



Legislation Text

File #: 16-0282, **Version:** 1

Resolution Approving the City of Hampton, Virginia's Participation in and Appropriation of the 2016-2017 Victim Witness Program Grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND:

The Hampton Victim Witness Program prides itself in its ability to provide quality direct services to crime victims in the City of Hampton, Virginia. We are able to provide these services because of a group of dedicated service providers who have demonstrated a commitment to ensure that the rights of crime victims are not overlooked in the criminal justice process. Collectively, the Hampton Victim Witness staff has over 50 years of experience working in the field of victim services.

The program continues to provide comprehensive information and direct services to crime victims and witnesses, in accordance with the Virginia Crime Victims and Witnesses Rights Act and other applicable victims' rights laws. During July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 (FY 2017), it is estimated that 2,000 victims and 250 witnesses will receive direct services through this program.

Discussion:

The Hampton Victim Witness program is on the front line of victim/witness interactions when a violent act occurs in the City. Typically the program is the first to contact victims/witnesses of crime to offer services after the Hampton Police Department investigates. We address the emotional and financial hardships that normally accompany violent crimes. We help guide and direct these individuals to available resources in our community which includes financial assistance for injuries sustained as well as counseling and other services as needed.

The City of Hampton has supported the Victim Witness Program since 1984, and has consistently provided a substantial cash contribution each year since the program's inception. The original agreement between the city and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services was for the City to commit to financially supporting the program by a percentage each year, until it was a fully funded program of the City of Hampton. Since the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and federal dollars have been available to fund the Victim Witness program for the past 30 years, the local contribution has not been a mandatory requirement. The City's willingness to support this program financially shows the commitment it has for the needs in our community as well as its preparedness in the event a mandatory financial commitment becomes necessary.

Impact:

The Victim Witness Assistance Program consistently adheres to policy initiatives of the City by participating in the City's job performance evaluation process; being actively involved in the community and utilizing volunteers to maximize direct services while minimizing the costs associated with staffing. The goal is to ensure that staff is provided with the leadership, guidance and training necessary to achieve successful performance measures while modeling the City's mission, values and principles when providing services to the victims and witness served.

Recommendation:

Approve.

WHEREAS, the City of Hampton's Victim Witness Assistance Program has received award notification from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services on their allocation amount, which is \$395,032 in federal and state funds and \$124,320 as the City of Hampton's local cash contribution from the General Fund for a total grant award of \$519,352; and

WHEREAS, the grant award covers the grant period of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Hampton, Virginia accepts and appropriates the Victim Witness Assistance Program Grant in the amount of \$519,352, and any related supplemental funding, by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services in accordance with the grant agreement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council authorizes the City Manager, or her designee, to take the necessary steps to implement this grant award.