



## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 2021-0206, **Version:** 1

---

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

**Title:**

District Attorney Innovative Prosecution Solutions Program

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the District Attorney to execute a contract with the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to accept \$340,000 in grant funding for the Innovative Prosecution Solutions Program for the term October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022.

**Executive Summary:**

On October 2, 2020, the District Attorney's Office was notified its project was selected to receive funding for the Innovative Prosecution Solutions Program of the Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance. Board approval and authorization is requested to allow the District Attorney to accept the grant award of \$340,000 for Federal Fiscal Years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

The purpose of the Innovative Prosecution Solutions Program is to assist with the investigation and prosecution of opioid-related crimes committed in Sonoma County.

**Discussion:**

Opioid-related crimes present a growing challenge in Sonoma County, in particular those related to the drug fentanyl. Data from the Coroner's Office shows deaths by overdose reached 72 in 2018, and 77 in 2019, with 15 deaths occurring in just the first two months of 2020. In 2019, fentanyl was detected in 38 of the total of 77 deaths, and in 11 out of the total of 15 deaths in 2020. According to the most recent data available from the California Department of Public Health's California Opioid Overdose Surveillance Dashboard, the Sonoma County opioid-related overdose death rate of 9.8 per 100,000 residents in 2018 was nearly 70% above the California Statewide rate of 5.82 per 100,000 during that same year.

In spite of the continued increase in opioid and fentanyl-related overdose deaths in Sonoma County, the number of criminal investigations and prosecutions related to these events remains small. The limited prosecution of opioid and fentanyl overdose deaths in Sonoma County is associated with a number of gaps in resources and training among county law enforcement agencies. County law enforcement and prosecutors lack the data, technology, and collaborative structures to successfully investigate and prosecute these opioid-related deaths. Resource gaps include a lack of capacity within local law enforcement to investigate the causes of death for a suspected drug overdose, lack of staff resources needed for communication among local and regional law enforcement and prosecutors regarding the origin of illegal drugs that come into the county, and

the lack of coordination between local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to support prosecutions of these crimes.

The Sonoma County District Attorney's Office will introduce the SCOPE (Sonoma County Opioid Prosecution Effort) project with Innovative Prosecution Grant funding. This project will strengthen coordination among law enforcement, increase training in investigative techniques and evidence gathering for local law enforcement officers, and improve sharing of data and evidence between agencies, by funding the following positions: a 0.3 FTE Deputy District Attorney IV, a 0.2 FTE Senior Investigator, and a 0.125 FTE Technology Specialist, who will carry out the activities related to the grant objectives. These include increasing the number of investigations of crime related to opioid overdose deaths, increasing the number of criminal charges filed in these cases, increasing the number of successful prosecutions of crimes linked to opioid deaths, and ultimately reducing the total number of opioid-related deaths in Sonoma County.

**Prior Board Actions:**

N/A

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses	\$127,500	\$170,000	\$42,500
Additional Appropriation Requested	0	0	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$127,500</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>	<b>\$42,500</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal	\$127,500	\$170,000	\$42,500
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$127,500</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>	<b>\$42,500</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Funds for FY 2020-2021 are included in the adopted budget. The remainder of funds will be included in the FY 2021-2022 proposed budget and all funds will be expended by June 2022. No additional appropriation is requested. There is no match requirement for this grant.

<b>Staffing Impacts:</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

Staff funded by this grant are already included in the District Attorney departmental allocation.

**Attachments:**

Resolution

Grant Award Document

Standard Assurances

Legal Notices

Certifications

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

N/A