

August 2025

Family Assistance Program Annual Report Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Los Angeles County Department Of Public Health
Office Of Violence Prevention



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION
FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025**

On July 9, 2019, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors formally directed the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to establish a Family Assistance Program (FAP). This pilot program was to ensure that families affected by Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) fatal use-of-force incidents and in-custody deaths receive immediate access to mental health services, compassionate support and guidance, and assistance with funeral expenses during a distressing period. FAP was staffed by trained professionals from DMH, who accompanied investigators during the notification of next of kin and remained available to provide crisis counseling and referrals to ongoing mental health services.

DMH oversaw direct service provision to impacted families until February 2024, when the program transitioned to the Department of Public Health's Office of Violence Prevention (OVP). Under OVP's leadership, FAP carries on the County's commitment to providing family-focused, trauma-informed interventions designed to foster coping, healing, and long-term recovery for those affected by fatal use-of-force incidents and in-custody deaths. While OVP staff do not accompany the scene investigators, they generally contact families within 48 hours of being notified of an incident.

OVP has partnered with the Department of Medical Examiner (DME), Office of Inspector General (OIG), LASD Homicide Bureau, LASD Custody Compliance and Sustainability Bureau (CCSB), DMH, the Civilian Oversight Commission (COC), and the Office of County Counsel as part of a multi-sector effort to refine, implement, and evaluate program services.

STAFFING

OVP FAP is staffed with mental health providers including: one Clinical Social Work Supervisor, one Senior Clinical Social Worker, one Psychiatric Social Worker who collaborates closely with Medical Examiner Investigators to provide immediate assistance to families following death notifications, and one Medical Case Worker who supports the work of the clinical social workers. All three social workers are available to provide prompt response to incidents of LASD fatal use of force and inmate in-custody deaths. They support families with crisis intervention services, referrals, direct linkage to resources, assistance with funeral expenses, and emotional support to help family members cope with acute grief and trauma while navigating the intricacies of legal or investigative processes.

PROTOCOL

1. LASD Homicide Bureau contacts OVP FAP to provide notification of an in-custody death or fatal use-of-force incident. Death notifications are also received from LASD CCSB and community members.
2. Once the next of kin has been notified of the death by LASD Homicide and the Office of the Medical Examiner, the next of kin contact information is provided to the FAP Social Work Supervisor.
3. The OVP FAP Social Work Supervisor acknowledges receipt of the death notification and referral and advises that OVP will contact the family to offer FAP support services.
4. The OVP FAP Social Work Supervisor assigns the referral to one of the two Clinical Social Workers who acknowledge receipt and contact the family within 48 hours of receiving the assignment.
5. The Clinical Social Worker meets with the family, conducts a comprehensive needs assessment, enacts appropriate referrals, and provides immediate emotional support.

FAP PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

A family qualifies for FAP services when the death of a family member occurs either while the person is in custody, or as the result of fatal use of force by law enforcement that occurs in the field.

In-Custody Death refers to any death occurring while a person is detained within Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department facilities, including jail facilities, Court Services Division lockups, Patrol Operations Division station jails, or hospitals where inmates are receiving medical care. Additionally, deaths occurring in the field during the arrest process, even if not yet transferred to a custodial facility, are classified as in-custody deaths due to the person's custodial status at the time of death.

Fatal Use of Force refers to any incident involving LASD's application of force that directly results in a person's death. This includes, but is not limited to, incidents involving the discharge of a firearm.

SERVICES

FAP services include:

1. Crisis intervention.
2. Comprehensive needs assessment.
3. Funeral and burial expense assistance, up to \$7500 per decedent.
4. Financial assistance for emergent basic needs (i.e., food and transportation).
5. Grief counseling for impacted family members.
6. Early engagement and support to reduce the risk of complicated grief and promote healthier long-term adjustment.
 - Complicated grief is prolonged, intense mourning that disrupts daily functioning and impedes the natural healing process.
7. Advocacy to ensure families receive appropriate, timely, and respectful services.
8. Case management and system navigation:
 - Comprehensive guidance for funeral homes on how to navigate the Los Angeles County vendor registration process. This support ensures timely payment or reimbursement for burial expenses.
 - Linkages to a wide range of mental health and social service resources. These may include victims' compensation programs, legal assistance, housing services, and other relevant community supports, based on individual need.
 - Information about the roles, responsibilities, and contact information for the LASD Homicide Bureau and the Department of Medical Examiner.
9. Follow-up with family post crisis/discharge to assess long-term coping and social needs and provide support.

DEATH INCIDENTS

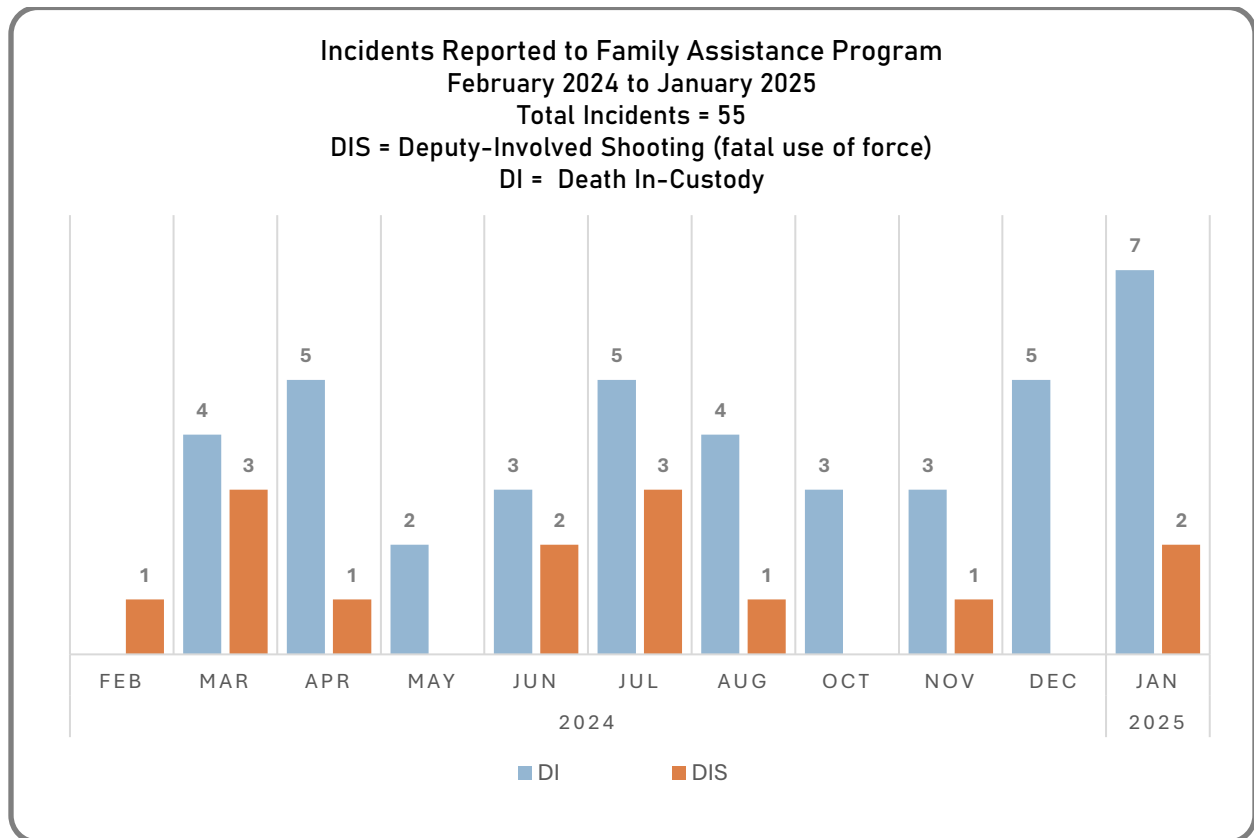
A total of 55 qualifying deaths were reported to OVP between February 1, 2024, to January 31, 2025. Fourteen (14) of those incidents were LASD fatal use of force in the field and 41 were in-custody deaths.

Death Incidents Reported

LASD HOMICIDE	42	12 Fatal Use of Force & 30 In-Custody Deaths
LASD CCSB	5	In-Custody Deaths
COMMUNITY MEMBER	8*	2 Fatal Use of Force & 6 In-Custody Deaths
TOTAL	55	

*Incidents likely occurred prior to February 2024

Table 1. Incidents Reported to FAP from February 2024 to January 2025



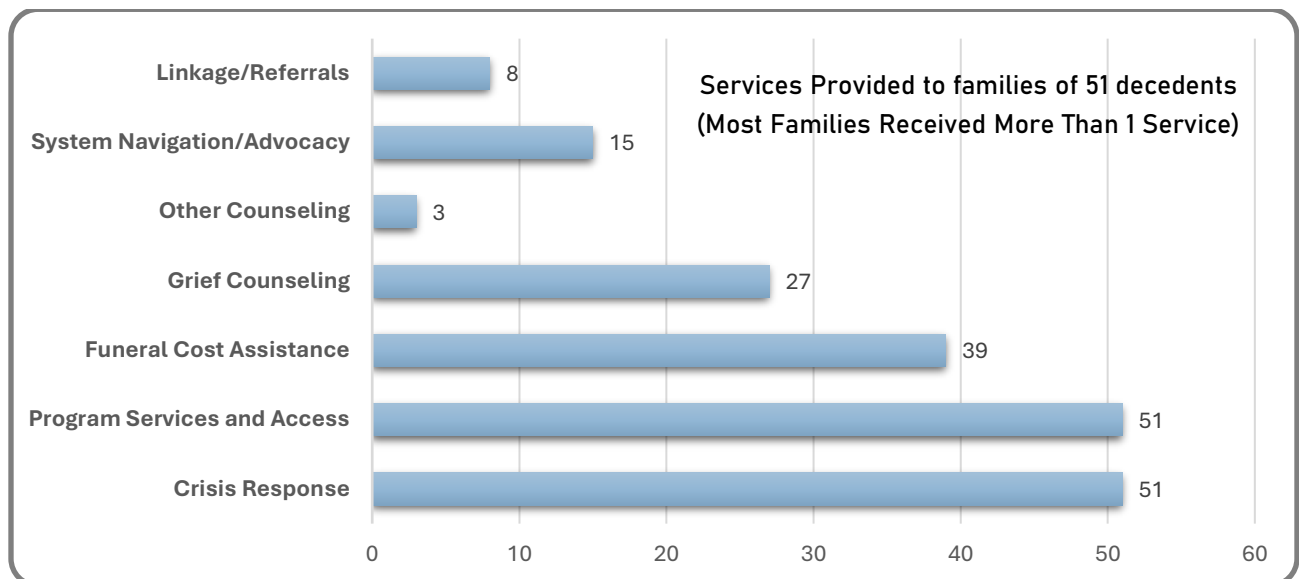
FAP SERVICES

From February 2024 to January 2025, of the 55 death incidents reported, 51 (93%) of the grieving families were engaged. There was no response from three families (5%) and no next of kin located for one of the decedents (2%).

FAP NOTIFICATIONS AND RESPONSE	Count	%
TOTAL NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED = 55 <i>(February 2024 to January 2025)</i>		
# of Families who received services	51	93%
No Response	3	5%
Next of Kin not located	1	2%

Families received various services, including crisis counseling, assistance with funeral expenses, grief counseling, system navigation, and linkage/referrals. Fifty-one families were provided with comprehensive information regarding FAP, including the range of services offered, eligibility requirements, and detailed instructions for accessing program services. Thirty-nine of the 55 families (71%) received assistance with funeral costs.

Table 2. Services Provided to Decedents' Families from February 2024 to January 2025



FAP INCIDENTS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY & SEX

Fifty-five (55) deaths were reported between February 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025. Fifteen (15) of the decedents were Black/African American (27%), 29 of the decedents were Hispanic/Latino (53%), and 11 of the decedents were White (20%). In relation to gender, 51 individuals were identified as male and four as female.

Table 3. Incidents Reported to FAP by Race / Ethnicity and Sex from February 2024 to January 2025

Race / Ethnicity	Sex		Total %	
	Female	Male		
Black / African American	0	15	15	27%
Hispanic / Latino	1	28	29	53%
White	3	8	11	20%
Grand Total	4	51	55	100%

FAP INCIDENTS BY DECEDENT'S AGE

Of the 55 deaths reported, most of the decedents were between 25 and 44 years of age (58%).

Table 4. Age of Cases Reported to FAP from February 2024 to January 2025

Age Interval (years)	Number	%
15-24	6	11%
25-34	17	31%
35-44	15	27%
45-54	8	15%
55-64	7	13%
65-74	1	2%
75-84	1	2%
Grand Total	55	100%

FAP FUNERAL EXPENSES

From February 2024 to January 2025, a total of \$209,756 was disbursed to 39 grieving families. The table below reflects the decedents by race/ethnicity, sex and amount of funeral funds paid to grieving families. The average amount received per family was \$5,378.

Most families request financial assistance to help cover funeral and burial expenses. However, the compiled funeral fund data only reflects payments that had been processed at the time of reporting. For instance, incidents that occurred in January 2025 were still pending payment and therefore not included in the total. In a few cases, families declined the funeral assistance—either because they had existing burial insurance or were advised by their legal representatives not to accept County funds.

Table 5. Funeral Funds Disbursed to Families from February 2024 to January 2025, by Decedent's Race / Ethnicity and Sex

FUNERAL FUNDS				
Ethnicity	Decedents	Female	Male	Grand Total
Black / African American	11		\$70,979.28	\$70,979.28
Hispanic / Latino	20	\$7,500.00	\$105,796.84	\$113,296.84
White	8	\$5,012.79	\$20,466.78	\$25,479.57
Grand Total	39	\$12,512.79	\$197,242.90	\$209,755.69

FAP HIGHLIGHTS (February 2024 to January 2025)

- In February 2024, OVP worked with DMH to transition FAP services.
- OVP hired, trained, and onboarded 3 program positions including a Clinical Social Worker Supervisor, a Senior Social Worker, and a Psychiatric Social Worker II.
- OVP developed FAP pamphlets in English and Spanish and designed a dedicated webpage to broaden awareness and increase accessibility to FAP services.
- In collaboration with county partners, OVP established standardized protocols to outline roles and responsibilities, coordinate service delivery, and ensure comprehensive support.
- OVP social workers proactively reached out to families within 48 hours of receiving an incident notification, demonstrating a commitment to timely intervention.
- OVP social workers engaged and provided services to 51 out of 55 (93%) families referred.
- LASD Homicide Bureau and CCSB promptly reported all FAP-eligible death incidents, facilitating immediate assistance for those in need.
- OVP established solid and ongoing partnerships with LASD Homicide Bureau, CCSB, DME, and DMH to coordinate critical services and ensure that grieving families received comprehensive, empathetic care.
- Payments to funeral homes or family reimbursements were processed within a few days but no later than 2 weeks.
- OVP disbursed a total of \$209,755.69 in burial assistance funds to 39 grieving families.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing FAP services during this first year of transition generated findings and documented needs that were reviewed by OVP and partner organizations to inform recommendations to improve the program:

- **Recommendation #1.** Increase the burial expense limit from \$7,500 to \$12,818, aligning the program's burial support with the amounts currently outlined in the California Government Code Article 4 Section 13957 California Victims of Crime Compensation Board. The original FAP program was based on the state compensation amount at the time, which increased in 2022. The \$5,318 increase aligns with government code and would allow for compensation up to that amount and that more accurately reflects the true cost of traditional burials, including the purchase of a plot. It helps to ensure that families can receive adequate financial assistance during a difficult and sensitive time. The current burial-expense budget allocation is \$375,000, an amount set to cover funeral assistance for about fifty families each year. Raising the maximum benefit per family to \$12,818 can be accommodated with this current allocation. While some families will choose

traditional burials and would benefit from the ability to draw on the full amount, program data show that many families elect cremation—incurring costs well below the proposed cap.

- **Recommendation #2.** Establish a hardship fund at \$50,000 using existing funds, which can be reallocated from personnel cost savings, and can cover expedited payment for one-time unique expenses that families may encounter after the loss of a loved one. OVP currently offers limited emergency funding to families experiencing hardship; however, the program has documented urgent family needs that require additional resources. Access to such emergency funds would allow for timely and responsive assistance for a variety of one-time needs, including rental support, utility bill payments, and specialized professional services. OVP would work internally, and with partners, to develop a structured mechanism and protocols to ensure equitable and prompt release of emergency funds to FAP families in need. It is recommended that this hardship/emergent fund initially be funded at \$50,000 per year to start. Data will be gathered in the next year of the program to understand what amount of emergency funding would best meet the needs of FAP-enrolled families.
- **Recommendation #3.** Implement an electronic data-collection system designed for human service and mental health programs. Since February 2024, OVP has relied on Microsoft Access for FAP data management. However, Access does not adequately support all client care management and reporting needs, forcing the program to rely partially on Excel to capture essential information that cannot be accommodated in Access. To better evaluate FAP's effectiveness and meet families' evolving needs, we recommend the implementation of an electronic data-collection system designed for human service and mental health programs. The software should facilitate real-time input of key metrics (e.g., referral outcomes, funeral assistance disbursements, next of kin demographics, support needs), track progress over time, and enable data-driven decision-making. Having a centralized platform will streamline reporting, highlight service gaps, and improve continuity of care for families.

CONCLUSION

This first year of FAP under OVP has been a year of transition, collaboration, and progress. The program's success in reaching and serving 93% of referred families reflects the strong coordination with our County partners, including LASD Homicide Bureau, CCSB, DME, and DMH, as well as the dedication of our newly established FAP team. Together, we have built the foundation for timely, compassionate, and comprehensive responses to families facing unimaginable loss. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening these partnerships, implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, and enhancing our capacity to meet urgent family needs. With a focus on transparency, we will continue to provide annual reports and explore additional ways to share program data and outcomes with County departments and the communities we serve, ensuring that our work remains both accountable and responsive.