

Adopted: September 28, 2012

Statewide Cost Estimate

\$15,938,818

Penal Code Section 273.75 (a) and (c)

Statutes 2001, Chapter 713

Domestic Violence Background Checks

01-TC-29

Test Claim Filed: July 31, 2002

Reimbursement Period for this Estimate: January 1, 2002 through 2010-2011

Eligible Claimants: Any City or County

STAFF ANALYSIS

Background and Summary of the Mandate

The test claim statute requires district attorneys and prosecuting city attorneys to perform database searches of persons when they are charged with domestic violence, or when considering a domestic violence restraining order against them. The information is required to be presented to the courts for consideration under certain circumstances.

The claimant filed the test claim on July 31, 2002. The Commission on State Mandates (Commission) adopted a statement of decision on July 26, 2007, and parameters and guidelines on July 28, 2011.¹ The Commission found that the test claim statutes and executive orders impose a reimbursable state-mandated program on district attorneys or prosecuting city attorneys within the meaning of article XIII B, section 6 of the California Constitution and Government Code section 17514.

Eligible claimants were required to file initial reimbursement claims with the State Controller's Office (SCO) by January 30, 2012.

Eligible Claimants and Period of Reimbursement

Any city or county that employs prosecuting attorneys or district attorneys, respectively, and incurs increased costs as a result of this reimbursable state-mandated program is eligible to claim reimbursement of these costs.

Government Code section 17557(e), states that a test claim shall be submitted on or before June 30 following a given fiscal year to establish eligibility for that fiscal year. The County of Alameda filed the test claim on July 31, 2002, establishing eligibility for reimbursement on or after July 1, 2001. However, the test claim statute did not become operative until January 1, 2002. Therefore, costs incurred for compliance with most of the mandated activities are reimbursable on or after January 1, 2002.

¹ Exhibit A.

Reimbursable Activities

The Commission approved the following activities for reimbursement:

For each eligible claimant, the following ongoing activities are eligible for reimbursement upon any charge involving acts of domestic violence (as defined in Pen. Code, § 13700 & Fam. Code, §§ 6211 & 6203):

- A. Perform or cause to be performed, in specified electronic data bases, a thorough investigation of the defendant's history, including, but not limited to, prior convictions for domestic violence, other forms of violence or weapons offenses and any current protective or restraining order issued by any civil or criminal court (Pen. Code, § 273.75(a)).
 - 1. Review by district attorney or prosecuting city attorney, or at the direction of such attorneys by investigative staff, support staff, legal assistant or others of any or all of the databases as listed in Penal Code section 273.75 as based on defendant information provided in or with the law enforcement report.
- B. Present the information for consideration by the court (1) when setting bond or when releasing a defendant on his or her own recognizance at the arraignment, if the defendant is in custody, and (2) upon consideration of any plea agreement (Pen. Code, § 273.75(a)).
 - 1. Review of databases or printouts from databases by district attorney or prosecuting city attorney in preparation for presenting such database evidence in court.
 - 2. Presentation of evidence in court by district attorney or prosecuting city attorney.
- C. If a protective or restraining order is issued in the current criminal proceeding, and if the investigation reveals a current civil protective or restraining order issued by another criminal court and involving the same or related parties, the district attorney or prosecuting city attorney sends relevant information regarding the contents of the order issued in the current criminal proceeding, and any other information regarding a conviction of the defendant, to the other court immediately after the order has been issued (Pen. Code, § 273.75(c)).
 - 1. Review of databases or printouts from databases, case file, and other sources as may be necessary by district attorney or prosecuting city attorney, or by another at the direction of the attorney, to obtain relevant information for a letter or report to be sent to order-issuing court of a different jurisdiction.
 - 2. Draft letter or report and sign.
 - 3. Prepare envelope and mail.

Statewide Cost Estimate

Staff reviewed the claims data submitted by 25 cities and counties and compiled by the SCO. The actual claims data showed that 204 claims were filed between fiscal years 2001-2002 and 2010-2011 for a total of \$15,938,818². Based on this data, staff made the following assumptions and used the following methodology to develop a statewide cost estimate for this program.

Assumptions

- *The actual amount claimed for reimbursement may increase and exceed the statewide cost estimate.*

There are currently 478 cities and 58 counties in California. Of those, only 25 filed reimbursement claims for this program between fiscal years 2001 and 2011. If other eligible claimants file late or amended claims, the amount of reimbursement claims may exceed the statewide cost estimate. For example, the County of Los Angeles indicated that it will be filing a late claim. Late claims for the initial claiming period (2004-2005 through 2009-2010 fiscal years) may be filed until January 30, 2013. Late claims for fiscal year 2010-2011 may be filed until February 15, 2013.

- *The number of reimbursement claims filed will vary from year to year.*

This program is based on activities performed by law enforcement agencies and district attorneys when domestic violence charges are filed, when considering domestic violence restraining orders, or when presenting information to the court regarding domestic violence background checks. Therefore, the total number of reimbursement claims filed with the SCO will increase or decrease based on the number of incident reports taken by the local agencies.

- *There is a wide variation in costs claimed for this program.*

The variation in costs claimed is likely due to the size of the city or county making the claim. Approximately 25% of the claimed amount is claimed by the City of Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles, the largest city in California, maintains an entire department to administer domestic violence arrests. The variation in costs is also likely due to the classification of the employee performing the mandate. Under the mandates process the state does not dictate the level of staff a claimant may use to carry out a mandate. For example, most claimants for this program use peace officers to do the domestic violence background checks, however the County of Ventura uses an office assistant and, thus, their costs claimed are substantially lower.

- *There may be several reasons that non-claiming counties did not file for reimbursement, including but not limited to:*

1. Some counties cannot reach the \$1,000 threshold for filing reimbursement claims.
2. Claimants report that some counties are not filing for reimbursement because they do not prosecute misdemeanor domestic violence cases.
3. Counties did not have supporting documentation to file a reimbursement claim.

² Claims data reported as of April 3, 2012.

