



CITY OF ORANGE

CITY ATTORNEY

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November 10, 2020

The Honorable Kirk H. Nakamura
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, California 92701

RE: 2019-20 Grand Jury Report: “Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve”

Dear Presiding Judge Nakamura:

This letter establishes, in accordance with Section 933 and 933.05 of the California Penal Code, the response of the City of Orange to the Orange County Grand Jury 2019-2020 Report titled “Protecting Those Who Protect and Serve”. This response documents the Findings and Recommendations contained in the Grand Jury Report for the City of Orange. The Grand Jury required a response from the City of Orange for Findings: F1, F3, F4, F5, F6 and Recommendations: R2, R3, R4.

Finding 1:

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

Response:

The City of Orange agrees with the Finding (F1). The Orange Police Department has a Peer Support Program which has been in place for the last 3.5 years. The Orange Police Department currently has 13 Peer Support Team members made up of sworn and non-sworn staff.

The Orange Police Department has established procedures for sworn and non-sworn staff to utilize Dr. Heather Williams for both work related and personal psychological services. Dr. Heather Williams, at the request of the Chief of Police, can facilitate a Critical Incident Debrief of a traumatic event(s).

The City of Orange has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides all employees with the opportunity to obtain additional assistance.

Finding 3:

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 Orange agrees with the Finding (F3). The Orange Police Department has provided updated training to our Peer Support Team regarding confidentiality. The Peer Support Team understands the importance of trustworthiness and the confidential nature of their conversations.

Finding 4:

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

Response:

The City of Orange agrees with the Finding (F4). The Orange Police Department has all members of the Peer Support Team attend the Basic Peer Support course within one year of being assigned to the team. The Peer Support Team receives training from Dr. Heather Williams at their regularly scheduled meetings, these meetings are scheduled to take place three times a year.

Finding 5:

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

Response:

The City of Orange agrees with the Finding (F5). A dedicated budget line item has been established for Premier 1st Responder Psychological Services. These funds allow the Orange Police Department to utilize the services of Dr. Heather Williams and allows access to the Orange County Association of Peer Supporters (OCAPS). The Orange Police Department has utilized these funds to pay for required training classes and to provide department wide training to increase the awareness of the Peer Support Program.

Finding 6:

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 Orange agrees with the Finding (F6). The Orange Police Department's Peer Support program is a respected and growing program. The program's success is dependent on Peer Support Team members ensuring our staff understands how the program works and what resources are available. Peer Support Team members, along with Dr. Heather Williams, provide training for all members of the Department. This is done to highlight and remind our personnel of the benefits of the program. In addition, our new employees receive a Peer Support orientation during their FTO program.

Recommendation 2:

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

Response:

The Recommendation (R2) has been implemented by the City of Orange. The Orange Police Department Peer Support Program is in compliance with the Peer support statute. The Orange Police Department Peer Support and Assistance Program policy details the importance of and need for confidentiality in policy section 1005.3. The Orange Police Department has contracted with Dr. Heather Williams to ensure employees have access to available resources.

Recommendation 3:

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 Recommendation (R3) has been implemented by the City of Orange. The training completed by the Peer Support Team members is documented and maintained in the Department's Training Division.

Recommendation 4:

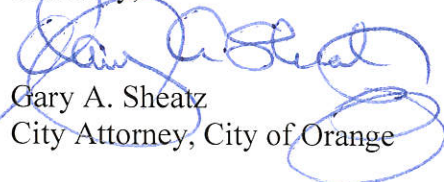
The 2019-2020 Orange County Grand Jury recommends that all law enforcement agencies allocate a specific budget line item for their Peer Support Program. (F5)

Response:

The Recommendation (R4) has been implemented by the City of Orange. The Orange Police has contracted with Dr. Heather Williams through Premier 1st Responder Psychological Services to provide Peer Support development, training, crisis response, and psychological services. The Orange Police Department has a line item in the budget for these services.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this very important issue. The City of Orange appreciates the time and effort given to this matter by the 2019-2020 Grand Jury. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience for any issues surrounding this response at (714) 744-2222 or rotto@cityoforange.org.

Sincerely,



Gary A. Sheatz
City Attorney, City of Orange

cc: Mark A. Murphy, Mayor
Rick Otto, City Manager