

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

October 19, 2021

**Permanent Support for Families Affected by LA County Sheriff’s Department:
Identifying Sustainable Funding for and Streamlining the Family Assistance
Program**

Upon the recommendation of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, on July 9, 2019, the Family Assistance Program (FAP) was created by the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board)¹. At its core, the FAP was created with families in mind and “aimed at improving compassionate communication and providing trauma-informed support to families of those whose lives were lost while in custody or following an encounter with Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) personnel.”² A key element of the FAP is the integration of advocates present during next-of-kin notifications to provide crisis intervention; mental health first aid, system navigation – explaining and helping to access available resources provided by the County and

¹ <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/128116.pdf>

² <https://oig.lacounty.gov/Portals/OIG/Reports/First%20Semi-Annual%20Report%20Back%20on%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Family%20Assistance%20Program.pdf?ver=wIBB4OIYCINpSrDWvbvjhw%3d%3d>

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community based organizations and service providers. The advocates can also serve as liaisons between the families affected, LASD and other County departments as needed. In addition, the FAP provides up to \$7,500, at the request of families, to alleviate the financial hardship of burial costs, which without, would compound the emotional trauma caused by the unexpected and tragic loss of a loved one.

Identifying sustainable funding for this program, which started as a pilot program, is fundamental to the County's commitment to helping these families. As past motions show, the Board is supportive and advocates for a comprehensive, permanent FAP with sustainable funding:

- In April 2021, Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Holly J. Mitchell requested \$4 million to support FAP in their respective American Rescue Plan proposals to the Chief Executive Office (CEO).
- On May 4, 2021, the Board approved the "Protecting Surviving Families from Law Enforcement Harassment and Retaliation" motion³ that directed the CEO to identify sustainable funding for FAP and report back during the Supplemental Budget Phase.

On October 5, 2021, in the CEO's report back⁴ on FAP, it stated there were concerns with the structure of FAP and recommended a re-evaluation of who should be engaging with impacted families, among others, including identifying a new County lead to facilitate the programming and services. Upon completion of an

³ <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/158009.pdf>

⁴ <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/162345.pdf>

assessment, the fiscal needs of FAP could be determined to “pursue sustainable funding options”⁵.

In the Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) 2020 report⁶, it recommends the Department of Public Health’s Office of Violence Prevention as the lead agency that should work collaboratively with county and community providers.

Additionally, per the CEO report back to the Board, there is \$20,000 dollars that will be carried over to the next fiscal year. This amount has been earmarked for those families who applied and are still waiting for funeral reimbursements. This means that additional families seeking assistance from the County will not be able to receive support until a more sustainable funding source is identified. This is utterly unfair and adds to their trauma. Therefore, finding bridge funding to fill this gap and need is paramount.

With the recommendations in the OIG report and the CEO’s report back, it is timely that the Board revisit the FAP pilot, review lessons learned, and make significant improvements to FAP to shift it from a pilot to a permanent, established County program so that it can better serve families and individuals who have been affected by the LA Sheriff’s Department.

The FAP is a necessary aspect in providing a humane, compassionate, trauma-informed response by the County to serve impacted families and the larger community in their time of need, grief, and healing, as the Board continues to seek additional ways to hold the LA Sheriff’s Department accountable for its abuse and dereliction of duty.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶https://oig.lacounty.gov/Portals/OIG/Reports/2020-0385LongTermViabilityFAP.pdf?ver=P_wDdTzUoUJlub9ZvxibOA%3d%3d

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Direct the Office of Inspector General, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, and the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention, in consultation with other relevant County departments, to develop an implementation plan, budget, and timeline for a permanent Family Assistance Program, and report back to the Board in 90 days, in writing, including but not limited to:
 - a) A program design and implementation plan that involves the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention, per the recommendations of the Office of Inspector General, as the County Department to lead the Family Assistance Program.
 - b) An annual budget that includes program funding, family support reimbursements, and a plan for issuing payments for services. The plan should also include estimated costs for OVP administration, staffing, and operational expenses; and recommendations on how the County could contract and partner with community-based service providers and organizations to Implement direct service elements of the program including mental health first aid, grief counseling, system navigation, and burial services.
 - c) A tracking system to gather and synthesize data on the total number of families impacted by a death involving the Sheriff's Department and FAP's provision of services broken down as follows:
 - i) The number of families who have received assistance;
 - ii) The number of families who have requested assistance but requests were denied;

- iii) The total number of families that had an advocate present for next-of-kin notification;
 - iv) The total number of families requesting financial assistance for burial costs;
 - v) The total number of families who received financial assistance for burial costs;
 - vi) The average length of time from request for financial assistance to reimbursement; and
 - vii) Other relevant data to track the impact and outcomes of the program.
 - viii) In addition, direct the Department of Mental Health to provide all data related to the usage of FAP to the OIG, COC, OVP, and those identified in Directive #1 to complete Directive #1(b) within 21 days.
- d) A plan for processing and making payment on the requests for financial assistance for burial costs of all families eligible to receive it. This plan should, among other things:
- i) Ensure that payments are made to these families no later than 45 days after the request is made;
 - ii) A description of what funding, if any, is needed to ensure that administrative needs are met to ensure that payments are made to families within the 45-day timeline; and
 - iii) Additional support and assistance, through the help of a Family Assistance Program Peer Advocate or otherwise, should be provided to families to help them navigate the process of requesting funding in a timely manner.

2) Direct the Sheriff's Civilian Oversight Commission, the Office of Inspector General, the Office of Violence Prevention and other relevant County Departments to engage with the community and community stakeholders for input on improving the Family Assistance Program, and include recommendations and suggestions in the implementation plan and the report back to the Board.

I, FURTHER, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

3) Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Office of Inspector General, Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, and the Office of Violence Prevention to report back to the Board in writing in 90 days identifying a sustainable, long-term funding source, such as AB 109, Care First Community Investment, and Net County Cost, to continue the Family Assistance Program, once the new implementation plan is developed and approved by the Board.

a) In addition, identify \$100,000 dollars in bridge funding and a temporary administrator of the funds to continue the program for affected families until the report back and a sustainable, long-term source of funding is identified in 45 days.

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