



## Earning A Second Chance Arrest Diversion Program

Sometimes in life, people make mistakes. As a society, we like to look for the best in everyone and hope that if a person makes a mistake, they learn from it. Bad choices can be made due to being young, peer pressure, mental health issues, loss of employment, divorce, etc... For the most part, one bad choice should not mean a lifetime of shame. However, second chances are earned, not given. The Oelwein Police Department is proposing and seeking endorsement from the Oelwein City Council to explore and potentially implement an arrest diversion program.

The program:

- Seeks to reduce recidivism by addressing the core issues.
- Seeks to provide an equitable way to address specific crimes while reducing the long-term impact that a conviction may have on an individual.
- Development of an adult system of referral in lieu of arrest.
  - Formation of a committee of stakeholders that would periodically review cases and set a course of action based on consistent criteria.
    - Course of action would hold the individual accountable by providing benchmarks and potentially provide necessary guidance and resources.
    - Specific criteria would be utilized to determine what qualifies a person to be considered for deferred prosecution. That way, it does not matter who you are, your income level, or your race; it is fair and equal.
- Takes into consideration an individual's circumstances and to provide guidance or services to improve those circumstances. Ie. A person is arrested for shoplifting bread and sandwich meat. You discover that the person has been laid off from work. The person does not have a lengthy criminal history and it appears the theft is due to them trying to provide food for them and their family. Is the best course of action to add legal fees, court costs, fines, or a jail sentence? Or is the best course of action to defer prosecution until the person meets certain criteria. If they accomplish the committee's set goals, the charge is not filed, if they do not meet it, then the charge is filed.
- Presently, it can be hard for a person to find employment if they have a conviction on their record. People make mistakes, it happens. Finding a way to hold them accountable without a criminal record could be the difference between getting things back in order and living a crime-free life or entering a cycle of criminal activity.

Our goal, stop the cycle of criminal activity while addressing the core issues through individual growth and accountability.