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September 14, 2023

Via E-mail and U.S. Mail

Ms. Maria Hernandez, Presiding Judge
Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Response to Grand Jury Report Entitled Human Sex Trafficking in OC

Honorable Presiding Judge Maria Hernandez:

The City of Santa Ana, (Santa Ana) with all of its departments, is a single legal entity. As such, Santa Ana's response to the grand jury is made on behalf of itself and on behalf of the Santa Ana Police Department (SAPD). Requesting separate responses by both Santa Ana and SAPD is inappropriate and inefficient since the Santa Ana City Council, as the elected leadership of Santa Ana, is responsible for any and all actions and policies taken by Santa Ana entities. It is the only body authorized to act or speak on behalf of any portion of Santa Ana. Given that separate responses would require City Council approval for each one, and given that the City Council is authorized to speak on behalf of SAPD, a consolidated response is both efficient and appropriate.

Santa Ana's responses to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations of the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report-Human Sex Trafficking in OC ("Grand Jury Report") are set forth below in accordance with the format required by Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Finding F1:

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

Santa Ana disagrees partially with this finding. While funding is a concern, staffing levels at agencies throughout the County contribute to the inconsistent and insufficient participation in the OCHTTF. Even with adequate funding, including past grants, only a few Orange County agencies participate in the task force.

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Finding F2:

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

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. Budgets, training, and hiring differ from agency to agency throughout the County. Agencies deploy their personnel according to the unique needs of their respective agencies. Notwithstanding the budget, training, and hiring challenges faced by the Santa Ana Police Department, Santa Ana recognizes the human trafficking crisis in Orange County, and to that end, Santa Ana has dedicated a full-time detective to the task force.

Finding F4:

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

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. The OCHTTF's partnership with Santa Ana, the County, and private entities has assisted in bringing awareness to the human trafficking crisis in the County. The task force has traveled up and down the state providing training on the issue. Despite losing grant funding, Santa Ana has committed to providing personnel to the task force.

Finding F5:

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

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. While grant funding traditionally supported efforts to record, track, and coordinate data collection effectively, these efforts have become limited without the grant. Nevertheless, Santa Ana is committed to furthering these critical areas of data collection to combat human trafficking through our partnership with the task force and seeking out the best tools to enhance human trafficking prevention and education.

Finding F6:

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

Santa Ana agrees with this finding; however, a law enforcement agency cannot develop such victim databases due to laws, policies, and procedures. A non-profit agency/entity or a County agency would be better suited to manage such a database.

Finding F7:

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

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. Orange County is a magnet for tourism with its wealth, world-renowned attractions, beaches, and excellent weather. The County also attracts a criminal element, including human trafficking. Santa Ana recognizes this criminal element's negative impact and has dedicated personnel to the OCHTTF, led by the Anaheim Police Department.

Finding F8:

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

The City of Santa Ana agrees with this finding. Human traffickers and their victims are transitory and routinely traverse from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, crossing county and state lines. As a member of the OCHTTF, Santa Ana understands the importance of collaboration with these other jurisdictions.

Finding 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.

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. Our personnel within the OCHTTF and the Department receive continual information and training regarding human trafficking.

Finding F10:

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

Santa Ana disagrees partially with this finding. Santa Ana and the OCHTTF conduct operations to address the demand side of human trafficking by arresting sex purchases; however, sex purchases receive only a citation and rarely spend any time incarcerated for their crimes.

Finding F11:

Victims and survivors need complex ongoing social service support.

Santa Ana agrees with this finding. Santa Ana has dedicated personnel to the OCHTTF, which partners with various entities, such as Waymakers, who assist in addressing survivor concerns. These private entities are better equipped to help survivors long-term with their needs.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 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)

Although the recommendation is explicitly directed at the City of Anaheim and the County of Orange, Santa Ana recognizes the need for a victim database; 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. As such, this recommendation requires further analysis by the City of Anaheim and the County of Orange, all of which should occur within the prescribed time frame.

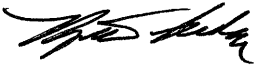
Recommendation R6:

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)

Although the recommendation is explicitly directed at the County of Orange, Santa Ana agrees with and supports the recommendation, and believes it will be implemented in the future. The timeframe for implementation to be determined by the City of Anaheim and County of Orange.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (714) 647-5200.

Sincerely,



Kristine Ridge
City Manager

Attachments: City of Santa Ana Staff Report to City Council dated August 29, 2023



City of Santa Ana
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
Staff Report
August 29, 2023

TOPIC: Grand Jury Report: Orange County Human Sex Trafficking

AGENDA TITLE

City's Response to Grand Jury Report Regarding Human Sex Trafficking in Orange County

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve City of Santa Ana's responses to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations of the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report-Human Sex Trafficking in OC pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05.

DISCUSSION

On June 13, 2023, the City of Santa Ana, and the Santa Ana Police Department separately, received the "2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report on Human Sex Trafficking in OC." The Grand Jury Report's objective is to attain an understanding of the facts regarding sex trafficking in Orange County and Orange County agencies' efforts to address the problem. The report reviews support available to victims and survivors, as well as assistance available, to learn skill sets necessary to reenter society and lead a productive life. Finally, the Report sets forth findings and recommendations in order to enhance the effective prosecution of sex traffickers in Orange County, as well as to provide information for public awareness of the complexities of sex trafficking.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

EXHIBIT(S)

1. City of Santa Ana and Santa Ana Police Department's Joint Response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations of the 2022-2023 Orange County Grand Jury Report-Human Sex Trafficking in OC

Submitted By: David Valentin, Police Chief

Approved By: Kristine Ridge, City Manager