



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

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER

Department Name:

District Attorney

Department Number:

021

Agenda Date:

August 18, 2026

Placement:

Administrative Agenda

Estimated Time:

<Insert Time>

Continued Item:

No

If Yes, date from:

<Insert Date>

Vote Required:

Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director: John T. Savrnock, District Attorney

CONTACT: Michael Soderman, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: California Department of Insurance Automobile Insurance Fraud Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2026-27

Concurrences:**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 and authorize the Chair to execute a Resolution authorizing the District Attorney, or designee, to apply for and, if awarded, execute a Grant Award Agreement with the California Department of Insurance (DOI) for the Automobile Insurance Fraud Program, for the award

period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027, with an anticipated award of \$143,500, up to a maximum grant award amount of \$253,000;

- b) Approve and authorize the District Attorney, or designee, to execute any future amendments to extend the term of the Grant Award Agreement through December 31, 2027, or to increase the grant award in an amount not to exceed an additional \$50,000, with the concurrence of Risk Management, County Counsel, and Auditor-Controller; and
- c) Determine that the above recommended actions are not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under 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 District Attorney's Office seeks the Board's approval to reapply for the DOI Automobile Insurance Fraud grant award for an amount up to the maximum possible grant award of \$253,000 for Fiscal Year 2026-27. The DOI Automobile Insurance Fraud Program is designed to prosecute automobile insurance fraud cases which are investigated by various law enforcement agencies. The District Attorney's Office has been awarded these grant funds for many years and must apply for these grant funds on an annual basis.

Discussion:

This grant will continue to provide partial funds for two existing part-time Deputy District Attorneys (DDAs) and one existing part-time Legal Office Professional (LOP) to support the long-term goal of this initiative, which is to reduce automobile insurance fraud in Santa Barbara County through crime prevention and deterrence, through a combination of community education and criminal prosecution of fraud cases. In addition, training of local law enforcement regarding potential signs of auto insurance fraud continues to result in new cases being investigated.

At this time, the actual grant award amount is unknown as the grant funds have not yet been awarded. Historically, the amount awarded to the District Attorney's Office has been less than what was requested in the grant application. Based on prior awards, the department estimates that the DOI Automobile Insurance Fraud Program grant award will be approximately \$143,500 for Fiscal Year 2026-27; as a result, this is the amount that was included in the FY 2026-27 Adopted Budget. However, in keeping with prior practice, the department is requesting Board approval to apply for the maximum possible grant award amount of \$253,000.

Background:

The DOI Automobile Insurance Fraud Program is the primary law enforcement agency responsible for investigating automobile insurance fraud crimes and enforcing the provisions of California Penal Code Sections 548-550. Crimes include, but are not limited to, medical mills, organized crime, staged collision rings, false and fraudulent claims, and organized economic automobile theft groups. As part of this program, the DOI provides grant funding to counties to fund investigation and prosecution of automobile insurance fraud. Financial support to counties is based on county population, the number of suspected fraudulent claims reported, and the Insurance Commissioner's evaluation of the

county's historical performance and plan description. Funding for the program comes from a quarterly fee assessed to each insurer, for each vehicle insured during the quarter.

Performance Measure:

Each district attorney's office receiving annual funds pursuant to Section 1872.8 of the California Insurance Code must submit an annual report to the Insurance Commissioner on the local program and its accomplishments. The District Attorney's Auto Insurance Fraud Unit has been steadily securing restitution for the cases which are submitted. The Office worked closely with private industry through the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) as well as with the DOI, investigating and prosecuting a consistent stream of felonies. Fiscal Year 2025-26 saw lower numbers than previous years in case prosecutions, largely driven by fewer case submissions; eight cases were received, with three under investigation or pending review, and five rejected. This marks a decrease in overall case submissions, and the cases that were submitted were usually minor damage with no loss to the insurance companies.

In Fiscal Year 2025-26, the Office continued to expand the Program's expertise in insurance fraud to the Santa Maria and Lompoc branches of the District Attorney's Office by assigning an attorney to serve Northern Santa Barbara County.

Fiscal Analysis:

The anticipated funding from this grant reflects one year of program expenses for the period of July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. The total anticipated project cost is \$253,000 and does not require any local cash match.

If the District Attorney's application is approved and the full grant amount of \$253,000 is awarded, then the grant funds will support \$235,700 in salaries and benefits as listed in the *Staffing Impacts* chart below, as well as \$17,300 in operating costs including training, IT costs, single audit fees, and indirect costs.

However, based on prior actual award amounts, the anticipated award for Fiscal Year 2026-27 is estimated at \$143,500. Accordingly, revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$143,500 are included in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Adopted Budget. If additional grant funds are awarded, the District Attorney's Office will return to your Board with a budget revision to appropriate the additional funds.

Funding Source	FY 2026-27	Total
General Fund		
State	\$253,000	\$253,000
Federal		
Fees		
Total	\$253,000	\$253,000

Staffing Impacts:

There are no staffing impacts of receiving this grant, as grant funds will continue to fund existing staff. If additional grant funds are awarded, the District Attorneys' Office will dedicate more staff time to Automobile Insurance Fraud Grant Program related activities as listed below.

Legal Position Title	Number of FTE	Estimated Cost
Deputy District Attorney Sr.	0.25	\$49,000
Deputy District Attorney	0.40	\$63,600
Legal Office Professional	0.20	\$17,100
Benefits		\$106,000
Total	0.85	\$235,700

Special Instructions:

Please return the following items to John DeAlba, DA Department Business Specialist:

- a) One (1) Minute Order
- b) One (1) copy of a fully-executed Grant Delegation Resolution

Attachments:

Attachment A – FY 26-27 DOI Auto Resolution (Signature Required)

Attachment B – FY 26-27 Auto Application Report

Contact Information:

John DeAlba

Department Business Specialist

jodealba@countyofsb.org