



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0769, **Version:** 1

Department: Domestic Relations

Department Head/Elected Official: David Simpson

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Grant

Project ID (if applicable):

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable):

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable):

MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable):

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request by Domestic Relations for approval to submit a revised application to the Office of the Governor/Criminal Justice Division for grant funds in the amount of \$370,500, with a match of \$148,936, for the FY 25 Family Victimization Services for Supervised Possession Program.

Background and Discussion:

The grantor has placed a funding cap and added a match requirement this year. After our first submission to Commissioner Court to approve this application, the Office of the Governor advised that our request amount could be increased from \$223,200 to \$370,500.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice via the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, the purpose of the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program is to provide services and assistance directly to victims of crime, speed their recovery, and aid them through the criminal justice process. Chapter 203, Texas Family Code, authorizes a Domestic Relations Office to provide supervised visitation for parents whom a court has deemed unsuitable to have access to their children absent supervision. The Domestic Relations Office has provided cooperative parenting services for 38 years and supervised visitation services since April 2018. As a county legal agency, our vision includes ensuring that parents provide both financial and emotional support.

Expected Impact:

The grant funds 48% of the service. Without the VOCA funding, additional general funding would be required. Project goals include: (1) keeping children safe when visiting with their noncustodial parent; (2) helping children and noncustodial parents develop mutually beneficial relationships with each other; (3) providing services which reduce conflict that may occur at visitation; and (4) helping parent communicate more effectively with each other to increase quality parenting time with children. If awarded, this would be the seventh year of funding for the Department for this project. Grant funds would enable the Department to

provide visitation services to prevent victimization of children ensuing from custodial decisions made in Family Court. Department staff will monitor visitations and provide supervisory services. The goal is to increase child safety during the process and to avoid dangers such as domestic violence, abduction, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and many others.

Alternative Options:

Discontinuing the service would leave noncustodial parents without an alternative method of visiting with their children and would deny children the emotion support they need and the ability to have an ongoing, frequent relationship with their parent. There is a need for this service to meet the emotional needs of children and ensure safe and positive contact with their parent. Absent extenuating circumstances, there is an emotional benefit to Harris County children who maintain a relationship with their parents and extended family. Should the Domestic Relations Office not provide this service, it is not available in this format or at this cost through any other entity.

Alignment with Goal(s):

- X Justice and Safety
- _ Economic Opportunity
- _ Housing
- X Public Health
- _ Transportation
- _ Flooding
- _ Environment
- _ Governance and Customer Service

Prior Court Action (if any):

| Date | Agenda Item # | Action Taken |
|---------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1/30/24 | 222 | Original application approved. |

Location:

Address (if applicable):
Precinct(s): Countywide

| Fiscal and Personnel Summary | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Service Name | Supervised Possession | | | FY25 Grant |
| | | Current Fiscal Year Cost | | Annual Fiscal Cost |
| | | Labor | Non-Labor | Total |
| Recurring Expense | | | | |
| Funding Sources | | | | |
| Existing Budget | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|------------------|
| Grant | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$370,500 |
| 1000 - General Fund | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$148,936 |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Total Current Budget | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$519,436 |
| Additional Budget Request (<i>Requires Fiscal Review Request Form</i>) | | | | |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Choose an item. | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Total Additional Budget Request | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Total Funding Request | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$519,436 |
| Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs) | | | | |
| Current Position Count for Ser | - | - | - | - |
| Additional Positions Request | - | - | - | - |
| Total Personnel | - | - | - | - |

Anticipated Court Date: February 27, 2024

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date): 10/1/2024.

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: Not an emergency, disaster, or COVID-19 related item

Contact(s) name, title, department: Blanca Reyna, Grants/Statistical Analyst, Domestic Relations Office

Attachments (if applicable): Court Order, Grant Application and RFP