

## Response to Grand Jury Report Form



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**AUG 11 2020**

**Ventura County  
Grand Jury**

Report Title: Cybersecurity Strategies for Cities in Ventura County

Report Date: April 17, 2020

Response by: August 03, 2020

Title: City of Ventura Response to Grand Jury Report

### FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the Facts / Conclusions numbered: C01-C08

- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Facts / Conclusions numbered: \_\_\_\_\_

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the Facts / Conclusions that are disputed; including an explanation of the reasons.)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R01, R02, R08, R11 have been implemented.  
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions and date completed.)
- Recommendations number \_\_\_\_\_ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.  
(Attach a time frame for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R03, R04, R05, R06, R07, require further analysis.  
R09, R10
- Recommendations numbered \_\_\_\_\_ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.

Date: 7/16/2020

Signed:

Number of pages attached: 4



Anida Margolis, Foreperson  
2019-2020 Ventura County Grand Jury  
County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Cybersecurity Strategies for Cities in Ventura County

**CITY OF VENTURA  
RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT  
August 03, 2020**

The City of Ventura has reviewed the Ventura County Grand Jury report titled "Cybersecurity Strategies for Cities in Ventura County" dated April 17, 2020. The intended responses below are to address the recommendations and conclusions found in the report.

**REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**R-01. The Grand Jury recommends Cities establish secure web addresses through the use of HTTPS or other such protocols. (C-02)**

Response – Implemented before 2014. All-City of Ventura websites utilizes certificates and HTTPS. The City of Ventura was one of two cities in Ventura County to implement this before the grand jury report.

**R-02. The Grand Jury recommends Cities establish trustworthy web addresses by following the California Department of Technology domain name taxonomy guidance. (C-02)**

Response – Implemented in 2017. The City of Ventura utilizes ".cityofventura.ca.gov" for web access and primary email addresses. The City of Ventura was one of two cities in Ventura County to implement this before the grand jury report.

**R-03. The Grand Jury recommends Cities utilize free federal and federally aligned cybersecurity services as set forth in Appendix 02 to supplement internal staff and/or replace vendor services whenever possible. (C-03)**

Response – The City of Ventura believes that it would be beneficial to use free federal cybersecurity services whenever reasonably possible. However, even these "free" federal services require staff resources to oversee and implement any project that would

be undertaken. As the City's resources and funding allow, staff will look to participate in these federal programs.

**R-04. The Grand Jury recommends Cities' IT staff subscribe to CISA updates online. (C-03)**

Response – The City of Ventura will review and apply this recommendation as appropriate. However, due to the lack of staffing and existing capacity constraints, it might not be a goal that the City can achieve this fiscal year. The City will revisit this in the next fiscal year.

**R-05. The Grand Jury recommends Cities take advantage of discounted services and cooperative purchasing programs whenever possible. (C-03)**

Response – The City of Ventura agrees with this recommendation and will look to implement it whenever reasonably possible.

**R-06. The Grand Jury recommends Cities develop personnel cost-saving opportunities and create a cybersecurity talent pool by recruiting interns or graduating students using: (C-04)**

- **The Scholarships for Service program described in Appendix 02**
- **Local education institutions (high school, community college, private college and state university)**

Response – The City of Ventura has historically partnered with local educational institutes to create internship opportunities throughout the City, including within the Information Technology (IT) Division. While there is not currently funding available for paid internships, the IT Division will continue to work with local educational institutions to provide unpaid internship opportunities as a potential cost-saving measure.

**R-07. The Grand Jury recommends Cities maintain good vendor management by: (C-03, C-05)**

- **Obtaining CISA assistance to conduct risk management assessments on all third-party vendors that have access to any confidential data or that interact with City networks and systems**
- **Requiring all vendors provide cybersecurity documentation. As part of their ongoing third-party due diligence, Cities should evaluate vendors for compliance and risk on an annual basis**
- **Requiring IT vendors obtain cybersecurity insurance.**

Response – The City of Ventura continuously strives to maintain proper vendor management and requires IT vendors to submit cybersecurity insurance and other cybersecurity information. However, no CISA assistance has been obtained to conduct risk management assessments on the existing vendors. Adopting CISA assistance requires purchasing process modifications to technology vendor evaluations and

procurement as well as modifications to our current risk management protocols. It, therefore, requires further assessment.

**R-08. The Grand Jury recommends Cities clearly identify expenses for their Information Services (Technology) Departments in their approved budgets. (C-06)**

Response – The City already implements this best practice. As part of the City's budget, a separate fund is used to track the IT Division expenses. To access the City's budget, please visit <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/158/Financial-Transparency>

**R-09. The Grand Jury recommends Cities develop and test cyber incident response, recovery and business continuity plans. (C-07)**

Response – The City of Ventura has already developed a cyber incident response plan. Additionally, the City is in the process of adopting a cybersecurity incident plan, which it will implement as appropriate.

**R-10. The Grand Jury recommends Cities implement the best practices for teleworking as published by the California Cyber Security Integration Center. (C-08)**

Response – The City of Ventura did not promote teleworking for all City employees before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since the start of the pandemic, the City has provided its employees with the tools needed to telework successfully. The City will continue to work to review and implement the best practices published by the California Cyber Security Integration Center.

**R-11. The Grand Jury recommends Cities develop a written plan for implementation of R-01 through R-10 prior to December 31, 2020.**

Response – The City of Ventura will have a response for implementation ready by August. A written plan will be developed by December 31, 2020.

**REPORT CONCLUSIONS:**

**C-01. While the Grand Jury recognizes each City is taking steps to implement cybersecurity and to defend against cyberattacks, it concludes there is no perfect solution to cybersecurity or defense against cyberattacks. (FA-01, FA-02, FA-03, FA-04, FA-05, FA-06, FA-07)**

Response – The City of Ventura agrees with this conclusion, and while no perfect solution exists, the City believes active end-user training is crucial to help reduce risks. The City, therefore, utilizes end-user training services to increase security awareness and to help protect the City against potential attacks. The City of Ventura also implemented Multi-Factor Authentication and other beneficial tools to provide multiple layers of security.

**C-02. The Grand Jury concluded eight Cities are currently using suboptimal web addresses for their websites. (FA-08, FA-09)**

Response – The City of Ventura is not part of the eight Cities mentioned in this conclusion since the City utilizes ".cityofventura.ca.gov" for web access and primary email addresses.

**C-03. The Grand Jury concluded generally Cities are not utilizing free federal and discounted federally aligned resources available to Cities to bolster their cybersecurity defenses. (FA-10, FA-11, FA-12, FA-13, FA-14, FA-15, FA-16, FA-17, FA-18, FA-19, FA-20)**

Response – The City of Ventura agrees with this conclusion and ask that the Grand Jury refer back to comments made surrounding R-03.

**C-04. The Grand Jury concluded cybersecurity staffing could be improved with more effective recruiting and staff retention practices. (FA-21, FA-22, FA-23)**

Response – The City of Ventura supports this conclusion. It will periodically review adopted recruiting practices to make sure that the City continues to develop the recruiting tools and staff retention practices needed to be effective in this area.

**C-05. The Grand Jury concluded Cities should manage cyber risks associated with vendors by requiring they provide annual documentation regarding cybersecurity insurance and cybersecurity practices. (FA-24, FA-25, FA-30, FA-31)**

Response – The City of Ventura does require vendors working with the IT Division to submit cybersecurity insurance and other cybersecurity information. The IT Division will continue to request and track cybersecurity documentation from vendors as appropriate.

**C-06. The Grand Jury concluded some Cities do not clearly identify expenditures regarding information technology or cybersecurity in their budgets. (FA-26, FA-27)**

Response – The City of Ventura identifies IT expenditures in the annual budget.

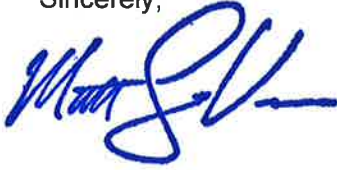
**C-07. The Grand Jury concluded all Cities would benefit from comprehensive cyber incident response, recovery and business continuity plans. (FA-28, FA-29)**

Response – The City of Ventura agrees with this conclusion. The City has already implemented a cyber incident response plan and is developing a recovery and business continuity plan that will include a disaster recovery plan.

**C-08. The Grand Jury concluded some Cities are not following the recommended best practices for teleworking published by California Cyber Security Integration Center (FA-03, FA-04)**

Response – The City of Ventura did not actively promote teleworking for City employees before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the City had already developed the infrastructure and support systems needed to telework, which enabled the City to successfully provided employees with the tools required to telework. The City will continue to implement the best practices published by the California Cyber Security Integration Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt LaVere". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "M" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Matt LaVere  
Mayor