



Legislation Text

File #: 2023-0038, **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:

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 an award in the amount of \$248,742 for the term January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.
- B) Adopt a resolution extending the 1.0 FTE time-limited Administrative Aide position to the department allocation table through March 31, 2024, 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 in the amount of \$248,742 from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

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. The [2022 Sonoma County Point <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Development%20Services/CDC/Homeless%20Services/Homeless%20Data/County%20of%20Sonoma%202022%20Point-in-Time%20Count%20Results.pdf>](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Development%20Services/CDC/Homeless%20Services/Homeless%20Data/County%20of%20Sonoma%202022%20Point-in-Time%20Count%20Results.pdf) in Time Count continues to show that a large portion of the just under 3,000 people homeless in the county are vulnerable to becoming victims of crime. The 2022 data shows that 24% of the unsheltered surveyed during the Count reported they had experienced domestic violence, 17% experiences sex trade, and 42% of survey participants reported having at least one disabling condition, requiring multiple types of resources to respond to the unique needs of this population. 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. Polyvictimization is the cumulative impact of trauma that results from experiencing multiple types of victimizations such as: physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; neglect; witnessing violence; and separation from, abandonment by, or impairment of parents and/or caregivers due to drugs, illness, or incarceration versus multiple episodes of the same kind of victimization.

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 or who are unable to get into a 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. As of December 2022, the team served 43 families and 265 individuals. Seventy six percent of the victims served in 2022 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 48% of clients served experiencing bullying or verbal abuse, 43% reporting being the victim of physical assault, and 27% experiencing sexual assault recently as an adult. In 2022, 85% of clients served received some form of emergency financial assistance including fuel and/or food gift cards, clothing vouchers, and bus passes. Of the clients served in the past year, 61% were mainly residing in Santa Rosa.

One of the goals of the program is to serve this 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 Sonoma County (FJCSC), victims are referred 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 FJCSC 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. To further provide services, multiple reoccurring drop-in outreach hours have been established for clients who are connected to agencies such as The Living Room, Family Shelters, and Ruthless Kindness Veterinary Services.

Since the program's inception in 2016, the team, which included 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. Currently the team is made up of the Coordinator, a Verity Advocate, a Catholic Charities advocate, as well as multiple close community partnerships. Despite the FJCSC facility being closed to the public during the pandemic, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator continued to meet with victims in the field, which was crucial for those facing transportation barriers and/or financial, and/or safety obstacles.

Likewise, the Catholic Charities Advocate continued to meet with clients in the field. All members of the team provide remote services and can coordinate pick up or drop off of supplies. Clients know the team is there for them - no matter the obstacles. In times like this, that 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. The FJCS reopened in January 2023.

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 Entry intake to encourage clients to participate in the full screening and assistance through nonprofit agencies; as well as coordination with shelters and services as needed
- 24/7 hotline resource cards and care kits provided

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:

April 19, 2022: Board approved the acceptance of the California Office of Emergency Services' County Victim Services Program (Outreach and Services to Homeless Victims of Crime) for grant term January 2022 through December 2022.

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 22-23 Adopted | FY23-24 Projected | FY 24-25 Projected |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Budgeted Expenses | \$124,371 | \$124,371 | |
| Additional Appropriation Requested | | | |
| Total Expenditures | \$124,371 | \$124,371 | |
| Funding Sources | | | |
| General Fund/WA GF | | | |
| State/Federal | \$124,371 | \$124,371 | |
| Fees/Other | | | |
| Use of Fund Balance | | | |
| Contingencies | | | |
| Total Sources | \$124,371 | \$124,371 | |

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This grant is non-competitive, funds for the 2023 program were anticipated and included in the department budget for Fiscal Year 2022/23. The revenue and appropriations for FY 2023/24 will be included as part of budget development.

| Staffing Impacts: | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Position Title (Payroll Classification) | Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step) | Additions (Number) | Deletions (Number) |
| | | | |
| | | | |
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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, 2024, 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, 2023, the non-grant funded position costs from January 2024 through March 2024 would be paid with salary savings by the department.

Attachments:

Resolution A - Grant Acceptance
Resolution B - Position Allocation
CalOES Grant Award Document

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

N/A