

Budget & Finance Committee

Preliminary Questions to Metropolitan Government Departments

1. What is the amount of the proposed funding increase or decrease from the previous fiscal year?

Total Decrease: \$611,700 - 26% of OFS' Metro budget

\$696,300 Decrease

- \$46,300 - salary & fringe from targeted savings
- \$6,000 - out of town travel
- \$200,000 - CPF funding to non-profits
- \$444,000 - Direct Appropriations to non-profits (YWCA and Legal Aid)

\$84,600 Increase

- Assistant Client Director Position salary and fringe

2. Please provide a statement regarding the impact the proposed increase/reductions will have on your department's operations.

Targeted Savings Impact: Possible impact if a large number of OFS employee spouses need to utilize their Metro benefit plan (e.g. spouse becomes unemployed).

Out of town Travel Savings Impact: No concerning impact as many trainings are now being offered electronically.

Nonprofit funding (CPF & Direct Appropriations) Savings Impact:

Nonprofit funding allows OFS and the Family Safety Center to provide essential services to all Family Safety Center and Jean Crowe Advocacy Center clients. Those essential services include shelter, transitional housing, legal representation, and after hours and weekend order of protection assistance.

If CARES Act does not cover this loss (we expect it will), loss of these funds will greatly impact domestic violence shelters and transitional housing programs who have seen an increase in demand during COVID19 and shelter demand is expected to further increase as safer at home restrictions are lessened. Loss of these funds would require OFS to hire more staff or decrease crisis intervention services in order to fill the gap left by on-site nonprofit partners.

Funded Assistant Director Position Impact: The Mayor's proposed budget includes preserving one (1) previously funded grant position. This Assistant Director position will ensure business continuity in service provision, staff supervision, data collection, metric measurements, state and national family justice center affiliations and nonprofit partner collaboration.

3. Please identify and describe programs or services added or eliminated in the Mayor's proposed budget.

Services/Programs lost - CPF and Direct Appropriation:

The following services would be lost if CARES Act funds are **not** utilized for this purpose

Agape CPF – Family Safety Center would no longer offer 24/7 Order of Protection Assistance. As a result, MNPD Patrol officers would need to spend an extra hour helping victims and their children fill out forms and secure the ex parte Order of Protection. Currently, the on-site Agape advocate assists with approximately 1,750 Orders of Protection at the Family Safety Center per year.

YWCA – Would not have funding for 250 unduplicated domestic violence victims and their children per year staying at the Weaver Center Shelter compromising their ability to meet expected increases in demand and the Family Safety Center's ability to assist victims with their safety needs.

Mary Parrish Center – Would no longer be able to provide any case management and therapy for its residents. This includes connecting victims who have left their offender to permanent housing, food, employment, and therapy. This gap would result in more demand on FSC advocacy and counseling services.

Legal Aid Society & Tennessee Coalition – Family Safety Center would likely lose an on-site attorney and advocate at the Family Safety Center designated to help high risk clients with legal matters relating to their victimization and leaving the offender. Losing this onsite partner would jeopardize our State and Federal accreditation as a Family Justice Center.

Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee – Less marginalized and underserved communities would know that the Family Safety Center exists and the services it offers. This funding focuses on targeted outreach campaigns promoting services provided at the city's new Family Safety Center.

Services/Program Preserved – Assistant Director position

Services preserved by funding the existing Assistant Director position include managing: 1) OFS grant outcomes and reports, 2) Jean Crowe Advocacy Center (JCAC) and the Family Safety Center's (FSC) non-profit partnerships, 3) OFS client data, 4) collection and management of all departmental and Family Safety Center performance metrics required by Metro, Tennessee's Office of Criminal Justice, and the National Family Justice Center Alliance.

4. For any requested or recommended programs or services not included in the Mayor's budget, please itemize them by dollar amount and in order of importance to your department.

OFS did not receive three (3) advocate positions and one (1) child trauma specialist. The Database and FSC Equipment request have been submitted under the 4% process.

- a. (3) advocate positions salaries are \$138,000 (\$46,000 each)
- b. (1) Child Trauma Specialist salary is \$55,000

5. Regarding the number of FTE employees in your department:

- a. **How many budgeted employees do you have for the current fiscal year?**
36 (15/36 are grant funded)
- b. **How many unfilled FTE employees does your department currently have?**
3
- c. **How many FTE positions are included in the Mayor's proposed budget?**
1

6. Regarding your department's "departmental savings":

- a. **What is the amount of your department's 'targeted savings' for FY2020?**
\$46,300
- b. **What was your department's budget for FY2020 after the targeted savings?**
\$2,359,000 metro funded and \$1,187,500 grant funded
- c. **How does that compare with the Mayor's proposed FY2021 budget?**
\$611,700 - (26%) of OFS' Metro budget
- d. **Could this same level of targeted savings be achieved in FY2021?**
Yes

7. Regarding any previous audits in which your department has participated:

- a. **What operations or expenditures have been audited within the last three years? Five years? Ten years?**
OFS has been audited once by Internal Audit and once by the Office of Financial Accountability since we became a department in FY 2016. OFS has also had two State grants audited.
- b. **Has any capital spending been audited during the last five years? Ten years?**
N/A
- c. **Are there any prior audit recommendations still shown as pending/outstanding? If so, please identify these recommendations and provide a response regarding your department's plan to address the recommendation(s).**
No, all audit findings have been corrected.

COVID 19 Mayor's Office Supplemental Questions:

Are there any additional or new services your department is currently providing due to recent events, like the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those that would not be typically offered?

New Services:

- Covid19 related safety checks calls for past and current clients.
- Ongoing case management with clients due to increase need.
- Time with each client has doubled due to increased complexity of client needs.
- Victims can now complete the entire Order of Protection process with an OFS Advocate from their home.

Describe how reallocating staff and resources has already impacted current service offerings.

Impacted Services:

- In-person services now confined to one location
- Services provided to children significantly altered due to ensure social distancing
- Loss of student interns – staff has had to fill the gap of losing the equivalent of 6 FTEs this semester and potentially 10FTEs this summer.
- Bi-lingual non-advocate staff have had to become advocates in order to meet increased demand for Spanish speaking advocates
- With advocacy services provided from home it is important to mention the toll this takes on advocates who are struggling emotionally with the trauma stories that have now become a part of their home life. This lack of work separation for those helping severe trauma victims has caused tremendous emotional strain on staff.

What specific needs has your department encountered that will have to be addressed when reopening/ back to normal?

Re-opening Concerns:

- Social distancing with Orders of Protection will be harder when the Governor's COVID19 notary requirements changes are lifted.
- Need for bi-lingual advocates remains with our 2 open positions remaining frozen.
- Courts are severely backlogged and when and how they reopen will impact the JCAC's ability to operate safely for staff and clients.

For those services that have been suspended or reduced, what are the plans to avoid bottle necks and process issues when resuming operations? How might bottle necks and process issues effect residents and businesses?

Bottlenecks:

National experts predict that there will be a wave of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, child and elder abuse victims seeking help when "safer at home" is lifted. With this pent up demand being released, backlog will be inevitable. Due to space and staffing limitations, OFS' plan to reduce bottlenecks will unfortunately involve triaging clients based on assessed level of risk.

How many department employees do you anticipate will be impacted by the reduction in funding? None.