

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
District Attorney's Office
Inter-Office Communication

File No. 19-482

Date: May 17, 2019

To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors

From: District Attorney's Office

Subject: Permission to Apply for Additional VOCA Grant Funding and to Accept the Grant if Awarded

We are requesting, pursuant to section 56.06(1) of the county general ordinances, permission to apply for additional Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding of \$1,635,843 (\$1,282,151 federal funds + \$353,692 local and in-kind matches) from the Wisconsin Department of Justice, and to accept the additional VOCA grant funding if awarded.

The District Attorney's office has a longstanding VOCA grant program that presently provides funding for the salaries and fringe benefits of 8.0 FTE employees – 4.0 FTE sensitive crime victim advocates in the sensitive crimes unit, 2.0 FTE victim/witness advocates in the crisis response unit, and 2.0 FTE victim witness advocates in the domestic violence unit.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office on Crime Victims Services, recently announced a competitive round of VOCA funding to provide \$38 million for one year, which is approximately \$10 million above that awarded to all VOCA subgrants in the 2018-2019 continuation grant year, to enhance services to crime victims in Wisconsin. Successful applicants will be awarded a VOCA grant for a one-year period, from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, with the possibility of four additional years of continuation funding.

With this grant application, discussed more fully below, the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office is requesting continuation of the previous funding for eight positions. Additionally, we are requesting three new District Attorney positions, *viz.* a victim/witness advocate in the Violent Crimes Unit, a new victim/witness advocate in the General Crimes Unit and a paralegal to assist in the processing of legal papers relating to, for example, restitution and reimbursement for witness expenses.

There is a match requirement with the VOCA grant. VOCA will fund 80% of program expenses with a 20% local match requirement.

Acceptance of VOCA grant funding, if awarded, will have no tax levy effect because as set forth in Table 1 below, the 20% local match requirement is met with expenditures funded by the county in the existing 2019 budget as well as the likely 2020 budget.

This VOCA grant funding, if awarded, will provide funding of \$1,635,843.00 from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020 in categories as follows:

	Federal	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Category Total
Personnel	673,742.00	0.00	1,642.00	675,384.00
Employee Benefits	379,171.00	0.00	0.00	379,171.00
Staff Development	18,000.00	0.00	0.00	18,000.00
Supplies & Operating Expenses	66,829.00	74,835.00	0.00	141,664.00
Consultants/Contractual	3,550.00	0.00	0.00	3,550.00
Indirect	116,559.00	277,215.00	0.00	393,774.00
Other	24,300.00	0.00	0.00	24,300.00
Total	1,282,151.00	352,050.00	1,642.00	1,635,843.00

Table 1

As reflected above, all salary and fringe benefit costs for direct VOCA staff (other than \$1,642 in volunteer hours) are funded with VOCA grant monies at the level of 100%. This includes the three new positions described above. Salary amounts were submitted with adjustment for possible future wage increases during the life of the overall three to five year grant cycle.

The grant application includes a request for Staff Development in the amount of \$18,000, consisting of expenses related to education and training. This is funded with VOCA grant monies at the level of 100%.

The grant application includes \$3,550 for consultants, who will be retained to do in-house training for victim witness professionals in the District Attorney's Office. This is funded with VOCA grant monies at the level of 100%.

The grant application includes for \$141,664 for Supplies and Operating Expenses. As set forth in Table 1, this consists of \$66,829 in federal funds and \$74,835 in local match. The match funds consist primarily of the rent paid by the District Attorney's office for space allocable to the Victim Witness programs run by our office. That allocable amount is conservatively estimated at \$64,795. The balance of the local match consists of office supplies and copy machine paper paid for by the county and used to support victim and witness services. Computer equipment for the three new positions is included in this amount. The Supplies and Operating Expenses will primarily fund victim waiting areas including furniture, reading materials, electronics such as televisions, snack, beverages and convenience items such as baby wipes and diapers. Because the VOCA grant application emphasizes a need for employee wellness,² our application includes expenses related to improvements and

¹ This item consists of Milwaukee County DA's Office volunteer staff calculated at \$16.10/hour x 100 hours.

² The grant announcement provides at page 8, "OCVS believes staff retention and staff well-being enhances the effectiveness of victim services throughout the state."

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modifications to office space which will be converted to a staff break room. Furnishings for this break room are also included.

The grant application includes \$393,774 for Indirect expenses. This includes a 10% *de minimus* recoupment of indirect costs of \$116,559, *i.e.*, the federal portion identified in Table 1. The balance of the indirect funds are match funds of \$277,215. This local match amount consists of salaries and fringe costs of non-VOCA staff who provide supervision and/or support services for victim witness, *i.e.*, VOCA functions.

Finally, the grant application includes \$24,300 for "Other" expenses. This is funded with VOCA grant monies at the level of 100%. It includes expenses for such things as courthouse food vouchers and emergency funds for bus fare or basic necessities to assist victims and witnesses when appearing in court. The application also includes a request for a trained service dog. Research and practice have demonstrated that the presence of a trained service dog has a calming effect on victims and witnesses of crime, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

The VOCA grant application is intended to address the demands for victim-witness services in the largest county of the State. Between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018, the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office provided services to 14,526 victims of crime and 2,770 witnesses of crime. A total of 37,166 criminal cases were referred for charges and 33,994 were managed via prosecution or prosecution based early intervention programs.

The three new proposed positions, two victim witness advocates and a paralegal, will help to meet these extreme demands. The non-personnel requests are intended to provide assistance to victims to mitigate the pain, stress and overall life-disruption represented incidental to being a victim of, or witness to, crime. Likewise, the grant application seeks to achieve the VOCA goals, as stated in their funding announcement, of staff retention and staff well-being.

As noted above, acceptance of this additional VOCA grant funding will have no tax levy effect the 20% local match requirement is met with expenditures that are already funded by the county.

Respectfully Submitted,



John T. Chisholm
District Attorney