



County of Orange  
California

Thomas G. Mauk  
County Executive Officer

September 14, 2010

Honorable Kim G. Dunning  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Is the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Working?"

Dear Judge Dunning:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. Respondent is: Probation Department. If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Long at (714) 834-7410 in the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas G. Mauk". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Thomas G. Mauk  
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: 2009-10 Orange County Grand Jury

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**2009-2010 Grand Jury Report**  
**Is the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative Working?**  
**Probation Department**  
**Responses to Findings and Recommendations**

**Responses to Findings F.2 through F.5**

**F.2** *Lack of communication:* Many law enforcement personnel say that they first learned of the RAI process when attempting to book a juvenile in Juvenile Hall or by word of mouth from fellow officers.

*Response: Agrees with the finding.*

Although the Probation Department has done a great deal of educational outreach, including presentations, meetings, and an instructional DVD, it is apparent that not all line level police officers are familiar with the Risk Assessment Instrument (RAI) point system of the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI).

**F.3** *Method of communication:* The Probation Department's method of communicating with law enforcement agencies provides no assurance that the information is reaching the personnel whose agencies will be working directly with the RAI process. Probation personnel have told the Grand Jury that they are making a new effort to strengthen communication.

*Response: Agrees with the finding.*

Previously, meetings were held with law enforcement managers and trainers in the belief that the information would be shared with other levels within their respective departments. In February 2009, the Division Director of Juvenile Court Services accompanied the Chief Probation Officer (CPO) to the Orange County Police Chiefs and Sheriff's Association monthly meeting. At this meeting, association members were advised of the RAI and the probation department's paradigm shift related to detention and community supervision strategies. In January 2009, association members were provided with JDAI information in preparation for the February meeting. In April 2009, the department's CPO hand delivered RAI DVDs to each law enforcement agency that was to be shared with police officers and sheriff's deputies throughout the county. Most recently, in response to the Grand Jury's concerns, the probation department circulated a memo to each law enforcement agency describing the department's use of the RAI. In addition, two more RAI DVDs were distributed to each law enforcement agency. Finally, all law enforcement agencies were invited to a recent JDAI training. The training, held on August 10, 2010, was hosted by the Orange County Juvenile Court at the Lamoreaux Justice Center and was facilitated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Anaheim PD, Garden Grove PD, and Santa Ana PD participated in the training.

- F.4 **JDAI assessment:** Because the JDAI program in Orange County is still in its early stages, it is too early to assess the program's success or failure.

**Response:** *Agrees with the finding.*

The Probation Department has data from over 125 jurisdictions in 30 states and the District of Columbia, including "model sites" (i.e. Santa Cruz, CA; Cook County, IL; 5<sup>th</sup> District – Andrew County and Buchanan County, MO; 17<sup>th</sup> District – Cass County and Johnson County, MO; Bernalillo County, NM; and Multnomah County, OR) which indicates success in those locations. However, the department is still collecting data in Orange County to determine its efficacy here.

- F.5 **Cost effectiveness:** Saving money for the County by vacating beds at Juvenile Hall is clearly a worthy objective, but it is not the only criterion that must be considered.

**Response:** *Agrees with the finding.*

Saving taxpayer dollars is a worthwhile goal, but was not the sole factor in the implementation of this initiative. Studies have indicated that the strongest predictor of future incarceration is prior incarcerations. The department continues to collaborate with other system stakeholders to ensure youth who can be managed within the community are not unnecessarily detained. The use of JDAI aligns with the department's desire to use data for case management decisions; to develop objective instruments to guide detention decisions; and to develop or enhance a continuum of "non-secure" detention alternatives that does not jeopardize or compromise community safety.

#### **Responses to Recommendation R.1 through R.4**

- R.1 **Lack of communication:** In order for the RAI to achieve its optimum effectiveness, the Grand Jury believes it is important that all affected law enforcement agencies have a working knowledge of RAI. Additionally, the Orange County Probation Department needs to collaborate with law enforcement.

**Response:** *The recommendation has been implemented.*

An information packet and a DVD explaining the RAI was sent to each law enforcement agency in the county. Representatives from the Orange County Sheriff Department (OCSD) and the Anaheim Police Department are members of the JDAI Workgroup.

**R.2** *Method of communication:* Orange County Probation Department must ensure that law enforcement agencies have received and understood RAI information, and the agencies have an opportunity to provide feedback to the Probation Department.

*Response: The recommendation has been implemented.*

Each law enforcement agency has designated a juvenile liaison for JDAI matters. Probation has contacted each liaison and sent updated information regarding JDAI to them. Each agency was offered training and a personal presentation on JDAI via the liaison. Additional DVDs on the RAI were sent to each agency via the liaison. A mailing list has been created to allow two-way communication between Probation and each law enforcement agency. A JDAI training session was held on August 10, 2010. Santa Ana PD sent one representative, Anaheim PD sent one representative and Garden Grove sent six representatives.

**R.3** *JDAI assessment:* Orange County Probation should continue monitoring recidivism rates to determine whether the JDAI program is an appropriate approach to intervening with juveniles who enter the juvenile justice system, and is in fact reducing recidivism rates.

*Response: The recommendation has been implemented.*

Recidivism rates are being monitored quarterly and reported annually in the Probation Department business plan.

**R.4** *Cost effectiveness:* The Grand Jury cautions the Probation Department that success should not be measured just by empty beds in Juvenile Hall and related cost savings, but in reducing recidivism rates.

*Response: The recommendation has been implemented.*

Recidivism rates are being monitored quarterly and reported annually in the Probation Department business plan.