



Legislation Text

File #: 1642-2024, **Version:** 1

This ordinance authorizes the City Clerk to enter into a grant agreement with The Ohio State University in support of the Opportunity Port program operated by the Drug Enforcement and Policy Center (DEPC), housed at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University.

Opportunity Port is an online tool that connects justice-involved persons in Franklin County with limited-scope legal service providers who assist with the record sealing and expungement application process. Opportunity Port operations are fully remote and full service-the service providers leverage the Franklin County courts' e-filing systems to submit applications and pay for the filing fee. The DEPC is both a service provider and the Opportunity Port program manager.

In just six months of 2023, DEPC directly assisted 185 users with completing and filing applications for record sealing and/or expungement. 63 additional users were screened and were eligible, but have yet to schedule an appointment with the staff attorney. 37 additional users were found not eligible after screening.

This grant agreement will support a portion of DEPC personnel expenses as well as filing fees for Opportunity Port users assisted by the Franklin County service providers.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funding for this grant agreement is available within the Job Growth subfund.

To authorize the City Clerk to enter into a grant agreement with The Ohio State University in support of the Opportunity Port program operated by the Drug Enforcement and Policy Center; and to authorize an appropriation and expenditure within the Job Growth subfund. (\$120,000.00)

WHEREAS, the existence of criminal records hinders the equitable growth and success of Columbus as a whole; and

WHEREAS, one in three American adults has a criminal record that will appear on a routine background check, the effect of which disproportionately impacts people of color and lower-income individuals; and

WHEREAS, according to a University of Michigan study, record sealing has been shown to increase an individual's earnings by 25% along with other positive impacts; and

WHEREAS, Opportunity Port is an online tool that connects justice-involved persons with limited-scope legal service providers who assist with the record sealing and expungement application process; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the City Clerk to enter into a grant agreement with The Ohio State University in support of the Opportunity Port program; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the City Clerk is hereby authorized to enter into a grant agreement with The Ohio State University in support of the Drug Enforcement and Policy Center (DEPC) and the Center's Opportunity Port program, in an amount not to exceed \$120,000.00.

SECTION 2. That the City Auditor is hereby authorized and directed to appropriate \$120,000.00 in the Job Growth subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100015, to the City Clerk per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 3. That the expenditure of \$120,000.00 or so much thereof as may be needed pursuant to the action authorized in SECTION 1 of this ordinance, is hereby authorized in the Job Growth subfund, fund 1000, subfund 100015 per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2024 may be reimbursed.

SECTION 5. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 6. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 7. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.