



Board Agenda Item 37

DATE: December 9, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Lisa A. Smittcamp, District Attorney
John Zaroni, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator
Sanja Bugay, Director, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Retroactive Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System Memorandum of Understanding and Operational Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. **Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute the retroactive Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (ESCARS) Memorandum of Understanding and Operational Agreement (MOU and OA) between the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, and the Department of Social Services, along with fourteen independent law enforcement agencies for the period December 14, 2024, to December 13, 2029; and**
2. **Waive the policy in the County Purchasing Manual that allows only the Board of Supervisors to approve agreements with other governmental entities and authorize the District Attorney or designee to add other law enforcement agencies during the term of the ESCARS MOU and OA, subject to approval as to legal form by County Counsel (\$0).**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The purpose of this MOU and OA between County Departments/Offices and independent city law enforcement agencies, is to establish defined policies and procedures for all agencies participating with ESCARS. The first recommended action will allow for the continued implementation of the ESCARS database in Fresno County. The participating law enforcement agencies are: Clovis Police Department ("PD"), Coalinga PD, Firebaugh PD, Fowler PD, Fresno PD, Huron PD, Kerman PD, Kingsburg PD, Mendota PD, Orange Cove PD, Parlier PD, Reedley PD, Sanger PD, and Selma PD. The second recommended action will authorize the District Attorney to add additional law enforcement agencies if necessary. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the County will be out of compliance with Welfare and Institutions Code §§ 827 and 10850, as well as the California Department of Social Services Manual of Policies and Procedures Division 19.

RETROACTIVE:

This item is retroactive because when the previous MOU expired on December 13, 2024, there was no agreement between the parties to renew the MOU without additional discussion to improve outcomes. Those discussions took much longer than anyone anticipated.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions. The MOU and OA is required for data sharing between County partners and independent law enforcement agencies within Fresno County, with no associated cost.

DISCUSSION:

ESCARS is a web-based application that allows agencies to share Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCARs), as well as review historical information about victims and suspects. ESCARS is an information sharing system with built-in accountability measures. Using ESCARS to cross-report every instance of child physical/sexual abuse, severe neglect, or child endangerment, and responding and investigating every appropriate allegation brought to the departments' attention through E-SCARS will continue to enhance the County and its law enforcement partners' efforts to protect children.

The purpose of this MOU and OA between County Departments/Offices and fourteen independent city law enforcement agencies is to continue defined policies and procedures for all agencies participating with ESCARS.

The independent city law enforcement agencies have received the MOU and OAs for review and signature. The OAs are currently not signed by the independent city law enforcement agencies but will be signed and collected over the following weeks. The second recommended action will authorize the District Attorney to add additional law enforcement agencies if necessary.

The recommended MOU and OA requires that each party to the MOU indemnify all other parties to the MOU for that party's negligent acts, omissions, or willful misconduct. However, the participating County departments believe that any risks of continuing the MOU and OA are outweighed by the benefits provided by the MOU and OA.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #46, December 15, 2020
BAI #23, December 14, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - ESCARS MOU & OA

CAO ANALYST:

Fine Nai