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November 15, 2023

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director 

SUBJECT: PERMANENT FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ITEM 19, BOARD AGENDA OF APRIL 19, 2022)

On April 19, 2022, your Board passed a motion approving recommendations set forth in a February 22, 2022, report to the Board, prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in collaboration with the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (COC) and the Department of Public Health Office of Violence Prevention (OVP), to make the Family Assistance Program (FAP) a permanent program housed under OVP. The OVP Family Assistance Program would incorporate lessons learned from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) pilot program and community feedback. The motion further directed:

1. The Chief Executive Office (CEO) to identify and allocate ongoing annual funding in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget, in the amount of \$1,530,740;
2. OVP, in partnership with OIG, COC, Department of Medical Examiner (DME), Sheriffs' Department, DMH, and other County and community partners, to begin implementing the plan as outlined in the February 22, 2022, report once funding was allocated;
3. DMH to continue to provide FAP services, including healing support and counseling referrals to impacted families, administering funding to support burial costs, and coordinating with OVP and partners to facilitate a smooth transition to the permanent program;
4. DME and OVP, in consultation with County Counsel and OIG, to develop policy and protocols for next-of-kin notifications as part of FAP and;
5. OVP to provide written quarterly reports to the Board of Supervisors, in collaboration with CEO, OIG, COC, DME and other partners, and to provide quarterly updates to the public at COC meetings on implementation progress of the permanent FAP.

This memo includes a summary of OVP progress in implementing a permanent FAP program for the time period from July 2023 through September 2023.

Family Assistance Program Update

The Family Assistance Program (FAP) was established by the Board in 2019 to provide trauma-informed support and a compassionate response to grieving families who have lost a loved one in custody or following a community encounter with Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) personnel.

The Department of Mental Health (DMH) implemented the initial pilot of FAP beginning August 2019 through November 2021. DMH provided financial and emotional support to 45 families (40% of those eligible) experiencing traumatic loss during the pilot period. Between July 2023 through September 2023 DMH has provided the following services:

- There were a total of 12 deaths during this time period. Four officer involved shootings, and 8 in-custody deaths in hospitals or jails.
- Of the 12 families eligible for services, 2 received services, 4 declined and DMH was unable to contact the next of kin for 6 families. Contact efforts are still in progress for one family.
- DMH continues to work with DME to obtain next of kin contact information in cases where it is missing.
- Burial expenses were not provided this period. DMH and DPH are working on a process to pay families through DPH for families that are pending payment.

In 2023 year-to-date, there have been a total of 9 fatal deputy involved shootings, 3 non-fatal shootings, and 40 in custody deaths.¹

Between July 2023 through September 2023:

- OVP has continued to coordinate with DMH on the provision of services to impacted families, including counseling referrals and assistance with burial expenses. A meeting was held with DMH on September 29, 2023, to discuss transition protocols and next steps.
- OVP has built capacity to respond to incidents beginning January 2024 and to complete the transition of the critical coordination work that DMH has managed as part of the FAP pilot. A team of 2 clinicians will respond to fatal use of force incidents and in-custody deaths in real time and provide support to communities after a fatal use of force incident. Two clinicians provide scheduling flexibility to respond to incidents 24/7 as needed and after business hours. This team of clinicians will also ensure protocols are followed in providing mental health services to clients and help impacted families navigate the complex and delicate nature of fatal use of force incidents. They will provide clinical and administrative oversight to the contracted community-based agency. The Clinical Social Worker Supervisor will supervise the work of the Senior Clinical Social Worker; develop and manage a work plan to track the work of staff and partner agencies; develop,

¹ Deputy involved shootings: <https://lasd.org/transparency/deputyinvolvedshootingcurrent/>
In custody deaths: <https://lasd.org/transparency/icd/>

oversee, and interpret policies and procedures; coordinate a multi-disciplinary case review team; conduct training for staff and partners; develop presentations and reports that convey the approach to the project and implementation progress to community and county audiences; and develop as well as implement recommendations for systems change to better support impacted families and communities. The Senior Clinical Social Worker will be principally responsible for responding to incidents and working with families and communities to provide support and facilitate access to resources.

- OVP has hired a Clinical Social Worker Supervisor who started work in September 2023. The Clinical Social Worker Supervisor is reviewing FAP documents and preparing a work plan for the program. The hiring process is underway for the additional FAP positions which include a Senior Clinical Social Worker and two Psychiatric Social Worker II (PSWII) positions, with a goal to bring these staff on board by December 2023. The two PSWII positions were requested to work onsite with DME, in coordination with OVP, to support the next-of-kin notification process and system navigation for impacted families. DME and DMH will assist with the interview process.
- OVP met with DME on October 12, 2023, to discuss the staff recruitment process and logistics of coordination that will be included in an MOU.
- OVP secured a consultant, Patricia Soung Consulting. The consultant will assist OVP with facilitating multi-disciplinary meetings with FAP partners, refine existing data tracking systems, develop protocols to define clear roles for each County partner and the contracted community provider, and create a system for sharing information and receiving participant and community feedback.
- DME included their request for a Coroner Investigator for FAP in their budget package. This position has been approved and they are in the process of hiring.

Budget Update

During the FY 2022-23 Supplemental Budget process, the CEO identified and recommended \$1,530,000 in annual AB109 funding for the permanent establishment of FAP within Public Health, which the Board approved on October 4, 2022.

Timeline and Next Steps

OVP has updated the implementation timeline to reflect the timeframes associated with the County processes of allocating permanent County items, hiring staff, and executing a contract with a lead community-based organization (CBO) agency.

Timeline	Implementation Activities
September 2023 – June 2024	OVP hires the Clinical Social Worker Supervisor to implement FAP. OVP procures a Purchase Order for a consultant to assist with the FAP transition, and works with the consultant to refine transition protocols
October - November 2023	OVP convenes FAP partners including DME, DMH, OIG, COC, and Sheriff to discuss the transition, protocols, roles, and responsibilities.
November – December 2023	OVP works with DMH, DME, and LASD to transition protocols for burial cost reimbursement, next-of-kin notifications, data tracking, and follow-up. OVP consults with OIG, DME and County Counsel to develop policy and protocols for next-of-kin notifications.

Timeline	Implementation Activities
December 2023	OVP launches a FAP webpage which will provide a description of services and resources.
January 2024	OVP clinical team begins responding to FAP incidents.
January 2024	OVP coordinates with OIG, COC, and implementation partners to host a public townhall providing an update on FAP.
January – February 2024	OVP works with the consultant to draft statements of work for a community-based provider and for evaluation services.
March - July 2024	OVP executes contracts with community-based provider and evaluator.

Summary

Public Health is grateful for the Board's unanimous support for establishing a permanent FAP within OVP, and for the opportunity to provide a community centered, trauma informed and healing response to families impacted by in-custody deaths or by a fatal use of force at the hands of law enforcement. Public Health also appreciates the solid foundation that DMH has provided in their implementation of the FAP pilot and for their ongoing partnership to help facilitate a successful transition of this program. OVP is committed to working with County and community partners to share FAP program information widely and further transform the County's approach to supporting families devastated by the loss of a loved one.

Public Health will continue to share updates with the Board on a quarterly basis.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me.

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Cc: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
Chief Executive Office
Acting County Counsel
Office of Inspector General
Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission
Department of Medical Examiner
Department of Mental Health
Sheriff