



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members  
From: Daniel Dickerson, Fiscal Analyst  
Date: June 20, 2016  
Subject: Grant Request #2832

Enclosed please find one (1) item that the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the administration.

**JFO #2832** – \$6,463 grant from the State Center to the VT Attorney General. The grant will be used to fund a pilot program to install call-blocking technology in the homes of 50 Vermont seniors in Chittenden County. A survey will be performed 90 days after installation of the devices to assess the effectiveness of the program.  
*[JFO received 6/14/16]*

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Daniel Dickerson at (802) 828-2472; [ddickerson@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:ddickerson@leg.state.vt.us)) if you have questions or would like an item held for legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by July 6, 2016 we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of these requests.

STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

BASIC GRANT INFORMATION				
1. Agency:				
2. Department:		Attorney General's Office		
3. Program:		Public Protection Division Consumer Protection Unit / Consumer Assistance Program		
4. Legal Title of Grant:		The State Center Grant		
5. Federal Catalog #:		N/A		
6. Grant/Donor Name and Address: The State Center 360 Furman Street, #1026 Brooklyn, NY 11201				
7. Grant Period:		From:	6/1/2016	To: 10/31/2016
8. Purpose of Grant: To provide call blocking units to Vermont seniors in Chittenden County in order to assess effectiveness of the technology at blocking scam phone calls to landlines and improving the seniors' quality of life.				
9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted: No impact				
10. BUDGET INFORMATION				
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Comments
Expenditures:	FY 2017	FY	FY	
Personal Services	\$	\$	\$	
Operating Expenses	\$6,463	\$	\$	
Grants	\$	\$	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,463</b>	\$	\$	
Revenues:				
State Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Cash	\$	\$	\$	
In-Kind	\$	\$	\$	
Federal Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
(Direct Costs)	\$	\$	\$	
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
(Departmental Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
Other Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Grant (source )	<b>\$6,463</b>	\$	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,463</b>	\$	\$	
Appropriation No:	2100001000	Amount:	\$6,463	
			\$	
			\$	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,463</b>	
Has current fiscal year budget detail been entered into Vantage? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No				

**RECEIVED**  
 JUN 14 2016  
**JOINT FISCAL OFFICE**

JFO 2832

MAY 31 2016

**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)**

<b>PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION</b>		
<b>11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate intent to follow current competitive bidding process/policy.  Appointing Authority Name: _____ Agreed by: _____ (initial)		
<b>12. Limited Service Position Information:</b>	<b># Positions</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Total Positions</b>		
<b>12a. Equipment and space for these positions:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is presently available. <input type="checkbox"/> Can be obtained with available funds.		
<b>13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT</b>		
I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-1PN (if applicable):	Signature:	Date: <u>5-27-16</u>
	Title: Chief Assistant	
	Signature:	Date:
	Title:	
<b>14. SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved:	Date: <u>6/02/16</u>
	(Secretary or designee signature)	
<b>15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check One Box: Accepted	Date: <u>6/9/16</u>
	(Governor's signature)	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rejected	Date:
<b>16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED</b>		
<b>Required GRANT Documentation</b>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award <input type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any) <input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)	
<b>End Form AA-1</b>		
(*) The term "grant" refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency, department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).		

**WILLIAM H. SORRELL**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
**SUSANNE R. YOUNG**  
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL  
**WILLIAM E. GRIFFIN**  
CHIEF ASST. ATTORNEY GENERAL



**ADDRESS REPLY TO:**  
**CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
146 UNIVERSITY PLACE  
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05405  
www.uvm.edu/consumer  
e-mail: ago.cap@vermont.gov

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**PUBLIC PROTECTION DIVISION**  
TEL: (802) 656-3183  
FAX: (802) 304-1014  
**OUTSIDE CHITTENDEN COUNTY**  
1-800-649-2424

TO: Joint Fiscal Office –Committee Members

FROM: Janet Murnane, VT Attorney General's Office Consumer Assistance Program

DATE: June 14, 2016

RE: Request for Grant Acceptance to VT Attorney General from State Center

PURPOSE FOR GRANT: Pilot project to purchase and install 50 call blocking units for VT seniors in Chittenden County in summer/fall 2016

GRANT AMOUNT: \$6,463 in FY17

On behalf of the Vermont Attorney General's Office Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), I request permission to accept a \$6,463 grant from the State Center, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not-for-profit corporation. The State Center's mission is to enhance consumer welfare by supporting the enforcement of consumer protection laws at the state level.

This grant will fund a pilot project that will test the effectiveness of call-blocking technology and the degree of relief afforded to seniors who report receiving illegal robocalls, or other scam calls. This project will supply and install call blocking technology for a test population of 50 Vermont seniors in Chittenden County. If proven effective, the Vermont AGO would hope to further implement the project in coordination with area businesses, non-profits, advocacy groups.

If you have questions, I can be reached at 802-656-1025 or [janet.murnane@vermont.gov](mailto:janet.murnane@vermont.gov).

## **Murnane, Janet**

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**From:** Steve Houck <sdhouck1@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 21, 2016 1:47 PM  
**To:** Murnane, Janet  
**Subject:** RE: Grant Application for state attorneys general offices and other government agencies

Janet,

I am pleased to inform you that your grant application has been approved.

Please let me know how the check should be made out and to whom it should be sent.

Also, I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know the results of your pilot project.

Steve  
Stephen D. Houck  
Executive Director, State Center  
360 Furman Street 1026  
Brooklyn, NY, 11201  
631-324-0436  
sdhouck1@aol.com

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Janet Murnane [mailto:janet.murnane@vermont.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 20, 2016 4:30 PM  
**To:** sdhouck1@aol.com  
**Subject:** Grant Application for state attorneys general offices and other government agencies

Grant Request: \$6,463

AG Office to which grant would be paid: Vermont

Name: Janet Murnane

Title: Director, Consumer Assistance Program

Address: 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

Telephone Number: 802-656-1025

Email Address: janet.murnane@vermont.gov

Proposal: 1. GRANT PURPOSE: : Pilot project (Phase I) to test the effectiveness of call-blocking technology and the degree of relief afforded to seniors who report receiving illegal robocalls, or other scam calls. This

project will supply call blocking technology to a test population of 50 Vermont seniors. If proven effective, the Vermont AGO will work to further implement the project in coordination with area businesses, non-profits, advocacy groups, and volunteers (Phase II).

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSAL: As in most states, scam reports dominate Vermont's consumer complaint intake numbers. In 2015, 49% of the consumers contacting our program were reporting scams. In 2015, CAP received 5896 scam reports and 86% of those were phone scams.

Predominant Phone Scams reported in 2015

- 3131 - IRS Scam (primarily a robocall phone scam)
- 494 - Debt Collection Scam (primarily a live phone scam)
- 453 - Computer Tech Support (primarily a robocall phone scam, but also live calls)

Of the total scams losses reported in 2015, Vermonters reported financial losses due to wire and money transfer fraud totaling \$436,669.

2015 reports and losses represent a substantial increase from 2014 in both the total number of scam reports and the percentage of phone scams. In 2014, 34% of the consumers contacting our office were reporting scams. We received 3525 total scam reports with 76% reporting phone scams.

Predominant Phone Scams reported in 2014

- 556 - IRS Scam (primarily a robocall phone scam)
- 477 - Computer Tech Support (primarily a phone scam)
- 335 - Debt Collection Scam (primarily a robocall phone scam)

Anecdotally, we know that many of these common scams calls are targeted at Vermont seniors. Seniors have money, still own landlines, often answer their phones without call screening, and may have less experience with technology, thus falling prey to the computer tech scams. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates Vermont's 2015 population at 626,042 with 16.9% of that number, or 105,801 persons, to be seniors over 65. U.S. Census Bureau. (2015, July 1). Vermont Quickfacts, from <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/AGE765210/50>.

PLAN: We propose to focus the grant activities in Chittenden County, Vermont. Chittenden County has the largest population and, for ease of implementation, is also where CAP is located.

30 call-blocking devices would be offered to residents in senior housing project(s) in Winooski, VT, operated by the Winooski Housing Authority. 20 devices would be made available to seniors who contact CAP to report receipt of repeated, or particularly harassing scam phone calls (with callers yelling, making threats, etc.).

The Winooski Housing Authority sites are income-restricted. WHA operates

163 units in three different buildings. The 65 Barlow Street site has 50 units and would be our first area of focus. The WHA has agreed to distribute a notice from CAP entitled "Interested in Getting Free Help Stopping Scam Phone Calls" notice. Existing CAP staff will distribute this notice until we have 30 interested seniors, starting with the 65 Barlow Street site. Existing CAP staff will administer a pre-installation survey to document the number, type, and severity of the scam phone calls previously received by the senior. 90 days post-installation of the technology, existing CAP staff would conduct a post-installation survey to document the impact of the call blocking technology to confirm whether the calls were reduced or eliminated and the impact on the senior's quality of life.

**BUDGET:**

50 call blocking units @ \$110.00	\$ 5,500
1 hour per installation & instruction on use @ \$18/hr x 50 units	\$ 900
Pre-installation notice to seniors - 1 page x \$ .42/page x 50 copies (color)	\$ 21
Informational brochure - 2 pages x \$ .42/page x 50 copies (color)	\$ 42
<b>GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,463</b>