



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Susan E. Manheimer
Interim Chief of Police

SUBJECT: 2020 Law Enforcement Victim
Specialist Program Grant

DATE: October 26, 2020

City Administrator 
Approval

Date Nov 19, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Accept And Appropriate Four Hundred Thirty Six Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Nine Dollars (\$436,689) To The Oakland Police Department For A Three-Year Law Enforcement Victim Specialist Program (LEVS) Grant From The US Department Of Justice Office of Victim Services (DOJ OVS) To Fund One Full Time Equivalent (1 FTE) Victim Specialist In the Crime Investigation Division To Enhance The Quality And Quantity Of Services Available To Victims of Crime.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Approval of the proposed resolution will allow OPD and DOJ OVS to enter into a three-year grant agreement in the amount of \$436,689 via funding from the Crime Victims Fund to hire a Victim Specialist to assist victims and survivors of crime. OPD plans for this position to serve as a gap between OPD personnel and community support providers. Also, this position will help OPD better support the trauma-based needs of victims and survivors – especially those affected by violent crime. Grant funds will cover the following investments:

- Salary and benefits to hire one full-time Victim Specialist
- Marketing, printing, and supply expenses related to supporting and promoting the services available to victims of crime and the City of Oakland at large.

The grant term is from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Victims and survivors of crime, especially violent crime, often feel deeply traumatized and will benefit from immediate and ongoing access to crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, education, and information. Victims and survivors impacted by the trauma of violent crime will also benefit from referrals for a range of social services (and for witnesses and communities). Oakland continues to have the highest rates of crime in California for cities with a population over 100,000. Oakland has experienced a fifty percent reduction in homicides between 2012-2018, largely attributed to its Ceasefire Strategy. However, violent crime is still a major problem

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in Oakland and violent crime rates have been on the rise in 2019 and 2020. Greater levels of violent crime unfortunately equate with greater levels of traumatized victims and survivors.

Police personnel are also traumatized by violent crime; many sworn and professional staff have been deeply affected by scenes of violence and death in Oakland. An analysis of the 50 largest cities nationwide that submitted data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Universal Crime Reporting program revealed that Oakland ranks first in the nation in terms of violent crimes occurring citywide per officer. In 2018, there were 7.5 violent crimes per officer, more than three times the rate of San Francisco.¹

OPD strives to provide an array of victim services, but is ready to enter a second stage of enhancement. OPD hopes this new position will enhance internal coordination processes to facilitate greater internal efficiencies and ensure victims of crime are well-connected to support. The overall goal of hiring a Victim Specialist is to enhance and expand OPD's network of care for victims of violence in Oakland through coordinated provision of direct services, continued follow-up care, advocacy, criminal justice support, and community agency referrals.

In early 2020, the DOJ COPS office released a Request for Proposal (RFP) grant program, soliciting proposals for their Law Enforcement Victims Specialist Program Grant (LEVST) Program Grant, and on October 6, 2020, OPD learned that its application for a three-year, \$436,689 grant had been approved.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

OPD's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is comprised of the Homicide Section, Police Evidence Unit, Robbery and Burglary Section, Special Victims Section, as well as the Crime Analysis and General Crimes Sections. CID does not have a unit or personnel dedicated to supporting the trauma-based needs of victims and crime survivors. CID staff help victims address immediate needs, often without having full knowledge of the array of community services that may complement OPD's work. Additionally, OPD staff are stretched to capacity in terms of providing assistance to certain individuals who may need extraordinary levels of assistance or greater engagement in order to feel safe and supported. For example, if a robbery victim's glasses broke during the robbery, there is no one at OPD to assist that person in obtaining compensation.

OPD command believe in the value of victim support. As OPD works to repair relationships in the community and address increasing violent crime in Oakland, the Victim Specialist can play an important role – from assisting a grieving family member with the release of victim's possessions (car, phone, wallet, jewelry) to helping them access and navigate an array of support services. The overall goal of this three-year grant project is to enhance and formalize a network of support for victims of violent crime in Oakland. The specialist will be able to provide referrals for direct services, continued follow-up care and advocacy, criminal justice support.

¹ <https://app.box.com/s/icb4flrew3pdwth9apirnae2x79vs9c/file/540472445376>

There is a coordination with a variety of social services agencies and referral partners. However, OPD recognizes that more can be done to improve victims' experiences when engaging with OPD during difficult circumstances.

Specifically, this grant will allow OPD to hire one full-time Victim Specialist to work across all units of CID. The specialist's responsibilities will be to:

1. Coordinate facilitation of information and resources for victims of crime across sections and units and disseminate information to OPD staff; and
2. Ensure victims and survivors are connected to the community support services they need and deserve, and that they receive continued support and advocacy as their cases move through the criminal justice system.

The objective of the Victim Specialist will be to assist the entire CID, since there are already advocates, long-established community partners who assist with victim services, and point people within each Unit that the Victim Specialist can build upon. Staff still frequently work in silos or are unaware of services available outside their immediate area of expertise, largely due to lack of internal capacity to research options for victims or to follow up with them; the victim specialist will be able to have awareness of the crime and victim context and have more capacity to support victims with outside support services.

OPD determined the following objectives for the Victim Specialist position over the course of the three-year grant, with guidance from the Chattanooga Police Department (having developed expertise in this area²) and the International Association of the Chiefs of Police:

- Identify and fill the gaps in social services where there are few or no current resources or advocacy being provided to victims of crime.
- Create a cohesive and streamlined response to violent crime victims engaged with OPD. OPD recognizes the need to improve online/remote access to information and solutions.
- Increase awareness of community resources and social services available to crime victims, victim's rights, and the criminal justice process.
- Receive comprehensive and ongoing training and materials that organize referral and advocacy information for staff to disseminate.
- Organize meetings with OPD advocates in CID and the Victim Specialist to establish and maintain relationships and to improve existing processes/systems.
- Determine criteria to indicate successes and challenges for the Victim Specialist.
- Set goals are tracked on a quarterly basis over the course of the three-year grant period.
- Determine indicators of success with respect to outcomes for crime victims.
- Implement changes that create internal efficiencies and positively impact the community.

The CID leadership will identify criteria to assess the value of the Victim Specialist position; OPD will evaluate over the three-year grant period whether this position helps other personnel in CID and look to secure resources to make the position permanent if the position proves to add value to CID's ability to support crime victims and survivors.

² <https://wdef.com/2018/06/14/cpds-victim-services-unit-provides-support-survivors-crime/>

FISCAL IMPACT

Table 1 below outlines the spending plan over the 2020-2023 fiscal years for the Victim Specialist Program Grant.

Table 1: Spending Plan

Item	FY* 2020-21 Cost	FY 2021-22 Cost	FY 2022-23 Cost
Est. Salary for 1 FT Victim Specialist	\$79,332	\$79,332	\$79,332
Est. Benefits/Fringe	\$61,231	\$61,231	\$61,231
Marketing, Printing and Supplies	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Yearly Total	\$145,563	\$145,563	\$145,563
Total over 3 years	\$436,689		

* FY = Fiscal Year

All of the DOJ Victim Services Grant revenues will be allocated to the Department of Justice (2113); CID Org (102310); Project (TBD); Homicide Section (PS03), as illustrated below.

Fund Source	Organization	Project	Program	Amount
2113	102310	TBD	PS03	\$436,689

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The work that will be done under this grant program is of strong interest to Oakland's families and communities, in that law enforcement staff will become better at addressing the short- and longer-term needs of crime victims.

COORDINATION

OPD consulted with the Budget Bureau, Department of Violence of Prevention and the Office of the City Attorney in the development of this report and accompanying resolution.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: This grant will support salary and benefit expenses related to implementing the Victim Specialist position for a three-year period.

Environmental: None

Race and Social Equity: It is of enormous importance to OPD to play its part in making Oakland and its surrounding communities a safer place for all residents of all races and social strata. The requested funds will (1) help OPD to better provide more holistic law enforcement services to victims of crime who need support services and (2) serve as a step toward repairing and strengthening the relationship between OPD and communities at risk of harm.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve A Resolution: 1) Authorizing The City Administrator Or Designee To Accept And Appropriate Four Hundred Thirty Six Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Nine Dollars (\$436,689) To The Oakland Police Department For A Three-Year Law Enforcement Victim Specialist Program (LEVS) Grant From The US Department Of Justice Office of Victim Services (DOJ OVS) To Fund One Full Time Equivalent (1 FTE) Victim Specialist In the Crime Investigation Division (CID) To Enhance The Quality And Quantity Of Services Available To Victims of Crime.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Lieutenant Frederick Shavies, Homicide Section (CID), at (510) 773 -1552.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan E. Manheimer
Interim Chief of Police
Oakland Police Department

Reviewed by:
Frederick Shavies, III, Lieutenant
OPD, Training Division

Shamika Shavies, Fiscal Manager
OPD, Fiscal Services

Philip Best, Police Services Manager
OPD, Training Division, Research and Planning

Bruce Stoffmacher, Management Assistant
OPD, Training Division, Research and Planning

Prepared by:
Molly Giesen-Fields, Grants Coordinator
OPD, Fiscal Services