

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Fiscal Policy

BILL: SB 164

INTRODUCER: Senators Evers and Grimsley

SUBJECT: Crime Stoppers Trust Fund

DATE: April 14, 2015

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Cannon</u>	<u>CJ</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Wagoner</u>	<u>Yeatman</u>	<u>CA</u>	Favorable
3.	<u>Clodfelter</u>	<u>Sadberry</u>	<u>ACJ</u>	Favorable
4.	<u>Goedert</u>	<u>Hrdlicka</u>	<u>FP</u>	Favorable

I. Summary:

SB 164 authorizes counties that are awarded a grant from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund to use the funds for the purchase and distribution of promotional items to increase public awareness and educate the public about Crime Stoppers.

The express authorization to use grant funds for certain expenditures does not have a fiscal impact.

II. Present Situation:

The local Crime Stoppers programs authenticate tips about criminal activity and act as liaisons between citizens and law enforcement agencies.¹ They allow citizens to anonymously report individuals who are known or suspected of committing criminal acts within the community and offer cash rewards for any tips that lead to an arrest.²

Crime Stoppers began in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1976. A homicide detective with the Albuquerque Police asked a local television station to broadcast a re-enactment of an unsolved murder on its newscast. A reward was offered and a caller contacted the police the next day with a tip that led the police to the two men who were responsible. The success of this concept launched a program which is now internationally known as "Crime Stoppers." There are now over 1,200 Crime Stoppers programs worldwide.³

¹ Crime Stoppers of Broward County website, "What is Crime Stoppers?," available at <http://www.browardcrimestoppers.org/about-us/> (last visited April 10, 2015).

² Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers website, "About us," available at <http://www.swflcrimestoppers.org/content/about-us> (last visited April 10, 2015). See also Crime Stoppers of Broward County website.

³ Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, *Where It All Started*, available at <http://www.floridacrimestoppers.com/pages/where> (last visited April 8, 2015).

Today there are 32 programs in Florida operating under the name Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, Inc.⁴ Florida Crime Stoppers programs reported 56,069 crime tips, 9,857 cleared cases, 4,679 arrests, and 3,885 approved rewards during Fiscal Year 2013-2014.⁵

The Crime Stoppers programs are financed through the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund” (trust fund) provided for in s. 16.555, F.S. The Department of Legal Affairs (department) is required to administer the trust fund, including applying for all federal, state, and private grants that meet the purposes of advancing Crime Stoppers and disbursing the funds.

Section 938.06, F.S., provides a funding source for the trust fund by imposing a \$20 court cost on persons convicted of any criminal offense. The clerks retain \$3 per assessment as a service charge and forward the rest of the money to the Department of Revenue for deposit into the trust fund.⁶ The proceeds from the \$20 court cost are deposited in a separate account within the trust fund, and within that account, designated according to the judicial circuit in which they were collected.⁷ A county may apply to the department for a grant from funds collected in the judicial circuit in which the county is located; however, grants can only be awarded to counties which are served by an official member of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers.⁸ The grants may only be used to support Crime Stoppers and its programs.⁹ Approximately \$4.4 million in grants were awarded to Crime Stoppers organizations during Fiscal Year 2013-2014.¹⁰

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 16.555, F.S., to authorize counties that are awarded a grant from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund to use the funds for the purchase and distribution of promotional items to increase public awareness and educate the public about Crime Stoppers.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2015.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

⁴ Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, *Who We Are*, <http://www.floridacrimestoppers.com/pages/who> (last visited April 8, 2015).

⁵ *Division of Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs Annual Report 2013-2014*, pg. 10.

⁶ Section 928.06(2), F.S.

⁷ Section 16.555(4)(b), F.S.

⁸ Section 16.555(5)(b), F.S.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Department of Legal Affairs, *Division of Victim Services and Criminal Justice Programs Annual Report 2013-2014*, pg. 11, available at [http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/RMAS-9S3LLL/\\$file/2013-2014AnnualReport.pdf](http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/RMAS-9S3LLL/$file/2013-2014AnnualReport.pdf) (last visited April 8, 2015).

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

The bill would allow for trust funds to be used to purchase and distribute promotional items.

V. **Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

SB 164 expressly authorizes the use of grant funds from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund for certain expenditures. This bill has no fiscal impact.

VI. **Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

VII. **Related Issues:**

None.

VIII. **Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 16.555 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. **Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.