

September 21, 2010

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VENTURA COUNTY
GRAND JURY

J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Paul Dorse
Chief Financial Officer

John K. Nicoll
Human Resources Director

County of Ventura
Board of Supervisors
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Approval of Responses to Seven 2009-2010 Ventura County Grand Jury Reports: "Getting Better of the Way to Excellence", "Illusion of Safety, Control Self-Assessment", "Indigent Representation by the Public Defender", "Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities", "Ventura County Library System", "Where Are You Sleeping Tonight?", and "Youth in Shadow".

Recommendation:

That your Board approves the responses to the seven subject Grand Jury reports pertaining to County government under your authority for submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with State statute.

Discussion:

Penal Code §933.05 requires that your Board comment on the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury pertaining to county government under your authority. The 2009-2010 Ventura County Grand Jury issued 10 individual reports, seven of which pertain to County government.

Responses from the Board of Supervisors were required to all seven reports and were prepared on your behalf by the County Executive Office. Responses from appointed officials were required for three of the seven reports and one report required a response from a commission. County government reports are addressed in this letter. These responses have been coordinated through the County Executive Office and are submitted for your approval.

For your reference, the report titles and respondents listed in the Grand Jury Report are summarized in the table below.

Getting Better on the Way to Excellence	Board of Supervisors County Executive Officer (requested, not required)
Illusion of Safety: Control Self-Assessment Auditor-Controller's response is for information only, approval not required.	Auditor-Controller (Copy of response included for information) Board of Supervisors County Executive Office
Indigent Representation by the Public Defender	Board of Supervisors Public Defender (Response from PD would be accepted but is not required. Response provided)
Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities Sheriff's response is for information only, approval not required.	Board of Supervisors Sheriff's Department (Copy of response included for information)
Ventura County Library System The VCLC is an independent entity, response is for information only, approval is not required.	Board of Supervisors Ventura County Library Commission (Copy of response included for information)
Where Are You Sleeping Tonight?	Board of Supervisors
Youth in Shadow	Board of Supervisors

The responses that pertain to County government under your control will serve as your Board's response to the subject 2009-2010 Grand Jury Reports to be filed as indicated in the above recommended action along with any additional comments your Board may wish to make.

If your Board does elect to amend responses submitted from agencies headed by appointed officials or if your Board elects to change a responses prepared on your behalf by the County Executive's office, then CEO staff, at your direction, will make such changes or additions prior to submitting the responses to the Presiding Judge.

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As you are aware, elected officials submit their Grand Jury responses directly to the Presiding Judge. Although your approval is not required for responses from elected officials, a copy of the Sheriff's response to the report "Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities" and from the Auditor-Controller to the report "Illusion of Safety: Control Self-Assessment" are included here for your information.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact J. Matthew Carroll at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.



MARTY ROBINSON
County Executive Officer

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Response to "Getting Better on the Way to Excellence"
- Exhibit 2 – Response to "Illusion of Safety: Control Self-Assessment"
- Exhibit 3 – Response to "Indigent Representation by the Public Defender"
- Exhibit 4 – Response to "Utilization of the Ventura County Juvenile Justice Facilities"
- Exhibit 5 – Response to "Ventura County Library System"
- Exhibit 6 - Response to "Where Are You Sleeping Tonight?"
- Exhibit 7 - Response to "Youth in Shadow"

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EXHIBIT 7

FY 2009-2010 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Report Number	Report Title	Respondents
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REPORT NO. 07

Title: Youth in Shadow

Required
Respondents: Board of Supervisors (R-01 thru R-07)



Response to 2009-2010 Grand Jury Report "Youth in Shadow"

From the County Executive Office on behalf of the Board of Supervisors

REPORT FINDINGS:

Response: Concur with findings.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:

R-01 BOS and HSA should support and encourage legislation extending foster care services to the age of 21 or older by vigorously advocating passage of AB 12 by the State Senate.

Response: Implemented on an ongoing basis.

The Human Services Agency (HSA) actively supports legislation that improves services for foster and emancipated youth and extends eligibility for foster care programs from 18 to age 21. The County of Ventura is on record as supporting AB 12 and has both contacted and sent letters (see attached) to legislators requesting their support of the measure. The bill has received strong local support: Assemblymembers Julia Brownley, Audra Strickland, Cameron Smyth along with Senators Fran Pavely, George Runner and Tony Strickland are all co-authors of AB 12.

Each year, individual county departments have the opportunity to make contributions to the County of Ventura's Legislative Platform and Agenda. Several submissions for the 2010 State Platform from HSA advocate support for legislation such as AB 12, enhanced services for foster youth and additional funding and program support for the Independent Living Program. Representatives from HSA are active participants in the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), attend monthly legislative meetings in Sacramento and recently attended Senate Budget Sub-Committee hearings to testify against further funding cuts to Child Welfare Services.

R-02 BOS should continue to financially support and provide appropriate programs and assistance for older foster youth.

Response: Will continue to implement in accordance with available resources.

The Board of Supervisors will continue to consider funding appropriate programs and assistance for foster youth and older foster youth that HSA is responsible for operating.

R-03 HSA-CFS personnel should participate fully in AB 12 training programs when offered by CDSS.

Response: This recommendation will be implemented when the training is offered by CDSS.

Children and Family Services (CFS) regularly participate in training programs to enhance their knowledge and skills. Each year, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) issues guidance on how to implement new laws passed by the state legislature, which are typically issued in the form of All County Letters (ACL). As of now, the CDSS has indicated that once passed, they will form a working group to determine how best to implement AB 12. CFS staff looks forward to participating in any training associated with implementing AB 12.

R-04 Within the limitations of privacy and confidentiality laws, HSA-CFS should investigate ways to collect, store, and analyze summative data on youth who have exited foster care in the County.

Response: Will implement upon passage of AB 12 legislation.

Unfortunately, once youth have emancipated from foster care, confidentiality and privacy laws prohibit CFS from requiring the youth to report progress or outcomes to CFS. More information is available for emancipated youth who are still receiving benefits post-emancipation, such as those in the Transitional Housing Program-Plus. However, should AB 12 pass and extend benefits to youth over the age of 18, progress and outcomes for those youth will be tracked and reported, allowing caseworkers to identify specific strategies and practices that help foster youth transition to independence successfully .

R-05 HSA-CFS should complete and submit to the State, in a timely manner, any reports required by NYTD.

Response: Implemented.

CFS-HSA submits all required reports required by the State in a timely manner.

As part of the federal Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is required to develop and implement a data collection system to (1) track the independent living services States provide to youth, and (2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess State performance in operating their independent living programs. The data collection system is called the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).

States must begin collecting NYTD data on October 1, 2010 and must transmit their first semiannual data file no later than May 15, 2011. CFS-HSA will transmit data on local youth to the state within the specified time frame. CFS plans to combine this new data request into current data collection efforts. CFS management staff has participated in several conference calls on implementing NYTD and plans are in place to make necessary changes and enhance data collection practices.

R-06 HSA-CFS should reduce caseloads utilizing AB 12 funds when available by hiring more caseworkers, reorganizing resources, and/or re-evaluating priorities.

Response: Implementation is dependent upon passage of AB 12 and its provisions as well as available funding resources.

The restriction and parameters that outline the funding provisions of AB 12 have yet to be finalized. Upon notification and receipt of any funding, HSA will effectively utilize all resources to provide services under AB 12.

R-07 HSA-CFS should acknowledge that a caseload of 22:1 or higher is not necessarily ideal.

Response: Implemented, as stated below.

HSA-CFS uses a caseload of 22:1 as an internal measure but recognizes that it is not ideal. Studies such as those done by the Child Welfare League of America and the State Legislature in response to Senate Bill 2030 make a strong justification for reducing child welfare social worker caseloads.

In 1998, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed SB 2030 (Costa), directing the Department of Social Services (CDSS) to commission a study of workload standards in child welfare. The legislation represented a response to growing concerns over increasing workloads in child welfare, thereby overburdening social workers and threatening the ability of county child welfare agencies to meet its federal and state mandates in serving children and families impacted by abuse and neglect. The resulting study findings confirmed that existing child welfare budgeting standards, based on 1984 workload considerations, were outdated and inadequate.

The SB 2030 Child Welfare Workload Study then established minimum and optimal caseload standards and compared these to baseline standards in place at that time. Subsequent legislation required the development of a plan to implement the findings of the SB 2030 Workload Study. This plan was released June 2002; however, budget constraints have since prevented the state from allocating sufficient funding to reduce child welfare social worker caseloads, even to the minimum levels recommended.

HSA-CFS would need as many as 40 additional child welfare social worker positions to meet the optimal standards of SB 2030. While progress at reducing caseloads has stalled due to the current State budget allocations, HSA-CFS continues to advocate for sufficient resources to provide services to children, youth and families.