

FY16 GENERAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE – DIRECT SERVICES Addendum

Submission Instructions: Email completed addendum file to cjapplications@nctcog.org no later than 11:59 pm on
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Agency Name: Collin County Sheriff's Office
Application title: Crime Victim Advocacy Program
Application #: 2877101

Amount requested for this new project: \$63,000
Total amount of continuation projects (if applicable): NA

AGENCY HISTORY (THIS SECTION WILL NOT BE SCORED):

Location of Agency Headquarters:
4300 Community Ave, McKinney, Texas 75071

Mission Statement:

We, the men and women of the Collin County Sheriff's Office, believe that our fundamental duty is to serve and protect the citizens of Collin County with fairness, compassion, and respect. We demand excellence in the quality of our law enforcement, stressing professionalism, integrity, and timeliness, so that those we serve may feel secure. We provide equal enforcement and protection of the law without prejudice or favor. We promote the setting of goals in partnership with the community, and prioritize and address problems based on the concerns of the community. Committed to continuous improvement in law enforcement, we promote and utilize the most modern techniques available.

Experience in providing direct victim services: Explain how your agency is qualified to provide proposed services.

As a full service law enforcement agency, the Collin County Sheriff's Office and its staff are trained to work with the victims of crime. Our officers are first on-scene and are frequently the first interactions for victims with the criminal justice system, making our role in initializing victim services critical. We have been providing direct victim advocacy services, utilizing an educated and experienced Crime Victim Advocate, since FY 2013.

If this project is currently in existence in any capacity, briefly describe how long your agency has been providing this service, what resources are currently used to operate the project and why CJD funds are necessary at this time.

The Collin County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) began providing victim advocacy in FY 2013 after receiving a General Victim Assistance Grant in coordination with the City of Frisco. Through this grant, the two jurisdictions were able to share a Crime Victim Advocate, each receiving advocacy support 20 hours weekly. As data has been collected over the past two years from this project, CCSO has been able to demonstrate the benefits of the program as well as the need for full-time victim advocacy services. As funding for this cooperative project ends in FY 2015, CCSO is seeking funding beginning in FY 2016 to continue and increase the program's capacity by hiring our own full-time Crime Victim Advocate.

If this is a new project for your agency, briefly describe what other funds you have secured/applied for to support the project.

Victim advocacy is still a relatively new project with the Collin County Sheriff's Office; however, after seeing the results from the previous two (part-time) years, the project has the full backing of the department's administration. While this project will be supported with time from existing staff, along with county funding for training, travel and supplies, no other grant funds have been requested or secured for this program.

If funded, briefly describe your plan to sustain this project beyond CJD's grant period.

It is the intention of the Collin County Sheriff's Office to use the data collected from this grant-funded project to justify the need for the program to continue as part of the county budget once the grant term has ended.

- 1. STATE PRIORITIES AND PREFERENCES (Up to 50 points): Thoroughly describe how this project provides direct services and promotes comprehensive victim restoration to victims of child abuse and neglect, victims of family violence, victims of sexual assault, victims of human trafficking, and/or victims of other types of violent crimes.**

This project addresses the state priorities by providing direct services and promoting comprehensive victim restoration to **victims of child abuse, victims of family violence, victims of sexual assault, and/or victims of other types of violent crimes.**

Until FY 2013, the Collin County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) did not provide victim advocacy. However, after receiving a cooperative grant, the City of Frisco hired a Victim Advocate who expends 20 hours weekly providing direct services for victims of crimes, primarily family violence, investigated by CCSO. The Sheriff's Office investigates crimes in the unincorporated, rural parts of Collin County, which are greatly underserved areas with limited resources and almost non-existent social service providers. Since implementing this program, CCSO has collected and analyzed data regarding the benefits of this project and is seeking grant funding to expand the program's capacity. **Employing a full-time Advocate would allow us to provide services for victims for additional case types including child abuse, sexual assault, dating/acquaintance violence, and homicide, in addition to the existing family violence cases,** helping us address gaps in services for the County's most underserved and rural population.

Law enforcement is a natural entry point for victims to seek victim advocacy after they have been victimized. Whenever a crime is committed, law enforcement officers are usually the first to arrive on the scene and to interact with victims. This makes their role critical and puts our office in a unique position to assist victims immediately after the crime and encourage and facilitate victim participation in the criminal justice system. The initial response to a victim has been shown to have a long-lasting impact on that individual's view of the justice system and their participation in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. The first response has also been shown to be a key factor in whether or not a victim ultimately accesses needed services and assistance, such as crisis intervention, counseling, financial compensation, information, referrals to community programs, and help in navigating the justice process.

The moment a violent crime happens, the victim's life is forever changed. They are no longer the exact same person they were prior to the crime. The victimization doesn't stop when the actual crime is over, with crime victims suffering a tremendous amount of physical and psychological trauma, especially for victims of serious, repeated, or long-term crimes. For victims, the trauma of the crime itself is only the beginning of what can often be a lifelong struggle. Victims of crime can find their world in chaos for years to come and feel firsthand the crime's impact on their physical, financial, and psychological wellbeing.

Beyond any physical injuries resulting from the actual crime, victims may also suffer from other physical symptoms such as insomnia, headaches, muscle tension, and nausea. In addition, victims may find themselves faced with unforeseen financial expenditures related to the crime including time lost from work, costs to repair or replace damaged property, health care expenses, or even funeral and burial costs. However, the psychological impact of victimization is often the longest lasting and most difficult to overcome. Not every crime victim responds in the same manner; however, commonly reported emotional symptoms directly related to the victimization include (but are not limited to) grief, despair, anger, guilt, fear, numbness, and loss of control. Additionally, crime victims have an increased risk of suffering any number of mental illnesses like clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Unfortunately, in the chaos which envelopes a crime victim during and immediately after the event, the criminal justice system can seem quite daunting and frightening. Lacking knowledge of the criminal justice system, victims often retreat to the background and their voices go unheard during investigation, prosecution, and sentencing. While our core mission is to pursue justice for criminal acts, which includes justice for the victims and witnesses of crime, how we treat those individuals has a huge impact on their confidence in the criminal justice system and their

ability to heal and recover from crime. Additionally, if a victim feels they are receiving inadequate or delayed services from the criminal justice system, they are less likely to participate in the process of prosecution, creating a higher level of victim attrition and reducing the rate of offender accountability. A victim's cooperation, assistance, and safety are essential to the effective detection, investigation, and prosecution of crimes.

The CCSO crime victim advocacy program seeks to assist crime victims in achieving restoration of full physical, mental, and emotional health by providing for the unique needs of each individual citizen. Victims are provided services including, but not limited to, on-scene advocacy, short-term counseling, safety plan development, assistance with Crime Victims' Compensation application completion, and referrals to emergency and social service agencies for additional support, as well as reassurance, emotional support, guidance for resolving problems, and case status information. Additionally, as research has shown that participating in the criminal justice process can aid victims in rebuilding their lives, the Advocate will, on behalf of victims, act as a liaison between the victims and a variety of justice system departments and personnel; advocate for victims' needs and wishes within the system; recognize the impact crime has had on victims and support the important role victims play in criminal justice processes; work to ensure victims are treated fairly and respectfully; and seek to remove all potential barriers (physical, psychological, cultural, etc.) to services. When victims are kept well-informed about the criminal proceedings and feel that they have a voice in the process, they feel that they are a part of a team effort. This added effort enables victims to understand the judicial process and helps return to them a sense of control in their lives and circumstances.

As the CCSO and the Advocate cannot be the sole providers of necessary services, the program continues to build formal and informal community partnerships, creating and strengthening our relationships with local organizations and resources that serve crime victims' needs. We currently work with the Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County, Hope's Door (women's shelter and comprehensive intervention and prevention services for domestic violence), The Turning Point Rape Crisis Center of Collin County, Family Place, and LifePath Systems, as well as other non-profit, medical, and social service organizations. Through countywide collaborative efforts, such as the Collin County Social Services Association and the Collin County Council on Family Violence, we build strong networks, identify gaps in services, provide training, and minimize duplicative efforts. Additionally, Advocates in the District Attorney's Office, the local Rape Crisis Center, Children Advocacy Center, police departments, and social services agencies work together to help victims through their trauma.

For the past two years, the CCSO victim advocacy program has been utilized almost exclusively in family violence cases, which has been successful in assisting victims through the short and long term trauma associated with victimization. **With grant funding, the Collin County Sheriff's Office will be able to expand this beneficial program to include victims of other violent crimes including child abuse, sexual assault, dating/acquaintance violence, and homicide.** Additionally, having a full-time Advocate would benefit domestic violence victims through the implementation of a lethality assessment program.

Lethality assessments are risk assessment tools that provide law enforcement and other first responders with a simple method to evaluate the level of danger that a victim of intimate partner domestic violence is in given their current situation. Through a series of standard questions, victim responses are scored to assess the risk of danger. The goal of the assessment is to prevent domestic violence homicides, serious injury, and re-assault by encouraging more victims to use the support and shelter services of domestic violence programs.

2. LOCAL PRIORITIES (Up to 20 points): Thoroughly describe how this project addresses at least one of the following local priorities: services for victims of sexual assault (adult and children), services for victims of child abuse, protective order assistance for crime victims, crisis intervention services for crime victims, and/or counseling/therapy services for crime victims.

The local priority to be addressed by this project is **crisis intervention services for crime victims**. Merriam-Webster defines crisis as "an emotionally significant event or radical change of status in a person's life", while Random House defines it as "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, especially for better or for worse, is determined; a turning point." A wide range of human emotions and behaviors can accompany crisis, particularly when the crisis relates to victimization. People react differently to stress and crisis situations based on their own skills or behaviors, abilities to cope, and personalities.

The importance of crisis intervention for victims of crime is paramount. Crisis intervention should be an immediate response designed to help victims cope with physical, emotional, and psychological trauma in the aftermath of a crime. The goal of crisis intervention is to help victims confront the reality of what happened, begin to deal with the crisis, and allow the victim to begin regaining control that was lost as a result of victimization. When possible, victims should not wait hours or days to see a crisis intervention specialist. The challenge for crisis intervention programs is to provide effective crisis support and assistance as soon as possible following victimization, and to make resources and services available to meet the needs of victims by providing direct assistance or referrals to other agencies as quickly as possible.

The CCSO victim advocacy program has met this challenge over the past two years by sharing a part-time Victim Advocate with the City of Frisco. Having the Advocate as part of the law enforcement agency allows the Advocate to make contact at the earliest possible point in the criminal justice system, sometimes even immediately on-scene. The Advocate develops an empathetic dialogue with the victim, assesses the victim's safety and creates safety plans, normalizes the victim's emotions, and assesses basic needs such as clothing, food, and shelter. Immediate crisis intervention may also include caring for the medical, physical, and mental health needs of the victim by providing information to the victim about local resources or services. Depending on the situation, referrals may be made to other agencies for other services, such as shelter facilities or counseling services.

Once the immediate needs have been managed, during subsequent interactions, the Advocate will continue to provide emotional support and help with recovery toward the future by keeping victims informed about their rights, acting as a liaison between various justice system departments, assisting with Crime Victim's Compensation applications (as needed), and maximizing victims' social support networks and improving their coping skills by providing information and referrals to local social service agencies.

There is no universal solution to meeting the needs of the victims of crime. However, Collin County can improve victim services by employing a full-time Victim Advocate to assist victims of violent crimes, protect and advocate the rights of victims, provide necessary information, and prevent further victimization. According to a study conducted by the National Institute of Justice, "when Advocates can offer coordinated, early, victim-focused interventions, victims are more likely to participate in court-proceedings, access community-based advocacy programs and report decreases in distress, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, depression and fear." A strong advocacy program in Collin County will help ensure that victims have the strength and support they need to rebuild their lives.

3. COST AND PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS:

3a. Describe the target population. Describe the geographical target area to be served by the project. Describe the problem and its negative impact on the community to be served. (Up to 5 points)

The target population is **victims of violent crimes and their families**. The target area is the **unincorporated/rural areas of Collin County served by the Collin County Sheriff's Office**. Additionally, the CCSO has an agreement with 12 cities to investigate child abuse cases; these victims will also be served by this program.

For crime victims, the trauma of the crime itself is only the beginning of what will often be a lifelong struggle. Victims of crime can find their world in chaos for years to come and feel firsthand the crime's impact on their physical, financial, and psychological wellbeing. The moment a violent crime happens the victim's life is forever changed; they are no longer the exact same person they were prior to the crime. The victimization doesn't stop when the actual crime is over, with crime victims suffering a tremendous amount of physical and psychological trauma, especially for victims of serious, repeated, or long-term crimes.

Unfortunately, in the chaos which envelopes a crime victim during and immediately after the event, the criminal justice system can seem quite daunting and frightening. Lacking knowledge of the criminal justice system, victims often retreat to the background and their voices go unheard during investigation, prosecution, and sentencing. If a victim feels they are receiving inadequate or delayed services from the criminal justice system, they are less likely to participate in the process of prosecution. This creates a higher level of victim attrition and reduces the rate of offender accountability. A victim's cooperation, assistance, and safety are essential to the effective detection, investigation, and prosecution of crimes.

3b. Provide at least three (3) years of locally relevant and verifiable statistical data. Describe how the data supports the problem to be addressed. Describe how the data validates a significant crime problem within the target area to be served. (Up to 4 points).

Collin County’s population increased 73.8% since 2000, from 491,772 to 854,778 persons. Correspondingly, crime has risen. Family violence cases in unincorporated Collin County increased 17.8% from 2013 (n=275) to 2014 (n=324); however, there has been a 45.9% increase since 2009 (n=222). Additionally, the Collin County Sheriff’s Office has investigated 18 murders since 2004; 88.9% (n=16) were considered family violence, with 8 occurring in the past 4 years alone (since 2011).

In an effort to support victims of crime in Collin County and reduce victim attrition for family violence cases in the justice process, the Collin County Sheriff’s Office, in cooperation with the City of Frisco, obtained a three year grant (beginning in FY 2013) to share a Crime Victim Advocate, each jurisdiction receiving advocacy support 20 hours weekly. In 2012, prior to the Victim Advocate starting, 17% (n=47) of family violence offenses resulted in an “exceptional” clearance. An "exceptional" case clearance is when the identity and location of the offender is known and there is enough information to support an arrest; however, the offender cannot be taken into custody because circumstances outside the control of law enforcement prohibit the agency from arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender. In many cases, this is caused by the victim’s refusal to cooperate with the prosecution. However, after the Victim Advocate was hired, the “exceptional” rate was lowered to less than 4% in 2013 (n=9) and 2014 (n=12), as more victims continued to work with law enforcement.

| CCSO Family Violence Dispositions | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | # FV Cases | # Arrests | % Arrested | # Exceptional | % Exceptional |
| 2012 | 275 | 204 | 74.2% | 47 | 17.1% |
| 2013 | 262 | 190 | 72.5% | 9 | 3.4% |
| 2014 | 324 | 219 | 67.6% | 12 | 3.7% |

While working part-time, the Advocate provided 867 services for 285 clients in 2013 and 1,125 services to 288 clients in 2014 – an increase of 29.8% in services performed. Unfortunately, the Advocate is at currently at full capacity and cannot handle any additional CCSO victims working only part-time. In 2014, 36 (11%) family violence victims were unable to be served by the Victim Advocate. Additionally, as the position is constrained to 20 hours, the Advocate primarily focuses on family violence cases and has been unable to provide services for many victims of other cases such as child abuse, sexual assault, homicide, and dating/acquaintance violence. For instance, while the Collin County Sheriff’s Office conducted 1,856 child abuse investigations for twelve jurisdictions throughout the county in 2014, these victims were not provided services by the Victim Advocate shared with the City of Frisco.

3c. Describe how this project avoids duplication or overlapping of existing resources or programs available within the project’s proposed service area and target population. (Up to 4 points)

A law enforcement agency is a natural entry point for victims to seek victim advocacy, as law enforcement officers are usually the first to arrive on scene and interact with victims. This makes their role critical and puts our office in a unique position to assist victims immediately after the crime and encourage and facilitate victim participation in the criminal justice system. The initial response to a victim will have a long-lasting impact on that individual’s view of the justice system and participation in the investigation and prosecution of the crime. The first response has also been shown to be a key factor in whether or not a victim ultimately accesses needed services and assistance, such as crisis intervention, counseling, financial compensation, information, referrals to community programs, and help in navigating the justice process.

While the Collin County District Attorney’s Office also has a victim advocacy program, victims are only served if the case is filed for prosecution. Having a Crime Victim Advocate at the Sheriff’s Office ensures that all victims, regardless if the case is filed, can receive advocacy services. Additionally, the CCSO investigates

cases in the unincorporated, rural parts of Collin County which are greatly underserved areas without many resources or social service providers.

3d. GOAL, ACTIVITIES, PROJECT FLOW OF SERVICES (Up to 4 points)

Describe the overall project goal.

The goal of the program is to provide victim advocacy services that ensure the rights of crime victims, preserve privacy, reduce trauma, promote safety, facilitate recovery, and encourage participation in the criminal justice process.

Using the table below, list activity(ies) to be performed with grant funds. Describe the activity's planned flow of services for individuals served by the project.

| eGrants Activity | Flow of Services – Describe the planned flow of services for individuals served by each activity. Descriptors may include but are not limited to: type of client to be served, explanation of target levels for new project, function of grant-funded staff and volunteers in carrying out the project, frequency services will be provided, length of time a person remains in the program, how long a client receives a specific service, involvement of other entities, how budget items associated with this activity are necessary and will be used in carrying out services. |
|---------------------|--|
| Crisis Intervention | <p>Following a violent crime, the victim will be referred to the Crime Victim Advocacy Program either by formal or informal referral. Formal = CCSO supervisor or responding officer requests Advocate to respond to the scene or notifies the Advocate via phone or email. Informal = Responding officer provides victim with crime victim brochure which includes contact information for the Advocate</p> |
| | <p>Advocate may be requested to scene for incidents such as homicide, aggravated robbery with serious bodily injury, fatal collisions, child deaths, suicides, sexual assault (within 96 hours), aggravated assault with serious bodily injury (child, family, adult), and/or hostage/barricade incident</p> |
| | <p>Services provided by the Advocate at the scene may include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Onsite crisis intervention for victims, family members, and witnesses 2. Assistance for victims/witnesses in completing written statements at request of CCSO 3. Provision of information regarding the criminal justice process, victims' rights, departmental policies, and legal resources 4. Transportation of victims to shelter or other place of safety, if victims have no other available means of transportation 5. Referrals for emergency and other social services, as deemed appropriate |
| | <p>Services provided by the Advocate during subsequent interactions with the victim should include, at minimum</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-contact of victim by mail within 10 business days to include name, address, and phone number of District Attorney's victim assistance coordinator, as well as contact numbers for the assigned case investigator and other social service providers 2. Assistance with Crime Victim's Compensation application, as requested 3. Provision of crisis intervention services for victims, family members, and witnesses 4. Assistance with creation of a safety plan 5. Referrals for emergency and other social services, as deemed appropriate |
| | <p>The Advocate will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect the victim's/witness' right to confidentiality and privacy by not discussing the case/victim information with third party non-governmental entities without written permission 2. Provide emotional support, guidance, and reassurance for victims, family members, and witnesses 3. Act as a liaison between victims and a variety of justice system departments and personnel |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>4. Endeavor to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, gender, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each</p> <p>5. Build formal and informal community partnerships, creating and strengthening our relationships with local organizations and resources that serve crime victims' needs</p> |
|--|--|

Using the table below, describe proposed grant-funded staff (including contracted services): provide title, and indicate new or existing position. Describe the experience, education, and knowledge required of the grant-paid position.

| Title | New/Existing Position (N or E) | <i>Describe experience/education/knowledge required of grant-paid position (not of the person currently in that position).</i> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Crime Victim Advocate | N | The Advocate will provide crisis services to victims of violent crimes investigated by the Collin County Sheriff's Office. Requirements: Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Behavioral Science, Counseling or related field, and two (2) years victim services, law enforcement, probation/parole or counseling experience, which included training or experience with family violence; or equivalent combination of education and experience. Possession of a valid Texas Driver's License. Knowledge of counseling practices, procedures, methods and techniques related to the identification, interviewing, crisis intervention and support of victims and/or witnesses of domestic violence or criminal activities. Knowledge of Federal, State, regional and local social services agencies and non-profit organizations, including application/qualifications and types/scope of services provided. Knowledge of assessment, evaluation and analysis of individual needs. Skill in counseling and interviewing witnesses and/or victims of criminal activity. |

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3e. DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SECTION – COG WILL INSERT EGRANTS OUTPUT/OUTCOME MEASURES IN ADDENDUM (up to 4 points)

3f. DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SECTION - COG WILL INSERT EGRANTS BUDGET IN ADDENDUM (up to 4 points)