



CITY OF ANAHEIM OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

August 11, 2020

The Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura
Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve"

Honorable Judge Nakamura:

As the City Manager of the City of Anaheim, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the City to the 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury Report, "Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve." The responses contained in this letter were approved by the Anaheim City Council during regular session on August 11, 2020. The City's responses address the Orange County Grand Jury Report's findings and recommendations relevant to the report and are in accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933.05 (a) and (b).

FINDINGS

F1. Peer Support Programs are effective in helping Peace Officers develop healthy coping techniques for themselves and their families.

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. Additionally, the Anaheim Police Department contracts with The Counseling Team International (TCTI) which are available 24/7/365. Clinicians work exclusively with peer support teams, first responders and their families.

F2. A written policy documenting each agency's Peer Support Program helps ensure the program's continuation after changes in staff

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding and already has a policy established.

F3. The benefits in the peer support statute, effective January 1, 2020, are important to Peace Officers and Peer Support Team members.

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. Prior to the law being enacted, the Anaheim Police Department did maintain confidentiality while acting in a Peer Support capacity. An effective Peer Support Team is based upon confidentiality, it is extremely important and cannot be compromised.

F4. It is important that Peer Support Team members receive periodic training.

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. All Peer Support team members must attend the Basic Peer Support course within one year of being assigned to the team.

The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing course is also mandatory. Peer Support members are not allowed to attend a conference or other Peer Support related training prior to the completion of both courses. Additionally, approximately ½ the team is selected to attend the annual Public Safety Peer Support Conference. The conference is for Peer Supporters and provides a myriad of training classes dealing with first responders assigned to police and fire departments. It also includes presentations from those effected by mental wellness issues, including suicide ideations, attempted suicide, employee death, all facets of trauma, critical incidents, and injuries.

F5. Allocating a specific budget line item for Peer Support Programs help ensure adequate training and continuation of the programs.

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. It is important for Peer Support members to participate in training, be available to fellow employees 24/7/365, and provide initial assistance for personnel involved in critical incidents. The budget also allows for the Peer Support team to conduct in-house bi-annual training directly for the team.

F6. Continuous communication to Peace Officers about the Peer Support Programs is important to increase awareness and use of the Peer Support Programs.

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this finding. It is critical personnel know the Peer Support team exists and the department as a whole supports personnel who are in crisis. On a yearly basis, a certified clinician from TCTI, along with a Peer Support member, attends all patrol briefings as a reminder of the services which are available to the individual employee and the employee's immediate family members. Peer Support members continually communicate with department personnel. Department personnel also have direct access to Peer Support members through an app provided through the Wellness Incentive Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that that the four law enforcement agencies without a written policy on their Peer Support Program institute a policy. (F1, F2)

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this recommendation and a policy has already been established.

R2. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that all Peer Support Programs be in compliance with the peer support statute. (F3)

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this recommendation. Currently, all Peer Support Team members have attended the Basic Peer Support training which covers the various aspects of confidentiality. Additionally, during the next scheduled Peer Support training event, additional training will be conducted in this area.

R3. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that Peer Support Team members receive periodic training and that completion of training is documented. (F4)

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this recommendation. Formal training is documented and certificates of training completion are maintained with the Training Division. The Police Department has created a new form which is utilized to document additional internal training which will also be maintained by the Training Division.

R4. The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that all law enforcement agencies allocate a specific budget line item for their Peer Support Program. (F5)

Response: The City of Anaheim agrees with this recommendation. The Peer Support Program has a budget line item number which is managed by a Lieutenant and falls under a Captain. The budget covers the contract with TCTI, personnel expenses, and training.

I would like to express my appreciation for the efforts of the Orange County Grand Jury. The City is committed to providing a safe and peaceful environment for all who live, work and play in Anaheim. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Anaheim Police Deputy Chief Rick Armendariz, at (714) 765-1601 or rarmendariz@anaheim.net.

Sincerely,



Gregory Garcia
Interim City Manager