



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** District Attorney  
**Department No.:** 021  
**For Agenda Of:** June 22, 2021  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director Joyce E. Dudley, District Attorney, x2308  
Contact Info: Michael Soderman, Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, x2304  
**SUBJECT:** Cal OES Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System Program (E-SCARS)  
Grant Award, Subaward No. ES20 03 0420

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence: Risk Management**

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution approving, ratifying, and authorizing the District Attorney to execute a Grant Agreement with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) accepting the Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System Program (E-SCARS) grant award for the current award period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 in the amount of \$250,000.00; and
- b) Approve and authorize the District Attorney to execute any amendments to the Grant Agreement extending the term thereof through June 30, 2022, or for a supplemental grant award in the amount not to exceed \$50,000, with the concurrence of County Counsel and Auditor-Controller; and
- c) Determine that the above recommended actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), since they consist of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and approve the filing of a Notice of Exemption on that basis.

**Summary Text:**

The Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Reporting System (E-SCARS) program is designed to improve the system of information sharing between multidisciplinary agencies through a web-based database for reports of suspected child abuse. E-SCARS will be used to report, investigate, and track allegations of child abuse, neglect, or endangerment. The goal is to improve the coordinated response and investigation of reported cases of suspected child abuse.

The grant award will fund a small percentage of the salaries and benefits for existing positions within the District Attorney's Office that will be involved in the E-SCARS program. In addition, the grant award will fund operating expenses associated with the implementation of the system, capital expenditures associated with the purchase of servers to host the E-SCARS system, and costs associated with training and development led by a consultant from the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, after which the Santa Barbara County E-SCARS program was modeled.

Per the Cal OES Grant Agreement, the District Attorney is required to maintain written documentation on file showing authorization by the Board of Supervisors for the District Attorney to sign the Grant Agreement. In order to meet state deadlines and properly receive the grant funding, the District Attorney preliminarily executed the Grant Agreement pending formal authority from the Board of Supervisors. The purpose of this Board Letter is to request that the Board formally authorize the District Attorney to sign the Grant Agreement with Cal OES for the eSCARS Program grant award for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, in the amount of \$250,000.

**Background:**

A Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) is a Department of Justice standardized form that must be prepared in every known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect. Whenever a mandated reporter reasonably suspects that child abuse, neglect, or endangerment has occurred, he/she must report this information to the Department of Social Services (DSS), Child Welfare Services (CWS), or the law enforcement agency with investigative jurisdiction. Once a SCAR is created, it is required to be cross-reported between DSS, the law enforcement agency, and the District Attorney's Office.

Currently, these reports are manually cross-reported by fax transmission or telephone. This manual process is antiquated, ineffective, and inefficient. In response to these limitations, the District Attorney's Office applied for and was awarded grant funding from Cal OES for the development and implementation of a web-based E-SCARS system for Santa Barbara County.

E-SCARS will facilitate the mandated duty to cross-report allegations of suspected child abuse among all affected agencies. E-SCARS will be a secure, web-based application linking DSS, the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and all other Santa Barbara County law enforcement agencies with each other. E-SCARS will enable the secure, electronic transmission and receipt of reports, which will help expedite interventions. It will also allow more robust audit functions to ensure accountability across agencies. In addition, improved tracking mechanisms will facilitate the District Attorney's oversight function as the lead law enforcement agency. The ultimate goal of E-SCARS is to close the gaps caused by the current manual system in order to better protect the children of Santa Barbara County.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes. Revenues and expenditures are included in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Adopted Budget and the 2021-22 Adopted Budget. The total current program budget is \$250,000, with no required cash match.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<b>E-SCARS Grant Award Schedule</b>			
<b><u>Federal Funding Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Grant Award Period</u></b>	<b><u>Grant Award Amount</u></b>	
FY 2018-21 CJA0	1/1/2021 – 12/31/2021	\$	250,000
Total Grant Award		\$	250,000

The total E-SCARS program budget is comprehensive. It includes the cost of project implementation, initial hardware and software components, and recurring costs for running the program through December 31, 2021. The total award for the current grant period is \$250,000. This includes \$65,854 in operating costs and \$184,146 in Salaries and Employee Benefits costs.

**Key Contract Risks:**

There is minimal risk to the County. Funds are reimbursed after program expenses are incurred.**Special Instructions:**

The Clerk of the Board shall post the Notice of Exemption upon Board approval. Please return the following items to John DeAlba, DA Department Business Specialist:

- a) One (1) Minute Order;
- b) One (1) duplicate original fully-executed Grant Award Resolution;
- c) One (1) copy of the fully-executed Grant Award Resolution; and
- d) One (1) copy of the approved Notice of Exemption.

**Attachments:**

- a) Board Resolution
- b) ES20 Grant Award
- c) Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

John DeAlba, Department Business Specialist (x82434)