



May 25, 2022

Contact: Claire Crouch
Dallas County District Attorney's Office
214-653-3600 (Office)
Claire.Crouch@DallasCounty.org

For Immediate Release: Dallas County DA's Office Receives Grant to Support Transportation Access for Youthful Offenders

(Dallas, Texas) – Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot is proud to announce the Dallas County District Attorney's Office has received a grant in the amount of \$10,750 from the Texas Bar Foundation to implement Transportation Access for Youthful Offenders.

"We are so thankful to the Texas Bar Foundation for this grant that will aid in continuing powerful work in Dallas County. This money will go directly into the future of our communities, ensuring we break the cycle of recidivism and drive down costs for taxpayers in the process," said Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot.

The Transportation Access for Youthful Offenders project is seeking to help close short-term transportation gaps for individuals assigned to the AIM (Achieve Inspire Motivate) Drug Court.

AIM was established in February 2016 by the Dallas County District Attorney's Office and is a pre-adjudication diversion program for first-time felony offenders aged 18-24. A study by the SMU Meadows Mental Health Institute found a 74% reduction in recidivism among AIM Court participants vs. Probationers and a cost savings of \$6.86 for every \$1 invested in AIM Court vs. probation.

A Personal Experience

Quincy Chambers, an AIM graduate, knows first-hand how much the program can change a life.

"AIM was a reality check," said Chambers, now 22-years-old.

Chambers was arrested when he was 17 for evading arrest in a motor vehicle. After completing the AIM Program, he got his record expunged and is now employed by Garland Independent School District and works to share his story with others. He says a huge challenge during his time in the AIM program was transportation.

"I didn't have a car, so I had to rely on a friend or my dad who also worked full time," Chambers said. "It was a struggle for me. On top of trying to get to the courthouse, I had to pay AIM fees and restitution. Transportation was a big financial burden and stressful."

Since its creation in 2016, AIM has graduated 122 individuals between the ages of 18-24. The 12-18-month program includes life and parenting skills, counseling and substance abuse treatment, resources for housing, food and healthcare, and is centered around employment and education. Before graduating, each participant is required to complete their GED and/or secure employment. After graduating from AIM, the participant's case will be dismissed and immediately expunged.

Eliminating a Barrier

Reliable transportation can mean the difference between successful, long-term employment and lost opportunities. 51% of AIM participants lack a valid driver's license, and a third of these individuals do not own a vehicle. In addition, 10% of the participants live in areas with no viable public transportation.

With these grant funds from the Texas Bar Foundation, AIM participants will have consistent access to employment opportunities, job training, and other program requirements. Closing these short-term gaps can have an exponential impact on participants' success. Together, we can create a safer community and improve our local workforce.

"This kind of support is a big relief," said Chambers. "Where I lived in Mesquite, we didn't have public transportation -- it was either get an Uber or have a friend come pick you up. If I couldn't get to and from AIM, I would still have that felony on my record. Now I am empowered to spread the message that you don't have to be defined by your mistakes, rather it's how you deal with them."

Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$24 million in grants to law-related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nation's large charitably-funded bar foundation.