

---

Title	<b>Ventura County District Attorney's Office</b>	07/07/2023
	by paul nunez in <b>Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program</b>	id. 41328865
	Paul.nunez@ventura.org	

---

---

<b>Original Submission</b>	07/07/2023
----------------------------	------------

---

The Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program Application is divided into five sections as identified below: Background Information Contact Information Program Information Proposal Narrative and Budget Mandatory Attachments Each section has a series of questions that require a response. Applicants will be prompted to provide written text, select options from a drop down menu, select options from a multiple choice menu, or upload attachments. Questions with a red asterisk require responses. Applicants will not be able to submit the application until all questions with a red asterisk have been completed. Applicants may reference the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program Proposal Instruction Packet for background information, key dates, rating factors, and other important information to aid in the completion of the Grant Program Application. The Proposal Instruction Packet is available on the BSCC website. NOTE: Applicants may start and stop their application but must select "Save Draft" at the bottom of the application before existing.

---

SECTION I - BACKGROUND INFORMATION	This section requests information about the applicant's name, location, mailing address, and tax identification number.
------------------------------------	---

---

Name of Applicant	Ventura County District Attorney's Office
-------------------	---

---

Applicant's Physical Address	646 County Square Dr Third Floor Ventura CA 93003 US
------------------------------	---

---

Applicant's Mailing Address (If different than physical address)	800 S. Victoria Avenue, Room 314, Ventura, CA 93009
--	---

---

Mailing Address for Payment	<b>646 County Square Dr Third Floor Ventura CA 93003 US</b>
Tax Identification Number	<b>956000944</b>
SECTION II - CONTACT INFORMATION	<b>This section requests contact information for the individuals identified as the Project Director, Financial Officer, Day-to-Day Project Contact, Day-to-Day Fiscal Contact, and the Authorized Signature.</b>
Project Director	<b>Paul Nunez</b>
Project Director's Title with Agency/Department/Organization	<b>Chief Deputy District Attorney, Criminal Prosecutions, Ventura County District Attorney's Office</b>
Project Director's Physical Address	<b>646 County Square Dr Third Floor Ventura CA 93003 US</b>
Project Director's Email Address	<b>Paul.nunez@ventura.org</b>
Project Director's Phone Number	<b>+18056542548</b>
Financial Officer	<b>Chuck Hughes</b>
Financial Officer's Title with Agency/Department/Organization	<b>Special Assistant/ Fiscal, Administrative, and Legislative Services/Ventura County District Attorney's Office</b>
Financial Officer's Physical Address	<b>646 County Square Dr Third Floor Ventura CA 93003 US</b>
Financial Officer's Email Address	<b>chuck.hughes@ventura.org</b>
Financial Officer's Phone Number	<b>+18054771635</b>

Day-To-Day Program **Paul**  
Contact **Nunez**

---

Day-To-Day Program **Chief Deputy District Attorney**  
Contact's Title

---

Day-To-Day Program **646 County Square Dr**  
Contact's Physical **Third Floor**  
Address **Ventura**  
**CA**  
**93003**  
**US**

---

Day-To-Day Program **Paul.nunez@ventura.org**  
Contact's Email  
Address

---

Day-To-Day Program **+18056542548**  
Contact's Phone  
Number

---

Day-To-Day Fiscal **Derek**  
Contact **Fouarge**

---

Day-To-Day Fiscal **Accounting Manager/Fiscal/Ventura County District Attorney's Office**  
Contact's Title

---

Day-To-Day Fiscal **646 County Square Dr**  
Contact's Physical **Third Floor**  
Address **Ventura**  
**CA**  
**93003**  
**US**

---

Day-To-Day Fiscal **derek.fouarge@ventura.org**  
Contact's Email  
Address

---

Day-To-Day Fiscal **+18054771635**  
Contact's Phone  
Number

---

Name of Authorized **Paul**  
Officer **Nunez**

---

Authorized Officer's **Chief Deputy District Attorney, Criminal Prosecutions, Ventura County**  
Title with **District Attorney's Office**  
Agency/Department/Organization

---

Authorized Officer's Physical Address	<b>646 County Square Dr Third Floor Ventura CA 93003 US</b>
Authorized Officer's Email Address	<b>Paul.nunez@ventura.org</b>
Authorized Officer's Phone Number	<b>+18056542548</b>
Authorized Officer Assurances	<b>checked</b>
SECTION III - PROGRAM INFORMATION	<b>This section requests a Proposal Summary description and identification of the Funding Category.</b>
<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Ventura County District Attorney's Office Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Unit</b>
Proposal Summary	<b>The Ventura County DA's Office will establish an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Unit that will include one senior Deputy District Attorney and a District Attorney Investigator to vertically prosecute ORT crimes. The DDA will employ a vertical prosecution model including fielding pre-filing investigation issues, filing all ORT cases, and handling all court appearances and trials. The DAI will collect all relevant evidence and contact witnesses to strengthen trial presentations. The goals are to curtail ORT enterprises by 2027, consistently obtain successful outcomes, and create a successful algorithm for future success beyond the grant's end date.</b>
Funding Category Information	<b>Applicants may apply for funding in a Small Scope OR Large Scope Category. The maximum an applicant may apply for is up to \$800,000 in the Small Scope category OR up to \$2,050,000 in the Large Scope category. Applicants may apply for any dollar amount up to and including the maximum grant amount identified in each category. Please reference pages 8-9 in the Proposal Instruction Packet for additional information.</b>
<b>Funding Category</b>	<b>Large Scope (Up to \$2,050,000)</b>
SECTION IV - PROPOSAL NARRATIVE AND BUDGET	<b>This section requests responses to the Rating Factors identified in the the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program Instruction Packet.</b>

**The Proposal Narrative must address the Project Need, Project Description, Project Organizational Capacity and Coordination, and Project Evaluation and Monitoring Rating Factors as described in the Instruction Packet (Pages 17-21). A separate narrative response is required for each Rating Factor as described below: The Project Need narrative may not may not exceed 4,474 total characters (includes punctuation, numbers, spacing and any text). In Microsoft Word, this is approximately 2 (two) pages in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides and at 1.5-line spacing. The Project Description narrative may not may not exceed 8,948 total characters (includes punctuation, numbers, spacing and any text). In Microsoft Word, this is approximately 4 (four) pages in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides and at 1.5-line spacing. The Project Organizational Capacity and Coordination narrative may not may not exceed 4,474 total characters (includes punctuation, numbers, spacing and any text). In Microsoft Word, this is approximately 2 (two) pages in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides and at 1.5-line spacing. The Project Evaluation and Monitoring narrative may not may not exceed 4,474 total characters (includes punctuation, numbers, spacing and any text). In Microsoft Word, this is approximately 2 (two) pages in Arial 12-point font with one-inch margins on all four sides and at 1.5-line spacing. A character counter is automatically enabled that shows the number of characters used and the remaining number of characters before the limit for each response met. If the limit is exceeded, a red prompt will appear with the message "You have exceeded the character limit". Applicants will be prohibited from submitting the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program Application until they comply with the character limit requirements. NOTE: It is up to the applicant to determine how to use the total word limit in addressing each section, however as a guide, the percent of total point value for each section is provided in the Proposal Instruction Packet (Page 17).**

#### Project Need

**The Ventura County District Attorney's Office (VCDA) prosecutes all felony and misdemeanor offenses for the county's 850,000 residents. These prosecutions occur in one location, the Ventura County Hall of Justice. In the past year, the office has filed 209 felony organized retail theft (ORT) cases. FN1 These ORT cases are handled by 14 attorneys in the VCDA General Trials Unit (GTU). VCDA averages 17 ORT filings per month and assigns ORT cases among the GTU prosecutors, along with other felony cases. The substantial ORT workload equals the caseload of three prosecutors. The GTU does not have an assigned District Attorney investigator and relies on the work of local agencies to complete follow-up investigation on ORT cases.**

**Ventura County retailers are targeted by ORT crews traveling into the county. Local retailers have substantial losses due to the high value of goods sold at the Camarillo Premium Outlet, The Oaks Mall in Thousand Oaks, The Collection Mall in Oxnard, and several box store retailers across the county. ORT losses in each Ventura County city**

exceed six figures, and local chambers of commerce report substantial ORT losses for large retailers countywide. FN2

Ventura County ORT investigations have significant needs the grant can address. The number of ORT cases exceeds local agencies' ability to properly investigate all leads generated by the criminal enterprises. Agencies frequently are incapable of linking co-defendants to crimes with the limited follow-up work that can be done. Video evidence is often not properly collected from stores, resulting in the agency submitting the ORT case without the original video surveillance. Instead, agencies submit cellphone videos captured by patrol officers viewing the video on a store monitor. Non-Ventura County residents who commit ORT crimes often are not properly investigated for prior out-of-county ORT crimes, resulting in low bail amounts being set by local judges. Online retailers are infrequently contacted to recover stolen Ventura County merchandise and online shoppers do not have a manner to report suspected ORT merchandise. FN3

Ventura County Sheriff's Office data shows that ORT incidents, in their jurisdiction, increased by 35 percent from 2020 to 2022. Of the 225 ORT arrests in 2020, 181 arrestees, or 80 percent, resided outside Ventura County. FN4 Only a third of VCDA cases are multi-defendant cases even though most ORT cases involve a team of individuals operating in a coordinated manner to commit the thefts. Published news release from VCSO and VCDA demonstrate how ORT enterprises enter Ventura from surrounding counties to target local businesses. FN5

The scale of ORT crime in Ventura County is magnified by its geography. The county sits on the Northwest border of Los Angeles County and is connected by two freeways, the U.S. 101 (also known as "The 101 Freeway") and State Route 118, the principal means of travel between the two counties. FN6 The efficiency of travel into Ventura is not lost on criminal enterprises from throughout Southern California who target Ventura retailers and use the 101 Freeway for a quick getaway to avoid capture. Ventura cities, based on a coastal, neighborly, and farming history, have embraced trusting ideals and a welcoming attitude to all county visitors and could benefit from training on how to assist in the prevention of ORT crime.

Ventura County business communities have built large retail centers along the 101 Freeway to encourage accessibility for its residents, tourists, and nearby Los Angeles shoppers. The Camarillo Premium Outlets (TCPO) is an example of the shopping experience that is offered in Ventura County. FN7 TCPO is nearly the largest outlet mall in California with 691,000 square feet of retail space making it an attractive organized retail theft target. TCPO is targeted for athletic apparel such as Adidas and Nike as well as designer brands like Giorgio Armani, Gucci, and Versace. TCPO stretches a mile in distance and has 101 Freeway entrances at each end providing easy access and exit to potential ORT operations. FN8

Because VCDA already assigns felony cases to prosecutors at arraignment and the DDAs handle cases through trial and sentencing, VCDA does not have existing hurdles to employing a vertical prosecution model. Therefore, the proposed project will use grant funds to enhance ORT prosecution to a level commensurate to ORT crime experienced in the county.

#### Project Description

The VCDA proposal will staff one Senior Deputy District Attorney and one District Attorney Investigator III to vertically prosecute felony ORT cases in Ventura County. The significant number of ORT cases generated in Ventura County will allow the grant funded ORT DDA to vertically prosecute exclusively ORT cases. The grant funded ORT DAI will assist the ORT DDA prepare and investigate their caseload, which will occupy the entirety of the DAI's responsibilities.

In the past year, VCDA initiated 209 prosecutions in felony ORT cases. The VCDA General Trials Unit (GTU) staffs these cases and is comprised of the office's less experienced felony prosecutors. The ORT grant will allow the VCDA to staff a dedicated Senior Deputy District Attorney to vertically prosecute ORT cases and bring a significant number of VCDA ORT prosecutions under the control of a single, experienced DDA. The grant funded DDA will concentrate on the most serious ORT cases that involve multiple locations and/or multiple defendants. In addition to filing all traditional theft charges, such as grand theft, commercial burglary, and organized retail theft, the VCDA DDA will file conspiracy charges in all applicable cases.

California Penal Code Section 182, Conspiracy, is a charge frequently used in Ventura to hold all defendants criminally responsible for felony level conduct. Conspiracy is a complicated charge that must be well-investigated to be viable. ORT cases are highly suitable for the use of a Conspiracy charge and the ORT DDA, with the support of the ORT DAI, will make sure the charge is properly supported, against all charged defendants, with a thorough investigation, resulting in a case that is provable beyond a reasonable doubt.

The ORT cases not handled by the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit will be assigned to the GTU. The ORT DDA will support those prosecutors to determine the best charges and the best path for a successful outcome. The ORT DDA will train the GTU deputies in ORT prosecutions and the DAI will assist in follow-up investigation as needed. The GTU will vertically prosecute the remaining ORT cases.

The focus of the ORT team will target crews that enter Ventura County with the specific purpose of committing thefts, returning to waiting vehicles, and using the U.S. 101 Freeway or State Route 118 to leave Ventura County as quickly as possible. VCSO data indicates that 80% of ORT crimes are committed by offenders that do not reside in Ventura County. These cases become complicated for law enforcement agencies to investigate due to the distance the offenders have traveled, and the investigative hours required to build the cases against each offender.

Local agencies have determined that sophisticated retail theft operations have targeted Ventura County retail establishments for several reasons. First, high-end retail locations are located immediately adjacent to U.S. 101 and the 118 Freeways which allows retail theft operatives to effectuate a quick escape from the business and the area, giving responding law enforcement agencies a reduced window to apprehend the operatives. Second, Ventura County retailers serve a trusting local community that enjoy the ease of purchasing high dollar merchandise that is usually kept on the store floor for the shoppers' convenience. As a result, retail theft operatives can acquire large amounts of expensive retail goods without having to go behind a counter, a locked cabinet or other theft prevention norms to physically acquire the retail goods. The offenders can exit the retailer, enter their vehicle, and within seconds be on the freeway leaving the county.

The proposed project includes the utilization of sophisticated software and equipment to enhance trial presentations, including necessary digital media displays and editing equipment. Grant objectives will also include the investigation of all property taken in all ORT incidents to charge as many counts as provable, the writing of search warrants to obtain relevant video footage from victimized ORT retailers, and the execution of proper investigative methods such as surveillance and collaboration with retail partners and law enforcement agencies within and outside Ventura County to enhance ORT prosecutions, resulting in convictions on all filed charges.

The DAI will create partnerships with online marketplaces that are frequently used in Ventura County to resell stolen merchandise. Currently, law enforcement does not have the capacity to engage these retailers and properly curb the practice. The DAI will monitor and identify potential items that are ORT merchandise and contact retailers to assist in the return of the stolen merchandise. The writing and execution of search warrants will be one of the primary responsibilities of the ORT DAI. The DAI will partner with local law enforcement to execute and serve search warrants in Ventura County and surrounding Southern California counties.

Currently, VCDA and the Ventura County Courts do not operate a restorative justice program for adults that are involved ORT offenders. VCDA does partner with Interface Children and Family Services to provide restorative justice programming at the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Center. Interface offers a Theft Prevention curriculum to reduce theft-related recidivism in the juvenile population. The VCDA grant proposal includes a funding allocation for a third-party provider such as Interface to provide restorative justice programming for adult ORT defendants. The restorative justice programming will be offered in English and Spanish. The facilitators will utilize qualified professionals that can share a lived experience with the students. The restorative justice program will:

- a. Focus on addressing harms, needs, and causes of wrongdoing;
- b. Orient toward victims' needs to remedy the harm inflicted;
- c. Encourage accountability of those who cause harm to encourage



- them to take personal responsibility for their actions;
- d. Include all relevant stakeholders;
- e. Ensure participation is voluntary;
- f. Promote healing and prevention of future harm.

The ORT DDA also will use existing services offered through the Ventura County Courts mental health court, mental health diversion, Veterans' court, and court supervised diversion programming. The ORT DDA will use these existing resources, coupled with the planned restorative justice program, to ensure that ORT offenders are guided away from recidivism and assume a pathway to constructive community behavior.

The accompanying Project Work Plan includes four goals for the VCDA's ORT Vertical Prosecution Team. First, VCDA will endeavor to reduce ORT crews operating in Ventura County through the staffing of one experienced deputy district attorney and one experienced investigator to vertically prosecute felony ORT cases. Once staffed, the team will begin its vertical prosecution at the investigative and filing stages, which are the earliest stages that vertical prosecutions can commence. The ORT team will file conspiracy charges where applicable to properly file felony level conduct and ensure the appropriate consequences for the offender. The DAI will focus their efforts on crews entering Ventura County who reside elsewhere because they are committing 80% of the ORT crimes in the county. The objectives will include limiting the number of bench warrants filed against offenders who do not return to Ventura for prosecution. Second, the assigned DAI will complete comprehensive investigations on all ORT participants that result in filed charges on all potentially provable criminal conduct. Third, the project will establish and maintain enhanced ORT intelligence gathering, countermeasures and ORT investigative partnerships with law enforcement and retailers. Finally, the proposed project will contract, develop, and implement restorative justice programming.

By the end of the program:

The Vertical Prosecution Unit will dismantle ORT operations based in Ventura County and significantly reduce the number of Los Angeles County based ORT operations entering Ventura County; The ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit will maintain the improved ORT prosecutions and ORT investigative practices; The unit will improve liaisons and partnerships with Ventura County law enforcement and retailers; and ORT restorative justice programming will endeavor to yield a 100% success rate in avoidance of recidivism by participating individuals.

In order to achieve these goals, every stage of a case's investigation and prosecution will incorporate effective improvements that are the result of the ORT grant. Over time, through the implementation of this plan, VCDA will use all available data collection systems to analyze data to achieve the desired eventual reduction in ORT cases. VCDA is confident that the proposed project will be a successful addition to California's intended outcome for ORT cases across the state.

The VCDA's planned ORT grant project will use a Senior Deputy District Attorney and a District Attorney Investigator to combat the organized retail theft problem in Ventura County. By December 2023, the office will transfer one of six Serious and Violent Crimes Unit DDAs into the ORT grant unit. Each of the Serious and Violent Crimes DDAs has previously prosecuted organized retail theft cases. The grant will allow that prosecutor to work on ORT cases exclusively. By December 2023, the VCDA Bureau of Investigation, comprised of 54 sworn investigators, will transfer one investigator, who has previously investigated theft crimes, into the ORT grant unit.

The ORT DDA position will be a stand-alone assignment within the General Trials Unit (GTU) reporting directly to the GTU supervisor. The grant's Project Director is the Chief Deputy who manages the GTU and will ensure the proposed project is implemented as intended. The ORT DAI will report to the Supervisor for Major Crimes, the Commander that oversees Major Crimes, and the Bureau's Chief Investigator and Deputy Chief. The investigative supervisor will ensure that the DAI implements the proposed project as intended.

The VCDA intends to utilize the expertise of investigators in Ventura County to maximize the efficacy of the ORT grant. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) proposes, under a separate grant, to create a task force among all law enforcement agencies in the county to combat ongoing ORT, which will further increase ORT case submissions. The VCDA ORT grant project will allow the ORT DDA to directly file and vertically prosecute the additional cases generated by the task force.

The VCDA ORT grant project enjoys the support of local law enforcement chiefs and the sheriff. Their submitted letters of support show the VCDA ORT project will enjoy robust support from area law enforcement agencies that will add value to and maximize the project's success. In addition, submitted letters from local Chambers of Commerce indicate strong support from county retailers who see the vertical prosecution project as an effective measure to combat retail theft crime.

The VCDA is headed by District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. The D.A.'s executive team includes a Chief Assistant and the Criminal Prosecutions Chief Deputy, Paul Nuñez, who is the ORT grant's Project Director. Mr. Nuñez and the unit supervisors will ensure a vertical prosecution model is employed and that the caseloads for the grant DDA and DAI are 100% ORT cases.

In connection with VCDA's plans for the ORT grant, a restorative justice partner program will be selected by the County's RFP process by December 2023. The contractor will implement restorative justice conferences with qualifying defendants and conduct retail theft avoidance training with them. Currently Interface Family and Children Services provides restorative justice programming for Ventura County's juvenile justice center. It is expected that Interface will bid to

be involved in this program.

Additionally, VCDA will coordinate the vertical prosecution grant with county law enforcement partners that work on ORT cases and promulgate ORT trends and investigative strategies through the Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee. Internally, the VCDA Public Information Officer will issue ORT press releases to promote awareness of the program and announce successes of the grant. VCDA will utilize its Digital Media Unit professionals to prepare improved video evidence presentations in ORT prosecutions. The grant investigator will consult with investigators in the Bureau's High Tech Task Force to maximize the efficacy of ORT investigative work in video evidence collection; cellphone, computer, and online retail investigative methods; and surveillance methods. These internal resources will be leveraged to ensure the VCDA ORT vertical prosecution unit is supported in all critical areas.

Finally, the grant funded Vertical Prosecution Unit will provide internal and external training to incorporate the best practices in prosecution work and investigations in all current and future ORT cases. Couple with the above-described efforts, VCDA hopes to create an ORT prosecution model that will be sustained beyond 2027. This vertical prosecution project will, during the life of the grant, or in the immediate years to follow, achieve the proposal's goal of dismantling ORT teams and reducing ORT crimes at county retail establishments.

#### Project Evaluation and Monitoring

The VCDA proposed project will utilize veteran prosecutors, experienced in complex litigation with multiple defendants, to implement a vertical prosecution plan and supervise the utilization of grant funds. The project director for the VCDA ORT Vertical Prosecution Grant will be the Chief Deputy of Criminal Prosecutions, Paul Nuñez. The chief deputy will work with the head of fiscal and administrative services, Special Assistant Chuck Hughes, to ensure that the project goals are the focus of the grant from implementation until 2028. Collectively, Mr. Nuñez and Mr. Hughes have over fifty years of experience handling felony jury trials including charges relevant here such as conspiracy, burglary, robbery, grand theft, forgery, and multi-defendant fraud and theft cases.

Mr. Nuñez oversees the General Trials Unit (GTU) that staffs 14 DDA's and will select a senior prosecutor for the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit. Rafael Orellana, the supervisor of GTU, will supervise the ORT DDA. Together, Mr. Nuñez and Mr. Orellana will monitor the ORT vertical prosecution unit through the implementation process and the service delivery period.

The Bureau of Investigation Chief Scott Whitney and Deputy Chief Cloyce Conway oversee the command structure for the Bureau's Major Crimes Unit. Chief Whitney will select an investigator, experienced in theft investigations, as the assigned ORT vertical prosecution unit investigator. The Major Crimes Unit supervisor, Corina Wondoloski, will monitor the investigative side of the ORT vertical prosecution unit from implementation through the service

delivery period.

Prior to selecting the outside evaluator, VCDA will use the Ventura County Integrated Justice Information System (VCIJIS), to collect, monitor, and evaluate relevant ORT data and process measures. VCIJIS is a case management database that is used by local law enforcement agencies, VCDA, probation, and the county courts to track data on every case from investigation through filing, conviction, and probation. Mr. Nuñez and Mr. Hughes will work with Ventura County officials to select an outside vendor to handle monthly, quarterly, and yearly monitoring. The evaluator will be selected by January 2024 and be in place to monitor all data from 2024 through 2027.

VCDA filed 209 organized retail theft prosecutions in the past 12 months. The ORT grant DDA will devote 100% of their time to handling the most complex ORT cases. The ORT grant DDA and DAI will be assigned to the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit for the life of the grant. The overflow cases, handled by VCDA line attorneys, also will employ a vertical prosecution model. The ORT grant will monitor VCDA ORT cases beyond the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit and provide statistics on all ORT cases, whether grant funded or not.

The outside monitor and existing VCDA data analysts will use VCIJIS to calculate the number of ORT cases filed within the grant, the convictions obtained, and the sentences imposed. They will calculate the same statistics for cases prosecuted outside the grant. Because VCDA always employs vertical prosecution for felonies, the expected number of prosecuted cases using a non-vertical prosecution model is zero.

VCIJIS will allow comparison of outcomes between grant funded ORT cases and non-grant funded ORT cases. VCIJIS statistics will allow for an assessment of the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit and whether the project achieved the expected improved, intended outcomes for ORT crimes. These added statistics will serve as the model for how VCDA will operate beyond the term of the grant.

These cases will receive the full support of the ORT DAI, who will be responsible for pursuing evidentiary leads that will allow additional defendants and charges to be filed on existing cases, collecting all video evidence in an efficient manner, and utilizing the necessary digital equipment that will enhance the presentation of evidence at trial. The added benefit of a DAI to the ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit will be measured by the number of additional defendants, charges and improved outcomes compared to non-grant ORT cases.

The VCDA ORT Vertical Prosecution Unit will serve as consultants to VCDA prosecutors that are handling the remaining ORT cases to maximize ORT convictions and sentences officewide. VCIJIS will provide the relevant statistical information for these cases as well.

---

Budget Instructions      **Applicants are required to submit a Proposal Budget and Budget Narrative (Budget Attachment). Upon submission the Budget Attachment will become Section 5: Budget (Budget Tables & Narrative) making up part of the official proposal. The Budget Attachment must be filled out completely and accurately. Applicants are solely responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information entered in the Proposal Budget and Budget Narrative. The Proposal Budget must cover the entire grant period. For additional guidance related to grant budgets, refer to the BSCC Grant Administration Guide. The Budget Attachment is provided as a stand-alone document on the BSCC website.**

---

Budget Attachment

[VCDA\\_ORT\\_VP\\_Budget-Attachment.-Final.xlsx](#)

---

SECTION V -  
MANDATORY  
ATTACHMENTS

**This section list the attachments that are required at the time of submission. Project Work Plan (Appendix B) Grantee Assurance for Non-Governmental Organizations (Appendix D) Letter(s) of Commitment If Applicable (Appendix E) Certification of Compliance with BSCC Policies on Debarment, Fraud, Theft, and Embezzlement (Appendix F) Governing Board Resolution Optional (Appendix G)**

---

Project Work Plan (Appendix B)

[VCDA\\_Project-Work-Plan.docx](#)

---

Grantee Assurance for Non-Governmental Organizations (Appendix D)

[NGO\\_signed.pdf](#)

---

Letter(s) of Commitment, (Appendix E)

[CEO\\_Designation\\_VC\\_Organized\\_Retail\\_Theft\\_Prosecution\\_Grant.pdf](#)

[Chief\\_Benites\\_Grant\\_Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

[Chief\\_Schindler\\_Grant\\_Support\\_letter.pdf](#)

[Chief\\_Shorts\\_Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

[Oxnard\\_Ventura\\_Cam\\_CoC\\_support\\_letter.pdf](#)

[Sheriff\\_Fryhoff\\_Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

[Simi\\_Valley\\_Chamber\\_of\\_Com\\_Grant\\_Sup\\_Ltr.pdf](#)

[TOaks\\_Chamber\\_of\\_Com\\_Grant\\_Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

---

Certification of Compliance with BSCC Policies on Debarment, Fraud, Theft, and Embezzlement (Appendix F)

[Appendix\\_F\\_signed.pdf](#)

---

OPTIONAL: Governing Board Resolution (Appendix G)

[CEO\\_Designation\\_VC\\_Organized\\_Retail\\_Theft\\_Prosecution\\_Grant.pdf](#)

---

OPTIONAL:  
Bibliography

**Bibliography**

1. Internal filing data from the VCDA, Organized Retail Theft cases filed in 12-month period, 2022-2023. PC182(a)(1), 87 cases; PC 459, 14 cases; PC 487, 84 cases; PC 490.4, 21 cases; PC 496, 3 cases. Total, 209 separately filed cases.
2. VCSO internal data indicates reported losses for 2022 in Oxnard, \$273,000 and VCSO jurisdictions, \$794,000. Unreported losses, or shrinkage figures, are kept with each individual retailer.
3. Attorney General Bonta, Retailers, Online Marketplaces Sign Collaborative Agreement to Better Combat Organized Retail Crime. State of California - DOJ - Office of the Attorney General. (2023, June 20). <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-bonta-retailers-online-marketplaces-sign-collaborative>
4. VCSO internal data, in 2022, within the VCSO jurisdiction, there were 225 Organized Retail Theft related arrests. 181, or 80% of the arrestees reported their residences were outside Ventura County. There were 291 ORT reported incidents in 2022. In 2020 there were 216.
5. Media Releases  
Anaheim Man Pleads Guilty to Organized Retail Theft. (2022). <https://www.vcdistrictattorney.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/22-041-De-La-Sancha-Mirchi-Pled.pdf>  
Arrest of Organized Retail Theft Duo, from Ventura County Sheriff's Office. Nixle. (2021). <https://local.nixle.com/alert/9194173/>  
Organized Retail Theft Arrests - Moorpark from Ventura County Sheriff's Office. Nixle. (2021). <https://local.nixle.com/alert/8607878/>  
Organized Retail Theft Crew Sentenced for Thousand Oaks, Camarillo and Oxnard Offenses. (2022). [https://www.vcdistrictattorney.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/22-013-Walker\\_Phillips-Eugenio-Sentenced-1.pdf](https://www.vcdistrictattorney.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/22-013-Walker_Phillips-Eugenio-Sentenced-1.pdf)
6. Ventura County Transportation Commission. (2020). [https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VCTC\\_US-101\\_CC\\_Final\\_Report\\_12-4-20.pdf](https://www.goventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/VCTC_US-101_CC_Final_Report_12-4-20.pdf)
7. Simon Property Group, L. P. and/or I. A. (NYSE: S. (2022). Camarillo Premium Outlets Property Brochure. Leasing Camarillo Premium Outlets. <https://business.simon.com/leasing/camarillo/>
8. Simon Property Group, L. P. and/or I. A. (NYSE: S. (2022). Center map for Camarillo Premium Outlets. Discover A Simon Premium Outlet. <https://www.premiumoutlets.com/outlet/camarillo/map/>

CONFIDENTIALITY  
NOTICE:

All documents submitted as a part of the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program proposal are public documents and may be subject to a request pursuant to the California Public Records Act. The BSCC cannot ensure the confidentiality of any information submitted in or with this proposal. (Gov. Code, § 6250 et seq.)

## Appendix B: Project Work Plan

Applicants must complete a Project Work Plan. This Project Work Plan identifies measurable goals and objectives, process and outcome measures, activities and services, responsible parties for those activities and services, data sources and estimated timelines. Completed plans should (1) identify the project’s top goals and objectives; (2) identify how the goal(s) will be achieved in terms of the activities, responsible staff/partners, and start and end dates, process and outcome measures; and (3) provide goals and objectives with a clear relationship to the need and intent of the grant. As this grant term is for three (3) years, the Project Work Plan must attempt to identify activities/services and estimate timelines for the entire grant term. A minimum of one goal and corresponding objectives, process measures, etc. must be identified.

**Applicants must use the Project Work Plan provided below. You will be prompted to upload this document to the BSCC-Submittable Application.**

<b>(1) Goal:</b>	<b>&gt; To reduce ORT crews targeting Ventura County through the staffing of one deputy district attorney and one investigator to vertically prosecute felony ORT cases.</b>		
Objectives (A., B., etc.)	> A. Staff one deputy district attorney and one investigator in the VCDA ORT Vertical Prosecution Team by Dec. 2023. B. Improve filings against ORT crews traveling into Ventura County and set bail as needed to secure future attendance in criminal court proceedings. C. The VCDA ORT team will file felony theft charges and include conspiracy where appropriate. D. Achieve guilty pleas or case dispositions that include felony probation using a vertical prosecution methodology. Sentence defendants to appropriate prison or jail time to properly resolve cases.		
Process Measures and Outcome Measures:	> 1. Improve conviction rate for felony charges on all charged defendants. 2. Achieve reduction in open bench warrants by defendants that reside outside of Ventura County.		
Project activities that support the identified goal and objectives:	Responsible staff/partners	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
>. ORT filings will be strengthened to ensure that defendants that reside in and outside of Ventura County will be held responsible for their criminal activity.	> Deputy District Attorney (DDA)/ District Attorney Investigator (DAI)	> January 1, 2024	> December 31, 2026
List data and sources to be used to measure outcomes: > Bench warrant data, conviction rates and sentences will be collected from DDA files, court dockets, and plea forms. Ventura County integrated case management system (VCIJIS) will also provide data. Third party evaluators.			

<b>(2) Goal:</b>	<b>&gt; To Complete comprehensive investigations on all ORT participants that result in filed charges on all provable criminal conduct to strengthen case outcomes.</b>		
Objectives (A., B., etc.)	> A. Investigate all property in defendants' possession and identify source of thefts. B. Conduct investigations into all suspects connected to ORT operation. C. Identify members of ORT operation using intel gathered by justice partners.		
Process Measures and Outcome Measures:	> 1. ORT deputy district attorney and investigator will monitor the number of defendants that were added to charged cases. 2. ORT investigator will aim to increase the number of charged defendants by properly identifying and connecting each criminally culpable individual to the charged ORT conduct. 3. Sentences for convicted ORT offenders will be monitored for DAI's ability to strengthen case outcomes.		
Project activities that support the identified goal and objectives:	Responsible staff/partners	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
> The VCDA ORT investigator will conduct necessary follow-up investigations at victim's location and travel within Ventura and nearby counties to arrest charged individuals thereby reducing ORT recidivism.	> VCDA ORT DDA/ DAI	> January 1, 2024	> December 31, 2026
List data and sources to be used to measure outcomes: > Filed cases, VCIJIS, third party evaluators, and DAI investigative reports.			

<b>(3) Goal:</b>	<b>&gt; To establish effective law enforcement partnerships within Ventura County and outside the county and to enhance trial preparation and strengthen awareness programming with county retailers and citizens.</b>		
Objectives (A., B., etc.)	> A. Create effective liaisons with neighboring county law enforcement departments, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and retailers operating in Ventura County by 2026. B. Utilize Attorney General Public Portal and conduct awareness campaign to support public's use of portal by December 2024. C. Train law enforcement, retailers, and online marketplace partners throughout 2024 through 2026. Topics will include trial preparation, evidence gathering, testimony, curbing resale of stolen merchandise, and ORT prevention.		
Process Measures and Outcome Measures:	>1. Establish ORT contacts at all major law enforcement departments in Los Angeles, Kern, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and Santa Barbara counties. 2. Conduct 15 live and video training courses per year in 2024-2026, for local law enforcement and retailers on preventing ORT crimes and conducting successful investigations and prosecutions of ORT crimes.		



	3. Establish relationships with online retailers to identify stolen property from Ventura County retailers.		
Project activities that support the identified goal and objectives:	Responsible staff/partners	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
> ORT grant D.D.A. and D.A.I. will build relationships with law enforcement and retailers to effectively curb ORT and identify resale operations. Digital lab will enhance trial prep. Public Information Officer will prepare news releases on ORT prosecutions and publicize CA Attorney General ORT public portal.	> DDA, DAI, VCDA digital media/trial technicians, and VCDA public information officer	> October 1, 2023	> December 31, 2026
List data and sources to be used to measure outcomes: > Third party evaluator data collected from Ventura County District Attorney. DDA surveys of training participants. Published news releases. AB 1750 completed by attorney general.			

<b>(4) Goal:</b>	<b>&gt; To develop and implement restorative justice programming for ORT involved persons.</b>		
Objectives (A., B., etc.)	> A. Create a restorative justice program with a community-based organization, such as Interface Children & Family Services. The Ventura County RFP will be completed by January 2024. B. Offer diversion, restorative justice programming, and conferences with court approved ORT involved persons. C. Offer continuation services and link individuals with third party services. D. Offer classes and services in English and Spanish.		
Process Measures and Outcome Measures:	> Establish a sustainable restorative justice operation that can be maintained beyond this grant. Maintain enrollment, activity, and completion logs for all participants (after care).		
Project activities that support the identified goal and objectives:	Responsible staff/partners	Timeline	
		Start Date	End Date
> Implementing a sustainable restorative justice program will prevent ORT participants from repeating their crimes and reduce future ORT incidents/ crimes.	> VCDA ORT D.D.A., D.A.I., and third-party contractor. RFP conducted through VC Procurement.	> October 1, 2023	> December 31, 2026
List data and sources to be used to measure outcomes: > Third party evaluators, Enrollment, program completion, and recidivism data from third-party contractor.			

**Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program - Project Budget and Budget Narrative**

Name of Applicant: *Ventura County District Attorney*

44-Month Budget: October 1, 2023 to June 1, 2027

*Note: Rows 7-16 will auto-populate based on the information entered in the budget line items (Salaries and Benefits, Services and Supplies, etc.)*

Budget Line Item	Total
1. Salaries & Benefits	\$1,574,303.00
2. Services and Supplies	\$78,570.00
3. Professional Services or Public Agencies	\$5,000.00
4. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Subcontracts	\$15,000.00
5. Data Collection and Evaluation	\$87,191.00
6. Equipment/Fixed Assets	\$54,145.00
7. Financial Audit (Up to \$25,000)	\$16,800.00
8. Other (Travel, Training, etc.)	\$30,474.00
9. Indirect Costs	\$186,148.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,047,631.00</b>

**1a. Salaries & Benefits**

Description of Salaries & Benefits	(% FTE or Hourly Rate) & Benefits	Total
Senior Deputy District Attorney (Senior Attorney)	Year 1 - ((\$226,898 (100% of FTE) + \$76,332) / 365 days ) 274 (Prorated April 1 to Dec 31) = \$227,630 Year 2 - (\$226,898 (100% of FTE) + \$76,332) * 2% (General Salary Increase per MOA) = \$309,295 Year 3 - (\$226,898 (100% of FTE) + \$76,332) * 2% (General Salary Increase per MOA) = \$315,480	\$852,405.00
District Attorney Investigator III	Year 1 - ((\$166,286 (100% of FTE) + \$90,518) / 365 days ) 274 (Prorated April 1 to Dec 31) = \$192,779 Year 2 - (\$166,286 (100% of FTE) + \$90,518) * 2% (General Salary Increase per MOA) = \$261,940 Year 3 - (\$166,286 (100% of FTE) + \$90,518) * 2% (General Salary Increase per MOA) = \$267,179	\$721,898.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,574,303.00</b>

**1b. Salaries & Benefits Narrative:**

*The Senior Deputy District Attorney's annual Salary of \$226,898 and Benefits of \$35,329 (Retirement Contributions) + \$9,932 (FICA Social Security) + \$3,290 (FICA Medicare) + \$16,250 (Flex Credit) + \$45 (Life Insurance) + \$1,657 (Disability) + \$3,022 (Workers Comp) + \$6,807 (401k contributions) for an annual total of \$303,230. Totals in 1.a for Year 1 have been prorated for the Service Delivery Dates. For Years 2 and 3, a estimated General Salary Increase for new Memorandums of Agreements (MOA) are added for Projections.*

*The District Attorney Investigator III's annual Salary of \$166,286 and Benefits of \$56,583 (Retirement Contributions) + \$2,427 (FICA Medicare) + \$15,132 (Flex Credit) + \$11,085 (Workers Comp) + \$4,185 (401k contributions) + \$1,106 (Annual Uniform Allowance) for an annual total of \$256,804. Totals in 1.a for Year 1 have been prorated for the Service Delivery Dates. For Years 2 and 3, a estimated General Salary Increase for new Memorandums of Agreements (MOA) are added for Projections.*

**2a. Services and Supplies**

Description of Services or Supplies	Calculation for Expenditure	Total
Computer for Surveillance Camera Review	\$3,000 - for laptop, \$250(x2) - for Monitor, \$50 - for peripherals X 3	\$11,000.00
Surveillance Program - DVR Examiner	1 license - \$5,200/year X 3 years	\$15,600.00
External Hard Drives for Evidence	Bundles of Thumb Drives	\$500.00
Vehicle Tracker	Equipment - \$1,100; Subscription - \$600/year X 3 Years	\$2,900.00
Radio Earpieces	\$100 for Bundle	\$100.00
Amped FIVE	Initial Purchase (1 license) \$4975 License Renewal (per year per license) \$1575	\$9,700.00
Axon Investigate	4 licenses for 3 years Total: \$36,000 Software training: \$2,770	\$38,770.00
		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$78,570.00</b>

**2b. Services and Supplies Narrative:**



Enter narrative here. You may expand cell height if needed.

**6a. Equipment/Fixed Assets**

Description of Equipment/Fixed Assets	Calculation for Expense	Total
Surveillance Van	Price of Honda Odyssey - \$38,835; Sales Tax - \$3,010; Title and Doc Fees - \$300	\$42,145.00
Upfitting Vehicle with Law Enforcement Equipment	Upfitting with Radios, Lights, Sirens, Surveillance bench retro fitted	\$12,000.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$54,145.00</b>

**6b. Equipment/Fixed Assets Narrative**

*This vehicle will be utilized by the assigned District Attorney Investigator. It is contemplated that the investigator will need to be in the field to collect evidence, interview witnesses, and communicate with victims in the organized retail thefts. The unmarked surveillance van will be allow the added benefit of conducting surveillance as needed and the easy transport of evidence, including recovered stolen merchandise.*

**7a. Financial Audit**

Description	Calculation for Expense	Total
Third party Auditor	For small annual \$5,600/year X 3 years	\$16,800.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$16,800.00</b>

**7b. Financial Audit) Narrative:**

*Estimate for local third party Auditor, based on prior Grant Audits conducted.*

**8a. Other (Travel, Training, etc.)**

Description	Calculation for Expense	Total
LEVA Digital Multimedia Evidence Training Symposium (2024, 2025, 2026)	Tuition \$995 Hotel \$200/night, 6 nights= \$1200 Flights \$500 Per Diem \$384 Total: \$3,079 Total for 2 people, 3 years: \$18,474	\$18,474.00
LEVA Level 2(Simon) May 2024	Tuition \$1500 Hotel \$200/night, 6 nights= \$1200 Flights \$500 Per Diem \$384 Total: \$3,584 (round to \$4,000)	\$4,000.00
LEVA Levels 3 and 4 (Jake) (currently, there are no Level 3 and 4 classes scheduled beyond 2023)	Following Level 2 pricing estimates \$4,000 each = \$8,000 total	\$8,000.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
		\$0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$30,474.00</b>

**8b. Other (Travel, Training, etc.) Narrative:**

Additional training, advanced software, and updated computers will significantly enhance the prosecution of organized retail theft cases by bolstering the capabilities of analysts to process video evidence. Video evidence plays a pivotal role in these cases, and improving the tools used by analysts to analyze and present this evidence will have a profound impact on the success of prosecutions.

If video evidence is not handled and processed carefully, according to best practices, the video/audio might not be interpreted accurately. The additional training provided will expose analysts to more advanced theory and hands-on techniques that conform to the Best Practices for the Acquisition and Processing of Digital Multimedia Evidence.

This collection of training will meet the requirements for analysts to be Certified Forensic Video Technicians, equipping them with the expertise to handle video evidence effectively. The training will also fulfill the continuing education requirements to maintain the certifications for the duration of the grant program.

Moreover, the advanced software and updated computers will provide analysts with the necessary tools to analyze and process video evidence efficiently. These enhancements will ensure faster rendering times and real-time playback capabilities, enabling analysts to work more effectively and reduce the time required for analysis.

By investing in additional training, software, and updated computers, the capabilities of analysts to handle and process video evidence in organized retail theft cases will be significantly enhanced. This will enable us to adhere to best practices, accurately interpret digital multimedia evidence, and meet certification requirements, ultimately strengthening the prosecution's case against offenders.

**9a. Indirect Costs**

For this grant program, indirect costs may be charged using only <b>one</b> of the two options below:	Grant Funds	Total
1) Indirect costs not to exceed 10 percent (10%) of the total grant award. Applicable if the organization <b>does not have</b> a federally approved indirect cost rate.	\$186,148	\$186,148
<i>If using Option 1) grant funds allocated to Indirect Costs may not exceed:</i>	\$0	
2) Indirect costs not to exceed 20 percent (20%) of the total grant award. Applicable if the organization <b>has</b> a federally approved indirect cost rate. Amount claimed may not exceed the organization's federally approved indirect cost rate.	\$0	\$0
<i>If using Option 2) grant funds allocated to Indirect Costs may not exceed:</i>	\$0	
<i>Please see instructions tab for additional information regarding Indirect Costs. If the amount exceeds the maximum allowed and/or turns red, please adjust it to not exceed the line-item noted.</i>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$186,148</b>	<b>\$186,148</b>

**9b. Indirect Costs Narrative:**

The Ventura County District Attorney uses a 10% Indirect Cost Calculation. Indirect Costs will pay for overhead of Buildings, Utilities, Gas for Vehicle, Administrative and Fiscal staff Salary and Benefits.



# COUNTY of VENTURA

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
**SEVET JOHNSON, PsyD**  
County Executive Officer

July 3, 2023

California Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Venture Oaks Way  
Suite 200  
Sacramento, California 95833

**Mike Pettit**  
Assistant County Executive Officer

**Kaye Mand**  
County Chief Financial Officer

**Shawn Atin**  
Assistant County Executive Officer/  
Human Resources Director  
Labor Relations

Re: Ventura County Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant

To whom it may concern,

The County of Ventura, via the Office of the District Attorney, will be applying for the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant funded by California State Assembly Bill 178. Through the grant, the District Attorney's Office will create the Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Unit (the ORT Unit) on behalf of the County. The ORT Unit will initially be comprised of one full-time, experienced District Attorney Investigator and one full-time, experienced Deputy District Attorney, whose exclusive duties will be the investigation and prosecution of organized retail theft in Ventura County. The ORT Unit will work closely with local law enforcement and business leaders to most effectively prosecute offenders. For purposes of this grant application, **I am designating the Ventura County District Attorney's Office as the Lead Public Agency.**

Ventura County, like other cities and counties throughout the state, has seen a dramatic increase in organized retail theft over the last few years. Our county is home to numerous large retail outlet centers, shopping malls, big box stores, and other highly targeted areas for these criminal enterprises. Our County's geographic location and major state highways also make us a convenient target to these groups that move quickly through areas during their crime sprees. The focused approach of the ORT Unit will dedicate resources to investigating and prosecuting local organized retail theft offenses.

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is highly experienced in vertical prosecution models with a long history of partnering with our other law enforcement agencies, the community, and our businesses to combat local criminal trends. The District Attorney's Office is capable and prepared to manage these grant funds to benefit the residents of Ventura County as well as the State of California.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sevet Johnson  
Chief Executive Officer



# OXNARD POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Protecting Our Community with Exceptional Service*

**CHIEF OF POLICE**

Jason Benites

**ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF**

Denise S. Morehouse

**ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF**

Christopher Williams

---

251 SOUTH C STREET, OXNARD, CALIFORNIA 93030-5789 \* (805) 385-7600 \* <http://oxnardpd.org>

June 21, 2023

Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Ventura Oaks Way #200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Support for Ventura County District Attorney's Office- Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant

The Oxnard Police Department is committed to supporting the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in its application for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Grant Program. The City of Oxnard has experienced a rise in organized retail theft crimes, and we believe that a vertical prosecution unit, with a dedicated prosecutor and investigator, can have a positive impact by helping us address this problem.

In Oxnard, our highest volume of ORT crimes come from "big box" businesses, large commercial districts, and our premium shopping destination area. Our big box stores include Target, Home Depot, Lowe's, Best Buy, Costco, Dick's Sporting Goods, Nordstrom Rack, and three Walmart stores. We also have a commercial shopping area that has been targeted by organized retail theft operations and a shopping destination, The Collection, that has also been targeted.

We have a history of collaborative work with our local law enforcement partners in Ventura County. We have several task forces that have proven effective, including a High-Tech Task Force, Internet Crimes Against Children, Human Trafficking, and an Auto Theft Task Force. I am confident that an ORT Program will also be successful.

We will diligently investigate thefts that plague our communities, and focus on disrupting theft groups that conspire to steal, distribute, and sell stolen goods. These theft groups often work regionally or move throughout the state to avoid detection, arrest, and prosecution. By working together, we can ensure that every area of the county will benefit from the work of the Ventura County Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program.

The Oxnard Police Department has policies preventing Bias Based Policing, and a practice that every member of the community is treated fairly, professionally, and with respect. We are committed to abiding by policies and laws limiting the use of surveillance technology for official investigative purposes and to prevent crime. Any additional technology purchased through the grant will be used solely to support the goals of the task force and investigate crime.

Sincerely,

Jason Benites  
Chief of Police



# VENTURA POLICE DEPARTMENT

*Protect, serve, and problem-solve with our community*

DARIN SCHINDLER  
Chief of Police

DAVID DICKEY  
Assistant Chief

June 27, 2023

Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Ventura Oaks Way #200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Letter of Support for Ventura County DA's Office - Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant

The Ventura Police Department supports the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in its application for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Grant Program. Unfortunately, the City of Ventura has seen a significant rise in ORT crime. A vertical prosecution unit, with a specially dedicated prosecutor and investigator, will help us address this rising problem.

In Ventura, we have several "big box" stores that are subject to ORT crimes. These large retailers include Walmart, Home Depot, Lowe's, and two Target stores. We also have a municipal business district that is targeted by organized retail theft operations.

Our county is fortunate to have great working relationships amongst local law enforcement. We have participated in several combined efforts over the years. Our detectives will work closely with the Vertical Prosecution Unit to aggressively investigate and prosecute these cases.

These theft groups often work regionally or move throughout the state to avoid detection, arrest, and prosecution. By working together, we can ensure that every area of the county will benefit from the work of the Ventura County Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program.

The Ventura Police Department has policies preventing Bias Based Policing and a practice that every member of the community is treated fairly, professionally, and with respect. We are committed to abiding by policies and laws limiting the use of surveillance technology for official investigative purposes and to prevent crime. Any additional technology purchased through the grant will be used solely to support the goals of the task force and investigate crime.

Sincerely,

Darin Schindler  
Chief of Police





# CITY OF SIMI VALLEY

*Home of The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Charles Steven Shorts, Chief of Police

June 27, 2023

Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Ventura Oaks Way #200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

**RE: Support for Ventura County District Attorney's Office- Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant**

The Simi Valley Police Department strongly supports the Ventura County District Attorney's effort in pursuing the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Grant. The city of Simi Valley is experiencing a big increase in ORT crimes, and we need help. A vertical prosecution unit, with a dedicated prosecutor and investigator, will be of great benefit to our city.

Simi Valley has numerous retail outlets that are targeted by ORT crews. We have two Walmart stores, two Target stores, a Home Depot, a Lowe's, a Best Buy, and a Costco. We also have a commercial shopping area and the Simi Valley Town Center with numerous retail stores.

Simi Valley is on the far east end of Ventura County and borders Los Angeles County. The isolation from the rest of Ventura County and the proximity of the 118 and 101 freeways adds to the likelihood of our city being targeted by ORT crews. As a new police chief, I'm excited for the opportunity to work with the Ventura County District Attorney's Office in addressing this growing problem. Our property crimes detectives will work closely with the Vertical Prosecution Unit.

The Simi Valley Police Department has policies preventing Bias Based Policing and a practice that every member of the community is treated fairly, professionally, and with respect. We are committed to abiding by policies and laws limiting the use of surveillance technology for official investigative purposes and to prevent crime. Any additional technology purchased through the grant will be used solely to support the goals of the task force and investigate crime.

Sincerely,

Charles Steven Shorts  
Chief of Police



June 27, 2023

State of California  
Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Ventura Oaks Way, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant Program

Dear Board of State and Community Corrections Grants Committee:

The West Ventura County Business Alliance wholeheartedly supports the Ventura County District Attorney's Office's application for grant funding to create an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program in Ventura County.

As has been true throughout California, Ventura County businesses have experienced increasing organized retail theft in recent years. Retail theft rings have victimized local merchants with individual thefts of tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise and strings of thefts in the hundreds of thousands. The sophistication of these California-based and international theft rings requires increasingly sophisticated enforcement efforts.

The creation of an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program will enable the Ventura County District Attorney's Office to dedicate a prosecutor and an investigator to work closely with local businesses to combat organized theft schemes.

We are committed to the success of this program and highly recommend the Ventura County District Attorney's Office be selected as a grant recipient.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Lindholm", written in a cursive style.

Nancy Lindholm  
President and CEO



# Ventura County **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**150**  
YEARS  
OF SERVICE

**Jim Fryhoff** - Sheriff | **John Reilly** - Undersheriff  
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 | 805.654.2385 | VenturaSheriff.org

June 21, 2023

Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Ventura Oaks Way #200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

RE: Support for Ventura County District Attorney's Office- Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) supports the Ventura County District Attorney's Office (VCDA) in its application for the Organized Retail Theft (ORT) Vertical Prosecution Grant Program. The VCSO is applying for the related BSCC Organized Retail Theft Prevention Grant, and we believe these two grants will be complimentary together. Ventura County has experienced a significant increase in ORT crimes, and a vertical prosecution unit will be a great benefit in addressing this problem.

The VCSO provides contract police services for five cities within the county. Three of these cities, which include Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, and Moorpark have seen significant increases in ORT crimes. Some of the large retail stores within these three cities include Walmart, Target, Home Depot, Lowe's, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Nordstrom Rack. Within our jurisdiction, we're also experiencing problems with the resale of items stolen from ORT operations. Stolen items are resold on many online sites, including Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, Amazon, eBay, Mercari, Poshmark, Shopify, Chairish, and many others.

The VCSO and VCDA have a history of working well together. We currently collaborate on several task forces and cooperative projects, including the Cold Case Unit, Sex Assault Kit Initiative, Fentanyl Overdose Crimes Unit, High-Tech Task Force, Human Trafficking Task Force, Internet Crimes Against Children, and an Auto Theft Task Force. These successful programs serve as a model for tackling the big public safety problems in our county. I'm confident that, if funded, this grant will allow us to have a big impact on ORT.

The VCSO has a vibrant detective division and an effective crime analysis unit. They will work closely with the VCDA Vertical Prosecution Unit to aggressively investigate these thefts and prosecute the offenders. These theft groups work regionally. By working together, we can ensure that every area of the county will benefit from the work of the Ventura County Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution Grant Program.

The VCSO has policies preventing Bias Based Policing and a practice that every member of the community is treated fairly, professionally, and with respect. We are committed to abiding by policies and laws limiting the use of surveillance technology for official investigative purposes and to prevent crime. Any additional technology purchased through the grant will be used solely to support the goals of the task force and investigate crime.

Sincerely,

Jim Fryhoff  
Ventura County Sheriff

**2023 OFFICERS**

**KATHI VAN ETTEN**  
President/CEO  
*Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce*

**KAILEY CRAIG**  
Chair  
*Edward Jones Financial*

**PAUL GOODNOUGH**  
Chair-Elect  
*Paul Goodnough, CPA*

**JENNIFER SWENSON**  
Past Chair  
*Adventist Health Simi Valley*

**KAREN TROOP**  
CFO/Treasurer  
*Pinnacle Estate Properties*

**MELANIE VOLLBRECHT**  
Vice Chair of Legislative Advocacy  
*AXICOM*

**DIRECTORS:**

**JENNIFER FINNERTY**  
*Rose Family Funeral Home and  
Cremation*

**MELISSA GILLER**  
*Ronald Reagan Presidential Library &  
Museum*

**JILL HANEY**  
Past Chair & Secretary  
*Montecito Bank & Trust*

**JOE JUSKO**  
*Lee & Associates*

**NIKKI LIAN**  
*CKO Kickboxing/Body Brain Train*

**MICHELLE LIDDELL**  
*American Trophies & Awards*

**MIKE NOLAN**  
*Aflac Insurance*

**MARK PODESTA**  
*Price Ford Simi Valley*

**DR. HANI YOUSSEF**  
*Simi Valley Unified School District*

July 5, 2023

To the Board of State and Community Corrections Grant Committee;

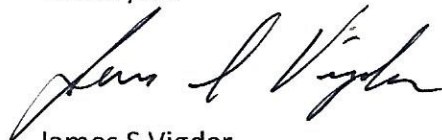
On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce, I would like to voice our strong support of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office application for grant funding to create an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program in Ventura County.

As has been true throughout California, Ventura County businesses have experienced increasing organized retail theft in recent years. Retail theft rings have victimized local merchants with individual thefts of tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise and strings of thefts in the hundreds of thousands. The sophistication of these California-based and international theft rings requires increasingly sophisticated enforcement efforts.

We believe the creation of an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program will not only help stem the continued escalation of retail theft but will be an effective tool to minimize these crimes by enabling the Ventura County District Attorney's Office to dedicate a prosecutor and an investigator to work closely with local businesses to combat organized theft schemes.

The mission of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce is to support and promote our business community. As such, we support this program to reduce business crime in our community and highly recommend the Ventura County District Attorney's Office be selected as a grant recipient.

Thank you.



**James S Vigdor**  
Director of Government Affairs  
Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce



## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Ed Sahakian**  
Chair of the Board  
Ventura County Credit Union

**David Barnett**  
Chair Elect  
Hyatt Regency Westlake

**Jill Haney**  
Chair Emeritus  
Montecito Bank & Trust

**Eva Gomez**  
Treasurer  
California State University Channel Islands

**Matt Midura**  
Secretary  
Good Cause Marketing Partners

**Jake Demirchyan**  
Director-at-Large  
Caruso

**Dianne McKay**  
Director-at-Large  
Mustang Marketing

**Lisa Safaenili**  
Director-at-Large  
Westminster Free Clinic

**Danielle Borja**  
President / CEO  
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce

### DIRECTORS

**Debbie Adrian**  
Warner Pacific Insurance Services

**Leanne Alva**  
Connect Escrow, Inc.

**Maria Camacho**  
Los Angeles Rams

**Tom Cohen**  
Cohen Land Use Law

**Marja Cross**  
Janss Marketplace

**Elizabeth Dritz**  
Takeda

**Mike Dutra**  
Candu Graphics

**Kinsie Flame**  
Jacob Flame's Tang Soo Do University

**Rick Gibson**  
Pepperdine University

**Rondi Guthrie**  
Athens Services

**Vikas Kaushik**  
TechAhead

**William Koehler**  
Law Offices of William D. Koehler

**Amie Krause**  
Atara Biotherapeutics

**Ruben Maciel**  
The SL Group

**Andrea McClellan**  
Boy Scouts of America -Ventura County Council

**Michelle Menzel**  
GreatWay Roofing

**Lucia Minaya**  
The Oaks Shopping Center

**Mark Ortgies**  
Southern California Orthopedic Institute

**Rudy Pereira**  
Premier America Credit Union

**Niki Richardson**  
TOArts

**Ryan Van Ommeren**  
California Lutheran University

July 5, 2023

Board of State and Community Corrections  
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Board of State and Community Corrections Grants Committee:

On behalf of the Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce, I am writing in strong support of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office's application for grant funding to create an **Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program** in Ventura County.

In recent years Ventura County businesses have seen increasing retail theft to levels that warranted news coverage in the LA Times, Ventura County Star, and numerous other news outlets. Retail theft rings have victimized local merchants with individual thefts of tens of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise and strings of thefts in the hundreds of thousands. These thefts have not only had a high cost to the local business owners directly victimized but to the community at large as they caused the price of goods to continue to escalate during high inflation.

Our District Attorney's Office, law enforcement, and businesses continue to address these challenges and advocate for viable solutions. In 2022, one of our state representatives, Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, introduced AB 1613 to increase the prosecution of retail thefts and empower District Attorneys' offices statewide to take greater action. However, the sophistication of these California-based and international theft rings requires increasingly advanced enforcement efforts to combat the problem.

The creation of an Organized Retail Theft Vertical Prosecution program in Ventura County will give our District Attorney's Office the resources needed to dedicate a prosecutor and an investigator to work closely with local businesses to combat organized theft schemes. Having these single points of contact for the victim(s) and witness(es) not only gives confidence that they are more than just a case number, but that action can be taken about these crimes.

The Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly supports the Ventura County District Attorney's Office's application, is committed its' program success, and requests state assistance to combat organized theft schemes.

Sincerely,



**Danielle Borja**  
President/CEO  
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce