

Grand Jury Report

RESPONSE FORM

Grand Jury Report Title : Another Look at Family and Children's Services

Report Dated : 6/27/17

Response Form Submitted By:

Heidi Dunham, Human Resources Director
County of Mendocino
501 Low Gap Road
Ukiah, Ca 95482

**Response MUST be submitted, per Penal Code §933.05, no later than:
60 days – 8/27/17**

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:
F9
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have **attached, as required**, a statement specifying any portion of the Finding that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.
F1, F3, F5, F10, F11, F13, F15

I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:

- The following Recommendation(s) have have been implemented and **attached, as required**, is a summary describing the implemented actions:

- The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, **attached, as required** is a time frame for implementation:

- The following Recommendation(s) require further analysis, and **attached as required**, is an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed: (This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)
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- The following Recommendations will NOT be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable, **attached, as required** is an explanation therefore:

R1, R4, R5

I have completed the above responses, and have attached, as required the following number of pages to this response form:

Number of Pages attached: 3

I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: www.mendocinocounty.org/grandjury. The clerk of the responding agency is required to maintain a copy of the response.

I understand that I must submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:

First Step: E-mail (word documents or scanned pdf file format) to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: grandjury@mendocinocounty.org
- The Presiding Judge: grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

Mendocino County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 939
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: Heidi Dunham

Title: Human Resources Director

Signed: 

Date: 7-20-17

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: ANOTHER LOOK AT FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report Date: June 27, 2017

Response by: Heidi Dunham, Director Mendocino County Human Resources

FINDINGS:

F1. The loss of significant numbers of experienced staff since 2011 and the inability of the County to attract trained social workers with CPS experience has resulted in the hiring of inexperienced workers with a higher than normal turnover rate and a need for on-the-job training.

Partially Disagree: The County has had a significant number of social workers leave County employment since 2011 and while we may not attract the number of trained social workers with CPS experience required to fill all vacancies, the County will only hire social workers who meet the minimum education and experience requirements of the position requested to be filled by the Department.

F3. Without more investigators and a five-day workweek, it will be impossible to meet the County's mandated response time for non-emergency ten-day investigation requests. This results in unnecessary risks for children.

Unable to Respond: The Human Resources Department (HR) is not involved in the operations of the Health and Human Services Agency, therefore cannot offer a response to this finding.

F5. Experienced workers are carrying a much higher caseload than inexperienced workers creating resentment and job dissatisfaction. This has contributed to staff leaving the Department.

Partially Disagree: While I do agree that experienced caseworkers would carry higher caseloads than inexperienced caseworkers, I do not have specific information about caseload rates and cannot state whether that has created resentment and job dissatisfaction. HR received three employee separation transactions from HHSA in 2016 listing "job dissatisfaction" as the reason for resignation.

Response to Grand Jury Report - continued

Report Title: ANOTHER LOOK AT FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report Date: June 27, 2017

Response by: Heidi Dunham, Director Mendocino County Human Resources

F9. The change from the Merit System to Civil Service Employment practices allows promotion of experienced people without an MSW degree to supervisory positions and this may attract new staff from neighboring counties.

Agree: Prior to converting to Civil Service, there was no local control of classification specifications. Any changes had to be made at the State level and would have a statewide effect. Upon conversion to Civil Service, the County was able to make changes to the classification specifications at the local level which enhanced our ability to recruit staff while still being in compliance with State requirements.

F10. The use of the term *Social Worker* as a job title in the Department is too broad. It does not properly define the education or responsibility of the various workers' assignments.

Disagree: Social Worker is a recognized industry standard job title. Education requirements and job responsibilities are well detailed in the County's Social Worker series classification specifications.

F11. The California State Waiver for staffing levels through 2018 will need to be renewed. Mendocino County is unable to maintain sufficient State mandated MSW staff levels.

Unable to Respond: Human Resources does not monitor State mandated staffing levels for HHSA and is not involved in their State reporting or requirements. Therefore, HR cannot offer a response to this finding.

F13. The disparity between Mendocino County's salary scale and adjacent counties' pay scales has made recruitment of workers with a MSW degree or years of CPS experience nearly impossible.

Partially Disagree: I agree that there is disparity between Mendocino County's salary scale and that of adjacent counties, however, the County has been successful in hiring some Social Workers with a MSW and CPS experience. Human Resources is currently reviewing the Social Worker classification series which may result in classification and salary grade adjustments.

F15. The Board of Supervisors agreed to many of the recommendations in the UC Davis report. The BOS increased salaries and awarded a 5% differential payment to Coastal

and Covelo staff. The BOS also took action to reward long-term County service with longevity pay. The Grand Jury commends these changes and hopes the BOS will continue to support those committed to County service.

Partially Disagree: I cannot confirm nor deny what recommendations the Board agreed with in the UC Davis report. During 2017 labor negotiations for some bargaining units, the Board of Supervisors approved the implementation of longevity pay, a salary increase, and a 5% Coast/Covelo assignment premium.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. The County require a commitment of continued employment for a fixed period of time for those participating in the County subsidized Master's Degree program. (F1, F5, F9, F11, F13)

The County does not subsidize Master's Degree programs for employees. Funding may be available for qualified individuals through a federal Title IVE program. In addition, the County cannot require an employee to continue employment should they decide to leave.

R4. The Board of Supervisors direct the County to offer competitive salaries to hire and retain quality Department staff. (F1-F3, F5, F11, F13, F15)

HR provides the Board of Supervisors with information regarding salary levels in surrounding counties and cities. HR cannot make changes to County labor agreements or salary levels without Board direction.

R5. The Board of Supervisors provide a side letter agreement to the SEIU contract authorizing additional pay for Emergency Response work. (F1-F3, F11, F13-F15)

County employees currently receive pay for "on-call" hours as well as compensation for hours worked when responding to emergencies. HR cannot make changes to County labor agreements or salary levels without Board direction.