



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 16-1705A, Version: 1

Subject:

Criminal Lab Financial Assistance Agreement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement on behalf of the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory.

Recommended Action:

Approve the Criminal Lab Financial Assistance Agreement with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) to fund a portion of the operating cost for the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory (PCFL).

Strategic Plan:

- Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare
- 2.2 Be a facilitator, convener, and purchaser of services for those in need
- Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers
- 5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public’s resources
- 5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support

Summary:

The Criminal Lab Financial Assistance Agreement allows the County to receive financial support from FDLE to fund up to 75% of PCFL’s operating costs. This agreement supplements the County’s funding of the PCFL’s operating costs, reducing PCFL’s reliance on local general revenue and funding support.

The agreement is funded by criminal fines collected statewide, pursuant to Sections 938.07 and 938.55 Florida Statutes. The funds are disbursed to the County on behalf of the laboratories according to a pre-determined distribution based on a percentage of the population served.

Background Information:

Section 943.32, Florida Statutes, establishes a statewide criminal analysis laboratory system that includes PCFL, a locally funded laboratory eligible for funding under Section 943.35 Florida Statutes. PCFL employs professionals that provide the County’s criminal justice system with a variety of forensic services including but not limited to DNA tests, toxicology reports, and trace evidence analysis.

The criminal analysis laboratory system is composed of FDLE laboratories and five locally-funded laboratories in Broward, Indian River, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and Pinellas Counties. The locally-funded laboratories receive a distribution of DUI/Drug fines based on the population the lab serves as follows:

Laboratory	Population	% of Total Funds
Broward	1,827,367	24.61%
Indian River	621,189	8.37%
Miami-Dade	2,653,934	35.74%

Palm Beach	1,378,417	18.56%
Pinellas	944,971	12.73%
Totals:	7,425,878	100.00%

From FY14 to FY15 the County saw a 30% increase in cases submitted to PCFL, up from a 7% increase from FY13 to FY14. The Criminal Lab Financial Assistance Agreement helps supplement the operating costs associated with this increase. Fines and fees used to fund the agreement includes mandatory fines imposed for driving or boating under the influence and discretionary fines the courts may impose when a locally-funded crime laboratory provides services that are used in the prosecution of any violation included in Title XLVI, CRIMES, chapters 775-896 of the Florida Statutes.

Fiscal Impact:

In FY17, PCFL will receive 12.73% of the total criminal fines collected statewide, not to exceed 75% of PCFL's actual operation costs. Under this agreement, the County has previously received laboratory support totaling \$289,487.49 in FY16, \$293,542.99 in FY15, and \$273,491.16 in FY14.

An estimation of funds received under this agreement is \$265,000 for FY17 to supplement the Medical Examiner's operating costs. Grant funds were anticipated and included in the Medical Examiner's FY17 Budget. The actual amount received will be based on a percentage of fees collected that will be allocated in quarterly distributions. The Agreement is effective retroactive to October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

Staff Member Responsible:

Lourdes Benedict, Director, Human Services

Partners:

Pinellas County Medical Examiner's Office
Florida Department of Law Enforcement

Attachments:

Criminal Lab Assistance Agreement FY17
FDLE Criminal Analysis Laboratory System Funding Agreement Letter