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## eCivis Case Study Tulsa County, Oklahoma

### eCivis Helps Tulsa Non-profit Win More Than \$2 Million in Grants to Keep Mentally Ill Out of Jail

#### The Municipality

The County of Tulsa comprises 587 square miles in northeast Oklahoma. With approximately 570,000 residents, Tulsa is the state's most densely populated county.

#### The Challenge

With declining federal allocations, Tulsa County needed to find additional sources of funding for critical services. Among other issues, Tulsa County Social Services Department recognized that many mentally ill residents were languishing in jail rather than receiving treatment, but the county and community non-profit agencies lacked funding to implement a comprehensive program to identify, divert, treat, and support these individuals.

#### The Solution

Tulsa turned to eCivis to find grants that could help the county's departments and community-based organizations develop additional resources. The Social Services Department and Family and Children's Services, Inc. partnered to find grants to expand a fledgling jail diversion program.

#### The Results

In 2006, grants totaling more than \$2.6 million funded programs within the Sheriff's Department. In addition, one of the 60 community-based organizations using eCivis received \$2 million in grants. In the first quarter of 2007, the intervention program operated by that agency and Tulsa's Social Services Department assisted law enforcement and provided services to all 1100 individuals with mental illness who had interactions with police. As a result, only five went to jail.

### The Challenge: Declining Federal Funds Leaves County and Its Non-profits Strapped for Funds

Tulsa County Clerk Earlene Wilson recognized the grant seeking challenge the county faced and commented: "Money is tight. In this day and age, you need to look at every opportunity to find funding."

The problem was that finding sources of funding to replace declining federal allocations to counties and community-based organizations (CBOs) took a tremendous amount of time and effort. Tulsa County Sheriff's Department Grants Analyst Debbie Benight says, "I used to spend all day every day on the Internet searching for grants—and that didn't include foundation money. To get information on foundations, we had to go to the central library."

In addition to the need for more money to fund county programs, community non-profits frequently approached the county for financial assistance, too.

"It was virtually impossible for us to assist the non-profits financially, even though they do valuable work in our community on behalf of our constituents," says Tulsa County Director of Social Services Linda Johnston.

Johnston was particularly troubled by the difficulty the county had in keeping mentally ill individuals out of the prison system. "Our prisons are full of mentally ill people who didn't commit much of a crime. We wanted to ensure that the non-violent mentally ill got the services they needed—and stayed out of jail."

## Case Study: Tulsa County, Oklahoma

### The Solution: Tulsa Offers eCivis to Community Organizations

Tulsa County IT Director Tom Trimble learned about eCivis at a conference and introduced it to Fiscal Officer Jim Smith and County Clerk Earlene Wilson. They quickly saw the advantage of eCivis for efficiently finding grants for the county—and for the community’s nonprofit agencies. “We thought offering eCivis would be a marvelous way to help CBOs help our constituents and develop their own resources,” says Wilson.

Today, more than 60 Tulsa-County nonprofit agencies use eCivis. Lindon Thompson of Family and Children’s Services, Inc. (FCS) says, “eCivis is the best grants program by far. It has much better functionality. I just check eCivis every day because it’s more user-friendly and has more information.”

eCivis simplified grants pursuits for County departments, too. Benight of the Sheriff’s Department says, “eCivis gives me everything I need in one place. The advance notices particularly help us prepare so we have the programs and process in place when grants are officially announced. Often the deadlines are quick and we would miss the opportunities otherwise.” Benight also finds that, “The examples really help us by showing what we can ask for and what the grantor has previously funded.”

Using eCivis, Tulsa County Social Services pursued additional funding for a jail diversion program for the non-violent mentally ill. Although the program started 10 years ago with training for law enforcement officers, it did not have the money necessary to ensure that mental health professionals were available to support police officers when they responded to a situation involving an individual who may have mental illness.

### The Results: Both the County and Local Agencies Receive Millions from Grants

Through eCivis, the Tulsa Social Services Department received funding to expand the jail diversion program. Mental health professionals from FCS and law enforcement now work side-by-side to keep the non-violent mentally ill out of the legal system. According to Johnston, when the program started, law enforcement typically encountered 1,100 people with mental illness every quarter, all of whom entered the court system. With the expanded program in place, the first three months of 2007 presented a 99.5% decrease in incarceration of the mentally ill, reducing the impact on correctional facilities and other valuable resources.

In addition, FCS received more than \$2 million in grants last year, too, which it used primarily to fund programs to address homelessness and responsible fatherhood.

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