



Board Agenda Item 28

DATE: August 20, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Agreement and Annual Certification Report with Federal Government for the Sheriff's Office to participate in the Federal Equitable Sharing Program

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute annual Equitable Sharing Agreement and Certification with the Federal Government authorizing the Sheriff's Office to participate in the Federal Equitable Sharing Program and certifying as to funds received and expended during FY 2023-24 (received \$71,683 and expended \$265,195);**
- 2. Authorize the Sheriff to execute, as Agency Head, and submit the Equitable Sharing Agreement and Certification; and**
- 3. Authorize the Sheriff, or his or her designee, to execute any and all "Applications for Transfer of Federally Forfeited Property (DAG-71)" and other required documents, as appropriate, and designate a Sheriff's Office employee to accept forfeited property, transfer documents, and/or receive funds.**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions, which will allow the Sheriff's Office to continue to participate in Federal asset forfeiture cases. The annual certification report is also a requirement of this agreement and is recommended to be filed within 60 days after the end of the fiscal year. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

There are no alternative actions. If the recommended actions are not approved, the Department would not receive a share of federal forfeited assets.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The recommended agreement allows the Sheriff's Office to participate in Federal asset forfeiture cases, and the certification is an accounting of federal monies received and expended during FY 2023-24. The beginning FY 2023-24 balance for Federal asset forfeiture totaled \$1,213,091. The Sheriff's Office participated in multiple narcotics investigations, which resulted in the receipt of \$71,683 in asset forfeiture funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Sheriff's Office did not receive any asset forfeiture funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury during FY 2023-24. As of June 30, 2024, \$45,777 in interest was earned, for a total of \$117,460 received in FY 2023-24 in the Federal Asset Forfeiture Special Revenue Fund(s). Federal asset forfeiture funds totaling \$265,195 were expended in FY 2023-24, bringing the current balance to \$1,065,357.

DISCUSSION:

In order for the County of Fresno to receive a share of asset forfeitures, because of the Sheriff Office's involvement in arrests and confiscation of property/cash in accordance with asset forfeiture laws, an executed Federal Equitable Sharing Agreement and Certification must be on file with the Federal Government.

The Federal Equitable Sharing Agreement sets forth the requirements for participation in the federal equitable sharing program and the restriction upon the use of federally forfeited cash, property, proceeds, and any interest earned, which are equitably shared with the participating law enforcement agencies.

Shared funds must be used to increase or supplement the resources of the receiving state or local law enforcement agency. Shared resources shall not be used to replace or supplant the resources of the state or local law enforcement agency.

Additionally, the Department of Justice requires that state and local law enforcement agencies requesting an equitable share of proceeds complete and electronically submit an Application for Transfer of Federally Forfeited Property (Form DAG-71) within 45 days of seizure. The field office will make a recommendation on the agency's sharing percentage based upon the information reported on this form. These percentages are ultimately approved by either the seizing agency headquarters, U.S. Attorney's Office, or the Criminal Division.

During FY 2023-24, the Sheriff's Office participated in narcotics operations that resulted in asset forfeiture. As a result, the U.S. Department of Justice transferred \$71,683, and there were no transfers from the U.S. Department of Treasury to the Sheriff's Office, and this is reported as required in the Annual Certification Report section of the form.

The Affidavit certifies that the Agency (i.e., the Sheriff's Office) head, (i.e., the Sheriff) and the Governing Body Head (i.e., the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors) have read and understand their obligations under the Equitable Sharing Agreement, the Guide to Equitable Sharing for State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies, and any related updates, and that the information submitted in conjunction with the document is an accurate accounting of funds received/spent by the Sheriff's Office in compliance with the National Code of Professional Conduct for Asset Forfeiture. This includes certifying the Sheriff's Office is in compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of the cited laws, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in any federally assisted program or activity, or on the basis of sex in any federally assisted education program or activity. It also certifies that the Sheriff's Office has not suffered an adverse finding on claims that it has violated the discrimination statutes or entered into a settlement of such claims.

Approval of the recommended actions will allow the Sheriff's Office to continue to participate in Federal asset forfeiture cases and submit the required forms in the event of an asset seizure.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #23, August 22, 2023

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Equitable Sharing Agreement and Certification

CAO ANALYST:

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