



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY EXECUTIVE

File #: 23-985

Board Meeting Date: 12/12/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Michael P. Callagy, County Executive
Christina Corpus, Sheriff
Subject: Domestic Violence Co-Response Pilot Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing and directing the County Executive or their designee to design and implement a Domestic Violence Co-Response Pilot Program for a term of two years for a total amount not to exceed \$1,000,000.

BACKGROUND:

Domestic violence is a public health and safety issue that impacts over 10,000 people in San Mateo County annually. In 2022, the County received 1,786 domestic violence-related calls for service ([CA DOJ <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/domestic-violence-related-calls-assistance>](https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/exploration/crime-statistics/domestic-violence-related-calls-assistance)). In 2023 alone, five women in the County were killed in domestic violence incidents. To better address domestic violence in San Mateo County, the Domestic Violence Council has convened a Task Force that seeks to identify opportunities for programmatic improvement, one opportunity identified was the creation of a domestic violence Co-Response Pilot Program.

Law enforcement officers have traditionally responded to domestic violence calls alone. The proposed pilot program enhances law enforcement response by supplementing it with an embedded survivor advocate assigned to each partner law enforcement agency. Each survivor advocate in partnership with law enforcement responders will assist in the first response by providing early and specialized engagement, intervention, guidance, and connection to support services for those involved. The proposed Co-Response Model recognizes the importance of ongoing support for victims beyond the initial response, a capacity that survivor advocates can uniquely provide, complementing law enforcement's efforts.

The County and three partner cities are currently utilizing with success the Co-Responder model for response to community members experiencing mental health crisis ([CWCRT <https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/community-wellness-and-crisis-response-team>](https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/community-wellness-and-crisis-response-team)). The domestic violence co-responder pilot looks to replicate that model and its success to better address domestic violence, ensure a holistic and supportive response to domestic violence related calls, and improve

outcomes.

A literature review was conducted looking into coordinated response for domestic violence. Although there is some documentation of Co-Response models for domestic violence, it is unclear if any are currently active or in-line with this proposed pilot.

DISCUSSION:

The domestic violence Co-Responder Pilot Program will embed survivor advocates within the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and participating police departments. In the event of a domestic violence call for assistance, law enforcement and survivor advocate will be simultaneously dispatched to the scene. The goal of the immediate response will be to first ensure the safety of affected persons and then to engage them in early and specialized engagement, intervention, guidance, and connection to support services. The survivor advocate will provide immediate services to victims-survivors when they are most likely to be receptive and provide ongoing advocacy and assistance in navigating public assistance, emergency housing resources, legal procedures, and other resources.

Participating cities will enter into cooperative agreements with the County for implementation of the pilot. A local service provider will provide a minimum of three full-time Co-Response survivor advocates to be embedded with law enforcement and a half program manager. Data and outcomes will be tracked by the service provider and participating jurisdictions and evaluated by a third-party researcher.

The Co-Response Model for Domestic Violence calls for service aims to not only improve victim safety and perpetrator accountability but also to potentially establish a model for addressing domestic violence calls for service. The model embraces a proactive, collaborative, and tailored approach, recognizing the unique needs of our diverse community.

This initiative reflects the County's commitment to creating a safer and more supportive environment for victims of domestic violence while contributing to the broader goal of fostering respectful domestic relationships within San Mateo County. This collaborative approach aims to enhance the County's response by incorporating the unique skills and perspectives of both law enforcement and survivor advocates.

EQUITY IMPACT:

This pilot will promote equity by increasing availability and effectiveness of responses to domestic violence by local jurisdictions in a culturally competent manner. To create a program that is culturally competent, the County will develop the pilot collaboratively with survivors of domestic violence, community-based organizations that address domestic violence, and a third-party researcher. The language needs of the participating jurisdictions will be considered to ensure accessibility.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The pilot is expected to start in 2024 and end in 2026 (2-year pilot). The maximum for FY 2024-2026 is \$1,000,000. The program will be funded by County reserves.