



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

Department Name: District Attorney
Department No.: 021
For Agenda Of: December 12, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director John T. Savrnich, District Attorney, (805) 568-2308
Contact Info: Michael Soderman, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, (805) 568-2303

SUBJECT: Cal OES Victim/Witness Program Grant Award; Subaward VW23 42 0420

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt the Board Resolution approving, ratifying, and authorizing the District Attorney to execute a Grant Agreement with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) accepting the Victim/Witness (VW) Program grant award (VW23 42 0420) for the award period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024 in the amount of \$751,616;
- b) Approve and authorize the District Attorney to execute any amendments to the Grant Agreement extending the term thereof through March 31, 2025, or for a supplemental grant award in an amount not to exceed \$100,000, with the concurrence of County Counsel, Risk Management 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), since 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, and approve the filing of a Notice of Exemption on that basis.

Summary Text:

The purpose of this Board Letter is to request Board acceptance of and authorization for the District Attorney to execute the Grant Agreement with Cal OES for VW Program grant award VW23 42 0420 for the award period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024, in the amount of \$751,616.

The Cal OES VW Program provides outreach and support to victims of crime. 9.20 FTEs are assigned to the program. These staff provide mandatory and optional services to victims in accordance with the Cal OES program guidelines and the Penal Code governing VW Assistance Programs. The Santa Barbara County District Attorney's VW Assistance Program provides comprehensive services, advocacy, and support to victims and witnesses of crime, enabling them to effectively participate in the criminal justice system and restore their physical, financial, and psychological well-being.

Per the Cal OES Grant Agreement, the District Attorney is required to maintain written documentation on file showing authorization by the Board of Supervisors for the District Attorney to sign the Grant Agreement. In order to meet state deadlines and properly receive the grant funding, the District Attorney preliminarily executed the Grant Agreement pending formal authority from the Board of Supervisors.

Background:

Since 1978, the District Attorney has received partial funding through Cal OES to provide comprehensive services to crime victims in Santa Barbara County. Since that time, the VW Assistance Program has evolved to become a county-wide program offering comprehensive mandatory and optional services to all victims of crime. In addition to the 9.20 FTEs partially funded by the grant, volunteer staff from local universities and trade schools are utilized to contact victims of property crimes, DUI with injury offenses, and misdemeanor batteries to provide case status/disposition, restitution assistance, referral counseling, victim compensation, and property return assistance. As time permits and victims' needs warrant, Victim Advocates provide field visits and/or transportation assistance to and from the VW Program offices.

Referrals to the VW Program come from various health, human service, and law enforcement agencies. Upon receipt of a referral, advocates conduct an assessment to determine the extent of optional services necessary. Volunteers provide a range of services including orientation to the criminal justice system, case status, victim of crime claim assistance, property return, and restitution assistance. This allows Program staff to focus on serious misdemeanor and felony cases. For sexual assault cases, Victim Witness Advocates respond during business hours to Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) sites where sexual assault medical exams and forensic interviews are conducted to provide crisis intervention and support services to children and their families. The SART team is comprised of the District Attorney's Office, members of local law enforcement, public health nurses, rape crisis advocates, Child Abuse Listening and Mediation child interview specialists, and Child Welfare Services social workers.

The VW Program is overseen by a Program Director. Two VW Program Supervisors oversee Victim Advocates in North and South County, in addition to providing direct services to victims of crime. The Victim Advocates have a minimum of three years of experience with the criminal justice or social services systems in interviewing, counseling, and providing referrals. The grant also continues to partially fund a Mass Victimization Advocate, who has been specially trained to respond to mass casualty events. This individual is responsible for implementing a Crisis Response Plan and handles a reduced caseload.

Performance Measures:

The District Attorney has been awarded the VW Program grant annually for several years. During the previous grant period (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023), a total of 1,164 victims were provided services. Units of service provided include victims’ rights notification, crisis counseling, court case information, resource and referral counseling, court support, restitution, and victim compensation assistance. Of these 1,164 victims, 800 were identified as new victims who received services for the first time.

In the current grant period, quarterly progress reports will be submitted to Cal OES and will serve as a record for implementing the grant award. Statistics for progress reports must be collected monthly, even if there is no new information to report. Information collected will include but is not limited to the following:

1. Number of victims.
2. Number of new victims.
3. Types of victimizations.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes. Revenues and expenditures are included in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Adopted Budget.

Fiscal Analysis:

The grant award reflects one year of program expenses for the period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. The grant funding spans across two fiscal years. The total project cost is \$751,616, with no required cash match.

The \$751,616 in grant funds includes \$679,241 in Salaries and Employee Benefits, which partially funds 0.04 FTE existing Victim Witness Program Manager, 0.30 FTE existing Victim Witness Supervisors, 4.29 FTE existing VW advocates and .57 FTE existing Mass Victimization Advocate. Also included is \$72,375 in operating costs.

VW Grant Award Schedule		
<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Grant Award Period</u>	<u>Grant Award Amount</u>
2022 VOCA (Victims of Crime Act)	10/1/23 – 9/30/24	\$ 342,270
2023 VOCA (Victims of Crime Act)	10/1/23 – 9/30/24	\$ 342,276
2022 VWA0 (Victim Witness Assistance)	10/1/23 – 9/30/24	\$ 67,070
<i>Total Grant Award</i>		\$ 751,616

Key Contract Risks:

There is minimal risk to the County. Funds are reimbursed after program expenses are incurred.

Staffing Impacts:

None. Grant funds will partially fund 0.04 FTE existing Victim Witness Program Manager, 0.30 FTE existing Victim Witness Supervisors, 4.29 FTE existing VW advocates and .57 FTE existing Mass Victimization Advocate.

Special Instructions:

The Clerk of the Board shall post the Notice of Exemption upon Board approval. Please return the following items to John DeAlba, DA Department Business Specialist:

- a) One (1) Minute Order;
- b) One (1) copy of the fully-executed Grant Award Resolution;
- c) One (1) copy of the fully-executed Grant Award Resolution; and
- d) One (1) copy of the approved Notice of Exemption.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Board Resolution
Attachment B: Notice of Exemption

Authored by:

John DeAlba, Department Business Specialist; (805) 568-2434