Teen Court provides sanctions and clinical services to provide accountability and resources to young people up to the age of 18 who have been issued a civil citation for a misdemeanor offense in lieu of being arrested. From 2016 to 2019, referrals increased from 351 to 696 youth referred, a 68% increase in the number of referrals received by Teen Court. However, there has not been an increase in funding to provide additional case managers to oversee the cases. Based upon current trends, there will be an annual estimated increase in referrals of 35 youth. The $140,000 being requested will fund two full-time case managers and one part-time case manager. Any remaining funds will be used to purchase sessions of specialized counseling modalities.

Case Managers are a critical component of the Teen Court Program. The primary function of the position is to provide oversight to the youth in the program. The Case Managers are the first line of contact with the youth and families and serve as a continuous source of guidance, support, encouragement and structure as the families proceed through the program. In addition to other duties, the Case Managers are responsible for conducting intake and assessment, formulating contracts, providing clinical referrals, maintaining weekly contact with youth and families, working with families and youth to overcome obstacles and maintaining all youth documentation.

Specifically:

* Additional Case Managers will allow the program to operate at a higher capacity. Based on the current trends, anticipated referrals will increase by approximately 35 youths this year.
* Existing Case Managers will have reduced caseloads of youths and be able to provide more intensive case management allowing them to have more frequent interactions with the youth and better oversight. This will directly impact positive outcomes for the youth. Currently, each Case Manager has approximately 63 youth to oversee. The additional positions will allow Case Managers to maintain a caseload of approximately 40 youths each. Currently the U.S. Children’s Bureau and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency endorse a 35 case standard.
* Additional funding for counseling services will allow the program to expand the use of Family Coaching services and Psychosexual Counseling. Both of these modalities are expensive and specialized to address the needs of some of the most high risk youth in the program.
* Cost savings estimates of issuing a civil citation rather than an arrest range from $1,467 on the low end to $4,614 per pre-arrest diversion.

According to a study conducted by the Caruther’s Institute in 2018, high utilization of civil citations in Duval County drastically reduced racial disparity in the arrests of black youth. The current program demographics of Duval County Teen Court are: 66% black, 27% white, 7% other race and 57% male, 43% female.