



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0776, **Version:** 1

To: The Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County
Department or Agency Name(s): Office of the District Attorney
Staff Name and Phone Number: Renate Amantite, 565-3150
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

District Attorney Victim/Witness Assistance Grant

Recommended Actions:

Adopt a resolution to authorize the District Attorney to sign a contract with the California Office of Emergency Services to continue participation in the Victim/Witness Assistance Program and accept \$778,873 in grant funding for the term October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

Executive Summary:

Board approval and authorization is requested to allow the District Attorney to continue participation in the Victim/Witness Assistance Program funded by the California Office of Emergency Services, for \$778,873 for the 2018-19 Federal fiscal year. These funds are designated to pay for the salary and benefits of 0.25 full-time equivalent Victim Services Director, 0.5 full time-equivalent Senior Victim Witness Advocate, and 5.50 full-time equivalent Victim Witness Advocate II positions and funding for mandatory advocate training.

Discussion:

The purpose of this grant is to ensure advocacy is provided to all of adult and juvenile crime victims going through the criminal justice system and to do so as soon as possible after a crime has occurred; to reach out and offer services to victims even if the decision is made to not pursue prosecution; to collaborate with law enforcement, community based organizations, and other victim service organizations to provide a comprehensive response to meeting the needs of crime victims in Sonoma County; and to provide community outreach and training to law enforcement, community based organizations, and the community at large on the services available to crime victims through the Sonoma County District Attorney's Victim Services Division. The Mass Victimization Advocacy (MVA) has completed the required California Victim and Witness Coordinating Council Crisis Response Training, International Critical Incident Stress Foundation training and the Leave No Victim Behind Conference the last two years. The Director will participate in the CCVAA Crisis Response Training during the performance period. Additional suggested training to include the NOVA Conference, FBI and FEMA webinars will be completed by both staff members during the performance period as well as the Advanced Advocate Training for the Lead Advocate.

Sonoma County is part of the Bay Area Mass Casualty Planning Committee and has current Memoranda of

Understanding with the participating nine counties. Additionally, we have had an initial assessment and recommendations by Crisis Response Team. We are motivated to develop the plan in more detail and engage partners in our community. Our plan also includes creating Go-Bags for all advocate staff and one for our facility dog. Go-Bags will include a backpack style bag, with the following supplies: Emergency blanket, air mask, first aid kit, hand sanitizer, flashlight, tissue, rain poncho, disposable gloves, notebook, clipboard, 5-pocket file folder, charger with multi plug adapter and water. VCB claim packets, brochures, business cards and resources will be stocked in the folder. The facility dog backpack will also include a collapsible bowl, leash, collar, doggie bags and food. Additional supplies include team vests and jackets, items for children (“My heroes” coloring books and crayons), stress balls and pens. Outreach will be conducted throughout the performance period in a variety of settings. The goal is to establish clear protocols and build relationships to respond to an incident either in Sonoma County or a neighboring county efficiently.

The District Attorney’s Office has participated in the Victim Witness Assistance Program annually since 1986, and receives an award amount based on available combined State and Federal pass-through funds. The Victim Witness Assistance grant helps the County of Sonoma meet the victim and witness service mandates under California Penal Code Section §13835 and allows the County of Sonoma to provide comprehensive and optional services to crime victims and witnesses for all types of crimes, whether or not a suspect has been identified.

Victims often suffer emotional, mental and/or material losses. As a society it is imperative we help mend and restore these citizens to help prevent further harm to them, their families and their communities. The Victim Advocates provided for under this grant provide important victim advocacy, help them understand and navigate through the judicial process and help them make their voices heard throughout the prosecutorial process. They also help with Victim Impact Statements at the end of the proceedings which is one of greatest tools in helping victims heal. Advocates provided referrals to agencies who can help with housing and financial needs, counseling and medical services, legal assistance, translation and immigration services and more.

Prior Board Actions:

The Board of Supervisors has granted approval to accept the Victim/Witness Assistance Program funds since 1986.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	799,948	748,364	748,364
Additional Appropriation Requested	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	778,873	748,364	748,364
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	21,075	19,210	19,210

State/Federal	778,873	729,154	729,154
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	799,948	748,364	748,364

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Revenue and expenditure appropriations for this grant are already included in the Department's FY18-19 budget. Reduction anticipated for FY19-20 & FY20-21 as one-time funds awarded for FY18-19 helped cover half of the senior advocate position. The loss of funding for this position will be made up with additional funding from new grants. The total program cost includes a local General Fund cash match of \$21,075 in FY 18-19 and \$19,210 in both FY 19-20 and FY 20-21.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Resolution

Victim/Witness Assistance Program Grant Award

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

N/A