

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, APRIL 06, 2021**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 22

SUBJECT: TERMINATION OF EARLY FRAUD PREVENTION/DETECTION- SAN DIEGO COUNTY PROJECT 100% (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

In April 1997, the Board of Supervisors approved an initiative with the District Attorney's Office and the Health and Human Services Agency to implement Project 100% (P100). The initiative established a process within Early Fraud Prevention/Detection for Public Assistance Investigators (**PAIs**) to interview all Cal WORKs applicants to verify eligibility information supplied by the applicant before benefits are granted.

P100 PAIs previously worked out of the District Attorney's office. Currently, they are assigned to the Bureau of Public Assistance Investigations (BPAI) division of the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS).

P100 "home visits" are generally scheduled with CalWORKs applicants and often can create significant stress and anxiety for applicants. Applicants feel the stigma of "home visits" adds another barrier to accessing services. Removing this piece of the verification process would allow folks to engage with the county more holistically when they most need support.

San Diego County stands alone in requiring families who are experiencing poverty to open their homes to Investigators when there is no evidence or reason to suspect fraud or any kind of wrongdoing.

San Diego County regularly fails to enroll a high percentage of eligible residents in major federal safety net programs, including CalFresh, Medi-Cal, and CalWORKs, at an estimated cost of \$1 billion lost annually to the local economy.

Policies like P100 are likely to dissuade people from applying for benefits. San Diego County should be doing everything it can to remove barriers to families in need of assistance to survive these difficult economic times. Elimination of P100 will be one vital step in this process.

P100 is not effective in discovering fraud. After the 2013 publication of a report by the Open Society Foundation on P100, which demonstrated that the County had been systematically inflating the efficacy of the program for more than a decade, the County began to recode the data. Contemporary statistics indicate that the vast majority of P100 "home visits" result in no denial or reduction of benefits. This experience is consistent with that of Los Angeles County, which had a similar program from 1999 to 2008 called the Home Interview Program (HIP). LA County voluntarily terminated their program after concluding it was ineffective in discovering or deterring fraud. Ending the HIP program was a cost neutral action which resulted in staff positions being redeployed to alleviate workloads in other areas.

The average annual cost of P100 is approximately \$1.6 Million. A termination of P100 program will create an opportunity to fill critical vacancies within the HHSA. Termination will also create new opportunities to enhancing County investigations of wage theft, elder abuse (physical or financial), consumer scams, insurance/workers comp fraud, and other kinds of fraud.

Furthermore, by ending P100 the County shall redirect resources to get people out of poverty in a meaningful and less invasive way. Those redirected resources will provide access to jobs, build strong social safety nets, and increase people's ability to thrive without needing to rely on state assistance.

Today's actions request the Board to commit to ending Project 100%. The recommendations below will lay out a framework to meet this goal.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER AND VICE-CHAIR NORA VARGAS

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to take all necessary actions to immediately terminate Project 100%. This includes, but is not limited to, terminating mandatory applicant home visits and interviews as a pre-requisite in determining eligibility.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to the Board by Tuesday June 8, 2021, with an update on the termination of Project 100% and the placement of the affected County staff.
3. In accordance with the County Charter and Civil Service Rules, direct the CAO to assist interested impacted employees in finding other job opportunities within the County.

FISCAL IMPACT

If approved, this request will have no impact on Fiscal Year 2020-21.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Vargas, seconded by Supervisor Lawson-Remer, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Fletcher, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter

