



County of Fresno

Hall of Records, Rm. 301
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Fresno, California
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Legislation Text

File #: 19-1742, **Version:** 1

DATE: February 4, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

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

SUBJECT: Retroactive 2019 DNA Backlog Reduction Grant Application; Acceptance and Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively authorize the Sheriff's previous submittal of a grant application to the National Institute of Justice, Department of Justice, for the 2019 Forensic DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program Grant;**
- 2. Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute and accept a retroactive grant award agreement from the National Institute of Justice, Department of Justice, for the 2019 Forensic Casework DNA Backlog Reduction Grant for the period of January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021 (\$250,000);**
- 3. Adopt Budget Resolution increasing FY 2019-20 appropriations and estimated revenues for Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 3111 in the amount of \$59,100 (4/5 vote); and**
- 4. Authorize the Sheriff, or her authorized representative, to sign claims for reimbursement, activity reports, notices, and other related documents consistent with the above 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 74 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 May 7, 2019 to the National Institute of Justice, Department of Justice, to meet the application deadline contingent on your Board's approval. The Sheriff's Office was notified on September 12, 2019, that the application was preliminarily accepted for funding. Notification was received on November 20, 2019 that subsequent documentation satisfying special conditions had been accepted and final award will be made subsequent to your Board's approval.

It should be noted that once the Grant Award Face Sheet is executed by the Chairman 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 74 days to be processed.

RETROACTIVE AGREEMENT:

The Department was notified on September 12, 2019 of the preliminary award. On October 23, 2019, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) requested clarifications on the application. Clarifications were submitted and confirmation from NIJ was received on November 20, 2019 of the clearing of special conditions. 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 \$250,000 for the 2019 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant with no match requirement. The Resolution will increase FY 2019-20 appropriations and estimated revenues for the Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator's Org 31116338 DNA Backlog Reduction in the amount of \$59,100 for the purchase and replacement of specific laboratory equipment. Year two of the grant will fund continuing Salaries and Benefits for the dedicated Criminalist position in the amount of \$146,306, service and supplies in the amount of \$31,882 for the outsourcing of DNA casework, and \$12,712 for laboratory staff to attend forensic training workshops. Year two allocations totaling \$190,900 will be included in future requested budgets. The Sheriff's Office anticipates expending the full amount of the grant prior to December 31, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

The Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory has been awarded the 2019 DNA Backlog Reduction and Capacity Enhancement grant through the National Institute of Justice for the time period of January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. Currently, a dedicated Criminalist position funded by the current 2018 DNA Backlog grant has been working DNA cases and reducing the backlog. However, it takes an average of 74 days to process, record, screen, and analyze a forensic biology/DNA case from submission to delivery of results to the submitting agency.

Attachment "A", issued by the DOJ, is a description of the DNA Backlog Reduction program including parameters for the use of funds. The grant funds in the amount of \$250,000 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 74-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 2019 Forensic DNA Backlog Reduction Grant funds will be utilized in the following way:

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| • Water purification units (3) | \$ 24,300 |
| • Thermomixer -C - mixing heat blocks (3) | \$ 19,800 |
| • Vertical Autoclave (1) | \$ 15,000 |
| • Travel costs for staff to attend Forensics Training Workshop(s) | \$ 12,712 |
| • Outsourcing DNA casework to private accredited fee-for-service vendors | \$ 31,882 |
| • Continued funding of dedicated Criminalist position | \$ 146,306 |

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #31, December 4, 2018
BAI #17, December 12, 2017
BAI #25, December 6, 2016

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Agreement with National Institute of Justice
On file with Clerk - Budget Resolution (Org 3111)
Attachment "A" Program Information

CAO ANALYST:

Jeannie Z. Figueroa