



MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

REIA #26-7 **Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy Competitive Victims of Crime Act Award**

Requesting Department(s)	Dollar Amount
The State's Attorney's Office	\$649,272
Funding Source	County Match Amount
State Grant	\$174,761

Finding

Based on available information, Supplemental Appropriation #26-7 – Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy Competitive Victims of Crime Act Award does not appear to substantively alter programming that differs from REIA #25-10. Therefore, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finding remains unchanged:

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #25-10 FY 25 Operating Budget, Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP), Competitive Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Award has the potential to advance equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) particularly those who are Spanish-speakers residing in Montgomery County as the funds are used to support the County's Victim Assistance Program through the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office. As the sole funding source of the grant is generated from fees collected from offenders convicted of Federal crimes,¹ it is worth noting that the burden of financing VOCA falls primarily at the feet of low-income BIPOC individuals who are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Background

Purpose

The purpose of SA #26-7 is to authorize funding awarded from the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy to continue funding existing and new staff in its Victim/Witness Unit, providing victim-witness coordination in Spanish to individuals for whom Spanish is their first

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language. The funding is provided through the Federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Formula Grant, which supports the Unit's services for crime victims and survivors, including assistance navigating the court system, closing service gaps, and coordinating with partner agencies. The State’s Attorney’s Office must provide an in-kind match of \$174,761, contributing to a total project budget of \$824,033. The in-kind match is funded through the FY26 General Fund appropriation for the Office. Grant funds will be used to enhance direct services to victims through the MCSAO Victim/Witness Unit by maintaining the unit's existing Spanish-speaking Adult Circuit Court Victim/Witness Coordinators (VWC) and Spanish-speaking Adult Circuit Court Victim Service Specialist (VSS), as well as extending the contract of its existing Victim Assistants.

In maintaining its bilingual staff, the MCSAO Victim/Witness Unit will be able to address increases in caseloads, providing greater support for victims of crime throughout the judicial process. Specifically, the MCSAO will improve its capacity to receive, access, process, interpret, and more efficiently obtain testimonial evidence while providing more services to victims and witnesses. By alleviating excessive caseloads from existing staff, internal data has shown that the MCSAO Victim/Witness Unit has been able to focus efforts on providing direct services to victims and underserved populations, including the high number of cases involving Spanish-speaking victims, ensuring timeliness and accuracy in which cases are processed, having directly reducing rates of re-victimization.

Relevant REIAs and Other Assessments

ORESJ has conducted REIAs since 2021. The following REIA(s) are relevant to supplemental appropriation #26-7, specifically REIA 25-10, which reviews the VOCA grant victim-witness coordination in Spanish to individuals for whom Spanish is their first language.

- REIA #25-15 VOCA Award
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/25-15.pdf>
- REIA #25-10 VOCA Award
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/25-10.pdf>

Caveats

This REIA has been conducted with the best available information at the time of writing, including department responses to the Racial Equity and Social Justice template and research conducted by ORESJ Policy Team Analysts. While the assessment examines specific racial equity and social justice impacts of the funding request, it cannot fully address all systemic inequities that affect the communities in question, nor do we seek to examine impacts outside the scope of the funding request. We recommend using this assessment as a starting point for discussions about the impact of the program on advancing racial equity and social justice in Montgomery County.

References

¹ <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/voca/>