

Program #15900 - ARP - Domestic Violence Case Backlog 3/7/2022

Department: District Attorney **Program Contact:** Glen Banfield
Program Offer Type: Existing Operating Program **Program Offer Stage:** As Requested
Related Programs:
Program Characteristics: One-Time-Only Request, Out of Target

Executive Summary

This program offer funds an additional prosecutor to save lives and minimize the harmful life-long effects that domestic violence has on survivors and their children in the County exacerbated by COVID. Pandemic conditions, combined with an increase in domestic violence serious assaults and homicides in the community has lessened the MCDA's domestic violence unit's ability to intervene and make survivors safe and reduced services which promote survivors' physical and mental well-being. This use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding to address the increased number of unresolved domestic violence cases aligns with the County's goal to end domestic violence and foster equity and reduce disparities for community members.

Program Summary

In FY 2020 crimes of domestic violence submitted to the office increased to over 3,000 cases. Moreover, due to the pandemic and court orders to reduce the number of cases tried in Multnomah County, cases for survivors of domestic violence were delayed and created a "backlog" in the domestic violence unit and the court system. Some attorneys carry over 200 open cases not including probation violation matters. This high volume means that less time can be spent on trauma-informed practices, planning for complex legal issues, case preparation and coordinating services. More cases have less desirable outcomes and system confidence is diminished. Victims are less cooperative and more likely to be subject to the coercive influence of the person who physically harmed them--perpetuating the power and control cycle.

An additional prosecutor will serve members of the community and their families who are victims of crimes of domestic violence including sexual assault, stalking or dating violence as well as physical assaults, strangulation, burglary, attempted murder and homicides. This prosecutor will further assist victims through referrals, case consultation, investigative assistance and case review. This prosecutor will reduce the backlog, seek equitable outcomes, and support services that meet the unique needs of domestic violence survivors.

The addition of a prosecutor also increases the unit's ability to work with law enforcement on case follow-up, will lead to more successful prosecution, increased offender accountability and decreased negative health consequences and instability for children and families suffering from domestic violence.

Finally, additional resources will relieve some of the compassion fatigue and secondary trauma on prosecutors currently in the unit who are overworked, overwhelmed and overstressed due to the crushing, emotionally draining cases where high risk/high lethality dynamics have been amplified due to the backlog.

Performance Measures

Measure Type	Primary Measure	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budgeted	FY22 Estimate	FY23 Offer
Output	Number of Cases resolved	N/A	109	109	109
Outcome	Percentage decrease in Domestic Violence case backlog	N/A	12%	12%	15%

Performance Measures Descriptions

Legal / Contractual Obligation

ORS 8.660 Attending court and prosecuting offenses. (1) The district attorney shall attend the terms of all courts having jurisdiction of public offenses within the district attorney's county, and, except as otherwise provided in this section, conduct, on behalf of the state, all prosecutions for such offenses therein.

Revenue/Expense Detail

	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds	Requested General Fund	Requested Other Funds
Program Expenses	2022	2022	2023	2023
Personnel	\$0	\$242,360	\$0	\$191,354
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$242,360	\$0	\$191,354
Program Total:	\$242,360		\$191,354	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Program Revenues				
Intergovernmental	\$0	\$242,360	\$0	\$191,354
Total Revenue	\$0	\$242,360	\$0	\$191,354

Explanation of Revenues

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Direct County Funding - \$191,354

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was: FY 2022: 15900 ARP - Domestic Violence Backlog from COVID-19

This program offer falls under the County's Restoration of Services Impacted by Budget Reductions ARP Priority Area. The COVID pandemic has drastically reduced MCDA's ability to resolve cases expeditiously due to the inability to conduct trials. This has resulted in caseloads higher than ever seen in this unit. It is especially crucial to resolve domestic violence cases as fast as possible for safety of the victims involved. Unlike most crime, domestic violence frequently involves the accused and the victim staying in close physical or relational proximity. Protection orders and no contact orders help maintain safety, but the longer those cases languish, the longer it takes to get at the underlying dynamics that led to violence in the first place, leading to potentially lethal results.