



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 5/14/2019

File #: 19-710

To: Board of Supervisors

From: District Attorney

Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Grant Program Victim Witness Assistance Program Supplemental Budget and Allocation of 2.5 full time equivalent Victim Witness Program Specialist (4/5 Vote Required)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Authorize the District Attorney to sign all documents necessary to administer, modify and reapply for the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Grant Victim Witness Assistance Program for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 and first quarter FY 2019-20 (requires 4/5 vote);
2. Allocate two 1.0 FTE and one 0.5 permanent part-time Victim Witness Program Specialist positions (class 0689, salary range 347) in budget unit 208 effective immediately (requires 4/5 vote);
3. Approve the attached supplemental budget for FY 2018-19 in Fund 1100, Budget Unit 208, District Attorney's Victim Witness Program (requires 4/5 vote); and
4. Direct the Auditor-Controller to incorporate the attached supplemental budget into the adopted FY 2018-19 budget.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

State of California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Office of Violence Against Women

DISCUSSION:

In October 2018, the Office of the District Attorney of the County of Humboldt submitted an application for annual funding through Cal OES for FY 2018-19, for the District Attorney Victim Witness Assistance Program. The funding is available through the Victim Witness Assistance Office (VWAO) and the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which are a combination of federal and state funds that are managed and dispersed annually to eligible counties by Cal OES. The annual application was approved for funding in the amount of \$442,388. This award amount is \$153,388 over the estimated amount of \$289,000 of during the FY 2018-19 budget preparation.

Funding to the Victim Witness Assistance Program by Cal OES has allowed the program to provide increased direct services to victims and witnesses. Services provided included crisis intervention, emergency assistance, resource and referral assistance, direct counseling/therapy, victim of crime claim assistance, property return, orientation to the criminal justice system, court escort, presentations and training for criminal justice agencies, public presentations and publicity, case status/case disposition, notification of family/friends, employer notification/intervention, and restitution. All of these services are mandated by California Penal Code Sections 13835.4 through 13835.5. Other direct services are provided that are not mandated such as temporary restraining order assistance, providing crime prevention information, witness notification and funeral/burial arrangements.

Due to awareness and outreach to the community the number of direct services to victims and witnesses have increased. This has increased the work load for Victim Witness Program Specialists. The program has identified the need for additional Victim Witness Program Specialist to continue provide community appropriate levels of direct client services mandated by the California Penal Code.

An additional portion of the grant application included an opportunity of optional funding for a Mass Victimization Advocate (MVA). The optional funding is to assist victim witness programs/centers with training to prepare, respond and create a mobile Victim Witness Assistance Specialist (advocate). The Victim Witness Assistance Specialist or MVA position would be able to provide Humboldt County and other counties with assistance in providing a coordinated community response to mass victimization/terrorism incidents.

In 2014, Humboldt County Victim Witness Program Specialists (advocates) responded to Modoc County after a mass victimization incident to provide direct client services to victims, witnesses and families affected by the incident. This type of incident is occurring nationally and to have a MVA prepared to respond would benefit not only Humboldt County in being prepared but also allow Humboldt County to respond to assist other counties that may be affected in a mass victimization incident.

The increase in funding by Cal OES would allow the Humboldt County Victim Witness Program to allocate two 1.0 FTE and one 0.5 permanent part time Victim Witness Program Specialist positions. The increase also allows for the MVA to attend specialized trainings and prepare by collecting and having ready essential items needed for this work.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Approval of the grant award will allow the county to be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$429,272 for services performed in accordance with the scope of work described in the grant application for the period of Oct. 1, 2018 through Sept. 30, 2019 for the Victim Witness Assistance Program (budget 1100 208). This funding will supply salary and benefits in total of \$305,670 along with operating expenses of \$136,718. There is a cash match obligation totaling \$13,116 that will be met by the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office as indirect costs. Total cost of the grant project is \$442,388. The supplemental budget provides salary and benefits for remainder of the fiscal year for new hires and training travel costs totaling \$17,312. The remaining funding is being incorporated into the FY 19-20

budget. There will be no impact to the General Fund.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by seeking outside funding to benefit Humboldt County needs and providing community-appropriate levels of service. This funding also supports building inter-jurisdictional and regional cooperation along with investing in county employees

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Cal OES

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose not to approve the grant award. This is not recommended as it would cause a loss of anticipated revenue for the County of Humboldt. Furthermore, it would leave the community, as well as the region, without the funding to support the salaries and program functions that will provide local service to victims and witnesses of crime.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Supplemental Budget for Victim Witness Assistance Program (1100 208)
2. Grant Award Letter and application

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: C-8

Meeting of: April 10, 2018

File No.: N/A