



County of Orange

County Executive Office

September 12, 2023

Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: "Human Sex Trafficking in OC" Grand Jury Response

Dear Judge Hernandez:

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. The respondents are the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive Office.

If you have any questions, please contact Liz Guillen-Merchant of the County Executive Office at 714-834-6836.

Sincerely,

Digitally signed by Frank Kim
DN: cn=Frank Kim, o=County of
Orange, ou=CEO,
email=frank.kim@ocgov.com,
c=US
Date: 2023.09.12 15:17:34 -07'00'

Frank Kim
County Executive Officer

Enclosures

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
Lilly Simmering, Deputy County Executive Officer
Liz Guillen-Merchant, Director, Performance Management and Policy

Responses to Findings and Recommendations
2022-23 Grand Jury Report:



Human Sex Trafficking in Orange County

SUMMARY RESPONSE STATEMENT

On June 20, 2023, the Grand Jury released a report entitled "Human Sex Trafficking in Orange County." This report directed responses to findings and recommendations to the Orange County Board of Supervisors. The responses are below:

The County of Orange, through the work of Social Services Agency (SSA) provides a wide range of supportive services and programs to adult and child victims of human trafficking, as well as the Orange County Probation Department (Probation) that provides community supervision to perpetrators of human sex trafficking along with resources and referrals for both youth and adults under supervision who are victims of human sex trafficking. Both SSA and Probation provide these services in accordance with federal, state, and local directives, and work collaboratively to share pertinent and appropriate information with community partners and support networks across the county.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

F1.

Funding to combat human sex trafficking is both inconsistent and insufficient, resulting in less participation in the OCHTTF by law enforcement agencies.

Response: **Disagrees Partially with the finding**

While the County provides consistent funding to support department participation in the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force (OCHTTF), neither SSA nor Probation receive specific human sex trafficking funding. SSA utilizes current social services funding to support victims of human sex trafficking and when eligible provides victims with Medi-Cal for health care and physical wellness, CalFresh for food and nutrition access, and CalWORKS ranging from financial support to employment and education services. Thus, while funding that contributes to combatting human sex trafficking is utilized, it is not consistently allocated and is based on participants' eligibility. The County acknowledges that lack of sufficient and consistent funding may affect local law enforcement agencies' ability to allocate resources and participation in the OCHTTF.

F2.

Limited budgets, training, and hiring challenges constrain local law enforcement agencies' ability to devote significant resources toward combating human sex trafficking.

Response: Agrees with the finding

The County acknowledges the limitations identified in the finding may contribute to local law enforcement agencies' ability to devote additional resources toward combating human sex trafficking. Although, both Probation and SSA can encounter human sex trafficking crimes in providing community supervision and social services, their role is not the same as local law enforcement in investigating, arresting, and seeking a District Attorney filing on these types of cases.

F3.

The victim support network is defined and well developed for underaged (minor) victims. However, long-term support for adults is voluntary and there is no actionable follow-up for adult victims of human sex trafficking.

Response: Disagrees Partially with the finding

Self-determination is a key principle for services provided to adults and SSA can provide a variety of services to adult victims of human sex trafficking who accept them. Aside from programs provided by other agencies in the County, SSA provides key supportive services, including employment support and referrals to legal aid for trafficking victims via case management for CalWORKs and Refugee Cash Assistance clients. The Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program also provides cash assistance, food benefits, employment and social services to non-citizens who are victims of trafficking, domestic violence, or other serious crimes. Furthermore, SSA determines eligibility for the Medi-Cal health insurance program and eligible recipients can receive related medical services through their providers. Finally, through collaboration with the Orange County Juvenile Court and the Probation Department, foster youth can continue to receive supportive services beyond age 18.

F4.

Education and prevention efforts have increased awareness of human trafficking but remain insufficient to create heightened awareness within the Orange County community.

Response: Agrees with the finding**F5.**

Agencies inadequately record, track, and coordinate their data collection to effectively measure their progress toward addressing human trafficking.

Response: Disagrees Partially with the finding

Both Probation and SSA have a process to record, track, and coordinate data, however both are limited by compliance with federal and state regulations and confidentiality laws, as well as the limited scope of data collected based on clients served. Probation documents within an internal case management system for all cases that involve human trafficking meaning only clients under supervision are captured. Although SSA utilizes a system to record, track, and coordinate data for children and foster youth subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, the agency is bound to protect client confidentiality under current laws and regulations which restrict data sharing. SSA is additionally required by state and federal law to utilize various systems for client data and funding is expressly provided for those purposes only, meaning the funds cannot be leveraged for additional data coordination or tracking.

F6.

There is no centralized, coordinated, and specialized database in Orange County that could be utilized across all affiliated agencies to track repeat victimization.

Response: **Agrees with the finding**

F7.

Orange County's wealth and tourist attractions make it a magnet for human sex trafficking.

Response: **Agrees with the finding**

F8.

Sex trafficking is an underground crime. Trafficked individuals are transient and mobile, making it difficult to discover and identify victims.

Response: **Disagrees Partially with the finding**

The County acknowledges the transitory environment of sex trafficking victims makes it difficult to identify victims, however this is not indicative of all sex trafficking victims encountered in the field. For example, both Probation and SSA have encountered and thus recognize that individuals can be trafficked within their own homes or close to home and by their own family members. Regardless of the transitory status of the victims, the County agrees that it can be difficult to identify victims as they often do not see themselves as victims.

F9.

Law enforcement attitudes and methods have changed to a "victim centered trauma informed" approach, but more training is needed to identify, intervene on behalf of, and support victims.

Response: **Agrees with the finding**

F10.

Law enforcement agencies do not focus enough on the demand side of human sex trafficking, and punishment of the clients is minimal.

Response: **Disagrees with the finding**

The County focuses on the demand side of human trafficking through the collaboration of the departments and law enforcement agencies on the OCHTTF. The role of local law enforcement agencies on the OCHTTF is vital to the success of these efforts. Furthermore, the potential punishment of predators is contingent on state and federal law.

F11.**Victims and survivors need complex ongoing social service support.**

Response: **Agrees with the finding**

The County provides social support services to victims and survivors of human trafficking through the collaboration and participation of various agencies on the OCHTTF and CSEC Steering Committee. The CSEC Steering Committee is chaired by SSA Children and Family Services and the Juvenile Court Presiding Judge. The committee brings together the agencies and organizations working with children and youth affected by commercial sexual exploitation to work in finding better solutions to mitigate risk and address the challenges that youth and caregivers face. Probation works with identified sex trafficking victims in providing treatment resources/referrals. Probation also provides supervision of individuals placed on probation, monitoring court ordered terms and conditions.

The County recognizes the importance of providing comprehensive assistance to address the unique needs of these individuals and help them in their path to recovery. Some key social services available in Orange County for victims and survivors of human trafficking that are offered by SSA include three primary areas: (1) Safety-Net services helping families obtain Medi-Cal for health care and physical wellness, CalFresh for food and nutrition access (2) Education and Job Training: access to educational opportunities and job training programs is crucial for survivors to gain skills, secure employment, and achieve financial independence and offers resources for victims to pursue education, vocational training, and job placement assistance and (3) Financial Support: CalWORKS grants offer financial stability for victims to rebuild their lives. Victims may also receive aid in securing housing, transportation, and childcare.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

R2.

By June 30, 2024, the County Social Services Agency and Waymakers should develop a more robust victim assistance database to track victims to measure effectiveness toward reducing recidivism and re-victimization. (F3, F5, F6, F8, F11)

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

Waymakers tracks and measures data through CalOES Human Trafficking Victim Assistance (HV) Program funding which is aimed to measure effectiveness of the program. The District Attorney has the responsibility and relationship with Waymakers to best address reduction and re-victimization efforts utilizing the data tracked in CalOES.

R3.

By June 30, 2024, the Orange County Social Services Agency should identify and implement additional long-term victim support programs with financial support for adults in order to enhance opportunities to remove sex trafficking adult victims from the street. (F2, F3, F5, F7, F8, F11)

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

SSA partners with Waymakers, a Full-Service Partnership and Advocate Team to support youth who are victims of child sex trafficking. Waymakers participates in the CSEC Steering Committee and administers the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force website. The partnership between SSA and Waymakers focuses on conducting community and school leadership training and hosts the Human Trafficking Awareness Event held annually. In addition, Waymakers participates in 'The Cool Aunt' Orange County website to access the online prevention program to be utilized with our mutual clients and caregivers.

R4.

By June 30, 2024, the City of Anaheim and the County of Orange should develop and database dedicated to Human Trafficking that specifically tracks Sex Trafficking networks and victims. (F1, F2, F5, F6, F10)

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

The County does not have the ability to create a database that specifically tracks Sex Trafficking networks and victims due to confidentiality laws that restrict the disclosure of sensitive information about victims, including their identities, personal details, and involvement in trafficking cases. This limitation makes it challenging for agencies to gather comprehensive data on victim demographics, experiences, and patterns of trafficking. Additionally, given the transient nature of the networks and reluctance to self-identify as a victim any such development would require the inclusion and collaboration with not just the City of Anaheim, but all cities in the county. Per the Orange County Sheriff Department's response to this recommendation, Orange County law enforcement agencies already use a several databases that can gather information on suspects who have committed human trafficking and other offenses. These databases offer a wide range of information, including criminal history, arrests, field interviews, crime reports, associates, vehicle information, residences, employment, properties, social media, and more.

R6.

By June 30, 2024, the County of Orange should fully fund Education and Prevention Programs to address Human Sex Trafficking. (F1, F2, F4, F6, F7, F8, F9, F11)

Response: **The recommendation has been implemented**

For both Probation and SSA the recommendation has been implemented. Both agencies provide programming specific to human sex trafficking to youth detained in local juvenile facilities or Informational pamphlets are also available at Probation area offices.

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MINUTE ORDER
September 12, 2023

Submitting Agency/Department: County Executive Office

Approve proposed response to FY 2022-23 Grand Jury Report "Human Sex Trafficking in OC." - All Districts

The following is action taken by the Board of Supervisors:

APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED OTHER

Unanimous (1) DO: Y (2) SARMIENTO: Y (3) WAGNER: Y (4) CHAFFEE: Y (5) FOLEY: Y

Vote Key: Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain; X=Excused; B.O.=Board Order

Documents accompanying this matter:

- Resolution(s)
- Ordinances(s)
- Contract(s)

Item No. 30

Special Notes:

Copies sent to:

*CEO – Liz Guillen-Merchant
Superior Court
Grand Jury*

9/15/23



I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Minute Order adopted by the Board of Supervisors, Orange County, State of California.
Robin Stieler, Clerk of the Board

By: _____

Deputy



AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item

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ASR Control 23-000759

23F5

RECEIVED CLERK OF THE BOARD

AUG 28 2023

MEETING DATE: 09/12/23
LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION: Board of Supervisors
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S): All Districts
SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: County Executive Office (Approved)
DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S): Liz Guillen-Merchant (714) 834-6836
Lilly Simmering (714) 834-6234

SUBJECT: "Human Sex Trafficking in OC" Grand Jury Response

Table with 3 columns: CEO CONCUR (Concur), COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW (No Legal Objection), CLERK OF THE BOARD (Discussion, 3 Votes Board Majority)

Budgeted: N/A Current Year Cost: N/A Annual Cost: N/A
Staffing Impact: No # of Positions: Sole Source: N/A
Current Fiscal Year Revenue: N/A
Funding Source: N/A County Audit in last 3 years: No
Levine Act Review Completed: N/A
Prior Board Action: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve proposed response to FY 2022-23 Grand Jury Report entitled "Human Sex Trafficking in OC."
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to forward this Agenda Staff Report with attachments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court and the FY 2022-23 Grand Jury no later than September 20, 2023.

SUMMARY:

Approval of proposed response to FY 2022-23 Grand Jury Report entitled "Human Sex Trafficking in OC" will fulfill the County's required response to the Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On June 20, 2023, the Orange County Grand Jury released a report entitled "Human Sex Trafficking in OC." The report directed responses to findings and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. Attachment B is the County's proposed response to the Grand Jury.