



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: District Attorney
Department No.: 021
Agenda Date: June 9, 2026
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: John T. Savrnoch, District Attorney
Contact Info: Michael Soderman, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer
SUBJECT: First Amendment to Agreement with Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) for an Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Program (Agreement No. 1135-23)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the District Attorney, or designee, to execute the First Amendment to the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Program Grant Agreement (No. BSCC 1135-23) with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) for a no-cost extension of the Grant Agreement for an additional year with a new end date of June 1, 2028, with no change to the grant award of \$800,000 (Attachment A);
- b) Approve and authorize the District Attorney, or designee, to execute any future amendments to extend the term of the Grant Agreement through December 31, 2028, or to increase the grant award in an amount not to exceed an additional \$100,000, for a total grant award of \$900,000, with the concurrence of Risk Management, County Counsel, and Auditor-Controller; and
- c) Determine that the above recommended actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) because they consist of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The above-referenced First Amendment to the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Program Grant Agreement is on the agenda to request the Board's approval for the District Attorney, or designee, to execute a no-cost extension of the Grant Agreement to extend the term of the grant by an additional year through June 1, 2028, with no change to the total grant award of \$800,000. The ORT Vertical Prosecution Program provides dedicated resources to investigate and prosecute increasingly sophisticated retail theft crimes, including organized theft rings, repeat offenders, and large-scale property crimes impacting local businesses and communities. Grant funding supports a vertical prosecution model, allowing cases to be handled consistently from investigation through disposition, improving case outcomes and coordination with law enforcement partners.

The requested no-cost extension will allow the District Attorney's Office additional time to fully expend remaining grant funds and continue program activities without interruption. Extending the grant term will maximize the use of awarded funds, preserve staffing and prosecution efforts already established under the program, and support the continued investigation and prosecution of organized retail theft cases to enhance public safety and reduce economic impacts to businesses throughout the County.

Discussion:

The District Attorney's Office is requesting approval to execute a First Amendment to the Grant Agreement with the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Program Grant (No. 1135-23). This Amendment extends the grant term by one additional year, changing the grant end date from June 1, 2027, to June 1, 2028, with no change to the total grant award amount of \$800,000.

As outlined in the proposed First Amendment, the requested no-cost extension will provide the District Attorney's Office additional time to operate the ORT program, continue prosecution efforts, and maximize the use of awarded grant funds without requiring additional County resources. The extension will help ensure continuity of staffing, maintain partnerships with law enforcement agencies investigating organized retail theft, and allow the Office to complete ongoing and anticipated cases that may extend beyond the current grant term.

The recommended actions also request delegated authority for the District Attorney, or designee, to execute the First Amendment and any subsequent non-substantive documents required for grant administration, subject to review and approval by County Counsel and Risk Management, as applicable. Granting this authority helps avoid delays in program implementation and ensures timely compliance with grant requirements.

Background:

The Board approved the BSCC Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Grant Agreement on October 17, 2023. The original grant period was October 1, 2023 through June 1, 2027, with funding expected to be expended through December 31, 2026. This Amendment provides the District Attorney with one additional year to fully utilize existing funds through a no-cost extension until June 1, 2028.

The ORT grant program was established in 2022 via Senate Bill 178. Funding was awarded through a competitive grants process for district attorneys to address increased levels of retail theft property crimes by using a vertical prosecution model. For the purposes of this request for proposals, vertical

prosecution meant that a prosecutor was assigned to an organized retail theft case from beginning to end (i.e., initial hearing/arraignment to sentencing). Under this model, victim(s), witness(es), and impacted law enforcement official(s) had a single point of contact throughout the process.

In addition, programs were required to assign at least one Deputy District Attorney and one District Attorney Investigator whose primary role was the investigation and prosecution of organized retail theft crimes. The Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s ORT Unit consists of one full-time Deputy District Attorney and one Extra-Help District Attorney Investigator dedicated to actively investigating organized retail theft cases.

Performance Measures:

ORT grant award recipients are required to report data and outcomes to the BSCC through measurable goals and objectives. Santa Barbara District Attorney is working with the designated program evaluator, Dr. Greg DeAngelo of the Computational Justice Lab at Claremont Graduate University, to address the measurable goals and objectives identified below, which will remain the same and will not be affected by the First Amended ORT Grant Agreement:

(1) Goal:	Effectively combat organized retail theft in Santa Barbara County through a vertical prosecution approach.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Screen significant theft cases for ties to organized retail theft. b) Track theft case closure rates to demonstrate successful resolution. c) Strive to expedite case adjudication and disposition times to prevent delays and provide timely justice for victims of retail theft.
(2) Goal:	Establish a countywide Organized Retail Theft Task Force.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work with local retailers and law enforcement agencies to strengthen the County of Santa Barbara’s response to and prevention of organized retail theft. b) Participate in community outreach events to educate retailers regarding organized retail theft and increase awareness of the common signs of organized retail theft. c) Coordinate with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and other local law enforcement agencies to develop a robust retail theft prevention campaign.
(3) Goal:	Use available diversion and/or restorative justice programs to address the increase in theft cases throughout Santa Barbara County.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Address the underlying causes of criminal behavior, including theft. b) Prevent future criminal activity. c) Encourage retailers to participate in the restorative justice process.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts

Budgeted: Yes. The remaining \$234,000 of the grant award has been included in the District Attorney’s Fiscal Year 2026-27 Recommended Budget. If additional funds become available, the District Attorney’s Office will complete a Budget Amendment.

Fiscal Analysis:

The grant will continue to fund Salaries and Employee Benefits, which will support 1.0 FTE Deputy District Attorney and 0.25 Extra-Help District Attorney Investigator through FY 2026-27.

Funding Source	FY 2026-27	Total
General Fund		
State	\$234,000	\$234,000
Federal		
Fees		
Total	\$234,000	\$234,000

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Position Title	Number of FTE	Estimated Cost
Deputy District Attorney	1.0	160,674
District Attorney Investigator EXH	0.25	25,795
Total	1.25	\$ 186,469

Special Instructions:

Please email a copy of the following items to John DeAlba, DA Department Business Specialist:

- a) One (1) Minute Order

Attachments:

Attachment A – BSCC 23-27 ORTVP A-1 Grant Agreement (1135-23)

Attachment B – BSCC 23-27 ORTVP Grant Agreement (1135-23)

Contact Information:

John DeAlba
Department Business Specialist
jodealba@countyofsb.org