



City of Mission Viejo

Office of the City Manager

Wendy Bucknum
Mayor

Edward Sachs
Mayor Pro Tem

Brian Goodell
Council Member

Trish Kelley
Council Member

Greg Raths
Council Member

September 7, 2022

The Honorable Erick L. Larsh
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**Subject: City of Mission Viejo Responses to Orange County Grand Jury Report:
"How is Orange County Addressing Homelessness"**

Dear Honorable Erick L. Larsh,

The 2021-22 Grand Jury of Orange County released a report titled "*How is Orange County Addressing Homelessness?*" The purpose of the report is to discuss the effectiveness of the Continuum of Care Committee (CoC) and Office of Care Coordination (OCC) in collaborating to address Orange County's homelessness through services that are provided by 37 contracts they authorize and oversee.

The report requires a written response from the City of Mission Viejo under California Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05.

Penal Code Section 933.05(a) requires the respondent to agree, disagree wholly, or disagree partially with a finding.

Penal Code Section 933.05(b) requires the respondent to respond with one of the following choices to a recommendation:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action;
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future with a timeframe for implementation;
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of analysis or study, and a timeframe [given]; or
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented [with an explanation of why].

Consequently, on behalf of the City of Mission Viejo, please accept the following responses to



the findings and recommendations requested of Mission Viejo as noted on page 18 of the report.

Finding F1: South Orange County SPA cities lack low-threshold emergency shelters resulting in more homeless encampments and individuals living on the street

Response: The City of Mission Viejo disagrees partially with Finding F1

- A. While South County SPA cities lack low-threshold emergency shelters, there is a lack of data to conclude that this has resulted in more homeless encampments and individuals living on the street. In fact, homeless numbers have decreased countywide per the 2022 homeless count.
- B. In F/Y 2021-22, Mission Viejo helped 36 individuals exit south county homelessness into permanent or temporary housing which is 138% above the city's identified homeless numbers of 26 in 2022.
- C. Mission Viejo continues to provide outreach, diversion services and housing placement resulting in less south county homelessness via contracts with Mercy House, Families Forward, South County Outreach, Family Assistance Ministries and Standup for Kids.

Finding F3: The County of Orange and cities within Orange County have been inconsistent in collaboration for support of shelters and services, which has resulted in missed opportunities to end homelessness.

Response: The City of Mission Viejo disagrees partially with Finding F3

- A. Mission Viejo has collaborated with surrounding south county cities to recommend shelter locations.
- B. Mission Viejo extends homeless outreach services via Mercy House street outreach (\$88,000/yr.) and two OCSD Homeless Outreach Officers (\$608,272/yr.)
- C. Mission Viejo spends an additional \$85,500/yr. via federal grants and city funds to contract with ten non-profit agencies providing homeless services, homeless prevention and/or support to "at risk" populations in including: Family Assistance Ministries, Families Forward, Standup for Kids, South County Outreach, Project Access, Age Well Senior Services, Crime Survivors, Laura's House, Human Options and Camino Health Center.



***Finding F4:** There are an insufficient number of rental units available to those exiting Emergency Shelters, resulting in the majority returning to homelessness when leaving the shelters.*

Response: The City of Mission Viejo disagrees partially with Finding F4

- A. Overall lack of affordable housing, not just in the homeless population sector.
- B. Insufficient/lack(of)data to support this finding.
- C. No control over individuals with mental health issues and lack of resources after leaving the shelter.

***Recommendation R1:** By July 1, 2023, the CoC and County of Orange should leverage funding to persuade South County cities to open a regional, low-threshold emergency shelter for the homeless, in addition to the Laguna Beach Friendship Shelter. (F1)*

Response: The City of Mission Viejo concurs with the County that the recommendation requires further analysis, but will be implemented in the future within a time frame established by the county.

- A. Mission Viejo acknowledges that further county analysis may lead to additional involvement with and from cities.
- B. Mission Viejo supports the County of Orange collaborating with cities with a goal to open and operate a south county regional emergency shelter.

***Recommendation R2:** By July 1, 2023, South OC SPA cities should collaborate in siting and funding a low threshold emergency shelter for the homeless, in addition to the Friendship Shelter in Laguna Beach. (F2)*

Response: The City of Mission Viejo concurs with the County that the recommendation requires further analysis, but will be implemented in the future within a time frame established by the county.

- A. Mission Viejo looks forward to continued collaboration with the county and south county cities to establish a regional emergency shelter that is operated by the county.
- B. Mission Viejo is aware that county funds homeless shelters in SPA areas 1 & 2 and requests equitable county funding for a homeless shelter in SPA area 3 (South)
- C. Mission Viejo encourages county collaboration with Be Well OC for extension of homeless services in south county.



Recommendation R4: By July 1, 2024, the County of Orange and cities should collaborate to open facilities that can house people with severe and persistent mental illness and addiction issues in a secure setting. (F2)

Response: The City of Mission Viejo concurs with the County that the recommendation requires further analysis, but will be implemented in the future within a time frame established by the county.

- A. Mission Viejo is willing to work collaboratively with the county.
- B. Mission Viejo encourages county collaboration with Be Well OC for extension of mental health and homeless services in south county identified in the Orange County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA.)
- C. Mission Viejo encourages discussion between the state and the county and is willing to recognize and assist with approval of zoning needs.

Recommendation R5: By July 1, 2023, the County of Orange, cities and CoC should collaborate to encourage the development of housing affordable to individuals exiting the emergency shelters in Orange County. (F3, F4, F5)

Response: The City of Mission Viejo concurs with the County that the recommendation has been implemented as part of the housing element adopted by Mission Viejo.

- A. Mission Viejo continues to be open to collaboration with the county, cities and COC to encourage development of housing affordable to individuals exiting the emergency shelters in Orange County.
- B. Mission Viejo has funded the purchase of five affordable apartments managed by South County Outreach, four apartments managed by Families Forward and has an additional one-two apartment(s) pending.

Recommendation R6: By December 2022, the County of Orange, cities and CoC should collaborate to increase the number of housing opportunities for Transitional Aged Youth (TAY)

Response: The City of Mission Viejo concurs with the County that the recommendation has been implemented.

- A. Mission Viejo works with Office of Care Coordination (OCC) to improve homeless service delivery for transitional age youth (TAY) by actively participating on the County's TAY Collaborative and providing input to the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP.)

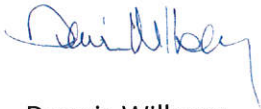


B. Mission Viejo contracts with Standup for Kids to provide outreach, support services and housing for at risk transitional aged youth ages 12- 24.

C. Mission Viejo has contributed to OCC data collection on transitional aged youth via city contractor Standup for Kids which serves at risk, homeless youth ages 12- 24.

If you have any questions about the forgoing, please contact me at 949-470-3051 or DWilberg@cityofmissionviejo.org

Sincerely,



Dennis Wilberg
City Manager

cc: Wendy Bucknum, Mayor
Edward Sachs, Mayor Pro Tem
Brian Goodell, Council Member
Trish Kelley, Council Member
Greg Raths, Council Member
William P. Curley, III, City Attorney
Mark Nix, Recreation and Community Services Director

