



Legislation Text

File #: 23-1165, **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 \$503,891 for the period of October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024, 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.

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 seventh year for this program's RFP cycle. For FY 2023-24, the District Attorney's Office was advised funding may be requested for a total project cost up to \$503,891.

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 \$503,891 for the Victim Witness Program for the federal fiscal year of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. The office plans to fund 1.0 FTE Victim Witness Program Specialist position, 1.0 FTE Victim Witness Program Specialist dedicated to the Mass Victimization position, 2.0 FTE Sr. Victim Witness Program Specialist positions to demonstrate a lead role, as well as 0.65 FTE Victim Witness Program Manager position with this grant funding. Operating expenses include memberships, travel, training, supplies, minor equipment, vehicle maintenance, cell phones, facility lease, and mental health and crisis response services provided by a licensed therapist.

Similar to the prior grant awards, the FY 2023-24 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 strengthening a comprehensive crisis response plan and victim assistance crisis response protocols, continue engaging in 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 for the Victims of Crimes Act (VOCA) Fund. The Certification of Assurance of Compliance includes details regarding Federal Grant 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 22-1044 - Board accepted Federal FY 2022-23 CalOES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$501,982 for the period of October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023.

Legistar 21-0873 - Board accepted Federal FY 2021-22 CalOES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$496,181 for the period of October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022.

Legistar 20-1082 - Board accepted Federal FY 2020-21 CalOES Victim Witness Assistance Program (VW) in the amount of \$524,533 for the period of October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021.

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 \$503,891 carries with it a match burden of \$94,408. The grant proposal submitted identified using a portion of the salary and benefits of the Program Manager as the cash match. Adequate funding was included in the department's Recommended Budget and no amendments are necessary.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Clerk of the Board to obtain the Board Chair's signature on two Certification of Assurance of Compliance Victim of Crime Acts forms and return one certified copy to the Chief Administrative Office, Central Fiscal Unit, Attention: Justene Cline.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Safety

CONTACT

Vern Pierson, District Attorney