



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

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Relaunched Program by Criminal Court Clerk's Office Finding Success

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.—The Knox County Criminal Clerk's Office has relaunched a program that offers community service to some indigent defendants who cannot afford to pay their court costs.

"The Community Service Program is a way for qualifying individuals to honor their debts while making a positive impact in the community," said Clerk Mike Hammond. "The initiative is not solely about meeting court costs but also supporting individuals to grow personally and professionally. This approach reinforces the belief that everyone deserves a second chance."

Since the program's reboot in early August, five people have completed community service time for a total of 430 hours. The participants also decreased their debt by almost \$16,000.

Hammond worked with state lawmakers years ago to create the program and the Legislature overwhelmingly approved it. The program, though, was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hammond made a goal to reinstate the program and hired Elizabeth White to oversee it. Ms. White was one of the few people to complete the program before the pandemic, and she is passionate to see it reinstated. Since starting it back again this year, more than two dozen community nonprofits, agencies, and organizations have signed on as partners.

"I was delighted and honored to relaunch this amazing program," said Elizabeth White, who now serves as Community Service Program Director. "It gives people an opportunity to get their lives back on track as well as make a difference in their community. Alongside our community partners and participants, we're making Knoxville and Knox County a better place for all of us."

The Community Service Program also partners with another program that helps participants eligible for a driver's license to get it reinstated.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the Community Service Program, please contact Elizabeth White at (865) 215- 4087 or elizabeth.white@knoxcounty.org.

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