

Boise County Receives Final Restorative Justice Officer Grant Award

On June 27, 2017, the Boise County Board of Commissioners accepted three Millennium Fund grant awards totaling \$59,781 for state fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018). These grants have provided a large portion of the funding for the Restorative Justice Officer positions, more commonly known as School Resource Officers, for the school districts in the county. The purpose of the grants are to provide restorative justice interventions for youth ages 10-17 who have committed a tobacco, alcohol, or drug related offense at school. Restorative Justice Officers are Deputy Robert Hastie for Horseshoe Bend and Garden Valley, and Sergeant John Archer for Idaho City. These grants have been written by Boise County Community Justice in partnership with the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, Boise County Sheriff's Office, and the three school districts—Garden Valley #71, Basin #72, and Horseshoe Bend #73.

What are Restorative Justice Officers?

Restorative Justice Officers (RJOs) are uniformed sheriff deputies whose offices are in the schools. They address issues using by restorative practices—informal and formal processes that emphasize repairing the harm done to people and relationships. They also do preventative work such as facilitating character building circles or giving educational presentations based on trending at-risk behaviors. RJOs follow-up on delinquent behaviors of students reported over the weekends, they work to obtain resources for students and families, and provide increased safety in the schools and communities in which they work. As summarized by Horseshoe Bend School District Superintendent Dennis Chestnut, "The RJO program has been extremely valuable for our school district. Officer Hastie has developed positive relationships with students, faculty, and families in our community. He has worked with students in the classroom, mediated student conflict, and has applied restorative practices system-wide. We are fortunate to have this program."

What is the future of the RJO programs?

The first Millennium Fund grant award was in 2014 for the program in Idaho City. In 2015, awards were granted to start programs in Garden Valley and Horseshoe Bend. The majority of the grant funding is for personnel (20 hours a week for each district). The maximum funding allocation has decreased each year by 15% and that amount has been absorbed by the Boise County Sheriff's Office. The Basin School District contributes a large portion of the RJO's wages through a levy and has the only full time RJO in the county. Garden Valley School District has previously made a contribution for the program. The future of the programs is uncertain because this is the final year the Millennium Fund will be available. The Boise County Sheriff's Office will be seeking alternative funding sources through partnerships with the schools (similar to the Basin School District) and the Boise County Commission.

For additional information on the Millennium Fund grants or the RJO programs, please contact Amanda Leader, Director of Boise County Community Justice, at aleader@co.boise.id.us or (208)392-6767.