



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Sheriff-Coroner

Subject: Accept Grant Award from U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant Program

Meeting Date: March 11, 2025

Formal Title: Accept grant award in the amount of \$22,838 from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program to enhance the forensic DNA laboratory with a Crime-lite AUTO Kit and Crime-lite Lab Arm, and take related actions

Recommended Actions

1. Accept a grant award in the amount of \$22,838 from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program;
2. Adopt a resolution accepting unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$22,838 from the BJA JAG Program to enhance forensic DNA capabilities;
3. Approve the purchase of a DNA Crime-lite and Crime-lite Lab Arm in the amount of \$49,645.98; and
4. Approve the grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice BJA, and authorize the Sheriff-Coroner to sign on behalf of the County.

Executive Summary

The Sheriff's Office requests the Board's authorization to accept the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program award and adopt a resolution accepting the unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$22,838 to purchase a Crime-lite AUTO Kit and a Crime-lite Lab Arm to enhance and expedite forensic DNA capabilities in its newly established DNA laboratory. Additionally, staff recommends that the Board approve the grant agreement and authorize the Sheriff-Coroner to sign on behalf of the County.

Discussion

The BJA JAG Program is the primary provider of federal criminal justice funding to states and units of local government. This grant program, following a statutory formula allocation of the funds for eligible agencies, has awarded \$22,838 in funding to the Sheriff's Office to enhance its DNA laboratory.

The Sheriff's Office completed construction of its DNA lab, which includes a dedicated room for forensic light source examinations. The Crime-lite AUTO Kit and Crime-lite Lab Arm will be crucial in expediting the collection of biological evidence and ensuring that the lab operates at peak efficiency.

This advanced technology will enable the lab to efficiently examine trace evidence, and biological fluids such as blood, semen, urine, and saliva, which are critical elements in solving complex crimes. The foundation of any successful DNA analysis is in the proper recognition and collection of evidence, and a forensic light source is vital in this process.

The advancement of DNA technology has become a significant role in forensic investigations, aiding in identifying suspects and enhancing public safety. By achieving turnaround times as short as 48 hours, the Sheriff's DNA lab will drastically expedite local investigations and, help to remove dangerous individuals from the streets more quickly. In comparison, the State's turnaround times for urgent cases, such as rape and homicide, typically range from one to six months, with less urgent cases such as property crimes taking one to three years. Having a local, regional DNA lab will significantly reduce these delays.

The local lab's ability to prioritize urgent cases and meet court deadlines will greatly improve the County's response to these critical cases. Many underserved community members, who often face systemic barriers to justice, will now have a better opportunity for their cases to be handled efficiently, allowing for swifter resolution and healing.

Approval of this grant allocation will enhance our county's ability to prioritize urgent cases, meet court deadlines, and provide justice for victims in a timely manner. This initiative represents a significant step forward in improving public safety and supporting underserved communities in Santa Cruz County.

Sole Source Justification

The vendor, Foster + Freeman Forensic Science Innovation, is the sole manufacturer and distributor for the Crime-lite AUTO. This system utilizes proven Crime-lite technology, offering exceptional capabilities for crime scene and laboratory evidence collection, documentation and analysis.

Acquisition of the Foster + Freeman Crime-lite and Crime-lite Lab Arm will ensure our DNA Laboratory is equipped to maintain public safety. We are committed to providing the tools and resources necessary to protect the public and ensure the continued reliability of our mutual aid support for allied agencies.

Financial Impact

The recommended actions will accept and appropriate unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$22,838 in GL Keys 661405-41102 and 661405-86204. This item has no impact on the General Fund. The grant does not require a local match of funds. The remaining cost in the amount of \$26,807.98 for the DNA technology will be drawn from the DNA Trust Fund.

Item	Cost	Grant Request
Crime-lite AUTO Kit	\$40,911.32	
Crime-lite Laboratory Arm	\$2,696.65	
Training (non-taxable)	\$1,950.00	
Shipping and Handling	\$250.00	
Sales Tax 9.5%	\$4,138.01	
Total Costs:	\$49,645.98	\$22,838.00
Local Funding:	\$26,807.98	

Strategic Initiatives

Comprehensive Health & Safety- Local Justice

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Operational Excellence

Submitted By:

Chris Clark, Sheriff-Coroner

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrative Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.