



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

December 2, 2024

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-15 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Competitive Victims of Crime Act (VOCA/VOCG) (VOCA) Grant, \$387,925

I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that *Supplemental Appropriation #25-15 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Competitive Victims of Crime Act (VOCA/VOCG) (VOCA) Grant* has the potential to advance equitable outcomes for Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) residing in, or who experience a crime in, Montgomery County as the funds are used to support the County's Trauma Services Program through the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. As noted in the REIA for *Supplemental Appropriation #25-10 FY25 Operating Budget, Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy, Competitive Victims of Crime Act Award*, the funding source for the Trauma Services Program is also generated from fees collected from offenders convicted of Federal crimes¹. As a result, it is worth noting that the burden of financing VOCA falls primarily at the feet of low-income BIPOC individuals who are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

II. **BACKGROUND:** *Supplemental Appropriation #25-15 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, DHHS, VOCA/VOCG* is utilized for the purpose of improving the

¹ <https://gocpp.maryland.gov/grants/programs/voca/>

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) Supplemental Appropriation #25-15 FY25 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services, Competitive Victims of Crime Act (VOCA/VOCG) (VOCA) Grant

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treatment of victims of crime by providing victims with the assistance and services necessary to aid their restoration after a violent criminal act, and to support and aid them as they move through the criminal justice process. Specifically, awarded funds will partially support five positions intended to aid victims. Victim assistance includes services such as crisis intervention, counseling, emergency transportation to court, temporary housing and criminal justice support and advocacy.

Since 1977, Montgomery County Trauma Services has enhanced direct services to survivors of crimes including: domestic, intimate partner and family violence; sexual assault/rape; human trafficking; and general crime including homicide, assault, etc. It provides an array of comprehensive services to Montgomery County residents who are crime victims or victims whose crime occurred in Montgomery County. When possible, services are provided in the primary language of the victim and in community settings.

III. ANALYSIS: ORESJ previously provided analysis on VOCA in the REIA for *Supplemental Appropriation #25-10 FY25 Operating Budget, Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy, Competitive Victims of Crime Act Award*. As the REIA states, programs provided by VOCA have the ability to help bridge gaps between communities experiencing crime and the government—with culturally competent staff being able to provide victims and witnesses with more time, attention, support, and rehabilitative services. It is for these reasons that ORESJ finds that this supplemental request has the ability to advance equitable outcomes for BIPOC communities in Montgomery County. ORESJ continues to stress the importance of VOCA programs meeting the diverse language needs of all county residents and that the source of the grant funding be considered—ensuring that undue burden is not placed on already marginalized communities. For additional information, we implore you to review the *REIA for Supplemental Appropriation #25-10 FY25 Operating Budget, Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy, Competitive Victims of Crime Act Award*.

cc: Dr. James C. Bridgers, Jr., Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Tricia Swanson, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive