

county of ventura

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE
MICHAEL POWERS
County Executive Officer

J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Catherine Rodriguez
County Chief Financial Officer

Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive Officer/
Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

August 7, 2017

Sent Via Email

Honorable Patricia M. Murphy
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Superior Court of California, Ventura County
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Subject: Board of Supervisors' Responses to 2016-2017 Grand Jury Final Reports on Ventura County Children and Family Services and Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement

Honorable Judge Murphy:

In accordance with State requirements, responses from the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to the 2016-2017 Final Grand Jury reports referenced above are hereby submitted.

By way of this email, copies of the responses to the subject reports (Exhibits 1 and 2), Minute Order and the August 1, 2017 Board letter were provided to the Ventura County Clerk; to Superior Court Jury Services; and to the Foreperson of the 2017-18 Ventura County Grand Jury. As has been the usual practice in past years, Jury Services will provide copies of the responses to the State Archives.

For information purposes, this office supplied the Board with a copy of the response from the Ventura County Sheriff (Exhibit 2).

Should you have any questions, please call me at 654-2864; or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Attachments:
Board of Supervisors' Responses to 2016-17 Grand Jury Final Reports on:
Ventura County Children and Family Services (Exhibit 1)
Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement (Exhibit 2)
Minute Order
Board Letter dated August 1, 2017

Copies

County Executive Officer, Michael Powers
County Clerk, Mark A. Lunn
Foreperson, Andrew Ludlum, 2017-18 Ventura County Grand Jury
Superior Court Jury Services, Nan Richardson, Manager

J. Matthew Carroll
Assistant County Executive Officer

Catherine Rodriguez
County Chief Financial Officer

Shawn Atin
Assistant County Executive Officer/
Human Resources Director
Labor Relations

August 1, 2017

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

Subject: Approval of Response to 2016-2017 Ventura County Grand Jury Report (Report): Ventura County Children and Family Services from the Human Services Agency and to the Report Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement for Submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in Accordance with State Statute; and Receive and File a Copy of the Response to the Report Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement from the Ventura County Sheriff.

Recommendations:

- 1) It is recommended that your Board approve the response to the subject Grand Jury reports Ventura County Children and Family Services (Exhibit 1) and Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement (Exhibit 2) pertaining to county government under your authority for submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in accordance with State statute.
- 2) Receive and File a Copy of the response to the Grand Jury Report Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement from the Ventura County Sheriff for information only, as approval by the Board of Supervisors is not required.

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 2016-17 Ventura County Grand Jury issued a report on May 18, 2017, entitled Ventura County Children and Family Services. The Grand Jury requested a response from the Human Services Agency, which is attached as Exhibit 1. The Grand Jury issued a report on May 18, 2017, entitled Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report. The Grand Jury requested a response from the Board of Supervisors, which was prepared on your behalf by the County Executive Office for your approval and attached as Exhibit 2. The Grand Jury also required a response from the Ventura County Sheriff to the report Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report and a copy of that response is provided for information only as responses from elected officials do not require approval by the Board of Supervisors.

The response pertaining to County government under your control will serve as your Board's response to the subject 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report to be filed as indicated in the recommended action along with any additional comments your Board may wish to make.

August 1, 2017

Response to 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report

Board Approval: Ventura County Children and Family Services (Response Requested from HSA)

Board Approval: Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report (Response Required by BOS)

Receive and File: Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report (Response from VC Sheriff for Information Only)

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If your Board elects to amend the response prepared on your behalf to the subject report before you for approval, then CEO staff, at your direction, will make such changes or additions prior to submitting the response to the Presiding Judge.

A response to the subject report was also required from the Ventura County Sheriff. As an elected official, the Sheriff responds directly to the Presiding Judge. Although the official's response does not require your Board's approval, it is provided for informational purposes only.

This letter was reviewed by County Executive Office, Auditor-Controller's Office and County Counsel. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Matt Carroll at 654-2864 or Kathleen Van Norman at 654-2566.

Sincerely,



Michael Powers

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Attachments:

Exhibit 1 - Ventura County Family and Children Services (HSA Response for Approval)

Exhibit 2 - Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report (BOS Response for Approval)

Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement Report (Sheriff's Response for Information)



**BOARD MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF VENTURA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**SUPERVISORS STEVE BENNETT, LINDA PARKS,
KELLY LONG, PETER C. FOY AND JOHN C. ZARAGOZA
August 1, 2017 at 8:30 a.m.**

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE - Approval of Response to 2016-17 Ventura County Grand Jury Report (Report) Entitled: Ventura County Children and Family Services from the Human Services Agency and to the Report Entitled: Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement for Submittal to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court; and Receive and File a Copy of the Response to the Report Entitled: Annual Detention Facilities and Law Enforcement from the Ventura County Sheriff.

- (X) All Board members are present, except Supervisor Long is absent.
- (X) The following person is heard: Matt Carroll.
- (X) The following documents are submitted to the Board for consideration:
 - (X) Revised Board Letter
 - (X) Revised Exhibits 1-2
 - (X) Sheriff's Response
- (X) Upon motion of Supervisor Bennett, seconded by Supervisor Parks, and duly carried, the Board hereby approves recommendations as stated in the Board letter.

I hereby certify that the annexed instrument is a true and correct copy of the document which is on file in this office.

Dated: 8/4/17 MICHAEL POWERS
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura, State of California

By: Lon Harris
Deputy Clerk of the Board

By: Brian Palmer
Chief Deputy Clerk of the Board



EXHIBIT 1

FY 2016-2017 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

**RESPONSES TO FINDINGS (FI)/CONCLUSIONS (C) AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report Number (& Date)	Report Title	Respondents (With FI, C and R #)
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REPORT NO. 01 May 18, 2017

Title: **Ventura County Children and Family Services**

Requested
Respondent: **Human Services Agency**
(C-01 through C-09 and R-01 through R-09)

Response to Grand Jury Report Form

Report Title: Ventura County Children and Family Services

Report Date: May 18, 2017

Response by: Barry Zimmerman Title: Human Services Agency

FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

- I (we) agree with the findings/conclusions numbered: C-03, C-04
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings/conclusions numbered: C-01, C-02, C-05, C-06, C-07, C-08, C-09

(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings/conclusions that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R-01, R-05, R-09 have been implemented.
- Recommendations numbered R-02, R-03, R-04, R-06, R-07 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R-08 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 8/1/17 Signed: _____

Chair, Board of Supervisors

Number of pages attached 7



ATTEST: MICHAEL POWERS
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura, State of California

By: Don Jones
Deputy Clerk of the Board

GRAND JURY REPORT RESPONSE
Ventura County Children and Family Services

Report Title: Ventura County Children and Family Services

Report Date: May 18, 2017

Response by: Barry Zimmerman Title: Director, Human Services Agency Date: August 1, 2017

CONCLUSIONS

C-01. The caseloads of the child welfare social workers, in particular the ER social workers, are excessive and currently have no defined limit. A lower case load would allow social workers to spend more time with families. This would foster the team approach essential for optimal case management. (FA-01, FA-02, FA-03, FA-04, FA-05, FA-06, FA-07, FA-08, FA-13, FA-14, FA-15, FA-16,)

RESPONSE: Disagree

Primarily due to investments in social worker staffing over the past two years, HSA monthly reports show that the Agency is managing reasonable caseloads. In 2014, the average caseload for a Child Welfare Social Worker carrying dependency cases (combination of Family Maintenance, Family Reunification and Permanency Planning cases) typically ranged from 22 to 27 cases per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). In 2014 the average number of new referrals assigned to an Emergency Response Child Welfare Social Worker ranged from 12-17 referrals per month. More recently, in December 2016, the average caseload for an Ongoing Child Welfare Social Worker ranged from 18 to 22 cases per FTE. The average number of new referrals assigned to an Emergency Response Child Welfare Social Worker in December 2016 ranged from 11 to 16 per FTE. Staff assigned to some specialty programs (such as Dependency Drug Court and Youth Services Division) carry lower caseloads, commensurate with the specialized work they perform.

C-02. Time constraints and lack of specific procedures, have resulted in the inability of social workers to communicate effectively with families. Critical information may not always be provided and therefore does not allow for the development of a partnership with families. (FA-09, FA-10, FA-11, FA- 12, FA-13, FA-16)

RESPONSE: Partially Disagree

The Human Services Agency has many effective partnerships with families and seeks ways to strengthen relationships that are lacking. The Family Team Meeting process-- a key component of California's Continuum of Care Reform—has provided a framework that encourages client feedback and allows social workers and families to strengthen communication and relationships. An important benefit of increased staffing levels and reduced case-loads is that Social Workers have more time to spend building relationships with families. Additionally, the Agency is in the process of formalizing protocols that will ensure social workers provide families with key contact information at the initial home visit.

C-03. There is no standardized protocol for social workers to follow when returning phone calls. (FA-9, FA-11, FA-16)

RESPONSE: Agree

While social workers make every attempt to return calls in a timely manner, the absence of a standardized protocol is a deficiency in the system. The Human Services Agency has assigned development of call back protocols to a program administrator who will develop a written policy.

C-04. Families are not provided a standardized written grievance procedure to follow if they are dissatisfied with how their social workers are performing case management services. (FA-10, FA-12, FA-13)

RESPONSE: Agree

The Human Services Agency agrees that there is a need to develop standardized written grievance procedure. This policy will need to be negotiated with the Court to ensure that is in line with the Court process and/or case plans.

C-05. Social workers are not given the time or the opportunity to attend scheduled weekly meetings to discuss personal and professional job-related challenges with their peers. This is essential in a stressful and demanding job. (FA-17, FA-18, FA-19)

RESPONSE: Disagree

The Human Services Agency provides a variety of meetings and groups that support social workers in addressing the challenges of working in a child welfare setting. Most meetings and support groups are available for social workers to attend on County time and include the following:

- **Unit Meetings:** Weekly unit meeting led by a supervisor which also allows for dialogue with peers around job related challenges.
- **Individual Supervision:** Social workers are provided with formal bi-weekly supervision to support social workers in their jobs as they face work-related challenges.
- **Clinical Supervision:** Individual and group clinical supervision is provided to social workers pursuing licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Clinical supervision provides social workers with opportunities to enhance their clinical skills and discuss challenging cases.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Resiliency Support Groups** are hour-long sessions led by EAP staff covering a variety of topics. Social Workers have the opportunity to discuss primary and secondary trauma issues in a safe, confidential and supportive environment.

- Peer Supporters who are trained, volunteer staff that offer assistance and support to social workers through a nonjudgmental conversation in a safe environment. The Peer Support Program is self-referred and is designed to provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis; promote trust, allow anonymity and preserve confidentiality for employees utilizing the program; provide an environment where peers may listen, assess, and whenever necessary, refer for professional assistance for employees should the need for clinical intervention arise

C-06. Some supervisors appear to have difficulty managing heavy caseloads. Social workers report some supervisors may be unavailable at critical times when a supervisor's authorization may be required. Families report supervisors may fail to return phone calls. (FA-11, FA-12, FA-20, FA-21,)

RESPONSE: Partially Disagree

The Human Services Agency is strengthening the "Supervisor of the Day" coverage plan so that there is always at least one Child Welfare Supervisor available in each major program to consult with social workers in the field if the worker is unable to reach his or her direct supervisor.

C-07. Families are not given an opportunity to provide written feedback which can be analyzed to improve case management services. (FA-22)

RESPONSE: Partially Disagree

As part of the case review process, the Human Services Agency contacts families for input. In order to gather more information, Children and Family Services is working to finalize a survey that will give parents whose children are entering the child welfare system an opportunity to provide written feedback. All feedback from families is valued and is considered in process improvement efforts.

C-08. Social workers do not have a comprehensive written list of resources and are unable to provide information on available programs to families. Dependency on electronic access in the field may not be as effective as maintaining a comprehensive list which can be easily distributed to families. (FA-23)

RESPONSE: Disagree

Given that printed lists of resources can quickly become obsolete, Ventura County became a pioneer in equipping staff with iPads, which gives both social workers and families real-time

access to current internet sites that offers updated information. Many jurisdictions have followed Ventura County's lead and are finding that using iPads in the field is a promising practice. As a result, social workers can discuss various resource information that can be quickly sent to a family's electronic devices and be readily available when needed. Should a client need printed lists, social workers can offer that option.

C-09. There are not adequate substance abuse treatment programs in the County to accommodate the families involved in the Child Welfare System. (FA-24, FA-24)

RESPONSE: Disagree

The Human Services Agency (HSA) supports access to substance abuse treatment programs. Substance abuse treatment programs fall under the oversight and operation of Ventura County's Behavioral Health Agency (VCBH) and the following response is an assessment of services from that department.

We agree that well-designed, targeted care coordination that is delivered to the qualified patients (meet medical necessity) at the right time, can improve outcomes for everyone: patients, providers, and the community. HSA and VCBH are engaged in a variety of efforts that assess and improve aligning resources to those in need. Substance abuse treatment programs include supportive, preventive, residential and non-residential, narcotic and ancillary services. There are no waiting lists for any of the treatment programs. At New Start for Moms (the perinatal drug treatment program), where the vast majority of cases are referrals from the HSA Child and Family Services, there has been no waiting list in over five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R-01. The Grand Jury recommends CFS establish a reasonable limit to the number of cases assigned to child welfare social workers, in particular the ER social workers. (C-01)

RESPONSE: Previously Implemented

Primarily due to investments in social worker staffing over the past two years, HSA monthly reports show that the Agency is managing reasonable caseloads. In 2014, the average caseload for a Child Welfare Social Worker carrying dependency cases (combination of Family Maintenance, Family Reunification and Permanency Planning cases) typically ranged from 22 to 27 cases per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). In 2014 the average number of new referrals assigned to an Emergency Response Child Welfare Social Worker ranged from 12-17 referrals per month. More recently, in December 2016, the average caseload for an Ongoing Child Welfare Social Worker ranged from 18 to 22 cases per FTE. The average number of new referrals assigned to an Emergency Response Child Welfare Social Worker in December 2016 ranged from 11 to 16 per FTE. An important benefit of increased staffing levels and reduced case-loads

is that Social Workers have more time to spend building relationships with families. Staff assigned to some specialty programs (such as Dependency Drug Court and Youth Services Division) carry lower caseloads, commensurate with the specialized work they perform.

R-02. The Grand Jury recommends, early in the process, families be provided with the contact information for the social worker's supervisor, contact information for the Custodian of Records, and the procedure to follow if there is a grievance about how the social worker is providing case management services. (C-02)

RESPONSE: Will Be Implemented in FY 2017-2018

The Human Services Agency has recently developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) flyer with information about the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI). These FAQs are mailed to families-- along with the CACI notification letters-- to individuals with substantiated allegations of child abuse. The purpose of the informational letter is to provide the individual with relevant information, including the contact information for the custodian of records. The Human Services Agency is in the process of formalizing protocols that will ensure social workers provide families with supervisor contact information at the initial home visit and leave it on their outgoing office voicemail. Additionally, the Human Services Agency is in the process of formalizing policies and procedures regarding grievances.

R-03. The Grand Jury recommends CFS establish a standardized and consistent protocol to ensure social workers and supervisors return phone calls in a timely manner. (C-03)

RESPONSE: Will Be Implemented in FY 2017-2018

While social workers make every attempt to return calls in a timely manner, the absence of a standardized protocol is a deficiency in our system. The Human Services Agency has assigned development of call back protocols to a program administrator who will develop a written policy.

R-04. The Grand Jury recommends CFS develop a simple, written form for families to document any grievances regarding the performance of case management services. All staff should be informed of the procedure and families provided with a copy. The procedure should include a protocol to follow until grievances are resolved. (C-04)

RESPONSE: Will Be Implemented in FY 2017-2018

The Human Services Agency agrees that there is a need to develop standardized written grievance procedures. This policy is in development and will need to be approved by the Court to ensure that is in line with the Court process and/or case plans.

R-05. The Grand Jury recommends CFS schedule weekly meetings for social workers to discuss the demanding and stressful aspects of their jobs and to provide mutual support. (C-05)

RESPONSE: Previously Implemented

The Human Services Agency provides a variety of weekly and bi-weekly meetings for social workers that provide support in addressing the challenges of working in a child welfare setting. These opportunities are detailed in the response to C-05.

R-06. The Grand Jury recommends CFS establish new procedures to ensure supervisors are more readily available to social workers in the field. (C-06)

RESPONSE: Will be implemented by September 1, 2017.

The Human Services Agency is strengthening the "Supervisor of the Day" coverage plan so that there is always at least one Child Welfare Supervisor available in each major program to consult with social workers in the field if the worker is unable to reach his or her direct supervisor.

R-07. The Grand Jury recommends CFS enhance opportunities for families to provide feedback on case management services, both positive and negative, once their case has been closed. Findings should be evaluated to improve future services. (C-07)

RESPONSE: Will be implemented in FY 2017-2018

As part of the case review process, CFS contacts families for input. In order to gather more information, Children and Family Services is working to finalize a survey that will give parents whose children are entering the child welfare system an opportunity to provide written feedback. The feedback from families is valued and is considered in all process improvement efforts.

R-08. The Grand Jury recommends CFS prepare and maintain a comprehensive written list of all programs and resources available to families in the child welfare system. All CFS staff in contact with clients should have copies of this list to use as a reference and to provide to families. (C-08)

RESPONSE: Requires Analysis

Given that printed lists of resources can quickly become obsolete, Ventura County became a pioneer in equipping staff with iPads, which gives both social workers and families real-time access to the most accurate information. Many jurisdictions have followed Ventura County's lead and are finding that using iPads in the field is a promising practice. As a result, social

workers can discuss various resources information that can be quickly sent to a family's electronic devices and be readily available when needed. While written materials are provided on request, the Human Services Agency will review this practice to make sure that it meets the needs of clients.

R-09. The Grand Jury recommends CFS prepare recommendations to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to fund additional substance abuse treatment programs. (C-09)

RESPONSE: Already Implemented

The Human Services Agency (HSA) supports access to substance abuse treatment programs. Expansion and funding for substance abuse treatment programs fall under the oversight and operation of Ventura County's Behavioral Health Agency (VCBH).

We agree that well-designed, targeted care coordination that is delivered to the qualified patients (meet medical necessity) at the right time, can improve outcomes for everyone: patients, providers, and the community. HSA and VCBH are engaged in a variety of efforts that assess and improve aligning resources to those in need. The funding in support of substance abuse treatment programs, in the amount of \$20.5 million for Fiscal Year 2017-18, include supportive, preventive, residential and non-residential, narcotic and ancillary services. There are no waiting lists for any of the treatment programs. At New Start for Moms (the perinatal drug treatment program), where the vast majority of cases are referrals from the HSA Child and Family Services, there has been no waiting list in over five years.

