

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Leading with Excellence”**

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: LA FOUND – PROJECT LIFESAVER PILOT**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: SEPTEMBER 2018**

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY. (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Los Angeles County has taken a proactive approach to address the issue of cognitively  
 2 impaired adults wandering away from their homes and other locations, by launching the  
 3 LA Found Initiative and Project Lifesaver Pilot. The need for the initiative was driven by  
 4 an awareness that improved intergovernmental coordination/collaboration were  
 5 necessary to address wandering among the cognitively impaired. Resources such as  
 6 technology were determined to be the key to prevention and intervention. A report was  
 7 unanimously approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in February  
 8 2018 mandating several County departments, spearheaded by WDACS, to implement  
 9 its recommendations, including LA Found, and the Project Lifesaver Pilot, which were  
 10 launched in September 2018. To date, over 800 devices have been distributed  
 11 throughout the County (from 850 applications received), and over 24 wandering  
 12 participants have been safely located as a result of wearing the tracking device. The  
 13 project is innovative as it is the first Countywide Program in the State of California  
 14 addressing the issue of wandering of cognitively impaired individuals and using  
 15 technology to keep individuals with cognitive impairments safe.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services 510 S. Vermont Ave Los Angeles, CA 90020		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (888) 211-0644
<b>PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME</b> Veronica Sigala		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (213) 910-1662
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Stephanie Maxberry 6-23-2021 <i>Stephanie Maxberry</i>		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-738-2015 <b>EMAIL</b> smaxberry@wdacs.lacounty.gov
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Otto Solórzano <i>Otto Solórzano</i>		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> (213) 738-2617
		<b>DATE</b> 06/25/2021
<b>**ELECTRONIC, WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE**</b>		

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**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:**

**Challenge:** According to the Alzheimer’s Association, there are more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer’s. The Autism Society estimates that 1 in 59 individuals live with an autism spectrum disorder. It is expected that 60% of individuals with Alzheimer’s and 49% of children with autism will wander and go missing at some point in their lives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2019, 12% of the older adult population in California reported subjective cognitive decline or memory loss within the preceding 12 months. In Los Angeles County, there are 166,560 individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease, and by 2030, this population is expected to double to almost 278,806 individuals. The California Department of Justice reported 40,897 adults went missing in California in 2020, of whom 1,676 were dependent adults (any adult who has a physical or mental limitation that would restrict his or her ability to carry out normal activities). Of those adults reported missing, 10,111 or approximately 25% were reported in Los Angeles County. Dependent adults represent 358 of those cases (about 4%).

Los Angeles County faces a serious issue of wandering among individuals with cognitive/developmental disabilities. Alzheimer’s Los Angeles estimates that 60% of individuals with Alzheimer’s will wander at some point. According to the National Autism Association, 49% of children with autism will also wander and go missing at some point in their lives. When an individual with dementia/Alzheimer’s wanders, the likelihood of them being found alive decreases with each passing hour. These and other related statistics have led to the recognition that a more active effort needs to be made to address wandering among individuals with cognitive impairments. The LA Found Initiative and Project Lifesaver Pilot are two of the strategies recommended by the Bringing Our Loved Ones Home (BOLOH) Taskforce. The initiative launched a website providing a one-stop shop of resources to LA County residents in the areas of County Coordination, Technology Resources and Emergency Coordination. The Project Lifesaver Pilot provides a free tracking device, worn as a bracelet, to individuals who suffer from cognitive impairments and are prone to wander. If the individual wearing a device goes missing, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department can quickly deploy personnel to help law enforcement agencies locate the individual.

**Solution:** LA Found was established in September 2018 to assist caregivers of those living with Alzheimer’s, dementia, autism and other cognitive impairments. The program focuses on three key areas: Tracking Technology, County Resources and Emergency Coordination among County Departments and other relevant community organizations.

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**Tracking Technology - Project Lifesaver Pilot:** Los Angeles County explored the feasibility of using tracking technology, and partnered with Project Lifesaver International, a 501c3 that developed a set of tracking devices to address the issue of wandering. The voluntary system of trackable devices is offered to L.A. County residents free of charge if they are impacted by a cognitive impairment and are prone to wander. The tracking device works via radio frequency and each device issued has a unique frequency number. The Sherriff’s Department Mental Evaluation Team has special equipment that can read the signal of the bracelet, which can be used to locate the missing individual.

Individuals may apply for Project Lifesaver on-line in our application portal, by e-mail, or phone. The WDACS L.A. Found Unit is responsible for determining eligibility, issuing devices and training caregivers on the device and pilot’s responsibilities. Most families applying for a bracelet have experienced a wandering episode and are often in crisis and do not know where to turn. The LA Found Unit provides limited case management to families, connecting families to resources available for them.

The L.A. County Sherriff’s Department Mental Evaluation Team is responsible for the search and rescue and can be deployed anywhere within the County to assist any law enforcement or municipality to help locate the residents. The L.A. Found Unit also assists the Mental Evaluation Team as necessary when an individual participating in the program wanders, by contacting local hospitals or obtaining additional information, such as areas that the individual frequency wanders to, to help locate the individual.

**County Resources:** The LA Found Initiative website provides a one-stop resource for families of loved ones and caregivers of individuals suffering from Alzheimer’s, other dementias, autism, or brain injury. The resource link lists available services in Los Angeles County, agency descriptions and contact information.

**Emergency Coordination:** Los Angeles County is enhancing training for law enforcement to provide a uniform and coordinated response to missing persons with cognitive impairments. The Emergency Coordination webpage provides the necessary steps for families to take in reporting missing loved ones how they may assist.

**Benefits:** 838 program participants are enrolled in the Project Lifesaver Pilot. Devices issued during the pandemic were distributed by amending unit business practices, using the USPS mail system to deliver devices to families and conducting virtual orientations to present the program’s expectations and responsibilities. Program overview and device assembly videos are also available through the LA

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Found Application Portal, providing further support to participant families. Also during the pandemic, over 220 orders for spare parts were filled for individuals participating in the program.

To date, 24 wandering participants have been safely located as a result of wearing the tracking device. Additional funding was subsequently allocated to expand the pilot from the initial 30 devices to the over 800 that have been distributed throughout the County. The program has received over 850 applications since implementation, and it has been featured in local news outlets such as Spectrum News, ABC 7, KTLA, NBC4, Fox 11, KCET, as well as nationally in the Washington Post, World News and Noticias Telemundo for World Alzheimer’s Day.

Incoming applications are tracked through the program’s Application Portal, which enables individuals to complete applications online and upload required documentation. Existing program participants can also request spare parts through the online system, as well as access video training. LA Found Unit staff can review applications electronically, contact families for follow-up, and assist in completing applications. The program is supported by a toll-free number administered through 211 and a direct e-mail address that families can use to contact the team and request assistance. The online application portal also enables the team to keep track of spare parts requests, as well as devices and spare parts for distribution.

The project is innovative as it is the first Countywide Program in the State of California addressing the issue of wandering of cognitively impaired individuals and using technology to keep individuals with cognitive impairments safe.

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**Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only.** Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12-point font.  
This program addresses County Strategic Goal I – Make Investments that Transform Lives, and Strategy 1.27 – Plan for Age-Friendly Communities for Older Adults.

With the older adult population doubling by 2030 and individuals with autism aging, there will be an increased need for municipalities to take proactive measures to ensure the safety of individuals with cognitive impairments. The LA Found Initiative and Project Lifesaver Pilot represent a significant first step in preparing Los Angeles County for the aging-related challenges that lay ahead. The initiative has established partnerships among County departments to proactively address this issue. It strengthens communities by providing resources to caregivers of individuals with cognitive impairments. It provides families with the peace of mind and reassurance that if their loved one goes missing, there is a proven method to help safely locate them. The initiative has also increased the public’s awareness of the need to be trained to identify the non-verbal signals indicating cognitive impairments. The focus of LA Found and the Project Lifesaver Pilot is as much about raising awareness as it is about rescuing loved ones and potentially saving lives.

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**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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