

MEMORANDUM

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

FROM: Vanessa Martin, Administrative Manager, Prosecutor's Office

RE: Victim/Witness Assistance Grant

DATE: September 8, 2020

Enclosed are two (2) originals of a contract between Whatcom County and Washington State Department of Commerce for your review and signature.

- **Background and Purpose**

District Court prosecutors handle a large share of serious domestic violence cases, and it is the only court at the county that facilitates supervision of domestic violence offenders on probation. The legislature requires prosecutors to keep victims informed and to provide emotional support for victims of violent and sex crimes, including having the advocate present at defense interviews and judicial proceedings (R.C.W. 7.69.030). Effective prosecution depends on cooperation from victims of crime. Staffing the position is absolutely necessary to ensure the health and well-being of the community and victims of domestic violence.

- **Victim/Witness Assistance Grant**

The County issued a hiring freeze due to COVID-19, which resulted in the Prosecutor's Office applying for a grant to pay for a critical vacancy we had in our Victim Witness Unit. The office was awarded the grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce in the amount of \$60,461 to put towards the salary and benefits for a full-time position. The County agreed to pay for the remaining \$20,741 to cover a portion of the position's benefits expenses.

Please contact Vanessa Martin at extension #5716 if you have any questions regarding this agreement.