



Agenda Date: 7/25/2006
Agenda Placement: 6A

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Gary Lieberstein - District Attorney
District Attorney
REPORT BY: Carol Strobel, Administrative Services Officer, 253-4215
SUBJECT: Renewal of Spousal Abuser Prosecution Program (SAPP) grant

RECOMMENDATION

District Attorney requests the following actions in connection with the State of California Department of Justice Domestic Violence Spousal Abuser Program for Fiscal Year 2006-2007:

1. Authorization to sign a grant award in the amount of \$33,261; and
2. Adoption of a resolution approving \$6,652 in County General Fund monies as match.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ongoing grant addresses the vertical prosecution of Spousal Abuse cases to minimize the trauma of the victims of these crimes.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	Yes
Where is it budgeted?	District Attorney
	The total grant award funds approximately 36% of an attorney salary and benefits.
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	This grant partially funds an attorney to vertically prosecute spousal abuse cases.

Is the general fund affected? Yes

Future fiscal impact: The Spousal Abuser Prosecution Program should continue into the future, if not, the General Fund would have to support the activity in the District Attorney's Office. This is a noncompetitive grant. County match is \$6,652. This grant funds an attorney to vertically prosecute spousal abuse cases to minimize the impact upon these victims.

Consequences if not approved: Prosecution of spousal abuse crimes is a mandated function of the District Attorney's Office, this grant permits this prosecution to be done vertically to spare the victim the trauma of having to establish rapport and confidence with a number of different attorneys.

Additional Information:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Fiscal Year 2006/2007 is the eleventh year that the County of Napa has received a Domestic Violence Spousal Abuser Program grant from the State of California Department of Justice.

This year's award, \$33,261 with a cash match requirement of \$6,652, permits the District Attorney to assign a single, experienced Deputy District Attorney to prosecute spousal abuse cases from filing of the charges to sentencing. There are many proven advantages to having one attorney assigned to a case from inception until completion. One of the most significant ones is that victims, who already come to the justice system traumatized by their abusers, are able to establish a closer working relationship with the prosecutor handling their cases. These abused individuals are generally completely ignorant about the criminal justice system, and thus, become frightened because they quickly learn that it will have such a tremendous, but unknown, impact on their lives. With that one prosecutor, victims are able to have their questions answered more quickly and consistently. This promotes victims having greater knowledge about what is transpiring in their cases, understanding the system, and, thus, there is less likelihood of them being re-victimized by the very system that is supposed to be helping them. Therefore, dealing with a single prosecutor throughout the legal process provides greater continuity and confidence, and is less traumatic for the victims of spousal abuse.

From the prosecutor's perspective, having a better working relationship with victims increases the likelihood of a just and successful result since it is common knowledge that victims of domestic violence tend to recant.

This grant funds 36% of the salary of the Attorney III who is prosecuting spousal abuse cases. The cash match is used toward the attorney's salary and benefits; the balance is already included in the District Attorney's fiscal year 2006/2007 budget.

This program will aid in the successful prosecution of Domestic Violence offenders. With Vertical Prosecution, all victims are referred to the proper victim services and all cases are handled by one prosecutor from first appearance until sentencing, minimizing the trauma for these victims. Prior to this grant three or more Deputy District Attorneys could be involved in the victim's case necessitating multiple interviews of the victim by the different

attorneys which increased the victim's anxiety and trauma.

The cost of the attorney performing this program is \$111,282, the revenue from this non-competitive grant is \$33,261. Funding for the attorney has already been included in the Department's 2006/2007 operating budget.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A . SAPP Resolution FY 06/07

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi