



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0195, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): District Attorney
Staff Name and Phone Number: Tatiana Lopez 565-2822
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services County Victim Services Program

Recommended Action:

Execute a contract with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for the County Victim Services Program Grant.

- A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the District Attorney to execute a contract with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to accept the award in the amount of \$244,316 for the term January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.
- B) Adopt a resolution extending the 1.0 FTE time-limited Administrative Aide position to the department allocation table through March 31, 2023 to support continuation of this program. Extending the position beyond the grant term will allow for continuity in the program in the event that grant renewal notification is delayed as it has been in the past.

Executive Summary:

Board approval and authorization is requested to allow the District Attorney to sign a contract to continue participation in the County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) funded by the State of California, Office of Emergency Services for \$244,316 from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

The objective of the Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime Program is to provide advocacy, case management and prosecution to the most vulnerable in Sonoma County, homeless victims of crime who may suffer from a disabling condition.

Discussion:

The unsheltered population continues to be one of Sonoma County's greatest challenges, particularly given the obstacles created by the persistent and pervasive pandemic. While the annual Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey, Point-in-Time Count could not be conducted in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the intersection of the housing shortage and crime continues to create one of the County's most vulnerable populations: victims of crime, particularly domestic violence, experiencing homelessness. The Sonoma County Homeless Outreach Team provides essential services and support for this population whose vulnerability often finds them the victim of a crime, and some of whom are chronically homeless, disabled and/or polyvictims. People who experience chronic homelessness have an average life expectancy of around 50 years of age, almost 20 years lower than housed populations. Connecting them to timely and essential services can be a

matter of life or death.

The Sonoma County Homeless Outreach Team serves victims experiencing homelessness by connecting them to essential services including congregate shelters and/or hotels via emergency vouchers (for those for whom it is not safe to be in congregate shelter). The team provides food, gas, bus, and Goodwill vouchers, as well as emergency provisions and basic needs supplies based on what each victim/family needs. In 2021, the Homeless Outreach Team served 77 families and 352 individuals, 368 of those total clients were new while 61 were returning. Looking at this compared to 2020 where the program served 156 families and 244 individuals, our need for individual services has increased while the needs of homeless families may be being met with other social services during the past year. Eighty nine percent of the victims served in 2021 were victims of domestic violence. This is compared to 39% in 2020 and 34% in 2019. The numbers, unfortunately, are significantly on the rise. Some of the other highest reported victimizations this year included 49% of clients served experiencing bullying or verbal abuse, and 48% reporting being the victim of physical assault. Of the clients served in the past year, 70% were mainly residing in Santa Rosa followed by seven percent staying in Petaluma and three percent in Sebastopol.

One of the goals of the program is to serve the highly vulnerable population by focusing on wrap-around services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or elder abuse as well as victims with disabilities. Many clients assisted by the team are attempting to flee domestic violence with their children after having been isolated by their abusers. Providing safety and support for them is especially crucial. Because the team is based at the Family Justice Center, we refer victims by way of warm handoffs to co-located partners, including Legal Aid, YWCA, Verity, Sonoma Works, Catholic Charities (for immigration services), law enforcement, the Redwood Children's Center and the Council on Aging for rapid support. The Coordinator also enrolls victims into Coordinated Entry to connect them to housing resources countywide, which allows the FJC to be designated as a comprehensive access point for homeless victims. Additionally, the Coordinator has been able to resume outreach with Catholic Charities to engage and support those victims living on the streets and/or in their vehicles who would otherwise fall through the cracks.

Since the program's inception in 2016, the team, which includes the Coordinator, a YWCA Advocate, a Verity Advocate, and a Catholic Charities Advocate, has developed relationships with providers throughout the county to ensure victims are connected to resources and services no matter where they are located - from Cloverdale, to Rio Nido, to Petaluma. Despite the FJC facility being closed to the public during the pandemic, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator was and is able to meet with victims in the field, which is crucial for those facing transportation barriers and/or financial, and/or safety obstacles. Likewise, the Catholic Charities Advocate on the team continues to meet with clients in the field. All members of the team provide remote services and can coordinate pick up/drop off of supplies. Clients know we are there for them - no matter the obstacles. In times like this, the team's support can make or break whether a domestic violence victim, for example, believes that she/he has the support and resources to leave an abusive relationship.

As the economic, housing, health and social challenges persist, the Homeless Outreach Team's services for victims of crime experiencing homelessness will continue to be vital. The vulnerable victims of Sonoma County deserve and need the team's support.

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) award of \$244,316 provides funds for an additional year of this program. The

funds provide salaries and benefits for one full-time Homeless Outreach Coordinator housed within the Family Justice Center as part of the Victim Services Division of the District Attorney's Office. Salary and benefits for this position is estimated at \$111,516, based on budget projections, and grant funds cover the entire amount.

The grant provides funding for Outreach Workers with current Community Based Organizations (CBO) who have expertise in victim assistance. The collaborative agencies are Catholic Charities, Verity, and the YWCA of Sonoma County. Verity and the YWCA of Sonoma County will both provide a full-time Outreach Worker and each will receive \$54,000 of grant funds. Catholic Charities will provide a quarter-time Outreach Worker and receive \$13,500 in grant funds. Match requirements have been waived.

Catholic Charities has experience serving the homeless, Verity targets victims of sexual assault, and the YWCA focuses on domestic violence abuse. These partner agencies have been at the forefront for victim case management and sought to participate in this program as agreed by the Victim Services Steering Committee.

The Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime program expands and enhances a coordinated system of multi-disciplinary response, outreach, and case management and provides timely and comprehensive services to homeless crime victims that may have disabling conditions.

Core services provided by partners include:

- Specialty outreach for homeless crime victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as general crimes to provide wrap around services
- Complete screening by outreach workers to direct victims to services
- Emergency resources available to resolve immediate needs like food, clothing, and transportation
- Assistance with referrals for housing, health and social services
- Coordinated intake to encourage clients to participate in the full screening and assistance through nonprofit agencies; as well as transportation to shelters and services as needed
- 24/7 hotline resource cards and care kits provided

Available funding pays for short-term housing at two local motels, transportation, grocery store gift cards for food, and vouchers for clothing and shoes.

Goals of the Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime Grant Program

1. Assist homeless victims of crime, who may have a disabling condition, to obtain housing, health services, and social services.
2. Identify and address facts that increase the likelihood that homeless individuals who may have a disabling condition will become crime victims.
3. Foster coordination across the County to sustainably address multiple difficulties of homeless victims of crime who may have a disabling condition.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Prior Board Actions:

January 26, 2021: Board approved the acceptance of California Office of Emergency Services' County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) for grant term January 2021 through

December 2021.

February 4, 2020: Board approved the acceptance of California Office of Emergency Services’ County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) for grant term January 2020 through December 2020.

October 23, 2018: Board approved the extension of the program through December 2019. November 1, 2016: The Board of Supervisors granted approval to accept the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services for County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime for the grant term July 2016 through June 2018.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 21-22 Adopted	FY22-23 Projected	FY 23-24 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$122,158	\$122,158	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$122,158	\$122,158	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$122,158	\$122,158	
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$122,158	\$122,158	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Budgetary expenditure appropriations were approved on January 26, 2021 when the CalOES County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) was approved. This grant is non-competitive, funds for the 2022 program were anticipated and included in the department budget for Fiscal Year 2021/22. The revenue and appropriations for FY 2022/23 will be included as part of budget development.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Administrative Aide	\$4,807.33 - \$5,842.20	1	0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

The extension of the 1.0 FTE time-limited Administrative Aide allocation will not increase, decrease, or change

the work of any existing positions. The incumbent will continue to coordinate and facilitate program planning and evaluation meetings, track data, and report on progress. Additionally, the Administrative Aide (Homeless Outreach Coordinator) will continue to build strong inter-agency collaboration, develop data collection and analysis systems that can refine service strategies, and bring new resources to provide a variety of services. This position has been in place since October 2016 when the first two-year term of the Homeless Outreach Program grant was awarded.

The end date of the grant-funded Administrative Aide will be March 31, 2023, which will allow the position to continue beyond the contract's expiration in order to accommodate common contract renewal delays. In the event that the contract is not renewed beyond December 31, 2022, the non-grant funded position costs from January 2023 through March 2023 would be paid with salary savings by the department.

Attachments:

Resolution A - Grant Acceptance

Resolution B - Position Allocation

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

CalOES Grant Award Document