



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-1082, **Version:** 1

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District Attorney recommending the Board:

- 1) Accept a grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for the Victim Witness Assistance Program with a total project cost of \$524,533 for the period of October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021, based on the received Letter of Intent;
- 2) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign the Certification of Assurance of Compliance; and
- 3) Authorize the District Attorney to execute the Grant Award Agreement and required documents, including any extensions or amendments thereof which would not increase net county cost, contingent upon review and approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

**FUNDING:** California Governor's Office of Emergency Services Victims of Crime Act Fund.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

The District Attorney's Office has operated the Victim Witness Assistance (VW) Program since 1980. The purpose of the VW Program is to provide comprehensive services to victims and witnesses of all types of violent crime. The advocates funded under this grant are required to provide the following services: crisis intervention, emergency assistance, resource referral and assistance, direct counseling and therapy, claim assistance, property return, orientation to the criminal justice system, court escort, presentations and training for criminal justice agencies, public presentations and publicity, case status/disposition, notification of family and friends, employer notification/intervention, and restitution.

Cal OES grant program funding typically runs for a 3-year cycle with annual renewals. During the first year, a Request for Proposal (RFP) is submitted. In the subsequent years, a Request for Application (RFA) is submitted based on the funding amount Cal OES has advised each agency is eligible to apply for. The District Attorney's Office is currently beginning the fourth year for this program's RFP cycle. For FY 20/21, the District Attorney's Office was advised funding may be requested for a total project cost up to \$524,533.

Cal OES has reviewed the RFA submitted on July 15, 2020 and requested the signed Grant Subaward Face Sheet and Certification of Assurance of Compliance be submitted so they may proceed with issuing the final notice of approval. For the purpose of this Board item, Cal OES has provided a letter of intent to fund the program.

The County is eligible for total project funding up to \$524,533 for the Victim Witness Program for the federal fiscal year of October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. The County will continue to fund three FTE Victim Witness Program Specialist positions, one FTE Victim Witness Program Specialist dedicated to the Mass Victimization position, as well as 55% of the FTE Victim Witness Program Coordinator position and 45% of the FTE Program Assistant with this grant funding. Operating expenses include memberships, travel, training, supplies and equipment, vehicle maintenance, cell phones, facility lease, indirect, and mental health, case management, and crisis response services provided by a licensed therapist.

Similar to the prior grant period award, the FY 2020/21 project award includes \$103,000 to support a Mass Victimization Advocate (MVA) position. The funding for the MVA is to be dedicated to further the objectives of supporting response readiness to mass victimization/terrorism incidents, which includes, but is not limited to, duties such as developing a comprehensive crisis response plan and victim assistance crisis response protocols, implementing mutual-aid memorandums of understanding with neighboring counties and within crisis response regions, conducting outreach, participating in community meetings, and maintaining a modified victim witness caseload. The District Attorney's Office received communication from Cal OES in 2019 that the funding for the Mass Victimization Advocate is guaranteed for possibly the next one or two grant years.

As set forth in the Request for Application (RFA), the District Attorney is required to obtain written authorization from the Board of Supervisors that the official executing the agreement is authorized to do so. The District Attorney recommends the Board approve the submission of the grant application and authorize the Chair to sign the Certification of Assurance of Compliance (Rev. 4/2020) for the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) Fund. The Certification of Assurance of Compliance includes details regarding Federal Grand Funds, Equal Employment Opportunity Program, Drug Free Workplace Compliance, California Environmental Quality Act, Lobbying, Debarment and Suspension requirements, Proof of Authority from the Governing Board, Civil Rights Compliance, and the special conditions of Subaward.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

Should the Board decline to accept the grant, the County would be ineligible to participate in the program.

#### **PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

Legistar 19-1307 - Board accepted Federal FY 19/20 Cal OES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$483,527 for the period of October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020

Legistar 18-1666 - Board accepted Federal FY 18/19 Cal OES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$481,190 for the period of October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

Legistar 12-0616 - Board accepted Federal FY 17/18 Cal OES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) for the period of October 1, 2017 - September 30, 2018

#### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

N/A

#### **CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS**

Approve as recommended.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no change to Net County Cost for accepting this grant award. The total project award of \$524,533 carries with it a match burden of \$98,265. The grant proposal submitted identified using a portion of the salary and benefits for the Program Coordinators and the Program Specialist, along with a portion of the facility lease as the cash match. All funding was included in the Recommended Budget and no budget amendment is necessary.

#### **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Clerk of the Board to:

- 1) Obtain the Board Chair's signature on two Certification of Assurance of Compliance Victim of

Crime Acts forms

2) Return one certified copy to the Chief Administrative Office, Central Fiscal Unit, Attention: Audra Anderson

**STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Public Safety

**CONTACT**

Vern Pierson, District Attorney