



## CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

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**MEETING DATE:** 10/10/2023

**REQUESTER:** John Stege, Police Standards Administrator

**PRESENTER:** Kevin Foster, Chief of Police

**ITEM TITLE:** CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF A GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$71,489 FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS (DOJ/OJP) THROUGH THE OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME (OVC) AND AUTHORIZED THROUGH THE VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA) TO BE USED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO EMPLOY AND PROVIDE TRAINING FOR A VICTIM ADVOCATE, CONTRACT K-2324-78, AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

We estimate that 60-70% of the victims of violent crime in Norman are unable to receive services from community advocacy partners due to their specific program concerns. Our advocacy partners include the District Attorney's Office (usually when a charge is filed), the Mary Abbott Children's House (when an incident involves child abuse, child neglect, or a sexual assault involving a child), and the Women's Resource Center (when the incident involves a victim of sexual assault, domestic violence or stalking). Victims of crimes that fall outside of these services are left with no voice, and since access to victim information is limited, the department is in the best position to reach out to victims of crime and provide resources.

The department received a grant beginning October 1, 2022 to employ a victim advocate. After a lengthy recruitment and hiring process, and in consultation with the field instructor from the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work, who was coordinating the department's advocacy internship program, the department hired an advocate on January 23, 2023. Meanwhile, the internship program continues, and the department hopes to expand this collaboration in the future. As a result, 229 victims of crime have received services where none would have been provided. In total, those victims have received a total of 366 distinct types of assistance through August 31, 2023. The general categories include: Information and referral, personal advocacy/accompaniment, emotional support/safety, shelter and housing, and criminal/civil justice system assistance.

VOCA funding, however, is not guaranteed each year, and we have been given instruction from the District Attorney's Council to prepare sustainability options as their funding continues to decline each year.

**DISCUSSION:**

On September 8, 2023, the District Attorneys Council (DAC) notified the department of an award in the amount up to \$71,489. This is the same amount of funding as the current year. Due to emergency measures adopted as a result of the pandemic, there is no 25% matching requirement. However, matching funds in the amount of \$31,988 are necessary to meet program expenses which include estimated cost increases in salary and benefits. This is a \$2,825 requested increase in City funding from the current grant as the award does not account for the full estimated personnel and training expenses.

This position will continue to collaborate with the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work to improve notification services to the victims of violent crime, improve the coordination of victim services during the course of an investigation, improve coordination with collaborative agencies through Cleveland County, and identify currently untracked under-served populations within the City of Norman. The goal is to expand the use of graduate interns from the university by developing our advocate into a "Field Instructor" who is able to teach social work graduate students through hands-on advocacy work through the department. The first step toward this goal was reached when our advocate received Master of Social Work licensure in July 2023 and is now qualified to become a field instructor for the university. To aggressively pursue this project, we are requesting an additional \$5,000 to employ two graduate student interns from the School of Social Work. One student would work closely with the Women's Resource Center to ensure the victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault receive appropriate services. The other would be tasked specifically with identifying underserved victims of crime and reaching out to them with appropriate services.

This position will continue to make necessary referrals, and provide essential services at the initial phase of an investigation and when trauma is acute and needs most pressing. The focus is to reach out to those victims who cannot receive advocacy services elsewhere. Graduate interns would be able to assist with identifying underserved victims and reaching out to offer assistance. Our goal is to ensure that every victim of a violent crime has access to services, is given assistance from the earliest opportunity, and has a voice throughout an investigation.

The performance period for this grant runs from 10-01-2023 to 09-30-2024.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 1:** Acceptance of the grant, acknowledging the terms of the agreement by completing the associated certifications, disclosures, and agreements, and by approval of the contract.

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 2:** Appropriation of \$71,489 from the Special Revenue Fund Balance (22-29000); and designate:

\$47,138 to account 22660043-42001; Salaries-Full-Time  
\$14,044 to account 22660043-42210; Other Benefits-Medical Insurance  
\$ 50 to account 22660043-42211; Other Benefits-Life Insurance  
\$ 3,750 to account 22660043-42901; City Share-Fica-Medicare  
\$ 4,007 to account 22660043-42902; City Share-Retirement-Employee  
\$ 1,250 to account 22660043-44130; Business Services-Printing-General  
\$ 1,250 to account 22660043-44701; Miscellaneous Services-Postage

And, that funds be deposited into VOCA Grant Revenue (account 226-333367).

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 3:** Appropriation of \$31,988 from the General Fund Unreserved Balance (10-29000) and designate:

\$19,451 to account 10660321-42001; Salaries-Full-Time  
\$ 4,965 to account 10660321-42210; Other Benefits-Medical Insurance  
\$ 29 to account 10660321-42211; Other Benefits-Life Insurance  
\$ 1,489 to account 10660321-42901; City Share-Fica-Medicare  
\$ 1,653 to account 10660321-42902; City Share-Retirement-Employee  
\$ 3,567 to account 10660321-44604; Employee Travel-Workshops & Seminars  
\$ 417 to account 10660321-44130; Business Services-Printing-General  
\$ 417 to account 10660321-44701; Miscellaneous Services-Postage

**RECOMMENDATION NO. 4:** Appropriation of \$5,000 from the General Fund Unreserved Balance (10-29000) and designate:

\$5,000 to account 10660321-44099; Prof Svcs-Other Professional

To be paid to the University of Oklahoma for the purpose of funding two graduate student interns from the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work.