



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0873, **Version:** 1

District Attorney recommending the Board:

- 1) Authorize the District Attorney to accept a grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for the Victim Witness Assistance Program with a total project cost of \$496,181 for the period of October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022, 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.

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. 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. The Program also requires participants to maintain non-financial Operational Agreements with local agencies such as local domestic violence centers, rape crisis centers, and agencies that provide services for child crime victims. The District Attorney's Office plans to renew their existing Operational Agreement for an additional 3-year term (07/01/21-06/30/24) with the following agencies: Placerville Police Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, The Center for Violence Free Relationships, and Live Violence Free. The agreement has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel as part of the Grant package.

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 fifth year for this program's RFP cycle. For FY 2021-22, the District Attorney's Office was advised funding may be requested for a total project cost up to \$496,181.

As part of the RFA process, CalOES requests the signed Grant Subaward Face Sheet and Certification of Assurance of Compliance be included with the submitted application. For the purpose of this Board item, CalOES has provided a letter of intent to fund the program.

The County is eligible for total project funding up to \$496,181 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, video production and mental health, case management, and crisis response services provided by a licensed therapist.

Similar to the prior grant period award, the FY 2021-22 project award includes \$100,000 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.

As set forth in the 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. 10/2020) 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 20-1082 - Board accepted Federal FY 2020-21 Cal OES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$524,533 for the period of October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021

Legistar 19-1307 - Board accepted Federal FY 2019-20 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 2018-19 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 2017-18 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 \$496,181 carries with it a match burden of \$92,965. The grant proposal submitted identified using a portion of the salary and benefits for the Program Coordinator, a portion of health benefits for the Program Specialists, a portion of Advocate travel-related expenses, and 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: Justene Cline

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Safety

CONTACT

Vern Pierson