

## Scottsdale police mull renting out jail space

by [Ofelia Madrid](#) - Feb. 24, 2011 12:00 AM  
 The Arizona Republic

Scottsdale police will start renting space next month to defendants from other Valley cities who want to serve their sentence in a Scottsdale jail.

The pilot program, which begins March 1, allows defendants convicted of non-violent misdemeanors in other city courts to spend up to 48 hours in Scottsdale's Via Linda detention facility, officials said.

City officials hope to bring in as much as \$700,000 from the six-month trial.

Scottsdale City Manager David Richert said success of the pilot program will determine whether Scottsdale's Via Linda jail stays open. Right now, Scottsdale's primary booking facility is its downtown jail at 3700 N. 75th St.

"The idea is to offset the existing cost," said Sgt. Mark Clark, a police spokesman. "We already pay to have two jail facilities open."

Scottsdale is in a unique position to offer the service because most neighboring police departments typically don't have jail space available to keep defendants overnight, Clark said.

For example, anyone convicted of jail time in Mesa City Court has to serve in a Maricopa County jail, said Sgt. Ed Wessing, a Mesa police spokesman. The Mesa holding facility holds 32 people.

"Each night we fill up the jail with bookings," Wessing said. "We don't have the capacity to house people."

In addition to offsetting costs, Richert said officials will look closely at whether renting jail space can turn a profit. The city is facing a \$20 million shortfall for next fiscal year's budget that begins July 1.

City officials have set a goal of \$700,000 for the six-month trial. It costs the city about \$500,000 to keep the facility open, leaving \$200,000 in profit, Richert said.

Using the jail to house defendants is a better alternative than shuttering the building, which will still be considered if the program fails, Richert said.

Six beds in the Via Linda jail already are used to house overnight convicts from Scottsdale City Court. That leaves an additional eight beds for out-of-city defendants, Clark said. Offenders are charged \$189 per day. "Right now, we want get the word out that we're doing this so we can work with the current court officials and defense attorneys to let them know this is an option for their misdemeanor defendants," Clark said.

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Republic reporter **Ben Backhaus** contributed to this article.

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