



TO: Hyun Kim, City Manager
FROM: Emily Embury, Therapeutic Courts Coordinator
Michelle Petrich, Court Administrator
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution – Therapeutic Court Funding Acceptance – July 21, 2026
DATE: July 6, 2026

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

A resolution to accept funding to support Tacoma Municipal therapeutic court operations. This resolution would allow Tacoma Municipal Court to enter an agreement with Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts, for reimbursement-based funding in the amount of \$344,243.32 from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027 and on an ongoing basis for annual funding awards thereafter.

BACKGROUND:

This department's recommendation is based on the need to maintain the operation of Tacoma Municipal Court's therapeutic court program, which connects justice-involved individuals to community resources, such as mental health and substance use disorder treatment, housing assistance, employment/education assistance, and more. The goal of therapeutic courts is to help individuals resolve the root causes that may have led to their criminal offenses and prevent them from returning to the criminal-legal system in the future.

Tacoma Municipal's therapeutic courts have been primarily funded by grants through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) since 2021. This funding reimburses the operational cost of therapeutic courts, including staff salaries/benefits, equipment and training costs, and direct client supports (such as treatment services, transportation assistance, and more.)

AOC offers therapeutic court funding to courts of limited jurisdiction across the state on an annual recurring basis, but requires that courts re-apply every year to continue receiving funds. This resolution would allow Tacoma Municipal Court to enter into an agreement with AOC for the next state fiscal year 2027 and all subsequent years that state therapeutic court funding remains available.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:

This resolution will allow Tacoma Municipal Court to continue to serve justice-involved individuals in need of supportive community resources. The court routinely meets with program participants, court stakeholders, and community members to solicit feedback on the program and to shape future program development.

2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Equity and Accessibility:

Therapeutic courts place a strong emphasis on reducing inequities and disparities in the justice system by providing program participants with equitable access to treatment services and other needed community services.

Livability: Equity Index Score: High Opportunity

Improve access and proximity by residents to diverse income levels and race/ethnicity to community facilities, services, infrastructure, and employment.

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.



Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).

This resolution broadens access to support services in the criminal-legal system, while also reducing recidivism and increasing public safety.

ALTERNATIVES:

Presumably, your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives or actions that City Council or staff could take. Please use table below.

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Declining state Therapeutic Court funds	The city would not take on the administrative burden of managing grant funds.	a) The city would forgo \$344,243.32 in state funding. b) The city would need to absorb the cost of therapeutic court operations to prevent the program from closing. c) If the therapeutic court program were to close, then justice-involved individuals in Tacoma would lose access to valuable support services.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:

Administrative Office of the Courts requires therapeutic courts who receive this funding to regularly track and report on program referrals, enrollments, and completion rates to monitor client engagement and success.

STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:

Tacoma Municipal Court recommends the adoption of the resolution to accept state therapeutic court funding.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Please provide a short summary of the fiscal impacts associated with the grant, agreement, policy action, or other action.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. 1020-GRNT: Municipal Court Grant Fund	GRT-00157-08	4334101	344,243.32
TOTAL			344,243.32



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

What Funding is being used to support the expense?

2027 WASHINGTON STATE COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION THERAPEUTIC COURT FUNDING

Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium's current budget?

YES

Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?

YES

Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?

YES

Will the legislation change the City's FTE/personnel counts?

YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW

This agreement would provide funding to maintain 2 Therapeutic Court FTEs.