



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: SHERIFF

File #: 19-1258

Board Meeting Date: 1/7/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Carlos G. Bolanos, Sheriff

Subject: 2019 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution accepting the 2019 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program grant award in the amount of \$290,899, for the term of January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021.

BACKGROUND:

The Forensic DNA Backlog Capacity Enhancement and Reduction Program through the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, offers an opportunity for government entities with existing crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis to handle, screen, and analyze backlogged forensic DNA casework samples. This grant program also assists with improving DNA laboratory infrastructure and analysis capacity so that forensic DNA samples can be processed more efficiently and cost effectively. These improvements reduce current and prevent future backlogs in DNA testing, which helps the criminal justice system maximize the benefits of DNA technology.

The San Mateo County Lab follows the mandated turnaround times for sexual assault case testing and has dedicated an increasing amount of time to processing and testing cold case evidence. Recent lab work in a number of these cases has allowed law enforcement and prosecutors to identify perpetrators of some of the County's most serious crimes and to seek justice for the victims in court.

As of December 31, 2018, the Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory had approximately 694 backlogged cases awaiting DNA analysis for property crimes and crimes against persons. The Forensic Laboratory has no backlog, however, with respect to sexual assault kit processing, DNA analysis, and uploading qualifying DNA profiles to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS, the national DNA database maintained by the FBI). The National Institute of Justice defines a backlogged case as one that has not been tested 30 days after submission to the laboratory.

DISCUSSION:

The Sheriff's Office applied for and has been awarded the 2019 DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction (CEBR) Program grant in the amount of \$290,899 for January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021. The Laboratory has received these grant funds for nearly 20 years and, if the funds are not accepted, the money will be redistributed to other participating agencies. Funding will be used to purchase two (2) Qiacube DNA extraction robots and to pay criminalists overtime. This will expedite handling, screening, and analysis of forensic DNA samples, increase the throughput of the Sheriff's Office Forensic Laboratory, and reduce existing DNA forensic casework backlogs. This infusion of funds has been a critical additional to the Lab's budget for nearly two decades. It is crucial to assist the Lab in processing DNA cases efficiently because an increasing amount of the Lab's budget is being spent on the cost of reagents and cold case analysis.

The DNA Backlog Capacity Enhancement and Reduction (CEBR) Program award will also be used to fund travel and training for Lab criminalists and to purchase supplies for use in evidence examination. The training provides our DNA analysts with the opportunity to learn about new technologies that other forensic labs are using to reduce their backlogs and enhance their capacity. Our DNA analysts also benefit from hearing about upcoming technologies and advances in the field of forensic DNA.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE:

| Measure | FY 2018-19 Actual | FY 2019-20 Projected |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Average turnaround time for Lab criminalists to complete DNA analysis | 181 days | 175 days |

FISCAL IMPACT:

The 2019 DNA Backlog Capacity Enhancement and Reduction (CEBR) Program grant award is for \$290,899 from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021. The appropriation of \$290,899 will be offset by incoming grant funds. This grant does not require matching County funds. There is no Net County Cost.