

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Contract Authorization

Authorization to submit an application, accept funding and enter into a contract with the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS) to expand the Victim/Witness Services Program at the Albany County District Attorney's Office

Date: August 16, 2022
Submitted By: P. David Soares, District Attorney
Department: Albany County District Attorney's Office
Title: District Attorney
Phone: 518-487-5460
Department Rep.
Attending Meeting: P. David Soares

Purpose of Request:

- ☐ Adopting of Local Law
- ☐ Amendment of Prior Legislation
- ☐ Approval/Adoption of Plan/Procedure
- ☐ Bond Approval
- ☒ Budget Amendment
- ☒ Contract Authorization
- ☐ Countywide Services
- ☐ Environmental Impact/SEQR
- ☐ Home Rule Request
- ☐ Property Conveyance

☒ Other: (state if not listed) Authorization to submit an application and enter into a contract with the New York State Office of Victim Services to expand the Victim/Witness Specialist Program.

CONCERNING BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Increase/decrease category (choose all that apply):

- ☐ Contractual
- ☐ Equipment
- ☒ Fringe
- ☒ Personnel
- ☐ Personnel Non-Individual
- ☒ Revenue

Increase Account/Line No.: *A1165 12237 001 120092, * A1165 12237 002 120164,
*A1165 12238 001 120095, *A1165 12262 001 130166, *A1165 89010, *A1165 89030, *A1165 89060, +
new line for Volunteer Coordinator
Source of Funds: A1165 03496
Title Change: n/a

CONCERNING CONTRACT AUTHORIZATIONS

Type of Contract:

- ☐ Change Order/Contract Amendment
- ☐ Purchase (Equipment/Supplies)
- ☐ Lease (Equipment/Supplies)
- ☐ Requirements
- ☐ Professional Services
- ☐ Education/Training
- ☒ Grant

Choose an item.

Submission Date Deadline 8/15/2022

Contract Terms/Conditions:

Party (Name/address):

New York State Office of Victim Services
Alfred E. Smith Building
80 South Swan Street, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12210

Additional Parties (Names/addresses):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Amount/Raise Schedule/Fee:

\$489,709.66

Scope of Services:

in Albany County.

The funds required will be used to support victims of crime

Bond Res. No.:

TBD

Date of Adoption:

TBD

CONCERNING ALL REQUESTS

Mandated Program/Service:

Yes ☐ No ☒

If Mandated Cite Authority:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Is there a Fiscal Impact:

Yes ☒ No ☐

Anticipated in Current Budget:

Yes ☒ No ☐

County Budget Accounts:

Revenue Account and Line: A1165 03496

Revenue Amount: \$489, 709.66

Appropriation Account and Line: *A1165 12237 001 120092, * A1165 12237 002 120164,
*A1165 12238 001 120095, *A1165 12262 001 130166, *A1165 89010, *A1165 89030, *A1165 89060 +
new line for Volunteer Coordinator

Appropriation Amount: \$489,709.66

Source of Funding – (Percentages)

Federal:	0
State:	100%
County:	0
Local:	0

Term

Term: (Start and end date) October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2025

Length of Contract: three years (36 months)

Impact on Pending LitigationYes ☐ No ☒If yes, explain: N/A**Previous requests for Identical or Similar Action:**

Resolution/Law Number: Resolution No. 338

Date of Adoption: August 12, 2019

Justification: (state briefly why legislative action is requested)

To apply for and accept the contract with the New York State Office of Victim Services (OVS) for funding for the Crime Victim/Witness Program with the Albany County District Attorney's Office. OVS has issued an award letter for this program which is good for a three years with a possibility of a 2 year renewal. This grant is to assist in funding and expanding the victim assistance program. There is no program match requirement for year one of this grant, however, years two and three require a 25% match.

The Victim Witness Specialist with the Albany County District Attorney's Office provide direct services to victims and witness of crime in Albany County. They specifically provide system based (court / law enforcement) assistance at each stage of the criminal justice process. The program provides safety planning, service referrals, assistance in requesting restitution, provide court accompaniment, provide notifications of criminal justice outcomes and continued support to victims and/or their surviving family members during post-conviction events such as return of property and Parole Board Hearing preparation. When a series of New York State criminal justice reforms took effect in 2020, the ACDA was forced to radically alter the way it does business. We switched to digital case management to comply with mandatory rapid E-Discovery. As a result, our bureau is now assigned to victim files at the earliest possible point. This is a huge benefit for crime victims in terms of consistency, but it has created tremendous workflow stress on our victim specialists. Because cases are assigned earlier, new files are expedited for review and assignment. Caseloads for each specialist have dramatically increased, and they must address myriad issues in local courts. Victim contact must not only happen faster but also more frequently due to bail reform. As a result of bail reform,

defendants are more likely to be released. This means more time on the phone doing safety planning and explaining changes in the criminal justice process. The increased use of appearance tickets has resulted in far more failures to appear, which in turn requires more frequent contact with victims. In addition the Victim Witness Specialists work with the DA Office's intake Unit to assure that local court advocates in our partnering county Crime Victims agency are receiving the necessary documents they require to assist victims in the local courts. Based on these concerns we requested and received increased funding from New York State Office of Victim Services in order to continue our efforts to serve all victims of crime.