



# CITY OF ORANGE

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF POLICE • 1107 N. BATAVIA STREET • ORANGE, CALIFORNIA 92867 • (714) 744-7300  
www.cityoforange.org FAX: (714) 744-7428

June 12, 2024

The Honorable Maria D. Hernandez  
Presiding Judge  
Orange County Superior Court  
700 Civic Center Drive West  
Santa Ana, CA 92707

**Subject: Response to the Orange County Grand Jury Report, “Law Enforcement’s Response to Mental Health Calls for Service”**

Honorable Judge Maria D. Hernandez:

Per the request of the Grand Jury and in accordance with California Penal Code § 933 and 933.05, I have prepared the following response to the above-mentioned Grand Jury Report.

The topic of mental health calls for service and law enforcement’s response is not new to the City of Orange and its Police Department. We have been at the forefront in the development of training with our *Mental Health Awareness Series* in partnership with St. Joseph Hospital and the Mental Health Association of Orange County (MHA). Our officers receive ongoing training upon graduation from the police academy in mental health awareness, through a brief training provided by the Orange County Health Care Agency and nonprofit organizations. The Police Department has developed unique ways to deal with mental health calls for service based on our particular needs and budget. Since 2021, the Police Department has dedicated six police officers and two professional staff to homeless outreach. Our experience has shown a majority of the City’s homeless population suffers from mental health issues. The two professional staff assigned to the Police Department are Homeless Outreach Specialists (HOS). HOS are not armed, and they wear “soft uniforms.” This approach has led to relationship building, follow-up case management, and a willingness on clients to partake in services such as sheltering.

The Police Department’s Homeless, Engagement, Assistance, & Resource Team (H.E.A.R.T.) works with a P.E.R.T. clinician who accompanies them every Monday and every other Thursday. The clinician serves as a valuable mental health resource for members of the homeless community and non-homeless residents. The clinician performs case management and brings knowledge about the County’s mental health and homeless related programs. H.E.A.R.T. officers attend “Meeting of the Minds” sponsored by MHA. The Police Department does not participate in Mobile Be Well. However, we helped establish intake protocol at the Be Well facility in the City of Orange. We utilize the facility and participate in ongoing training and orientation for Field Services personnel on their services.

Many of the Grand Jury's findings highlight our ongoing efforts to respond to mental health calls for service.

**Finding 1.** *Mental Health training for law enforcement officers in Orange County exceeds the State's requirements, resulting in law enforcement applying these skills to better evaluate and handle mental health calls for service.*

**Response:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

**Finding 2.** *Law enforcement agencies in Orange County have developed unique ways to deal with mental health calls in their communities based on their particular needs and budgets, enabling law enforcement to better serve their communities.*

**Response:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

**Finding 3.** *Law enforcement collaboration with County PERT clinicians and Be Well mobile response units has been an effective tool when responding to mental health calls for service.*

**Response:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

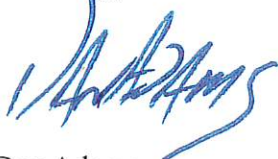
**Finding 4.** *People with mental illness respond more positively to "soft uniformed" police personnel, which can be effective in de-escalating situations.*

**Response:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

**Finding 5.** *Providing follow-up case management is not only necessary but critical for the wellbeing of people experiencing mental health issues.*

**Response:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Adams', is written over a large, faint blue circular stamp or watermark.

Dan Adams  
Chief of Police

CC: Orange County Grand Jury  
Dan Slater, Mayor  
Tom Kisela, City Manager