



county of ventura

RAIN PROJECT

Homeless Transitional Living Center



July 25, 2001

John F. Johnston
Chief Executive Officer
County of Ventura
800 So. Victoria Ave.
Ventura, CA 93009

Re: Response to FY 2000-2001 Grand Jury Report

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury made four (4) recommendations regarding the RAIN Project on page 50-51 of their annual report. Staff generally concurs with all of their findings, conclusions and recommendations and responds as follows:

R-1: A long-term, comprehensive funding strategy should be drafted to ensure the continuation of the program, including its capital and operational needs.

Staff concurs with this recommendation. Funding in the form of a forgivable loan/grant from the State of California has been approved for completion of the renovation/remodel of the former ARC building on Lewis Road in Camarillo. That \$500,000 and an additional \$700,000 in already approved grant funding will complete the capital improvements and allow relocation by Fall, 2002. It is not anticipated that any additional capital projects will be necessary in the foreseeable future, however no grant opportunity will be left unexplored.

Operating funds come from a variety of sources including Federal grants, State grants, City CDBG funds and the County General Fund. All of our major federal funding, totaling approximately \$1.5 million per year, is in the form of 3 year, renewable grants. The actual contribution from the County General Fund has decreased each year of operation due to our success in obtaining grant funding. In the FY 1999-2000 County budget, RAIN finally became a formally identified and funded budget unit of the County virtually assuring the ongoing operation and continued support of the program.

R-2: The County Board of Supervisors should continue its support of the program and not initiate any change in oversight responsibilities until after the move to new quarters in 2002.

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Director Phone: (805) 388-4341

The Board of Supervisors has not indicated any plan or desire to make any significant changes in the management or oversight of RAIN. The recently adopted FY2001-2002 County budget left RAIN under the management of the Department of Animal Regulation and recent discussions with the Chief Executive Officer have re-affirmed that until all construction is completed and the move accomplished, no further discussion of change in management will be necessary. All parties agree that the ultimate goal is to form a public-private partnership with a non-profit organization for the long-term operation and success of the program.

R-3: The current management team should recruit a strong and capable Board of Directors that will enable the program to grow within a stable financial environment.

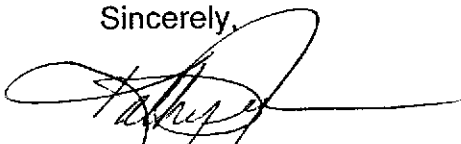
Attorneys from the office of County Counsel and management staff from RAIN and the Chief Executive Office are working together to form a non-profit organization, which will be governed by an independent Board of Directors. A number of community leaders, former and current elected officials, former Grand Jury members and interested local citizens have indicated an interest and willingness to serve on the Board. It is our hope that this group will be in place by November 1, 2001. Fund raising will be the primary focus of the group initially, with program growth, stabilization, oversight and operation the ultimate goal.

R-4: The current management team should investigate use of low-income housing offset funds (those funds builders pay to compensate for lack of low-income units under development) to expand services to this population.

A special committee appointed by the Board of the Ventura County Organization of Governments is studying this idea as a potential revenue stream for a number of regional homeless service programs and services. Such usage would require legislative relief and would necessarily have to involve all of the cities and their elected officials and is best investigated and implemented at that level. RAIN management will continue to assist the committee as they study their options.

The 2000-2001 Grand Jury is to be commended for their understanding of the issues surrounding the RAIN Project and their concern and compassion for the clients that we serve. If you have any questions or require additional information please contact me at (805) 388-4341.

Sincerely,



Kathy Jenks
Director