

Program #15900 - ARP - Domestic Violence Backlog from COVID-19

7/6/202

Department: District Attorney **Program Contact:** John Casalino

Program Offer Type: Innovative/New Program Program Offer Stage: As Adopted

Related Programs:

Program Characteristics: Backfill State/Federal/Grant

Executive Summary

This new 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	FY20 Actual	FY21 Budgeted	FY21 Estimate	FY22 Offer				
Output	Number of cases resolved	N/A	N/A	N/A	109				
Outcome	Percentage decrease of in Domestic Violence case backlog	N/A	N/A	N/A	12%				

Performance Measures Descriptions

Resolved cases include pleas, trials, rejections and dismissals. As of 5/15/21, the Domestic Violence Unit unresolved cases increased 112% from the year before which equaled approximately 586 additional "backlog" cases.

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	Adopted General Fund	Adopted Other Funds
Program Expenses	2021	2021	2022	2022
Personnel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$242,360
Total GF/non-GF	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$242,360
Program Total:	\$0		\$242,360	
Program FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

Explanation of Revenues

American Rescue Plan (ARP) Direct County Funding - \$242,360

Significant Program Changes

Last Year this program was:

This program offer restores services impacted by budget reductions. 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.