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September 24, 2020

The Honorable Xapuri Villapudua, Presiding Judge  
San Joaquin County Superior Court  
180 East Weber Avenue, Suite 1306J  
Stockton, California 95202

Also via email to [grandjury@sjcourts.org](mailto:grandjury@sjcourts.org)

The San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office is in receipt of the San Joaquin County 2019-2020 Grand Jury final report entitled *Homelessness in San Joaquin County, Building on a Foundation: Collaboration and Communication, Case #0119*.

I.

**Responses to Findings**

The District Attorney's Office offers the following in response to the Findings set forth in **F1.1**, **F1.3**, and **F1.4**, in compliance with the provisions of Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05.

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***F1.1 – None of the four Designated Lead Departments has provided a plain language website that describes their efforts in addressing and limiting the impact of homelessness, leaving many San Joaquin residents with the false impression that the County (and) is doing little or nothing to address homelessness.***

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We agree with this Finding. As one of the four "Designated Lead Departments", the District Attorney's Office does not currently operate a dedicated, stand alone, website outlining its own activities, or those of other Departments, related to addressing and limiting the impacts of homelessness within San Joaquin County.

The District Attorney's Office currently provides information to the community through its own dedicated website and through social media on its Facebook page, to share efforts made by the District Attorney and her team members to address and work towards the reduction of homelessness within the San Joaquin County community. The District Attorney's Office will expand the scope of information available on its website and through social media to allow for ease of accessing information related to homelessness and available resources within the community. The District Attorney's Office is supportive of the Grand Jury's recommendation that a unified website be implemented by the Board of Supervisors through the San Joaquin County Information Systems Department (ISD).

As will be discussed further below, the District Attorney's Office supports the Grand Jury's Recommendation 1.1 for the development and implementation of a countywide unified, "easy to find", "plain language" website describing efforts made by the four "Designated Lead Departments" as well as those of other local agencies and/or organizations offering services to homeless individuals within San Joaquin County.

This unified website will allow for direct links from the District Attorney's Office website and other County Departments for ease of access by the entire San Joaquin County community to updated and consistent information on homelessness issues, activities and services.

In addition, the District Attorney's Office will work to expand the scope of information available through its website and through the use of social media to report on the activities of the three (3) designated prosecutors working in Neighborhood Deputy District Attorney (NDDA) program. While their activities have historically been included on both the District Attorney's Office website and on social media, additional information can be provided to the community. The NDDAs engage the San Joaquin County citizens through participation in community activities, close working relationships with members of the Board of Supervisors' Offices, Behavioral Health Services, and other local agencies and organizations which address homelessness issues.

The NDDAs also work collaboratively with the Stockton Police Department and other county agencies on the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program to find solutions for homeless individuals within Downtown footprint and neighboring areas in the City of Stockton. The District Attorney's Office will expand the scope of information shared on its website to include data and analysis of this successful collaboration and the direct work currently being done with homeless individuals.

The District Attorney also regularly provides updates, offers feedback, and continues to work collaboratively with other "Designated Lead Departments" to address homelessness within the San Joaquin County community. This work and involvement with the aforementioned Departments and programs, and the additional engagement outlined in Finding 1.4 below, will continue in Fiscal year 2020-2021.

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***F1.3 – Holding Homeless Court only in Stockton denies access to many individuals and is inconsistent with the intent of the Quality of Life Policy, which is to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.***

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We agree with this Finding. The District Attorney's Office is supportive of the San Joaquin County Superior Court expanding the reach of Homeless Court outside Stockton to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County. The Homeless Court is one function of the Superior Court's Collaborative Court system. It is currently held on the last Friday of the month at St. Mary's Dining Room in Stockton, which offers a location outside the traditional courtroom setting.

The San Joaquin County Superior Court currently operates circuit courts in two additional communities, the City of Manteca and the City of Lodi. The Manteca circuit court currently serves the City of Tracy community in addition to the citizens of the City of Manteca. The Tracy circuit court has been and remains closed. The District Attorney's Office will work collaboratively with the San Joaquin County Superior Court

should a decision be made to hold Homeless Court in the Manteca, Tracy and/or Lodi jurisdictions at appropriate locations outside the traditional courtroom setting similar to what occurs in Stockton. The District Attorney's Office will work collaboratively with those organizations who join in supporting the operation of Homeless Courts in those locations frequently accessed by homeless individuals.

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***F1.4 – The four Designated Lead Departments are successfully prioritizing homelessness and implementing the Quality of Life Policy to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.***

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We agree with this Finding. At this time, most communities throughout the country are facing and working hard to address homelessness in order to make this circumstance brief, rare and a one-time occurrence. The sheer magnitude and scope of the work is complex and varies substantially in each community based on the extent of homeless population itself, as well as the availability of local resources and services. Each of the "Designated Lead Departments" are prioritizing homelessness and implementing the County's Quality of Life Policy.

Representatives of the District Attorney's Office continue to participate with the activities of the San Joaquin County Continuum of Care (CoC) and its related meetings and committees. In addition, the District Attorney's Office has participated as a core member of the COVID-19 Homeless Coalition and Hotel Taskforce, creating a partnership with the Human Services Agency (HSA) with operational plans for shelter screenings, emergency COVID-19 response planning for homeless individuals, referrals to Project Roomkey, and coordinated care for guests. This participation with representatives of the four (4) "Designated Lead Departments" will continue in Fiscal year 2020-2021.

In addition to the aforementioned work of the District Attorney's Office prosecutors assigned as Neighborhood Deputy District Attorneys (NDDAs) and the work with the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, prosecutors in the District Attorney's Quality of Life (QoL) Division will continue work combatting illegal dumping, environmental concerns, arson cases, public nuisance actions and other related issues. These prosecutors work collaboratively with local and statewide agencies to address issues affecting the general public and those experiencing homelessness.

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## II.

### Response to Recommendation

The District Attorney's Office offers the following in response to the Recommendation set forth in R1.1 in compliance with provisions of Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05.

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***R1.1 – By March 1, 2021, the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors develop and publish an easy-to-find, plain language website that includes a description of efforts made to address and limit the impacts of homelessness in San Joaquin County.***

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The District Attorney's Office will not implement this Recommendation as the Recommendation is directed to the County Board of Supervisors. The District Attorney's Office does support the development and implementation of the website suggested in this Recommendation and will contribute information for the website as requested.

The recommendation from the Grand Jury supports conveying a consistent countywide message through a dedicated website for access by homeless community members, those assisting these individuals, and by members of the general public. This supports an ease of information to and for the very individuals who need access to the services outlined on the website. The recommendation to develop and implement a unified website will allow the general public to understand exactly what services are being provided and the goals that have been accomplished within the County in one specific location rather than having to access multiple websites or seek information from a variety of sources. This will assist in dissuading the false impression within the community that little or no work is being done or accomplished to address homelessness within San Joaquin County by the departments, agencies, and organizations tasked with doing so.

By way of example, the Mecklenburg County Housing and Homelessness Dashboard in Charlotte, North Carolina, created with the support of the University of North Carolina, provides an example of a plain language website, designed for public access. This website was not created by policy or program providers, and demonstrates an ease of information sharing. A coordinated framework provides clear and easy to understand information on the inflow and outflow of those individuals experiencing homelessness. Additional relevant data points are shared in the Dashboard, such as information on wages, prevailing rental rates in the jurisdiction, work being done to assist those out of homelessness status, and school district estimates of homeless children. Reporting on these same data points, and others of local interest, will be an effective method of conveying key information from the unified website to the citizens of the San Joaquin County community.

It is evident the Mecklenburg County Housing and Homelessness Dashboard has been growing in its sophistication and design over recent years. By leveraging from various examples like this one, San Joaquin County can launch the dedicated plain language website as recommended by the Grand Jury which continues the work to meet the needs of this community. For additional information, please see their website at <https://mecklenburghousingdata.org/>.

As stated above, the District Attorney's Office supports the development of this website, will link its own website as a "Dedicated Lead Department", and work with County ISD to ensure the accuracy of relevant criminal justice information contained on the website, as well as providing regular information for inclusion on the website as requested.

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Should you have any questions, or need any additional information to further explain or expand upon any of the above responses, please contact me at (209) 468-2400.

Sincerely,



TORI VERBER SALAZAR  
San Joaquin County District Attorney

cc: Ms. Trista Martinez, Staff Secretary to the Grand Jury, [grandjury@sjcourts.org](mailto:grandjury@sjcourts.org)  
Ms. Rachel DeBord, Clerk of the Board, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors