



# City of Austin

## Recommendation for Action

**File #:** 25-1936, **Agenda Item #:** 50.

9/25/2025

### Posting Language

Approve a resolution authorizing the submission of an application for, and the acceptance of grant funding from, the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division to implement the Austin Police Department's Digital Evidence Management Project. Funding: \$94,559 is available from the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division, Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program. A thirty percent City match is required and available in the Operating Budget of the Austin Police Department.

### Lead Department

Austin Police Department.

### Fiscal Note

Funding in the amount of \$94,559 is available from the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division, Violence Against Women Formula Grants Program for the project period of September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026. A 30 percent City match is required and will be met by accounting for the salaries of existing Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)-scoped personnel.

### For More Information:

Robin J. Henderson, Chief of Staff, Austin Police Department, (512) 974-5030.

### Additional Backup Information:

The Office of the City Manager reviewed this grant for alignment as directed by Resolution No. 20200611-096 and recommends approval.

This action will provide the resolution required by the Criminal Justice Division to complete the award process related to \$94,559 in grant funding for this program. The project period is September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026. A 30 percent City match is required and will be met by accounting for the salaries of existing VAWA-scoped personnel.

This is the first year of this program. VAWA funding will allow the City to hire one full-time Police Digital A/V Specialist. Dedicating an APD Digital Evidence Management Unit (DEMU) position to focus exclusively on VAWA-scoped cases using a multi-pronged approach will eventually eliminate the backlog of evidence requests and usher in an era of evidence sharing within days instead of months. Expanding the DEMU with the addition of one VAWA-funded team member combined with the expansion of sworn digital evidence shared responsibilities will elevate the importance of addressing violence against women and will result in a higher percentage of meaningful case dispositions. In addition to completing the research and review process, coordinating evidence sharing and responding to requests from prosecutors within the three impacted counties, the grant-funded specialist will provide digital evidence training for patrol officers, prosecutors, forensics personnel, and other groups that capture digital evidence that is specific to violent crimes against women, including the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The specialist will help patrol officers understand the role of digital evidence in complying with the Michael Morton Act and in prosecuting crimes. The training will also highlight best practices and tips to ensure 100 percent accuracy in the identification and categorization of digital evidence. The project's success will be measured by how quickly: (1) VAWA-scoped digital evidence gathered during the call for service is shared with prosecutors after charges

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are filed by the Austin Police Department, and (2) subsequent digital evidence gathered during further investigation after charges are filed are shared with prosecutors.

The grantor requires a resolution approved by the governing body that includes items 1-4 below:

1. Authorization by the governing body for the submission of the application to the Office of the Governor that clearly identifies the name of the project for which funding is requested;
2. A commitment to provide all applicable matching funds;
3. A designation of the name and/or title of an authorized official who is given the authority to apply for, accept, reject, alter, or terminate a grant (Note: If a name is provided, the applicant must update the resolution should the official change during the grant period.); and
4. A written assurance that, in the event of loss or misuse of grant funds, the governing body will return all funds to Office of the Governor.