

**SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-THIRD SESSION**

S.F. No. 2914

(SENATE AUTHORS: WESTLIN)

DATE
03/15/2023

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Introduction and first reading
Referred to Judiciary and Public Safety

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to public safety; authorizing grants to county attorneys to reduce criminal
1.3 caseload backlogs and fund innovative initiatives; requiring a report; appropriating
1.4 money.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. COUNTY ATTORNEY CRIMINAL CASELOAD BACKLOG AND
1.7 INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.

1.8 Subdivision 1. Grants authorized. (a) The county attorney criminal caseload backlog
1.9 and innovation grant program is established. The commissioner of public safety through
1.10 the Office of Justice Programs shall award grants to county attorneys to fund initiatives
1.11 designed to decrease criminal caseload backlogs, reduce recidivism, or reduce future criminal
1.12 caseloads. Grant recipients may use the funds to hire and train additional attorneys, paralegals,
1.13 law clerks, or other support staff and to purchase equipment and supplies needed to:

1.14 (1) establish or expand pretrial or precharge diversion programs;

1.15 (2) assist in the review of body camera footage; or

1.16 (3) assist in researching, preparing, and executing data-based changes in the use of
1.17 prosecutorial discretion intended to reduce recidivism or create ongoing criminal caseload
1.18 reductions, or both.

1.19 (b) The commissioner shall give preference to applicants that:

1.20 (1) demonstrate the most severe backlog of cases relative to the size of the county; and

1.21 (2) seek to fund data-based initiatives designed to systemically and permanently reduce
1.22 recidivism and criminal caseloads.

2.1 (c) The commissioner must grant at least 30 percent of the funds appropriated to this
2.2 program to county attorneys from counties outside of the 11-county metropolitan area.

2.3 Subd. 2. **Application for grants.** A county attorney may apply to the commissioner of
2.4 public safety for a grant for any of the purposes described in subdivision 1. The application
2.5 must be on a form provided by the commissioner and comply with requirements developed
2.6 by the commissioner. The applicant must describe the intended uses of the funds, estimate
2.7 the amount of funds required, and include any other information required by the
2.8 commissioner.

2.9 Subd. 3. **Awards; limitations.** No award granted under subdivision 1 shall exceed
2.10 \$250,000.

2.11 Subd. 4. **Reports.** (a) A county attorney who receives a grant under this section shall
2.12 file a report with the commissioner of public safety by September 1, 2024. The report must
2.13 itemize how the county attorney expended the grant funds, identify the purpose of the
2.14 expenditures, and explain how successful the funded initiatives were at decreasing criminal
2.15 caseload backlogs, lowering recidivism, and sustaining criminal caseload reductions.

2.16 (b) By January 1, 2025, the commissioner of public safety shall report to the chairs and
2.17 ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over
2.18 criminal justice policy and funding on the implementation, use, and administration of the
2.19 grant programs created under this section.

2.20 Sec. 2. **COUNTY ATTORNEY CRIMINAL CASELOAD BACKLOG AND**
2.21 **INNOVATION GRANT PROGRAM; APPROPRIATION.**

2.22 \$8,000,000 in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner
2.23 of public safety for the county attorney criminal caseload backlog and innovation grant
2.24 program. The commissioner may use up to four percent of this amount to administer the
2.25 program.