

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONSE TO
GRAND JURY REPORT NO. 1212:
Help for the Homeless**

FINDINGS

1. There are an inadequate number of shelter beds in the County for the homeless youth population.

Response: Respondent agrees with the finding.

2. Adding to the problem of an inadequate number of youth shelter beds, there are no youth shelters outside of West Contra Costa County, which does not serve the needs of the rest of the County.

Response: Respondent partially disagrees with the finding. There are an inadequate number of youth shelter beds, however, there is one other youth shelter, operated by Northern California Family Center, located in Martinez that serves a limited number runaway and homeless youth up to age 17.

3. Little has been done to educate the public about homelessness even though it is identified as one of the three main tasks of the County's Homeless Program.

Response: Respondent disagrees with the finding. There are a number of forums that the County Homeless Program uses to educate the public about homelessness that includes quarterly meetings of the Contra Costa Inter-jurisdictional Council on Homelessness that are open to the public, annual Project Homeless Connect events that are advertised throughout the county, a bi-annual Homeless Count that relies heavily on volunteers from the community, and bi-annual posting of the Homeless Continuum-wide Demographic and Outcomes reports on the County's public website. Additionally, the Homeless Program makes presentations (average 8 – 10 times per year) at regional conferences, health/job fairs, advisory commissions, as well as to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

4. There has been limited progress toward establishing benchmarks, measuring achievement of outcomes, and using these data to evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of programs and services.

Response: Respondent disagrees with the finding. The County Homeless Program has well established benchmarks for its programs and can measure achievement of those outcomes. And, as a program that believes in continuous quality improvement, it has been engaged over the past year in a strategic planning process to refine those benchmarks and most importantly understand the impact of its services on the consumers it serves. Additionally, the County Homeless Program has engaged in a similar effort with other non-profit service providers within the Homeless Continuum of Care to establish continuum-wide benchmarks that they can collectively work to achieve.

3. The County should consider incorporating data from the Homeless Management Information System to create a performance planning, measurement, and reporting system that can be used for internal decision-making and for communicating results and progress achieved to its stakeholders.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The County utilizes information available through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), such as the Continuum-wide Demographics and Outcomes report data, to make decisions around its internal programs as well as provide guidance to the entire homeless continuum of services delivered throughout the community. Additionally, the information available through the HMIS is used in various grant proposals that results in approximately \$6M per year in funding to support the programs and services the Homeless Program offers. The outcomes for the Homeless Program services are communicated to a variety of stakeholders – from funders to consumers, through written and verbal reports as needed.

4. The County should consider reordering its priorities in serving the homeless population in order to address the increasing number of homeless families with children.

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Reducing the number of homeless families within the community is one of many priorities outlined in our annual continuum of care submission to the Department of Housing and Development. These priorities are not ranked by importance; rather all are given equal attention. The Homeless Program, in conjunction with the Contra Costa Inter-jurisdictional Council on Homelessness, reviews its priorities on an on-going basis, continuously monitors its progress, and communicates its outcomes to the community on a regular basis.