



County of Orange  
California

**Thomas G. Mauk**  
County Executive Officer

September 26, 2006

Jon Michael Penn  
FY 05/06 Grand Jury  
Superior Court of California  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Response to Orange County Grand Jury Report, "The  
Homeless Crisis in Orange County"

Dear Mr. Penn:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 993, enclosed please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Stanberry at (714) 834-3727 in the County Executive Office who will either assist you or direct you to the appropriate individual.

Very truly yours,

Thomas G. Mauk  
County Executive Officer

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**2005-06 Grand Jury Report  
 “The Homeless Crisis in Orange County”  
 Response to Findings and Recommendations**

**Response to Findings**

**6.1 Low priority for the homeless:** The homeless problem does not appear to be a priority with the Board of Supervisors (BOS) as indicated by the fact that only \$143,000 has been allocated from the FY 2005-2006 general fund for the homeless and that is solely for management salaries. The County only allocates minimal funds from the general budget to support a two-person homeless unit that also is responsible for seniors.

*Response: Disagrees partially with the finding.*

In November 2005, the Board of Supervisors released the Strategic Financial Plan. In this document, 10 Strategic Priorities are listed indicating the Board’s selected focus for future years. Section VIII, Strategic Priorities, Item 7b details the Board’s commitment to addressing homelessness by listing affordable housing as a strategic priority in Orange County. Affordable housing and homelessness are inextricably linked. Therefore, homelessness is a priority of the Board of Supervisors. To that end, Housing and Community Services (HCS) has been charged with the responsibility of providing Section 8 Rental Housing Assistance as well as the development of affordable housing in unincorporated areas and contract cities throughout Orange County. Each year, HCS spends approximately \$95 million in federal, state, and local funds on affordable housing programs and projects that benefit low and extremely low income residents including the homeless.

The Board of Supervisors has designated HCS as the lead agency responsible for coordinating and preparing the County’s annual Super Notice of Funding Available (SuperNOFA) Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Application. HCS completes this application in partnership with the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Commission, Leadership Cabinet, 211 OC, OC Partnership, multiple county agencies, Orange County cities, and hundreds of other public and private stakeholders. Since 1996, HCS and its partners have secured nearly \$75 million in federal Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funds. These monies are matched and/or leveraged with millions of dollars in private sector funds.

In addition to the HCS Homeless Prevention general fund budget of \$143,000 per year, the Board of Supervisors allocates additional funding to address homelessness. A breakdown of County General Funds allocated to homeless programs is as follows:

| <b>FISCAL YEAR</b>      | <b>2004-2005</b> | <b>2005-2006</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Probation               | \$240,000        | \$586,904        |
| Social Services Agency  | \$254,634        | \$239,610        |
| HCS Homeless Prevention | \$141,643        | \$141,643        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>\$636,277</b> | <b>\$968,157</b> |



The Board of Supervisors authorizes the use of millions of federal, state, and local dollars to assist the homeless. County agencies such as HCS, Social Services Agency (SSA), Health Care Agency (HCA), Probation, and others administer funding streams such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Housing Opportunities for Persons With Aids (HOPWA), Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), SECTION 8, and other funding sources that directly benefit the homeless or those at-risk of homelessness. For example, in FY 2004/05 and FY 2005/06, \$75,556,510 and \$69,582,861 in funds were allocated through multiple county agencies to serve the homeless. These funds paid for needed outreach services, mental health intervention, shelter, housing, food stamps, health care, transportation, specialized services to homeless clients with HIV/AIDS, job development, and a multitude of other supportive services.

- 6.2 **Responses by BOS in past grand jury reports:** Since 1989, three grand juries have made recommendations to the BOS to address the homeless problem. Despite previous efforts by the BOS, including responses to these reports, the homeless population has dramatically increased over that same time period.

***Response: Disagrees wholly with the finding.***

Orange County's population has grown 26.8% since 1990 as the Grand Jury Report indicates; however, the 600% growth in the homeless number is questionable since a regional system for gathering annual statistics on the homeless did not exist until 1998. In 1998, the Board of Supervisors directed HCS to develop a public/private data gathering system. Through 211 OC and a multitude of public and private partners, the county surveys agencies assisting the homeless to capture homeless persons and families at every known location where homeless access the system of care.

Research data presented at the State of California Policy Academy, Drafting California's Ten Year Chronic Homelessness Action Plan (June 2006)<sup>1</sup> reports the estimated number of homeless in the U.S.A. at 1.1% of the total population. The application of the national calculation to Orange County's population of approximately 3.2 million yields an estimated 35,200 homeless within the county. The 2005/06 Needs Assessment conducted by 211 OC, utilizing administrative records, reported the total number of homeless episodes in one year in Orange County at 34,898, just below the 1.1% estimation.

The national standard as applied in communities throughout the nation indicates that the entire U.S.A has experienced an increase in homelessness. Drawing conclusions from the number of homeless identified in Orange County and the fact that Orange County is a major urban area in the U.S.A seems to indicate that the number of homeless

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<sup>1</sup>Home Base Center for Common Concern, California State Policy Academy, (n.d.). Drafting California's Ten Year Chronic Homelessness Action Plan. Recent Data on Homelessness in California. [WWW page], <http://www.homebaseccc.org/extras/CATenYearPlan/RecentData.pdf>

in Orange County has not dramatically increased more than any other region across the U.S.A.

**6.3 Lack of distributed services for the homeless:** The vast majority of county services are centralized in Santa Ana.

*Response: Disagrees partially with the finding.*

Fifty-two percent of the mentally ill homeless reside in the central Orange County cities of Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Garden Grove while 12% reside in South Orange County cities. HCA's 2006 Behavioral Health Homeless Clients in Orange County Statistical Report indicates that the number of mentally ill homeless clients in Orange County is 5,861. From that number, 974 (16.6%) reside in Anaheim and 1,093 (18.7%) reside in Santa Ana. Garden Grove's mentally ill homeless population is 951 (16.2%). Given the locations of the most vulnerable homeless, positioning homeless services in locations accessible to that population is appropriate.

While a number of county services are offered in Santa Ana, many services are spread throughout the entire Orange County region. The Health Care Agency (HCA) provides financial support for 19 community clinics throughout Orange County including a mobile clinic. These clinics offer free and low cost medical care/treatment to the homeless. Four of the clinics (21%) are located in Santa Ana. SSA has offices in 20 locations throughout Orange County where homeless can sign up for needed resources. Seven of the offices (35%) are located in Santa Ana; however, some locations provide services to specific populations such as CalWORKs families or seniors. AB2034 and four MHSA Full Service Partnerships provide homeless outreach throughout the County. In addition, 2 of 3 new Full Service Partnerships-Prop 63 (FSPs) are located outside of Santa Ana. There are 16 Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS) County and contracted clinics (4 are in Santa Ana). Finally, HCA provided the following alcohol and drug abuse outpatient clinic services that serve the homeless:

- 17 Alcohol and Drug Abstinence Service (ADAS) clinics (3 in Santa Ana) (18%)
- 4 clinics that serve all areas
- 14 agencies providing prevention contracted services (4 in Santa Ana) (29%)
- 3 agencies providing specialized services i.e. Mariposa Women's Center (3 in Santa Ana) (100%)
- 18 residential treatment locations (6 in Santa Ana) (33%)
- 4 detoxification centers (0 in Santa Ana) (0%)

Annually, HCS coordinates an average of \$15 million in federal, state, and local resources that directly benefit the homeless. These funds are distributed to public and private agencies throughout the entire region of Orange County. Virtually all of the agencies receiving these funds provide homeless services on a regional basis.



## **Response to Recommendations**

- 7.1 **Make the homeless problem a higher priority:** The BOS should reconsider the current priority level for homeless issues. To effectively support programs, provider shelters, and low cost housing for the homeless, the BOS should consider allocating sufficient funds from the general budget and coordinating efforts with private, state, and federal organizations. (See findings 6.1 and 6.2)

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

In FY 06/07, the Board of Supervisors increased its general funds allocation to HCS administered homeless programs almost sevenfold (to over \$1 million). Although additional funds are always helpful, this is a significant increase.

In December 2005, the Board of Supervisors approved the Mental Health Services Act Plan for Orange County. As part of this three-year plan, HCA has allocated \$9.4 million to develop transitional and long-term housing for homeless mentally ill as well as \$25 million in direct services that will benefit homeless mentally ill residents in Orange County. These direct services include outreach and engagement activities, full service partnerships programs, crisis residential services and supported employment opportunities.

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, county agencies currently coordinate with federal, state, and private organizations to leverage general fund investments for homeless programs. Accordingly, county agencies allocated \$75,556,510 in FY 2004/05 and \$69,582,861 in FY 2005/06 to serve the homeless.

- 7.2 **Create a high level leader over the homeless issue:** The BOS should consider funding and directing the County Executive Officer (CEO) to appoint a high level leader with support staff. The leader would report to the CEO and work with county agencies and cities to:

- Coordinate homeless programs to maximize their efforts
- Secure new county and other funds for homeless persons
- Monitor all fund expenditures to provide better service for the homeless (See findings 6.1 and 6.2)

***Response: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.***

In 1998, the Board of Supervisors created the Homeless Coordinator position in the County Executive Office (CEO). The Board created this position to centrally coordinate homeless issues, to reduce duplication of effort and maximize resources amount county agencies, as well as to create public/private partnerships to fill gaps in the

Continuum of Care System for the homeless. Because housing continues to be the main barrier to homeless self-sufficiency, in 2002, a decision was made to move this position to HCS. Additionally, the CEO hired a consultant to assist the County with homeless issues. The consultant is charged with examining other cities and counties to assess how their homeless population is handled and to provide input to the CEO to address homelessness in Orange County.

- 7.3 **Distribute services for the homeless throughout the county**: The BOS should consider providing county services for the homeless in one-stop centers at strategic locations throughout the county to provide comprehensive assistance. (See finding 6.3)

*Response: The recommendation requires further analysis.*

The CEO has hired a consultant to research local and national best practices of multi-service, private/public resource centers. An analysis of the recommendation is underway and the results will be forthcoming.