



# Board Agenda Item 17

DATE: January 12, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Margaret Mims, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator

SUBJECT: Retroactive 2020 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 Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, for the 2020 Forensic DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program Grant;**
2. **Approve, ratify and authorize the Sheriff, or her designee, to execute, accept, and submit electronically, a retroactive Grant Award Agreement Number 2020-DN-BX-0137 on behalf of the County of Fresno to the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the 2020 Forensic Casework DNA Backlog Reduction Grant, effective October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022 in the amount of \$376,101; and**
3. **Adopt Budget Resolution increasing FY 2020-21 appropriations and estimated revenues for Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of \$233,842 (4/5 vote); and**
4. **Authorize the Sheriff, or her 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 additional 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. Currently, it can take an average of 70 days for DNA cases to be processed. 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 on July 31, 2020 to the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance to meet the application deadline. The Sheriff's Office was notified on October 13, 2020 that the application was preliminarily accepted for funding. The second recommended action authorizes the Sheriff's execution of the agreement. As required by the DOJ, all documentation will be signed electronically and submitted via the new DOJ web application.

It should be noted that once the Grant Award Face Sheet is executed by the Sheriff or her designee, and the DOJ, the award documents become the final agreement between the County and the DOJ. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the grant award will be withdrawn. This will result in backlogged DNA cases in the Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory continuing to take an average of 70 days to be processed.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

The Department was notified on October 13, 2020 of the preliminary award. Final award will be made subsequent to your Board's approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with these actions. The award includes \$376,101 for the 2020 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant, with no match requirement. The Resolution will increase FY 2020-21 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 31116338 DNA Backlog Reduction, in the amount of \$233,842, for the purchase and replacement of specific laboratory equipment, and \$52,201 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 \$127,235, and service and supplies in the amount of \$15,024 for laboratory staff to attend forensic training workshops. Year two allocations totaling \$142,259 will be included in future requested budgets. The Sheriff's Office anticipates expending the full amount of the grant prior to September 30, 2022.

DISCUSSION:

The Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory has been awarded the 2020 DNA Backlog Reduction and Capacity Enhancement grant through the Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance for the time period of October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022. Currently, a dedicated Criminalist position funded by the current 2018 and 2019 DNA Backlog grant 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.

The grant funds in the amount of \$376,101 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, 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 2020 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant funds will be utilized in the following way:

- Thermomixer C (1) \$ 6,641
- DNA Robotic Extraction Instruments (2) \$ 126,000
- DNA Extraction Centrifuges (4) \$ 14,000
- Lap Top Computers (10) \$ 35,000
- Outsourcing DNA casework to private accredited fee-for-service vendors \$ 52,201
- Continued funding of dedicated Criminalist position \$ 127,235
- Travel to Training for four DNA Lab staff members \$ 15,024

It should be noted that once the Grant Award Face Sheet is executed by the Sheriff or her 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 #22, February 4, 2020  
BAI #31, December 4, 2018

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution (Org 3111)

CAO ANALYST:

Yussel Zalapa