



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0152, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, Department of Health Services, Human Services Department, Probation Department

Staff Name and Phone Number: Michelle Carstensen 565-2822

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution proclaiming April 7 through April 13, 2019 as National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

Executive Summary:

On behalf of the many public and private agencies working together to improve crime victims' services, and to prevent and respond to crime in our community, five departments - the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, the Human Services Department, the Department of Health Services, and the Probation Department - have come together to seek a proclamation declaring April 7 through April 13, 2019, as National Crime Victims' Rights Week in Sonoma County.

The week of April 7 through April 13, 2019, has been designated as National Crime Victims' Rights Week by the Office for Victims of Crime of the U.S. Department of Justice and the National Center for Victims of Crime. For more than 30 years, communities across America have joined together annually to recognize the needs and rights of crime victims and survivors. In an effort to provide recognition to crime victims, Sonoma County is joining other counties and states throughout the nation in showing a commitment to raising awareness of the devastating impacts of crime and in holding events honoring the courageous survivors of crime and those who help them heal. The theme for 2019 "*Honoring Our Past. Creating Hope for the Future.*" celebrates the progress made by those before us as we look to a future of crime victim services that is even more inclusive and accessible.

We seek a future in which victims are strengthened by the response they receive, organizations are resilient in response to challenges, and communities are able to seek collective justice and healing. We continue to work to support all victims through our own work and that of our community leaders, organizations and local partners to empower victims throughout the healing process and as they become survivors. As we better learn how to meet the needs of underserved victims, we expand victims' options.

Discussion:

During Crime Victims' Rights Week, outreach activities will take place throughout the community in addition to raising awareness about victims and the services available to victims of crime through print and radio media.

The following sections identify key services provided to victims within county agencies.

Sonoma County District Attorney's Office

Historically, victims of crime have been under-served in a system geared to prosecute and protect the rights of the criminal. During the mid-seventies, the State of California began realizing that the trauma and financial loss experienced by victims should be acknowledged and began developing programs to address the problem.

The California Legislature mandated that counties establish programs to assist crime victims who suffer the ill effects and trauma of crime. Section 13835.2 of the California Penal Code mandates the scope of services that must be offered. The Sonoma County Victim Services Division was established in 1978 to serve victims of crime. On November 4, 2008, the People of the State of California approved Proposition 9, the Victims' Bill of Rights Act of 2008, known as Marsy's Law. This measure amended the California Constitution to provide additional rights to victims.

The District Attorney's Office Victim Services Division offers comprehensive services to victims and witnesses of all types of violent crimes. Mandated services provided by the Victim Services Division include crisis intervention, emergency assistance, direct follow-up counseling, court escort and support. Some optional services provided include creditor intervention, restitution information, and assistance with funeral and burial expenses through the State of California Victim Compensation Board.

In compliance with Marsy's Law, the District Attorney's Victim Services Division ensures victims receive all appropriate notifications related to court proceedings. We list victims' rights under Marsy's Law on our website. In order to better serve victims, the District Attorney implemented a web-based server, linked to the District Attorney's website, where victims are able to access online up to date court information and receive electronic notification of upcoming court dates.

The Victim Services Division served 3,300 new clients in FY 17/18 and is on track to serve even more in FY 18-19. The Victim Compensation Board through the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board processed 584 applications and paid hundreds of thousands of dollars directly to victims of crime in Sonoma County. In FY 17/18, the Court issued restitution orders totaling more than \$5.8 million to be paid by defendants on behalf of victims. The District Attorney's Office Victim Services Division participates in numerous outreach events throughout the year to educate and inform our community about the services offered and available to victims and witnesses of crime.

The District Attorney's office is the lead agency for the Family Justice Center Sonoma County, a multi-agency collaborative effort that opened in August of 2011. The Family Justice Center (FJC) concept is a multi-disciplinary, physically co-located model with a coordinated, single point-of-access offering comprehensive wrap-around services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder abuse and child abuse. The Family Justice Centers seek to improve the services being offered to victims, and to reduce the number of locations a victim must visit as well as the number of visits they must make to tell their story and receive the help they need.

Sonoma County Sheriff's Office

The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office receives approximately 28,216 "911" calls for service each year. Thousands of these calls are victim contacts. The Sheriff's Office provides victim services such as emergency first aid, criminal investigation, assistance with criminal justice process, and referrals to victim assistance resources. The Sheriff's Office works collaboratively with other government agencies to prevent and protect individuals from violence in an ongoing commitment to keep our community safe. The Sheriff's Office continues to be a strong supporter and partner of the Family Justice Center and the multi-disciplinary teams that advocate for victims.

Sonoma County Department of Health Services

The Department of Health Service's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) was created in 1995. SART provides specialized, coordinated services to the people of Sonoma County in a caring, supportive, collaborative and professional manner. SART is a multidisciplinary team of trained professionals that are available to provide

forensic exams 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. SART team members and other Department staff work closely with the Human Services Department, the District Attorney's Office, local law enforcement, and community partners, such as Sutter Hospital, the YWCA of Sonoma County and Verity, to provide services to victims and families.

Sonoma County Human Services Department (HSD)

The Human Services Department administers benefit programs and provides direct services to support the health, safety, and well-being of community members. Programs include: health care and nutrition benefit programs and general assistance; employment and training assistance; programs and protective and other services for older adults, persons of all ages with disabilities and U.S. military veterans; and foster care and protective services for youth experiencing abuse or neglect. In 2018, the Human Services Department received 6,465 calls alleging child abuse and neglect. The department also received 4,869 calls alleging abuse or neglect of an older or dependent adult, including reports of financial abuse. Services for children, youth and their families help ensure that our youngest residents live in safe, stable and nurturing homes. Services include case management, counseling, parent education, emergency housing, legal assistance, behavioral interventions, transportation and assistance with basic needs. If needed, children are cared for in our temporary emergency shelter and community foster homes. Department services also help ensure that elderly and dependent adults have safe, healthy places to live and the help they need to remain living safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible.

Sonoma County Probation Department

The Probation Department provides a number of services that aid victims. The Department's investigations units prepare pre-sentence reports for the Superior Court that includes a description of the impact of crimes, including victim impact statements. These statements allow victims the opportunity to participate in and influence the court's sentencing process. Deputy Probation Officers provide ongoing contact with crime victims to enhance their safety, explain the criminal and juvenile justice processes, and provide referrals to available victim services. Additionally, the Department works collaboratively with other agencies to identify victims of human trafficking within the criminal justice and juvenile justice systems, in order to refer victims to appropriate services. Deputy Probation Officers supervise offenders in the community, collect restitution owed to victims, and work to ensure offenders understand the impact their behavior has had on their crime victims. These supervision efforts reduce the likelihood of further community and/or individual victimization. Further, in appropriate juvenile cases, officers participate in a restorative justice process that allows the victim a voice in the development of the offender's supervision plan, and officers monitor completion of these plans.

Prior Board Actions:

Resolutions have been approved proclaiming National Crime Victims' Rights Week for each of the past 14 years.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			

Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

No Fiscal Impact.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

No Staffing Impact.

Attachments:

Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board: