



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: July 8, 2025

DATE: June 11, 2025
TO: Board of County Commissioners
FROM: Brenda Mathers, Chief Deputy Treasurer
(775) 328-2510, bmathers@washoecounty.gov
THROUGH: Justin Taylor, Washoe County Treasurer
SUBJECT: Request to establish a Backstop Bank Account for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office's Northern Nevada Drug Task Force (NNDTF) to investigate suspected illicit drug trafficking and make purchases through electronic payment platforms such as Venmo and Zelle. No fiscal impact. (All Commission Districts)

SUMMARY:

A request has been made by the Washoe County Sheriff's Office to open a new bank account for the Northern Nevada Drug Task Force (NNDTF) with the intent to fund it with High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program funding. The request has been reviewed and approved by both the County Treasurer and the County Comptroller.

WASHOE COUNTY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Fiscal sustainability.

PREVIOUS ACTION:

None.

BACKGROUND:

Drug traffickers are increasingly using online marketplaces and electronic payment platforms to connect with buyers and obscure the source of payments. Online marketplaces facilitate trafficking by providing anonymity, connecting buyers and sellers, and allowing a range of payment methods, including electronic payment platforms such as Venmo and Zelle. These marketplaces often use the "dark web," a hidden part of the internet that users access using specialized software. Traffickers use peer-to-peer mobile payment services because transactions are somewhat anonymous, making detection by law enforcement more difficult. However, transactions can be tracked to some extent.

Several federal law enforcement agencies investigate and prosecute trafficking cases involving online marketplaces, including through interagency partnerships.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

FISCAL IMPACT:

Additional costs associated with opening this backstop account will be funded by HIDTA funding, to include administrative fees to open and maintain the account with the required minimum balance. No County general funds will be used to establish or maintain this bank account.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board approve the request to establish a Backstop Bank Account for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office's Northern Nevada Drug Task Force (NNDTF) to investigate suspected illicit drug trafficking and make purchases through electronic payment platforms such as Venmo and Zelle.

POSSIBLE MOTION:

Should the Board agree with the staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

“Move to approve the request to establish a Backstop Bank Account for the Washoe County Sheriff's Office's Northern Nevada Drug Task Force (NNDTF) to investigate suspected illicit drug trafficking and make purchases through electronic payment platforms such as Venmo and Zelle.