

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	Resolution to Appropriate the Victim Witness Grant - \$299,672 (2nd reading)
Staff Contact(s):	Taylor Harvey-Ryan, Grants Program Manager
Presenter:	Pat O'Donnell, Director Victim and Witness Assistance Program
Date of Proposed Action:	October 6, 2025

Issue

The City of Charlottesville, through the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, has received the Victim Witness Program Grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services in the amount of \$107,446.00 in Federal Funds; \$128,700.00 in State General Funds; and a supplemental \$63,526.00 from the Commonwealth Attorney's operating budget for a total award of \$299,672.00.

Background / Rule

The victim's rights movement began in the 1970's as a result of victims being re-victimized by the criminal justice process. Victims had difficulty navigating the complexities of the criminal justice system and no voice or recourse when their cases were continued or pled out without their knowledge or consent. Prosecutors did not have the time or skills to respond to victims traumatized by this process. To proceed with their case, prosecutors recognized that many victims would need more services than the prosecutor's office could provide. In response to this need, the federal Victims of Crime Act was passed in 1984, and funds became available through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice to respond to the needs of victims.

Analysis

The Charlottesville Victim/Witness Assistance Program was established in 1989 to meet the needs of victims of crimes in Charlottesville. This program is one of more than 100 such programs in the state that provides crisis intervention and advocacy; information and support during and after criminal justice proceedings; access to compensation and restitution; referrals to local community agencies; and ensures victims are afforded their rights as outlined in Virginia's Crime Victim and Witness Rights Act. The program also provides training to law enforcement and allied agencies on victim issues. It regularly serves more than 1,000 victims and witnesses each year.

Financial Impact

The grant requires a City match of \$63,526 and will be covered using funds previously appropriated as part of the Commonwealth Attorney's Office Fiscal Year 2026 Adopted Budget. The Victim Witness Assistance Program Grant is renewed annually, and the funds will be received and expensed in the grants fund.

Recommendation

Staff recommend approval and appropriation of grant funds.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Attachments

1. Victim Witness Grant - 2025