



# Board Agenda Item 28

DATE: May 26, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Lisa A. Smittcamp, District Attorney  
Margaret Mims, Sheriff-Coroner-Public Administrator  
Delfino E. Neira, Director, Department of Social Services

SUBJECT: Amendment to Operational Agreement with the County of Los Angeles, Department of Children and Family Services

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

**Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute Amendment Number One to Agreement No. 19-161 with the County of Los Angeles, Department of Children and Family Services, for the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System Consulting and Training Services, to extend the term by twelve months, from May 31, 2020 to May 30, 2021, with no change to the maximum of \$68,520.**

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The purpose of the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (ESCARS) is to establish a database that allows for the sharing of electronic suspected child abuse reports between the District Attorney's Office (DA), Department of Social Services (DSS), Sheriff's Office (FSO), and local law enforcement. The recommended amendment extends the agreement by twelve months, to allow DSS staff to continue the development of the ESCARS database with the assistance of Los Angeles County, Department of Children and Family Services, as required by and funded with ESCARS grant funds. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended action is not approved, the County of Fresno will be out of compliance with the terms of the ESCARS grant agreement, which requires awarded counties to execute an Operational Agreement with Los Angeles County for technical support. Additionally, without technical support from Los Angeles County, the process for handling Suspected Child Abuse Reports will continue to be manual, and improvements to the cross-reporting process will be limited.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The Operational Agreement is required by the ESCARS grant, with sufficient appropriations and estimated revenues included in District Attorney-Grants Org 2862 FY 2019-20 Adopted Budget. Additional funding will be included in future budget requests as part of the remaining funding cycle for the ESCARS grant.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of ESCARS is to establish a database that allows for the sharing of electronic suspected child abuse reports between the DA, DSS, FSO, and local law enforcement. The Operational Agreement (OA) is a requirement of the grant, and has allowed the Los Angeles County, Department of Children and Family

Services (LA DCFS), to provide consulting and training for the development of the ESCARS database. The recommended action will continue the OA for another year, allowing Fresno County to complete the development of and implement the ESCARS database.

ESCARS was developed by LA DCFS, and has been operational since January 2009. The OA allows for the necessary communication required to develop and implement an ESCARS database in Fresno County. Additionally, the OA allows LA DCFS to bill for up to 240 hours per grant cycle, and provide the spending authority for the DA to pay for the ESCARS consulting and training services with grant funds.

There are 15 law enforcement agencies in Fresno County, with jurisdictions throughout the rural and metro areas of the County. FSO is the primary law enforcement agency for the purpose of this grant. The FSO, DA, and DSS currently maintain a collaborative relationship with regard to investigations and/or standard working processes. However, with regard to protocols, collaboration and/or attention to effective cross-reporting and oversight of suspected child abuse reports, substantial improvements are being developed as a result of this grant funding.

The Agreement with LA DCFS was approved first by your Board on April 9, 2019, but the effective date was when fully executed, or when LA DCFS signed, which was on May 31, 2019. Total expenses under this three-year agreement were estimated to be \$68,520, but first-year expenses totaled \$1,603 because of delays with LA DCFS providing the requested information. The recommended action would allow maximum expenses of \$31,200 for year two.

The OA contains non-standard insurance and indemnification provisions, but staff has determined that the benefits outweigh the risks associated with the OA, as a prudent business decision.

If grant funding for this program is discontinued, this OA will be terminated, unless alternative funding is located.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #29, December 10, 2019  
BAI #31, April 9, 2019

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Amendment Number One for Operational Agreement with LA DCFS

CAO ANALYST:

Samantha Buck