



# Board Agenda Item 29

DATE: March 28, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: John Zaroni, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator

SUBJECT: Retroactive 2022 DNA Backlog Reduction Grant Application Acceptance and Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively approve and authorize the Sheriff's previous submittal of an online grant application on behalf of the County of Fresno to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, for the 2022 Forensic DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program Grant (\$357,528);**
- 2. Approve, ratify and authorize the Sheriff's, or his designee's, execution of retroactive Grant Award Agreement (Number 15PBJA-22-GG-01610-DNAX), in the Justice Grants System, which requires compliance with assurances and certifications that relate to conduct during the performance of the award/agreement on behalf of the County of Fresno to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the 2022 Forensic Casework DNA Backlog Reduction Grant, effective October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2024 in the amount of \$357,528;**
- 3. Adopt Budget Resolution increasing FY 2022-23 appropriations and estimated revenues for Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of \$144,038 (4/5 vote); and**
- 4. Authorize the Sheriff, or his designee, to sign and submit claims for reimbursement, activity reports, notices, extend the grant ending date to expend allocated funding, and other related documents consistent with the grant award.**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with these actions. Divisions of the Department of Justice (DOJ) have awarded this grant to assist local forensic laboratories that conduct DNA analysis with reducing casework backlog. This grant continuation will fund the purchase and replacement of laboratory equipment, laboratory staff forensic training, DNA case analysis, and a dedicated Criminalist position to assist the Sheriff's Forensic Laboratory in reducing this turnaround time. The competitive application was submitted electronically on July 6, 2022 to the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance to meet the application deadline. The Sheriff's Office was notified on September 26, 2022 that the application was preliminarily accepted for funding. The first recommended action retroactively approves submittal of the online grant application on behalf of the County. The second recommended action authorizes the Sheriff's, or his designee's, execution of the retroactive agreement. As required by the DOJ, all documentation will be signed electronically and submitted via the new DOJ web application. The fourth recommended action authorizes the Sheriff or his designee to sign and submit documents associated with this grant agreement. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the grant award will be cancelled, resulting in a de-obligation of the allocated Federal funding. This will result in backlogged DNA cases in the Sheriff's Office Forensic

Laboratory that can take an average of 70 days to be processed.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

The recommended agreement is retroactive to October 1, 2022. The competitive application was submitted electronically on July 6, 2022 to the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance to meet the application deadline. The Sheriff's Office was notified on September 26, 2022 that the application was preliminarily accepted for funding. Work on this 2022 grant will commence at the conclusion of the current 2021 grant in September 2023.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with these actions. The award includes \$357,528 for the 2022 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant, with no match requirement. The Budget Resolution will increase FY 2022-23 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 31116338 DNA Backlog Reduction, in the amount of \$144,038 including \$52,200 for the purchase and replacement of specific laboratory equipment; \$73,400 for the service, maintenance and calibration of specific laboratory equipment, and \$18,438 for the outsourcing of DNA casework. Year two of the grant will fund continuing Salaries and Benefits for the dedicated Criminalist position in the amount of \$198,466, and Service and Supplies in the amount of \$15,024 for laboratory staff to attend forensic training workshops. Year two allocations totaling \$213,490 will be included in future requested budgets. The Sheriff's Office anticipates expending the full amount of the grant prior to September 30, 2024.

DISCUSSION:

The Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory has been awarded the 2022 DNA Backlog Reduction and Capacity Enhancement grant through the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance for the time period of October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2024. Currently, a dedicated Criminalist position funded by the current 2021 and prior DNA Backlog grants has been working DNA cases and reducing the backlog. However, it takes an average of 70 days to process, record, screen, and analyze a forensic biology/DNA case from submission to delivery of results to the submitting agency.

Your Board approved the 2021 DNA Backlog Reduction grant which is currently in progress on February 22, 2022. Prior to this, your Board approved the 2020 DNA Backlog Reduction grant on January 12, 2021.

The grant funds in the amount of \$357,528 will be used to further reduce or eliminate backlogged DNA casework. The Sheriff's Office is recommending the purchase and replacement of specific laboratory equipment, maintenance and service of equipment, as well as forensic training workshops for laboratory staff, outsourcing of DNA cases, and, continued funding of the Criminalist position to decrease the 70-day turnaround time for the analysis of sexual assault, homicide and other requested DNA analysis that are received by the laboratory. This includes the processing of sexual assault kits and autopsy kits received from within Fresno County.

The 2022 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant funds will be utilized in the following way:

- Servicing and Maintenance of laboratory equipment \$73,400
- Outsourcing DNA casework to private accredited fee-for-service vendors \$18,438
- Continued funding of dedicated Criminalist position \$198,466
- Travel to training for four DNA Forensic Lab staff members \$15,024
- Purchase and replacement of specific laboratory equipment \$52,200

It should be noted that once the Award acceptance document is executed by the Sheriff or his designee, and the DOJ, the award documents become the final agreement between the County and the DOJ. As required

by the DOJ, all documentation will be signed electronically and submitted via the new DOJ web application.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #31, February 22, 2022  
BAI #17, January 12, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Grant Application  
On file with Clerk - Grant Award / Agreement  
On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution (Org 3111)

CAO ANALYST:

Samantha Buck