



TUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

October 8, 2013

Honorable Thomas J. Borris, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California
County of Orange
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

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(714) 573-3306

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STANDARDS
DIVISION
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UNIT
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COMMUNICATIONS
UNIT
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RECORDS
UNIT
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INVESTIGATIONS
UNIT
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PROPERTY &
EVIDENCE
UNIT
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Honorable Thomas J. Borris:

On June 17, 2013, we received the 2012-2013 Orange County Grand Jury Report, *"To Protect and Serve: A Look at Tools to Assist Law Enforcement in Achieving Positive Outcomes with the Homeless Mentally Ill"*. The report was both informative and enlightening regarding the homeless/mental illness problem in our community today.

First, I must apologize for the tardiness of this response letter. With the retirement of Chief Scott Jordan and my recent promotion to Interim Chief, we have been in a state of transition and unfortunately, this report slipped through the cracks. As you well know, the Tustin Police Department has been diligent in its response to these requests in the past and we typically respond in a very timely fashion. I can assure you this was an anomaly and will not occur in the future.

In general terms, the Tustin Police Department approaches the homeless issue from a holistic standpoint, in that we utilize a combination of enforcement, education, and collaboration with other agencies to assist the homeless when possible and to ensure the quality of life for Tustin residents and business owners. It is a complex problem with many moving parts. As such, we have assigned our Community Impact Officer, Melissa Trahan, to be our department liaison when it comes to the homeless. She coordinates our response through the Tustin PD Neighborhood Improvement Task Force (NITF), which has been in existence since 2006. The NITF is a collaborative group of stakeholders from the City staff, outside governmental agencies, non-profit groups and members of the community that meets twice a month to tackle quality of life related issues within Tustin. In general terms, we agree that the problem with the homeless population, particularly the mentally ill, is a serious one and one in which resources need to be devoted.



Regarding Findings (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8 and F10), we agree on all accounts. The issues outlined in these findings regarding the training and resources provided within police departments towards this problem are on point. Overall, these resources are limited and are in need of further development and standardization across the board.

The first recommendation that applies to our department (R1) states:

“Require specific continuing education for all police officers and sheriff’s deputies in interacting with the mentally ill and homeless population:

- Orange County City Police Chiefs and the Sheriff-Coroner shall collaborate with the Orange County Chiefs and Sheriff’s Association to set the type, hours and frequency of this supplemental training;
 - Include Crisis Intervention Training (perhaps the Memphis Model);
 - Training is to be documented. (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F10).”

This recommendation **has been implemented** internally within the Tustin Police Department. In late 2011, on the heels of the Kelly Thomas incident, I co-created a four hour workshop with clinical psychologist, Dr. Elijah Levy, to teach first responders how to interact with and communicate with someone suffering from a mental illness, who is in crisis. This workshop was given to all first responders within this agency and now to over 1,000 first responders throughout Orange, Riverside, Los Angeles and San Diego counties. The training has been well received and is in continuous demand for more classes.

The second recommendation that applies to our department (R2) states: “All Orange County City Police Departments and the Sheriff’s Department shall be accredited with a national accreditation agency within (5) years. (F4)”

This recommendation **has been implemented**. We received national accreditation from CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) in July of 2011, and we are currently preparing for our first Re-Accreditation process in early 2014.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (714) 573-3300.

Sincerely yours,



CHARLES F. CELANO, JR.
Interim Chief of Police