



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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July 5, 2023

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair
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FROM: Max Huntsman
Inspector General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Max Huntsman".

SUBJECT: **SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ITEM NO. 14, AGENDA OF JULY 9, 2019)**

On July 9, 2019, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) adopted a motion establishing a Family Assistance Program (Family Assistance) as a one-year pilot program administered by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and instructing the Office of Inspector General to report back quarterly in the first year and semi-annually thereafter. On January 4, 2023, the Office of Inspector General submitted its first semi-annual report back for 2023 and reported on available data from July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022. This is the Office of Inspector General's second report back for 2023.

BACKGROUND

In July 2019, the Board established Family Assistance, aimed at improving compassionate communication and providing trauma-informed support to families of those who died following a fatal use of force by a Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department) employee or while in the custody of the Sheriff's Department.

On February 22, 2022, the Office of Inspector General, the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission, and the Office of Violence Prevention of the Department of Public

Health (OVP), in consultation with other County departments, submitted to the Board a report including recommendations to make Family Assistance permanent, administered by the Department of Public Health (DPH), comprising a design and implementation plan, an annual budget, a data tracking system, and a plan for quickly processing payments to affected families for burial assistance.¹

FAMILY ASSISTANCE STATUS

As previously reported, to allow sufficient time for DPH to properly staff Family Assistance, DMH is currently administering burial assistance services, providing mental health services to families, and connecting families to available services. DMH is working with DPH to transition the work to DPH, at which time, OVP will assume responsibility for the distribution of funds for burial services to the affected families. As part of its Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 budget request, DPH submitted position requests for one Mental Health Clinical Supervisor and three Psychiatric Social Worker II (PSWII) positions, two of which will work onsite with the Department of Medical Examiner (DME) to support the next-of-kin notification process and system navigation for impacted families. DME included in its FY 2023-2024 budget a request for a Coroner Investigator to support Family Assistance.

OVP reports that the Chief Executive Office (CEO) approved the Mental Health Clinical Supervisor position, which was reclassified to Clinical Social Worker Supervisor II, and the three PSWII positions, one of which was reclassified to Clinical Social Worker. The two PSWII positions will be allocated to OVP and support DME. OVP, in coordination with DMH and DME, commenced recruiting efforts for these positions. The requested DME Coroner Investigator position has not yet been budgeted.²

OVP also reports that a consultant has been identified to assist with transitioning the administration of Family Assistance from DMH to DPH. The consultant will, among other responsibilities, assist with convening partners and developing protocols. OVP anticipates beginning working with the consultant in July 2023.

¹ [Office of Inspector General's Semi-Annual Report on Implementation of the Family Assistance Program and Report Back on Permanent Support for Families Affected by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department: Identifying Sustainable Funding for and Streamlining the Family Assistance Program.](#)

² Based upon the name change of the Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner to Department of Medical Examiner, the title of this position should change to Medical Examiner Investigator.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE SERVICE DATA

Family Assistance continues to offer mental health services and financial assistance to the families with a relative who died due to a fatal use of force by the Sheriff's Department or while in Sheriff's Department custody. Data available to the Office of Inspector General reflects that from January 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023, DMH engaged the families of nine individuals who qualified for Family Assistance services. Of the nine families, five accepted services and assistance from DMH's Family Assistance Advocate while two families could not be reached. DMH is attempting to contact two families. Burial expenses were distributed to five of the nine families, with expenses ranging from \$3,951 to \$7,500, totaling a sum of approximately \$37,625 for the period.

The Office of Inspector General will continue to monitor Family Assistance. Future report backs will be incorporated into the Office of Inspector General's quarterly reports entitled *Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department* on a semi-annual basis.

MH:sg

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