

**Columbus Consolidated Government
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

TO:	Mayor and Councilors
AGENDA SUBJECT:	2021-22 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Base Grant
AGENDA SUMMARY:	Approval is requested to authorize the District Attorney’s Victim-Witness Assistance Program to submit and if approved, accept a grant for \$417,247 or as otherwise awarded from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia along with \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund allocated in the FY22 Budget to provide funding for Crime Victim Assistance in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. The grant no longer requires the use of volunteers; however, the entire 20% match could be provided with the use of volunteers. Volunteer hours are paid at \$15.00 per hour and, after proper submission, will reduce the amount of required cash match from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund. It is requested that the multi-governmental fund be amended by the amount awarded plus the local match.
INITIATED BY:	District Attorney/Victim-Witness Assistance Program

Recommendation: Approval is requested to authorize the District Attorney’s Victim-Witness Assistance Program to submit and if approved, accept a grant for \$417,247 or as otherwise awarded from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia along with \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund allocated in the FY22 Budget to provide funding for Crime Victim Assistance in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. The grant no longer requires the use of volunteers; however, the entire 20% match could be provided with the use of volunteers. Volunteer hours are paid at \$15.00 per hour and, after proper submission, will reduce the amount of required cash match from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund. It is requested that the multi-governmental fund be amended by the amount awarded plus the local match.

Background: In July of 1989, the Office of the District Attorney began operating a Crime Victim Assistance Program. In October of 1992, the Victim-Witness Assistance Program was awarded the first Crime Victim Assistance Grant, thereby broadening the program for the provision of basic services. In July of 1995, additional funds were received from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund, thus allowing the program to expand services to the 6 counties within the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit. Successful grant allocations since that time have sustained the program. The office currently employs a Director of Victim Services and 13 Victim Advocates.

Analysis: If approved for FY22, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia will allocate \$417,247 to Columbus Consolidated Government to support the Victim-Witness Assistance Program for the grant year October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia requires a 20% local match of the award which is \$104,312. The District Attorney requests Council’s authorization to utilize \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Funds, which is the required local match. This amount could be less upon successful submission of volunteer

hours. The total amount of \$521,559 represents the salary, full benefits and local match for 11 Victim Advocates, management of a virtual therapy program, and allowances for travel, training and education.

Financial Considerations: The grant total is \$521,559 with the Federal allocation of \$417,247 along with \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund. Submission of eligible volunteer hours, along with other In-Kind Match sources could reduce the amount needed from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Funds.

Projected Annual Fiscal Impact Statement: Due to the local match in the form of cash coming from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund, there will be no annual fiscal impact as a result of this grant.

Legal Considerations: Georgia Law requires the District Attorney provide extensive services, information, and notification to crime victims (O.C.G.A.-17-17-1). The District Attorney is solely and directly responsible for complying with this law as mandated by the Victims' Bill of Rights. Legislature acknowledges that this mandate places additional burdens on prosecutors and have designed laws enabling utilization of the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund to assist in easing said burdens.

Recommendations/Actions: Authorize submission and, if approved, acceptance of a grant in the amount of \$417,247 or as otherwise awarded from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia, along with \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Fund, in order to meet the legislative requirements mandated by the Victims' Bill of Rights. This action will provide the funding for positions, virtual therapy and allowances for travel, training, and education. It is requested that the multi-governmental fund be amended by the amount awarded plus the local match.

A RESOLUTION

NO. _____

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION, ON BEHALF OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND, IF APPROVED, TO ACCEPT A VOCA GRANT OF \$417,247 OR AS OTHERWISE AWARDED FROM THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF GEORGIA ALONG WITH \$104,312 FROM THE 5% CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE SURCHARGE FUND ALLOCATED IN THE FY22 BUDGET, TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR CRIME VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT FROM OCTOBER 1, 2021 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2022, AND, AMEND THE MULTI-GOVERNMENTAL FUND BY LIKE AMOUNT.

WHEREAS, the District Attorney is requesting the acceptance of a VOCA Grant in the amount of \$417,247 or as otherwise awarded to be allocated over a twelve-month period from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia to support innocent victims of violent crime under the 1996 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), along with \$104,312 from the 5% Crime Victim Assistance Surcharge Fund allocated in the FY22 Budget for salaries, benefits, created programs, supplies; and,

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia requires 20% of the grant come in the form of a match, either through cash or In-Kind contributions. Figures are based on a twelve-month period; and,

WHEREAS, the funding will be used to provide services to crime victims throughout the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit; and,

WHEREAS, The District Attorney will continue to supervise the operation of the Victim-Witness Assistance Program in the Chattahoochee Judicial Circuit from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA, HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

That the City Manager is hereby authorized to submit and if approved, accept a grant of \$417,247 or as otherwise awarded from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia along with a maximum of \$104,312 of the 5% Crime Victim Surcharge Funds allocated in the FY22 Budget to fund the Victim-Witness Assistance Program which will extend over a twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

Introduced at a regular Meeting of Council of Columbus, Georgia, held the 11th day of January 2022, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of ____ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting _____.
Councilor Barnes voting _____.
Councilor Crabb voting _____.
Councilor Davis voting _____.
Councilor Garrett voting _____.
Councilor House voting _____.
Councilor Huff voting _____.
Councilor Thomas voting _____.
Councilor Tucker voting _____.
Councilor Woodson voting _____.

Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor