



September 14, 2023

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

Subject: 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report "Human Sex
Trafficking in OC" City of Irvine and Irvine Police Department Response

To the Honorable Maria Hernandez:

In accordance with California Penal Code section 933.05, the Orange County Grand Jury has requested the City of Irvine and the Irvine Police Department respond to findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury report entitled: "Human Sex Trafficking in OC."

FINDINGS:

F1

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

Response to F1

The City of Irvine disagrees in part with this finding. While funding is a consideration related to participation in the OCHTTF, some agencies did not participate in the task force even when the positions were grant funded. The challenge extends beyond funding to included staffing shortages.

F2

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

Response to F2

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. Budgets and hiring challenges have made it difficult for all agencies to hire personnel and maintain service levels for their cities.

The Departments must be strategic in the placement of personnel in order to fulfill other critical duties and functions. Notwithstanding these challenges, the City of Irvine recognizes the critical nature of this work and has dedicated a full-time detective to the OCHTTF.

F4

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

Response to F4

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. The OCHTTF's partnership with city, County, and private entities has assisted in bringing awareness to the human trafficking crisis in the County. However, without consistent funding, the reach of training facilitated by the task force for other agencies has been lessened.

F5

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

Response to F5

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. The OCHTTF traditionally utilized grant funding to facilitate data collection. Without consistent funding, the taskforce's ability to maintain robust data collection and analysis is impacted.

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 to F6

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding; however, a non-profit or County agency would be better suited than a local law enforcement agency to manage such a database due to laws, policies, and procedures.

F7

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

Response to F7

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. Orange County is a magnet for tourism and travel with its affluence, strong business environment, world-renowned attractions, beaches, and excellent weather. The confluence of those attributes provides an environment for human trafficking.

F8

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

Response to F8

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. Human trafficking victims and suspects cross city, county, and state lines. As a result, we believe a regional approach through the OCHTTF is the best model to effectively investigate and impact human trafficking.

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 to F9

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. The Task Force continues to provide information and training to IPD personnel. Additionally, the Task Force has provided training to key hotel personnel in our City to help recognize and respond to signs of human trafficking.

F10

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

Response to F10

The City of Irvine disagrees partially with this finding. The OCHTTF conducts operations targeting the demand side of human sex trafficking by arresting sex purchasers. However, purchasing sex is a low-level offense often resulting in a citation at the time of arrest.

F11

Victims and survivors need complex ongoing social service support.

Response to F11

The City of Irvine agrees with this finding. The OCHTTF partners with advocates from Waymakers in order to address these complex survivor challenges. Nonprofit victim service organizations are well equipped to provide long term care and support for survivors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R4

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

Response to R4

This recommendation needs further analysis. Although the recommendation is directed at the City of Anaheim and the County of Orange, the City of Irvine recognizes the value of a database to track sex trafficking networks and victims. However, it is not appropriate for a local law enforcement agency to house such information. A state or national database would be better equipped to handle the transitory nature of human traffickers and their victims.

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 to R6

The City of Irvine agrees with and supports this recommendation.

The Honorable Maria Hernandez
September 14, 2023
Page 5

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Irvine Police Department
Lieutenant Bill Bingham at 949-724-7117.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Farrah Khan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Farrah" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Khan".

Farrah N. Khan
Mayor

cc: Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701