



**Court Services**  
454 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066



To: County Commissioners  
Scott Arneson

From: Rhonda VanSchoonhoven  
Court Services Director

Goodhue County Court Services is applying for the Restorative Practices Initiative Grant through the MN Department of Children, Youth and Families, Office of Restorative Practices Division. The request will be made for \$123,515. The application is due 12/19/2025. The grant will be from March 1, 2026-June 30, 2027.

### **Executive Summary:**

Goodhue County Court Services seeks funding to build the internal system infrastructure required to implement restorative practices consistently and sustainably across the juvenile justice system. This proposal supports the creation of a Restorative Practices Systems Coordinator, a newly identified need that emerged during the implementation of the current restorative practices grant. Through that work, Court Services identified gaps in policies, referral pathways, data systems, staff training, and cross-department coordination. Establishing this role will allow the county to address these barriers and integrate restorative practices into daily probation operations, diversion decisions, and youth support processes.

The project is designed to strengthen prevention, intervention, and accountability by embedding restorative approaches in schools, neighborhoods, social services, health settings, and criminal justice environments. This will allow conflicts to be addressed early, reduce youth involvement in the justice system, and create a more coordinated countywide response aligned with restorative values.

Court Services demonstrates extensive familiarity with the project elements through decades of juvenile justice experience, its foundational role in creating community youth services in Goodhue County, and current partnerships with RiseUp Partnership, The Loop Consulting Collective, and i3 Works. The proposed project expands upon existing restorative strategies by adding the infrastructure needed to sustain and scale implementation. This expansion is necessary because the current program cannot meet demand for coordinated responses without a dedicated internal role to manage policies, training, data, and system alignment.

### **Description of the Applicant Organization**

Goodhue County Court Services provides probation, parole, and investigatory services for adults and juveniles involved in the court system. The office administers evidence-based, culturally responsive programming grounded in the fair and impartial administration of justice. Current major programs include the Remote Electronic Alcohol Monitor (REAM) grant for adult



**Court Services**  
454 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066



offenders, the OJP Community Crime Prevention and Intervention Grant for multi-systemic therapy for justice-involved youth, and the NHTSA Supplemental Ignition Interlock Grant.

Court Services serves youth and adults across all of Goodhue County, collaborating regularly with schools, social services, law enforcement, health agencies, and RiseUp Partnership. The office works closely with hundreds of youth each year through probation supervision, pre-sentence investigations, and community-based interventions. Staff bring significant professional experience in juvenile justice, trauma-informed practice, crisis response, de-escalation, and collaborative case planning.

The department has demonstrated strong capacity for program administration, data management, and cross-sector coordination. Court Services played a foundational role in the creation of Red Wing Youth Outreach (now RiseUp Partnership) over 30 years ago and continues to collaborate with the nonprofit on youth support and prevention activities. RiseUp's current management of multiple state and federal grants, including Education Partnerships Coalition, Youth Interventions Program, and Community Crime Prevention and Intervention, strengthens the county's restorative ecosystem through data systems, financial oversight, staff training, and community partnership.

Court Services is well positioned to provide the services outlined in this RFP due to its long-standing role in the juvenile justice system, history of effective collaboration, and experience implementing evidence-based programming. Staff strengths include crisis management, culturally responsive communication, community engagement, restorative approaches, and cross-agency systems planning.

Court Services leadership and staff reflect deep ties to the community, many having lived or worked in Goodhue County for decades. The office has strong partnerships with county schools, social service agencies, tribal representatives, public health, and local nonprofits. Its staff recruitment and retention practices emphasize trauma-informed training, cultural responsiveness, mentorship, and ongoing professional development to strengthen rapport with diverse youth and families.

### **Description of Target Population**

Goodhue County's youth face significant and well-documented challenges, including unmet mental health needs, lack of supportive adults, housing and economic instability, absence of safe community spaces, and disproportionate rates of school disconnection. Assessments conducted between 2022 and 2023 identified that:

- 56% of youth identify mental health as their primary concern.
- 49% have experienced at least one ACE; 8% have four or more.
- Youth of color face higher rates of food insecurity, mental health concerns, and reduced access to supportive adults.



**Court Services**  
454 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066



- Nearly 20% of students in the district are youth of color.
- LGBTQ+ youth report particularly low levels of family and community support.
- Youth report feeling unsafe in public spaces and school hallways.

The target population for this project includes youth involved in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, along with the schools, families, and service systems that support them. The project specifically benefits populations experiencing disparities, including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, and youth from lower-income households, who are overrepresented in juvenile justice and face compounded barriers.

The new role will support prevention and intervention efforts in schools, neighborhoods, social services, health settings, and criminal justice environments. Outreach will occur through schools, law enforcement, social services, community referrals, and existing Court Services pathways. Staff will apply culturally responsive, trauma-informed communication strategies to ensure equitable access. Collaborations with RiseUp Partnership, school counselors, public health, and The Loop Consulting Collective will support outreach, referrals, and ongoing communication loops.

This project will have local and regional impact, serving low- and moderate-income youth and families across Goodhue County. By strengthening internal systems, improving referral consistency, and promoting restorative pathways, the project will reduce recidivism risk, strengthen youth coping skills and accountability, and deepen youth/family engagement with protective resources.

Positive impacts include access to diversion and expanded access to earlier intervention, clearer system navigation, increased safety, stronger family support, and greater alignment among agencies serving youth.

Court Services will be hiring a Restorative Practices Coordinator on a contract basis if this grant is awarded.