



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/10/2024

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): District Attorney
Staff Name and Phone Number: Shane Lewis 565-3150
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Family Justice Center Victim Witness Advocate II (Navigator) Time-Limited Position Increase from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE

Recommended Action:

- A. Adopt a position resolution amending the Department Allocation List of the District Attorney's Office effective December 10, 2024, through December 31, 2026.
- B. Adopt a budget resolution authorizing adjustments to the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Adopted Budget to provide additional appropriations of \$26,193 to increase the 0.5 Navigator to 1.0 full-time equivalent to the District Attorney Family Justice Center Special Revenue Fund. (4/5 Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

In October 2023, the District Attorney's Office was awarded a U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women Grant to Improve the Criminal Justice Response. The total amount of the award is \$575,000 for a three-year term, October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2026.

The purpose of the grant is to continue improving the criminal justice response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The project will establish a Domestic Violence High Risk Team and will develop a countywide protocol for handling high-risk cases from multiple entry points across disciplines. The project entails implementing training for multidisciplinary partners including law enforcement, prosecution, probation, and the courts.

The grant currently covers 0.5 FTE of a Time Limited Victim Witness II (Navigator) position, and the District Attorney requests to increase the FTE to 1.0 Time Limited Victim Witness II (Navigator) to support the program. The increase of the position to 1.0 FTE will provide navigator support that is greatly needed to assist clients at the Family Justice Center (FJC). The additional 0.5 FTE will be covered with fund balance as well as additional funds from the grant which are being reallocated within the grant budget to support the position; the FJC Foundation may also provide some funding.

Discussion:

The Victim Witness Advocate II (Navigator) is the first contact for victims seeking assistance at the FJC and will utilize validated assessment tools, including the Lethality Assessment Program as encouraged by state law, to identify high-risk individuals and implement the standardized protocols to keep victims safe as well as

coordinating needed supportive services through FJC partners.

Law enforcement agencies and nonprofit partners across the county conduct various lethality and danger assessments to determine the potential risk for victims of domestic violence. However, these assessments are not conducted consistently. First responders do not always have the information and training they need to connect victims that they identify as high-risk to potentially life-saving services and information obtained from these assessments often remains siloed with the respective agency. Victims who are flagged as high-risk by law enforcement need immediate crisis assistance and ongoing comprehensive services that are tailored to meet their needs, such as case management, civil legal assistance, and immigration services. This project supports the need for more effective and intentional coordination to prevent tragedies before they happen, including early identification and intervention, improving information sharing, providing ongoing monitoring and management of identified high-risk cases, referring victims to appropriate services, and holding high-risk offenders accountable.

Navigation services at the Family Justice Center have, in the past, been provided by non-profit partners at the FJC. Unfortunately, those partners have been unable to consistently staff those positions, requiring the FJC to seek alternative options for staffing this critical role. Currently the FJC has 1.0 FTE Time-Limited Victim Witness Advocate II (Navigator) who is funded by the California Office of Emergency Services Family Justice Center Grant program. That position is currently funded through March 2026, and the program is expected to be renewed for an additional two years at the end of the current grant term. One navigator is not sufficient to address the level of demand at the FJC, and there is no backup to accommodate clients when the navigator is out sick or on vacation, or when already assisting a client. By expanding the Time-Limited position from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE, the qualified candidate pool will be expanded to include skilled and experienced staff who require a fulltime position, and the additional hours will provide a more reliable level of service to clients at the FJC.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

On December 5, 2023, the Board adopted a resolution authorizing the District Attorney to execute a contract with the United States Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women to accept the grant award of \$575,000 for the term October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2026, and a resolution adding 0.5 FTE time-limited Victim Witness Advocate II position to the department allocation table through December 31, 2026.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$50,000	\$152,386	\$38,096
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$26,193		
Total Expenditures	\$76,193	\$152,386	\$38,096
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$54,084	\$74,816	\$18,929
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$22,109	\$77,570	\$19,167
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$76,193	\$152,386	\$38,096

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The additional cost over the grant term for the additional 0.5 FTE is \$118,846. The Fund Balance as of July 1, 2024 is \$570,198. The impact on Fund Balance could be reduced with a contribution from the FJC Foundation.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Victim Witness Advocate II	\$6,511.81-\$7,915.40	.5	0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The increase of an existing .50 FTE Time Limited Victim Witness Advocate II (Navigator) to a 1.0 Time-Limited Victim Witness II (Navigator), will support the work of one existing Navigator at the Family Justice Center. The Navigator will provide much needed additional staffing to assist clients seeking assistance at the FJC. The end date of the Time Limited Victim Witness Advocate II will be December 31, 2026, which will allow for the position to continue beyond the grant’s expiration in order to accommodate common program renewal delays. In the event the contract is not renewed, or alternative funding is not secured, the position will be eliminated at the end of the grant term.

Attachments:

- Position Resolution
- Budget Resolution
- OVW Grant Award

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A