



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

Post Office Box 939062 • San Diego, California 92193-9062



William D. Gore, Sheriff

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August 1, 2016

Honorable Jeffrey B. Barton
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
County Courthouse
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Judge Barton:

Response to San Diego County Grand Jury Report: "Realignment Challenges in San Diego County Jails-Improving Long Term Incarceration" Dated June 2, 2016.

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933(c), the following is my response to the Grand Jury's Findings and Recommendations 16-52 through 16-57.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Grand Jury Finding 01:

"Exercise opportunities, facilities, and equipment at county detention facilities need significant improvement."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department partially disagrees with this finding. The Department's recreational areas and opportunities meet Title 15 standards. However, the Department does agree that exercise equipment at various facilities could be improved.

RECOMMENDATION 16- 52:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:

Improve inmates' access to physical exercise by:

- *Providing athletic-type shoes to inmates*
- *Improving exercise areas at county detention facilities, such as dip/chin bar stations and outdoor exercise fields*
- *Increasing daily time and types of exercise afforded*
- *Promoting participation by inmates in team sports*

Response:

The recommendation for athletic type shoes will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The sandals currently issued to all inmates are acceptable for the recreational activities offered within our jails.

The recommendation for improving exercise areas at detention facilities will require further analysis and may be implemented. Within our existing recreational areas, we will have each facility consider adding new exercise equipment. Recommendations will be brought before Command Staff for consideration on or before November 23rd 2016.

The recommendation for increasing daily recreation time will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. The operational needs of each facility affect the timeframes during which daily activities occur. Each facility has its own schedule to allow for the minimum weekly recreation time as required by Title 15. When able, additional time is allowed.

The recommendation for promoting participation in team sports will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Our facilities do not have space available for the addition of large recreational areas or fields to allow inmates to participate in team sports.

CONTACT VISITS

Grand Jury Finding 02:

"In the area of contact visits, the Sheriff's Department is not following evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department disagrees with the finding. Current policies and practices balance the need to provide a safe and secure environment with the importance of family visitation.

Grand Jury Finding 03:

"Funds exist that could be devoted to remodeling and staffing jail facilities to make contact visits possible."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department disagrees with this finding. The Grand Jury is referring to unappropriated funds in the Community Corrections Subaccount, which is maintained and controlled by the Public Safety Group. Those funds are not part of the Sheriff's Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 16-53:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:

Allow qualifying sentenced inmates contact visits.

Response:

The recommendation has already been implemented. Those who qualify currently have contact visits. Current policies and practices balance the need to provide a safe and secure environment with the importance of family visitation.

RECOMMENDATION 16-54:

Repurpose areas in county detention facilities for contact visits.

Response:

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. Our current visit practices meet Title 15 standards. Repurposing space within our facilities to expand contact visits is cost prohibitive.

CORRECTIONS BASED ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Grand Jury Finding 04:

"Academic education in county jails is geared to completion of high school, with almost no opportunity for post-high school coursework."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 16-55:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:

Implement computer-based courses at all jail facilities, including installing appropriate hardware and software so that long-term inmates can earn college-level credits.

Response:

The recommendation for implementing computer-based college level courses at all facilities will not be implemented because it is not reasonable. We agree college courses will be beneficial, but implementing them at every facility is not a practical start point. However, starting in August of 2016, the Department is partnering with Southwestern College. This partnership will make college level courses and credits available to inmates at our East Mesa Reentry Facility. Courses will include personal development, communication, keyboarding and reading. We hope to learn valuable lessons which can guide us in an expansion of such services, possibly to other facilities.

Grand Jury Finding 05:

"Vocational education in county jails is not geared to preparing inmates for living wage employment."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department agrees with this finding. The focus of the vocational programs offered by the Department is to prepare inmates to obtain gainful employment upon release from county jail.

RECOMMENDATION 16-56:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:

Increase vocational training programs in multiple detention facilities in order to improve the likelihood of post-release employment, focusing on skills that could provide a living wage, such as welding/metal fabrication, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), auto technician and server technology/web maintenance.

Response:

This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Grand Jury report acknowledges the lack of available space within most of our facilities for expansion. We are continually looking to improve and expand upon our current vocational offerings, mainly at our reentry facilities.

Together with the San Diego Workforce Partnership, the Sheriff's Department has opened a Job Center at the East Mesa Reentry Facility. Reentry Works San Diego (Reentry Works) is a grant program funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) initiative, which aims to provide comprehensive career center services to justice-involved individuals. Reentry Works expands upon services already offered by local governments, community corrections and workforce development agencies by uniting resources to break the cycle of recidivism, build stronger communities and promote public safety. Deputy Secretary of Labor Chris Lu toured the facility and job center in March of 2016.

Currently Assembly Bill 2012 is before the legislature. If passed, it will give the San Diego County Board of Supervisors the authority to authorize the Sheriff to enter into a jail industry program through the California Prison Industry Authority. We are currently exploring participation in the program which would include nationally recognized accredited certifications and valuable work experience to increase inmates' opportunity to succeed and become contributing members of our community. This is accomplished through a unique relationship which is a cooperative effort of private industry and the state of California benefitting businesses, victims, and the state while preparing offenders for successful integration into the community. Inmate workers chosen by employers to participate receive: job skills training, valuable work experience, improved life skills, comparable wages (minus deductions for federal state and local taxes, restitution, victim compensation, family support, savings set aside for a fresh start).

We are currently working on a plan to have strategies in place should AB2012 pass. The Department will be prepared to discuss this recommendation by November 23rd, 2016.

Grand Jury Finding 06:

"The Sheriff's Department needs a document addressing Realignment in an integrated way that would coordinate custody, reentry, longer-term sentences and other issues."

Response:

The Sheriff's Department disagrees with this finding. Assembly Bill 109 has been in effect for close to 5 years. An implementation plan was prepared by the Community Correctional Partnership (CCP) and followed by all of the criminal justice partners within the Public Safety Group.

RECOMMENDATION 16-57:

The 2015/2016 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego Sheriff's Department:

Create an AB109 Implementation Strategic Plan, with specific goals for the next three to five years, and prepare annual reports on progress toward those goals.

Response:

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. Assembly Bill 109 has been in effect for close to 5 years. An implementation plan was prepared by the CCP and followed by all of the criminal justice partners within the Public Safety Group.

In closing, I would like to thank the Grand Jury for their efforts in working with the Sheriff's Department through this investigation.

If further clarification or additional discussion is needed, please feel free to contact Lieutenant Alan Kneeshaw of the Detention Support Division at (858) 974-2023.

Sincerely,



William D. Gore, Sheriff

WDG:agk

cc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Helen Robbins-Meyer, CAO
David Hall, Director, Clerk of the Board
Melinda J. Richards, Foreman, San Diego County Grand Jury