



Board Summary Report

File #: 26-222

Agenda Date: 4/20/2026

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Amy Padden, District Attorney, 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office

Prepared By :
Amy Padden, District Attorney, 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office

Presenter:
Amy Padden, District Attorney, 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office

Subject:
1:30 PM *Grant Opportunity: FY25 Upholding the Rule of Law and Preventing Wrongful Convictions Program from Bureau of Justice Assistance

Purpose and Request: The purpose of this request is for the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to consider approving and authorizing the District Attorney's Office to apply on behalf of Arapahoe County through electronic submission of a grant application to the DOJ BJA FY25 Upholding the Rule of Law and Preventing Wrongful Convictions Program, which provides up to \$600,000 over a 36-month period with no local match requirement to support review of post-conviction claims of innocence and strengthen system integrity.

Alignment with Strategic Plan : Good Governance - Deliver mandated and essential services with excellence.

Background and Discussion : The District Attorney's Office would like to submit a grant application to the DOJ BJA FY25 Upholding the Rule of Law and Preventing Wrongful Convictions Program, which provides up to a \$600,000 over a 36-month period with no local match requirement to support review of post-conviction claims of innocence and strengthen system integrity. The District Attorney's Office would apply on behalf of Arapahoe County because Arapahoe County is the entity eligible for this grant opportunity.

The proposed project will establish a formal post-conviction actual innocence review process within the DA Office to receive, assess, and investigate claims of wrongful conviction. Activities will include development of intake and review procedures, reinvestigation of eligible cases through case file review and witness follow-up, use of advanced DNA testing and forensic analysis where appropriate, and legal review necessary to pursue exoneration through the court system. In addition to case review, the project will evaluate factors that contributed to any wrongful conviction and use those findings to strengthen policies, training, and internal processes to reduce the risk of future errors.

The anticipated budget of \$500,000 - \$600,000 is primarily personnel-driven and is expected to support approximately two part-time positions over the three-year grant period: a part-time investigator to conduct case review, reinvestigation, witness follow-up, and forensic coordination; and

a part-time attorney to manage legal analysis, prepare motions, and represent the office in post-conviction proceedings.

The budget is also expected to include contractual funding for DNA testing and specialized forensic services, particularly for older cases where advances in technology may be helpful. The three-year performance period is intended to address the initial backlog of historical cases, establish formal procedures, and build long-term internal capacity. Following the grant period, future case review activities are anticipated to be absorbed into existing staffing and operations, limiting long-term fiscal impact.

The deadline to apply for this grant is May 11, 2026. The grant period lasts 36 months.

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact : If approved as presented, the fiscal impact to Arapahoe County will be a small amount of staff time to submit the grant application and \$500,000 - \$600,000 in grant funds received if the application is successful.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies : N/A

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends moving forward with the grant application as presented.

Concurrence: N/A