

Resource: “Homeless Court” Restorative Justice Program

“Operation Welcome Home” is the group you apply through at the contacts below

Phone: 608-358-9993

e-mail operationwelcomehome@gmail.com

Homeless Restorative Justice Project

The Homeless Restorative Justice Project is a collaborative effort between Operation Welcome Home, The Dane County Timebank, YWCA, Community Justice Inc, Brenda Konkel, Heidi Wegleitner, Judge Koval and Adriana Peguero from the City Attorney’s office.

The goals of the project are:

- 1) **For homeless people to have municipal tickets they cannot pay reduced or eliminated from their record through a restorative process as a way to eliminate barriers to future success.**
- 2) For homeless or recently homeless people to identify and achieve goals they decide to pursue such as of securing housing, sobriety, source of income, family connections or other goals to improving their life situation.
- 3) For all involved to develop policy, culture and enforcement recommendations to shift away from the criminalization of homelessness.

Criteria

We are looking for people who have over \$2000 in unpaid municipal tickets related to being homeless (trespassing, public urination, public intoxication, etc) and who are: 1) currently homeless, or 2) who have been chronically homeless and have recently gained access to transitional housing or permanent housing. The candidate must be ready to get support for improving their situation. At this point the group is able to take on about 3 people every 3 months. Having a current case manager is helpful, but not necessary.

Process:

1. Make a referral or apply to the project partners through Operation Welcome Home (OWH), or fill out the online form, call 608-358-9993 or e-mail operationwelcomehome@gmail.com
2. We will set up a meeting to discuss the applicant’s possibility of being in the program
3. A circle process led by the YWCA, Timebank and OWH with other community partners will take place to hear from the participant, agree on goals and requirements for the participant, and discuss follow up support needed and who will provide that support.
4. The participant will have a point person to check in with regularly.
5. An official agreement is made with the City Attorney for the length of time and the amount of tickets reduced at each step.
6. At certain intervals we will hold a follow up circle to check in with how the participant is doing, and any changes that need to be made.
7. At the end of the process Judge Koval will make final determinations of the deductions and remaining fine amounts on their cases.
8. A closing circle will be held to asses the process, discuss new goals for the participant, discuss ways to change policies and practices to decrease the criminalization of homelessness, and agree on any support that is needed and available moving forward.