would be to oversee the mental and physical health of prisoners being housed in the Blount County Jail and the placement in appropriate treatment facilities for such of them as need mental health or substance abuse treatment.

This position is urgently needed. Jail overcrowding has become a nationwide problem which is making itself felt locally. The epidemic of opioid addiction has added significantly to the number of inmates, not to mention the lack of residential facilities for housing those with mental health problems. These circumstances are costing the county significant amounts of money annually in an effort to deal with these problems in our local detention facility when they could be more cheaply and efficiently dealt with in other ways.

More and more, judges are attempting to find placements for many of these inmates in mental health facilities, inpatient drug treatment facilities, and outpatient drug treatment programs. These placements, however, are often delayed by weeks or even months because of the lack of expertise on the part of attorneys and prosecutors in these fields. These unnecessary periods of incarceration, in addition to being unpleasant for the inmate, cost Blount County significant sums of money. A Criminal Justice Coordinator who is familiar with all the possible placement options would expedite these procedures immensely.

The Blount County Recovery Court has shown how effective such remedial measures can be for those who are appropriate participants. Many offenders, however, are not eligible for the Recovery Court, either because they have serious mental health problems, they have committed only minor offenses, or they have disqualifying prior offenses. This position could address treatment for many of those offenders at a fraction of the cost that the county would expend on incarceration.

I strongly support the creation of this position and will be happy to answer any questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mack Garner".

Mack Garner
District 5 Public Defender

OFFICE OF THE
Public Defender



DISTRICT PUBLIC DEFENDER:
Mack Garner

Office: (865) 981-2395
Fax: (865) 981-5280

ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDERS:
Stacey D. Nordquist
Shawn G. Graham
George H. Waters
Tiffany L. Kourofsky
J. Matthew Elrod
Candace R. Garner

STATE OF TENNESSEE
FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

419 High Street
Maryville, Tennessee 37804

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:
Jeannine Wells
Connie Loy

April 23, 2018

Our signatures below indicate our support of Mack Garner's recommendation of a full-time Criminal Justice Coordinator for Blount County.

Stacey D. Nordquist
Assistant District Public Defender

George H. Waters
Assistant District Public Defender

Shawn G. Graham
Assistant District Public Defender

Tiffany L. Kourofsky
Assistant District Public Defender

J. Matthew Elrod
Assistant District Public Defender

Candace R. Garner
Assistant District Public Defender

Jeannine S. Wells
Office Manager

Connie S. Loy
Legal Secretary