



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 28, 2021

DATE: August 31, 2021
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Victoria Jakubowski, Fiscal Compliance Officer, District Attorney's Office, 325-6710 vjakubowski@da.washoecounty.us
THROUGH: Christopher J. Hicks, District Attorney
SUBJECT: Recommendation to accept a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$359,836; \$89,959 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide funding to retain a full-time Victim Witness Advocate and two temporary Victim Witness Advocates, two intermittent hourly Forensic Interviewer a full-time Forensic Interviewer, a full-time Human Services Support Specialist II; provide for direct victim services and supplies; retroactive from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; and direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments and retroactively authorize the District Attorney or his designees to sign the grant agreement. (All commission districts)

SUMMARY

The Washoe Board of County Commissioners must accept grant awards and must approve amendments to the adopted fiscal year budget and direct the Comptroller's Office to make necessary budget amendments.

The District Attorney's Office has received funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant through the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS). This grant provides direct victim services for the people in Washoe County. Additionally, this grant will fund the continuation of the following positions who provide victim services:

- One (1) FT Victim Witness Advocate; Position #7000249
- Two (2) Temporary Victim Witness Advocates (via My next Career Path)
- One (1) FT Forensic Interviewer; Position #7000830
- One (2) Intermittent Hourly Forensic Interviewer; Positions #70010580 & #70010831
- One (1) Human Services Support Specialist II; Position #7000829

Award is retroactive to July 1, 2021. This is the first BCC meeting date available after award documents were completed.

County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, secure and healthy communities

AGENDA ITEM # _____

PREVIOUS ACTION

On July 14, 2020, the Board accepted a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$627,000; \$156,750 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide funding to retain a full-time Victim Witness Advocate and two intermittent hourly Victim Witness Advocates; retain an intermittent hourly Forensic Interviewer and create a second intermittent hourly Forensic Interviewer and a full-time Forensic Interviewer for the Child Advocacy Center (CAC); create a full-time Human Services Support Specialist II for the CAC (as evaluated by the Job Evaluation Committee); provide for counseling services at the CAC; fund related travel, training equipment, and direct victim services and supplies; retroactive from July 1, 2020 through July 30, 2021

On June 16, 2020, the Board accepted an Amended Notice of Subaward for the 2020 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$34,027; \$8,507 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide counseling services from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments and retroactively authorize the District Attorney or his designee to sign the grant agreement. This award represents the remaining 50% of total FY2020 award.

On that same date, the Board accepted an Amended Notice of Subaward for the 2020 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$154,430; \$38,608 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide for intermittent-hourly Victim Witness Advocate and Forensic Interviewer positions as approved by the Job Evaluation Committee; from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. Direct Human Resources to create the necessary positions and direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments and retroactively authorize the District Attorney or his designee to sign the grant agreement. This award represents the final 50% of total FY2020 award.

The Board has accepted VOCA grants on behalf of the District Attorney's Office since 2003.

BACKGROUND

The Victim Witness Assistance Center (VWAC) opened in 1998 to provide victim and witness services in WC by increasing survivor access to safety planning, advocacy and support, referrals and emergency resources. VWAC utilizes a trauma-informed approach, assisting survivors in strengthening their psychological capacity to deal with the multiple complex issues they face in accessing safety, recovering from the traumatic effects of domestic violence/other lifetime abuse, and rebuilding their lives. VWAC ensures all survivors of domestic violence have access to advocacy services in an environment that is inclusive, welcoming, destigmatizing, and non-retraumatizing. VWAC serves over 40,000 subpoenas to victims and witnesses annually.

In 2014, the WCDA's office recognized the need for a safe, child-friendly and supportive environment that would give abused and neglected children a voice; one where they would not have to tell their traumatic story to numerous officials in a setting that was not designed to support children. This led to the establishment of the CAC, which utilizes a multidisciplinary approach that brings together professionals from law enforcement, social services, prosecution, mental health, medical and victim advocacy to help children heal from abuse, investigate crimes against children, and hold offenders accountable for such abuse. CAC collaborators/partners include Washoe County Human Services Agency (HSA), Reno Police Department (RPD), Sparks Police Department (SPD), Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO), Washoe County School Police, University of Nevada Reno Police Services, Crisis Call Center, and the WCDA. After rigorous effort, the CAC received accreditation in 2015 through the National Children's Alliance (NCA), which requires the agency meet national standards for all services provided; these include the establishment of a multidisciplinary team (MDT), cultural competence and diversity, victim support and advocacy; medical evaluations; mental health services; case review and tracking and the establishment of a child-focused setting. While most clients are from WC, the CAC also serves clients from rural northern Nevada and California. The CAC serves all clients who need services. In 2019, the CAC served 2,255 families and conducted 472 forensic interviews (with 578 law enforcement cases). The CAC Forensic Interviewers conducted 453 (96%) of all interviews (with the other 19 conducted by local law enforcement partners or the FBI).

Victim Witness Advocates handle caseloads of over 100 victims at one time (due to the length or life of the case), with the majority comprised of victims that have been subjected to domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, elder abuse, robbery, homicide, intoxicated drivers, or exploitation. This funding will help towards reducing caseloads and improve service. In addition to high caseloads, Marsy's Law requires additional responsibilities to meet the constitutional needs of crime victims and ensure proper notifications. Ultimately, this affects customer service for crime victims in Washoe County.

This grant will fund the continuation victim services personnel and temps along with victim supplies, housing, and other necessities.

Award is retroactive to July 1, 2021. This is the first BCC meeting date available after award documents were completed.

GRANT AWARD SUMMARY

Project/Program Name: VOCA Victim Assistance

Scope of the Project: Retain personnel who provide direct victim services and also provide victims with emergency housing and supplies.

Benefit to Washoe County Residents: Enhance victim services with a focus on the victims of domestic violence, abuse, and sexual assault.

On-Going Program Support: Continue to seek General Fund, grants and donations. As this award funds personnel, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the positions abolished accordingly.

Award Amount: \$359,836

Grant Period: July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

Funding Source: US Dept. of Justice – Office of Justice Programs; Victim of Crime Act

Pass Through Entity: State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Children and Family Service

CFDA Number: 16.575

Grant ID Number: 16575-20-061

Match Amount and Type: \$89,959 - General Fund (CC 106100 and 106110)

Sub-Awards and Contracts: Procurements will be processed in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200

FISCAL IMPACT

Should the board accept this grant award and approve these amendments, the FY22 adopted budget will be increased by \$339,360 in revenues and \$339,360 in expenditures as listed in the following accounts:

Cost Object & Description	G/L Account & Description	Amount
IO 11895 – FY2022 VOCA	431100-Federal Grants	\$339,360
IO 11895 – FY2022 VOCA	701412-Salary Adjustment	\$206,377
IO 11895 – FY2022 VOCA	705360-Benefit Adjustment	12,983
IO 11895 – FY2022 VOCA	710300-Operating Expenses	32,000
IO 11895 – FY2022 VOCA	710110-Contract Temp Services	88,000
	Total Expenditures	\$339,360

The required match of \$89,959 will be met through existing FY2022 budget General Fund personnel in Cost Center 106100 and in Cost Center 106110.

As this award funds personnel, if grant funding is reduced or eliminated, the position hours will be reduced and/or the positions abolished accordingly.

Grant funds shall be reported to grantor monthly and drawn as a reimbursement.

Indirect costs of 10% of salary and wages are included in the grant budget' estimated at \$20,476 which will be deposited into IO 11884.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners accept a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$359,836; \$89,959 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide funding to retain a full-time Victim Witness Advocate and two temporary Victim Witness Advocates, two intermittent hourly Forensic Interviewer a full-time Forensic Interviewer, a full-time Human Services Support Specialist II; provide for direct victim services and supplies; retroactive from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; and direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments and retroactively authorize the District Attorney or his designees to sign the grant agreement.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "move to accept a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to the District Attorney's Office in the amount of [\$359,836; \$89,959 required match], from the State of Nevada Department of Health and Human Services Division of Children and Family Service (DCFS) to provide funding to retain a full-time Victim Witness Advocate and two temporary Victim Witness Advocates, two intermittent hourly Forensic Interviewer a full-time Forensic Interviewer, a full-time Human Services Support Specialist II; provide for direct victim services and supplies; retroactive from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022; and direct the Comptroller to make the necessary budget amendments and retroactively authorize the District Attorney or his designees to sign the grant agreement."