



County of Fresno

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Fresno, California
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Legislation Text

File #: 19-1491, **Version:** 1

DATE: December 10, 2019

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: Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System Application/Agreement

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Retroactively authorize the District Attorney's previous submittal of grant application to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) for the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System for the time period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 (\$250,000);**
- 2. Authorize the Chairman to execute a grant Application/Agreement and Certification of Assurance of Compliance for the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System with Cal OES for the time period January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020 (\$250,000); and**
- 3. Adopt Budget Resolution increasing FY 2019-20 appropriations and estimated revenues in the District Attorney- Grants Org 2862 in the amount of \$125,000 (4/5 vote).**

The purpose of the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report (ESCAR) system is to establish a database which allows for the sharing of electronic suspected child abuse reports between the District Attorney (DA), Department of Social Services (DSS), Sheriff (FSO), and local law enforcement. To meet the grant proposal deadline of December 2, 2019, the grant application was submitted contingent upon your Board's approval. It should be noted that once the Grant Award Face Sheet is executed by the Chairman and Cal OES, the executed documents become the final Agreement between the County and Cal OES. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

If the recommended actions are not approved, the process for handling Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCAR) 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 actions. Appropriations and estimated revenues of \$125,000 will be added to District Attorney-Grants Org 2862 to fund program-related ESCAR system activities for the DA and DSS. The remaining grant amount will be budgeted in FY 2020-21.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the ESCAR system is to establish a database which allows for the sharing of electronic suspected child abuse reports between the DA, DSS, FSO, and local law enforcement. This program was established with a competitive grant award of \$250,000 as approved by your Board on February 20, 2018. This grant funding allowed the DA to add a Paralegal position and provided funding for the DA, FSO and DSS to develop and implement an ESCAR system for Fresno County. Since receipt of the initial grant, the

development process has moved forward with a demonstration of some completed system components at the last eSCARS Steering Committee meeting in November. Approval of the recommended actions will allow for the development and implementation process to continue.

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

Current processes are essentially manual, and create system gaps. Since collaborating on this grant, improvements have been made to the manual process, with respect to distribution of the SCAR between DSS, the DA, and law enforcement. Moving from a manual to a digital suspected child abuse report system would increase accountability in the cross-reporting process, and ensure that all agencies involved in investigating child abuse and neglect receive timely notification, and complete their investigations expeditiously, and with shared information. The ESCAR system is anticipated to contribute to improved investigations and prosecutions, and significantly reduce gaps which may place the children of Fresno County at risk of significant harm.

The recommended actions authorize the DA to apply for these funds, authorize the Chairman to execute a Grant Award Face Sheet with Cal OES for the ESCAR system, and provide continued funding for the development and implementation. If approved, the executed Grant Award Face Sheet for the application will be forwarded to Cal OES to finalize the application/agreement.

If grant funding for this program is discontinued, the associated position will be deleted.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI No. 5 - February 20, 2018

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Agreement with OES
On file with Clerk - Resolution (Org 2862)

CAO ANALYST:

Jeannie Z. Figueroa