



Legislation Text

File #: 2021-0500, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

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

Staff Name and Phone Number: Paul Dunaway 565-3673, Gary Fontenot 565-5931

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution designating June, 2021 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Human Services Department requests that the Board of Supervisors designate June, 2021 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in Sonoma County.

Discussion:

No single agency can provide all of the care and services needed to address the growing problem of elder and dependent adult abuse within Sonoma County. In the past 12 years, the reports of suspected elder abuse have risen by 127%. In 2008, there were 2,193 reports of elder and dependent adult abuse. In 2020, the number increased to 4,985 reports. Sonoma County's Elder Justice Coordinator (Coordinator), funded by the Human Services Department through a Victims of Crime Act grant received from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, is working to strengthen the current safety net of community-based services and supports to increase education and awareness to help prevent elder and dependent adult abuse. The Human Services Department - Adult Protective Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's Office, and community volunteers are among the Elder Justice Coalition members that are working to collaborate in bringing a more comprehensive response to individual victims of elder and dependent adult abuse within Sonoma County.

Additionally, in 2020, the Coordinator focused on finalizing agreements with all law enforcement jurisdictions, increasing awareness of the plight of elders in long-term care facilities and those isolated from the pandemic, as well as providing remote social connection through Project Tablet Turnover, which granted over 200 tablets to low-income residents in care facilities. Senior Advocacy Services has remained at the forefront of pandemic response to support health partners in vaccination efforts of all 165 care facility residents and staff as well as advising the public health response to the pandemic. As advocates of long-term care residents, the Ombudsman have been the first and sometimes only response to support facility residents who aren't able to connect to others outside the facility. Currently there is an emphasis to train and connect with more health partners and first responders about legal requirements of long-term care facilities in the event of an emergency.

In recognition of June being Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month, cities across Sonoma County will display banners asking "Notice a Senior in Crisis?" that will include hotline numbers for both Adult

Protective Services and the Senior Advocacy Services Ombudsman Program. In addition, all senior centers in the County will display purple flags representing each incident of elder abuse reported in 2020 in their respective communities and a digital and print media campaign will be run to raise community awareness and provide reporting resources. The Resolution will be presented on June 16th at the Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council meeting.

The following are community services designed to raise awareness and respond to elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect within Sonoma County:

Adult Protective Services

Elder abuse investigation and prevention are the responsibility of the Human Services Department, Adult and Aging Services Division. Through its 24-hour hotline, Adult Protective Services received 4,985 reports of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse in calendar year 2020 and conducted 3,040 investigations. Adult Protective Services is staffed by Human Services Department social workers. Adult Protective Services provides mandated reporter training throughout the community and collaborates with community partners to provide outreach to seniors throughout the year. In 2020, Adult Protective Services staff conducted 21 mandated reporter trainings, reaching 480 individuals.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Senior Advocacy Services Ombudsman Program responded to 776 reports of elder abuse and neglect in licensed care facilities in Sonoma County in calendar year 2020. Additionally, the staff and volunteer Ombudsman provided more than 6,915 informational and referral consultations to long-term care residents, facility staff, and the community. The Program also conducted elder abuse outreach and education to the community through 65 community education seminars.

District Attorney's Office

The Sonoma County District Attorney's office works closely with Adult Protective Services, law enforcement and other community organizations to ensure that elder abuse investigations and prosecutions are prioritized and that elder crime victims are treated with dignity. The office has appointed a chief deputy district attorney, two full-time deputy district attorneys, a district attorney investigator and two elder advocates to the District Attorney's Elder Protection Unit. Members of the Elder Protection Unit participate in the Financial Abuse Specialist Team and the Santa Rosa and Petaluma Elder Abuse Multidisciplinary Team meetings. The District Attorney's office also participates in the Elder Justice Coalition's Speakers Group, speaking with elder groups and public service organizations on a regular basis to educate seniors about the risks of fraud, undue influence, physical and social isolation, assault and neglect. When crimes are committed against an elder, the District Attorney's office and law enforcement partners aggressively pursue justice in the courts, including protective orders to help keep elder victims safe, obtain court-ordered restitution, counseling and other services. The District Attorney has worked closely with the Human Services Department to provide legal services aimed at maintaining elder safety and hired a Care Coordinator who works out of the Family Justice Center to guide elder victims to critical community resources. As a result of these and other successful collaborative efforts, more elders in Sonoma County are receiving the security, services, and support they need to lead healthy, productive lives.

Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff's Office takes elder abuse very seriously and has signed a commitment to the Elder Justice Coalition to help improve justice for elders and to participate in collaborative efforts to ensure older and dependent adults are safe and supported in Sonoma County. The Sheriff's Office aggressively investigates any and all allegations of elder abuse and works with the District Attorney's office to bring those guilty of preying on the elderly to justice.

Prior Board Actions:

June 11, 2018 - Board designated June, 2018 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month

June 6, 2017 - Board designated June, 2017 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month

June 16, 2016 - Board designated June 15, 2016 as World Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness day in Sonoma County

June 9, 2015 - Board designated June 15, 2015 as World Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness day in Sonoma County

June 10, 2014 - Board designated June 15, 2014 as World Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness day in Sonoma County

June 4, 2013 - Board designated June 15, 2013 as World Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY 21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	0	0	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	0	0	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

None

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

Resolution

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

None