



San Bernardino County

Legislation Text

File #: 3914, Agenda Item #: 25

REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO AND RECORD OF ACTION

April 6, 2021

FROM

JASON ANDERSON, District Attorney

SUBJECT

Agreement with the City of Ontario to Provide Victim Advocacy Services

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Approve non-financial agreement between the City of Ontario and the District Attorney's Office to provide onsite Victim Advocacy Services to victims of crime from April 6, 2021 through September 30, 2021.

(Presenter: Michael Fermin, Chief Assistant District Attorney, 382-7714)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

Pursue County Goals and Objectives by Working with Other Agencies.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of this item will not result in the use of additional Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). This is a non-financial agreement with the City of Ontario. The cost of one Victim Advocate position (\$83,829) was included in the 2020-21 Victim/Witness Assistance Program grant from Cal OES, approved by the Board on October 27, 2020 (Item No. 43). Sufficient appropriation and revenue was included in the Department's 2020-21 Adopted Budget and will be included in future recommended budgets.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In accordance with Penal Code Section 13835 et seq., the Bureau of Victim Services of the District Attorney's Office (Department) has administered the Victim/Witness Assistance Program (Program) for the County since 1980. The Program has received grant funding annually since its inception to provide a wide variety of social services to victims of and witnesses to crimes, including referrals to physical and mental health providers, coordination of volunteer support from the community, and assistance in applying for benefits from the Victims of Crime funds for economic losses.

To reach victims and witnesses of crime more quickly, the Department is expanding its hospital-based and police-based advocacy programs. The agreement with the City of Ontario (City) will allow the Department to place a Victim Advocate at the City's Police Department. The Victim Advocate will provide all mandatory and optional services, under California Penal Code 13835.5 to include crisis intervention, resources and referrals, California Victim Compensation Board (Cal VCB) application assistance, emergency funeral/burial assistance to families, emergency relocation assistance and, in limited circumstances, provide timely death notification support with law enforcement personnel.

Job duties will also include responding to crime scenes (once secured) upon request of law enforcement and providing immediate assistance to victims, witnesses and their families. Responding soon after a crime is essential to assist victims and witnesses that may be experiencing a wide range of emotions and feelings who may also need emergency services such as food, shelter and clothing.

The City of Ontario will provide an outfitted office space, office supplies, printing capability, and internet capability so that the Victim Advocate can access the Department's case management system. They will train the Advocate on their procedures and if they require the Advocate to access their databases or computer systems, they will provide a computer specifically for that purpose. They will also provide a separate waiting area for victims or witnesses of crime.

The salary and benefit costs of the Victim Advocate position are being funded by the Department's Victim/Witness Assistance Program grant, from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. The agreement with the City of Ontario was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic but will be in effect for the remainder of the grant cycle and renewed in successive years as funding allows. The Department expects grant funding to continue and will renew the agreement to match the grant period. If funding is reduced or Program goals change, the City of Ontario has the option to end advocacy services or to fund the costs of the Victim Advocate position.

PROCUREMENT

N/A

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (Katherine Hardy, Deputy County Counsel, 387-5437) on March 12, 2021; Finance (Monique Amis, Finance Analyst, 387-5404) on March 16, 2021; and County Finance and Administration (Kelly Welty, Deputy Executive Officer, 387-5423) on March 16, 2021.