Board Agenda Item 20

DATE: February 25, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: 2024 Coverdell Forensic Grant Application and Award

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Approve and adopt Resolution authorizing the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator, or his designee, as the official designated to execute a Grant Application/Agreement including, Certificate of Assurance and Subrecipient Grants Management Assessment forms for the 2024 Paul Coverdell grant from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program, including any Amendments and extensions, which assists forensic laboratories to improve their efficiency and effectiveness to provide forensic science services through improvement of the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services, effective April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026 ($51,136);**
2. **Approve and authorize the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator, or his designee, to execute the required Authorization for the Grant Subaward Certificate of Assurance of Compliance;**
3. **Adopt a Budget Resolution increasing the FY 2024-25 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator Org 3111 in the amount of $161,252 (4/5 vote); and**
4. **Adopt a Budget Resolution increasing the FY 2024-25 appropriations in the Sheriff's Criminalistic Laboratory Fund, Org 1451 in the amount of $44,889 (4/5 vote).**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with these actions. The non-competitive grant application ("2024 Coverdell Forensic Grant") was exclusively issued to thirty crime laboratories in California, which includes the Fresno County Sheriff's Office, contingent on your Board's approval. Divisions of the Department of Justice (DOJ), such as the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) working through Cal OES, have awarded this grant to assist local forensic laboratories in improving the quality and timeliness of forensic services. The Sheriff's Office (Department) will use the grant funds to provide continuing education and training in technical and professional skills to the laboratory's forensic scientists, and, additionally, to fund the purchase of a 3D comparison microscope equipment. The Department is requesting your Board to authorize the Sheriff or his designee as the designated official to submit this documentation, including any amendments, extensions, and modifications. Once the Grant Subaward Face Sheet, Certification of Assurance of Compliance, and Subrecipient Grants Management Assessment with Cal OES are signed by the Sheriff or his designee, the award documentation becomes the final agreement between the County and Cal OES. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

The non-approval of this item will result in the loss of the Cal OES grant funds with an associated decrease in the professional training opportunities for forensic staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with these actions. The award includes $51,136 for the 2024 Coverdell Forensic Grant. There is no match requirement for receipt of the funds. Approval of the third recommended action will increase the FY 2024-25 appropriations and estimated revenues in the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of $161,252 to provide continuing education and training to the laboratory's forensic scientists, and for the purchase of one 3D virtual comparison microscope to be used in firearms examination. The microscope will be purchased utilizing Cal OES grant funds and through an Operating Transfer in from the Sheriff's Criminalistic Laboratory Fund, Org 1451. The approval of the fourth recommended action will increase the FY 2024-25 appropriations by $44,889 in the Criminalistic Laboratory Special Revenue Fund Org 1451, using available fund balance to fund an Operating Transfer Out to the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111.

DISCUSSION:

The 2024 Coverdell Forensic Grant funding, offered and administered through Cal OES, will be used to address current needs in the forensic crime lab. The grant period will run for one year, from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026; however, the funds have not been received or spent. The grant funds will be used to provide continuing education and training in technical and professional skills to the laboratory's forensic scientists in order to improve their level of expertise, ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of laboratory work, and in turn maintain quality and reduce case turnaround time. Additionally, a 3D virtual comparison microscope to be used for forensic evaluation will be acquired with these grant funds and the Sheriff's Criminalistic Lab Funds, established under Health and Safety Code Sections 11350-11360, which related to controlled substances. Revenue from these funds shall be used exclusively to fund costs incurred by criminalistic laboratories, such as for the purchase and maintenance of lab equipment and for continuing education. Your Board approved the prior 2023 Coverdell Forensic Grant on February 20, 2024, 2022 Coverdell Forensic Grant on March 28, 2023, and the 2021 Coverdell Forensic Grant on March 22, 2022.

In addition to the standard State and Federal certifications included in the Board of Supervisors' Administrative Policy No. 47, the 2024 Coverdell Forensic Grant also requires the certification summarized here: the County must approve a Certification of Assurance of Compliance-FSIA, which includes details regarding Federal Grant Funds; Equal Employment Opportunity Program (EEOP); California Environmental Quality Act; Civil Rights Compliance; and Special Conditions (as listed in the Certification of Assurance) for the Subaward Eligibility Requirement Certification; and Proof of Authority from the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, CalOES requires the County to sign a Certification as to External Investigations agreeing to an external investigation in the case of an alleged misconduct or serious negligence substantially affecting the integrity of forensic results by an employee or subcontractor of the Fresno County Sheriff.

Additionally, all sub-recipient grantees of the grant are required to obtain a Resolution that states that the Authorized Agent, in this case, the Sheriff, or his designee, is in fact authorized to execute the agreement including any amendments and extension. The authorization for execution of all necessary documents will facilitate implementation of the grant. The Authorized Agent is limited in that the Authorized Agent cannot enter into any future executable documentation that in any way alter, amend, or add to or reduce, the County's fiscal obligation, the length or term of the agreement, or other material terms of the agreement. The Authorized Agent is the designee of the Sheriff for the execution of documents related to this grant.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI # 36, March 22, 2022
BAI # 28, March 28, 2023
BAI # 20, February 20, 2024

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Application with Cal OES
On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution (Org 3111)
On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution (Org 1451)
On file with Clerk - Resolution of Authorization

CAO ANALYST:

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