



County of Orange

County Executive Office

August 27, 2025

Honorable Maria D. Hernandez
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders" Grand Jury Response

Dear Judge Hernandez:

Per your request, and in accordance with Penal Code 933, please find the County of Orange response to the subject report as approved by the Board of Supervisors. The respondents are the Orange County Board of Supervisors, Orange County Community Services, and the Orange County Office on Aging.

If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Fernandez of the County Executive Office at 714-834-7219.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Aguirre".

Digitally signed by
Michelle Aguirre
Date: 2025.09.09
15:25:05 -07'00'

Michelle Aguirre
County Executive Officer

Enclosure

cc: 2024-25 Orange County Grand Jury Foreman
Jessica Witt, Chief Operating Officer
Lisa Fernandez, Assistant Chief Deputy Operating Officer
Elizabeth Guillen-Merchant, Assistant Chief Deputy Operating Officer

**Responses to Findings and Recommendations
2024-25 Grand Jury Report:**



Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders!

SUMMARY RESPONSE STATEMENT

On June 13, 2025, the Grand Jury released a report titled, "*Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders!*" This report includes findings and recommendations directed to the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the Office on Aging, a division within the Orange County Community Services Department. Below are the responses.

FINDINGS AND RESPONSES

F1. Orange County Office on Aging is not currently prepared to serve the future wave of older adults in this County.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding*

This finding is not directed to the correct agency. The Office on Aging does not solely deliver services to the County's population of older adults nor oversee and implement the preparation process for the Master Plan for Aging. The County of Orange (County) is proactively spearheading the Orange County Master Plan on Aging (OCMPA) to ensure service needs are identified and considered through the OC Cares model and the annual Strategic Financial Plan (SFP) development process. This effort is being led by the County Executive Office (CEO) as CEO has authority and oversight over the County departments delivering services to older adults, which includes more than just the Office on Aging (OoA).

F2. Based on the limited general funds allocated by the County for the Office on Aging, the well-being of older adults is not reflected as a County priority.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding*

The OoA serves as Orange County's Area Agency on Aging and receives funding to administer State programs. Twelve other County departments also receive funds to support older adults, demonstrating that the well-being of older adults is a Countywide priority, no matter the funding source.

F3. The Office on Aging does not have its own dedicated Event Coordinator to manage outreach, resulting in missed opportunities to engage and educate older adults and their caregivers about the services provided.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding*

While the County does not have an Event Coordinator position classification for use by OC Community Services (OCCS), OCCS utilizes various staff in other classifications to conduct outreach for the OoA as well as use of a dedicated Public Information Officer (PIO). The OoA also relies on a network of contracted service providers who participate in community events across Orange County.

F4. The Office on Aging does not have its own dedicated employee responsible for website design and modernization as well as for updating information and events; as a result, the Office on Aging website and mobile application (app) have outdated information and are difficult to navigate.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding*

Website design and modernization is based on Countywide policy, so not entirely within the OoA's authority to change. However, in early 2025, the Older Adults Advisory Commission (OAAC) Website Ad Hoc was formed to work with the OoA PIO to gather feedback and enhance website user experience.

F5. The Office on Aging suffers from limited resources and staffing and is therefore reactive rather than proactive to the needs of Orange County older adults.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding*

The OoA serves as Orange County's Area Agency on Aging and receives funding to administer programs on behalf of the State. While an increase in State funding could allow for enhanced services, the County values its older adults and is proactively spearheading the OCMPPA to ensure service needs are identified and considered through the OC Cares model and the annual SFP development process, which are the required processes for identifying and communicating resource needs to the Board of Supervisors.

F6. The Administrative Unit of the Orange County Community Services agency is at times slow to respond to requests from the Office on Aging, causing unnecessary delays to older adult services.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding*

Statistical data from the OCCS Administrative Unit indicates that over 95 percent of those OoA requests, for which OCCS Administrative Unit has the sole authority to resolve, are properly addressed within 24 hours, demonstrating commitment to timely support for all agency divisions, including those serving older adults.

F7. The Administrative Unit of the Orange County Community Services agency does not pursue sufficient feedback, input, or discussion with the Office on Aging and non-profit providers before implementing changes affecting the non-profit providers who are serving older adults.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding*

The OCCS Administrative Unit prioritizes open communication and regularly seeks feedback from the OoA and its contracted service providers. The OCCS Administrative Unit consistently issues notifications, provides training, and offers feedback opportunities when introducing or revising processes.

F8. The new invoicing system launched on July 1, 2024, by Orange County Community Services for the Office on Aging has caused certain non-profit providers difficulty in understanding how to implement the new system due to insufficient information and training provided, thereby causing a delay in payment for services to some non-profit providers.

Response: *Disagrees wholly with the finding*

OCCS' automated invoicing system, which received a 2025 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award, was rolled out with comprehensive training, including multiple retraining sessions and personalized technical assistance. All OCCS contracted providers have successfully transitioned to the new system, ensuring contract compliance and any questions were addressed with tailored training and ongoing technical support.

F9. It takes the Office on Aging an estimated six to nine months to fill a vacancy, due to the County hiring process. With the Office on Aging having roughly twenty employees (based on their most recent organization chart), any long-term vacancies have an outsized impact on the quality of services provided to Orange County older adults.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding*

The County hiring process follows standard public sector hiring protocols as prescribed by state and federal employment rules. The OoA collaborates closely with County Human Resource Services to focus on expediting recruitments and retaining valuable staff resources. At times, circumstances such as a lack of qualified applicants or a hiring freeze can delay hiring.

F10. The Orange County Older Adults Advisory Commission advises the Office on Aging but is frustrated at the OOA's current outreach activities, website revisions, marketing program, and the time it took to create a new brochure for the senior centers.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

While some Commission members have expressed frustration, these concerns are being addressed through implementation of the OCMPPA.

F11. The Office on Aging has to rely on the Orange County Community Services Administrative Unit as well as the Contracts Monitoring and Program Compliance Unit for decision making affecting older adult services. The inherent delays with this type of system, as well as a lack of timely collaboration between the Office on Aging and Orange County Community Services, causes unnecessary delays in decision making affecting services to older adults.

Response: *Disagrees partially with the finding*

The OCCS organizational structure is consistent with that used by other County departments and is intentionally designed to ensure accountability, regulatory compliance, and the responsible use of public funds.

F12. The human services administrators, analysts, and staff specialists at the Office on Aging provide quality oversight of the non-profit providers and are making good faith efforts to advocate for the non-profit providers in getting paid for providing their services.

Response: *Agrees with the finding.*

OoA staff, with support of the OCCS Administrative Unit and tools like the automated invoicing system, work collaboratively with non-profit providers to serve older adults in Orange County.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

R1. The Board of Supervisors should work with the Office on Aging's Agency Director to determine the staffing and financial needs of the OOA for the next decade, due to demographics projecting a sizable increase in the older adult population in the County. This determination should occur by December 31, 2025, and be reviewed annually thereafter. (F1, F2)

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

The County is proactively spearheading the OCMPPA to ensure service needs are identified and considered through the OC Cares model and the annual SFP development process.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the Office on Aging put forth more effort on outreach to older adults and their caretakers about the services and benefits available to them. This would include, but is not limited to, employing its own Event Coordinator dedicated to managing outreach to this population. The Event Coordinator should be retained by December 31, 2025. (F3)

Response: *The recommendation requires further analysis.*

While implementation of the OCMPPA will result in enhanced outreach to older adults and their caretakers, the County will determine through the implementation process the most effective and efficient way to do this.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the Office on Aging secure its own reliable and experienced employee to modernize and update the Office on Aging website and mobile application (app) by September 30, 2025, and review the effectiveness of those updates annually thereafter. (F4)

Response: *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.*

Per County policy, the OoA uses centralized Information Technology (IT) services, so will collaborate with the County's centralized IT services team to prioritize updates, enhance functionality, and evaluate digital tools to align with evolving community needs and technological advancements. Additionally, implementation of the OCMPA will result in improved/enhanced information available online and ongoing progress monitoring.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends that the Office on Aging prepare a written plan to submit to the Board of Supervisors identifying the additional staffing necessary to enable it to become proactive in the Orange County older adult community. Being proactive includes, but is not limited to, attending senior events in the County, reaching out to senior community centers to ascertain needs, and educating the target population on the services and benefits available through the Office on Aging. This shall occur by December 31, 2025, and the plan shall be reviewed annually thereafter. (F5)

Response: *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.*

The County is proactively spearheading the OCMPA to ensure service needs are identified and considered through the OC Cares model and the annual SFP development process, which are the required processes for identifying and communicating resource needs to the Board of Supervisors.

R5. The Grand Jury recommends that the Administrative Unit of the Orange County Community Services respond in a timely manner to reasonable and relevant information requests made by the Office on Aging staff. (F6)

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

The OCCS Administrative Unit will continue to respond timely to reasonable and relevant requests made by the OoA.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends that the Orange County Community Services Administrative Unit collaborate with the Office on Aging staff and non-profit providers to secure their input before implementing changes affecting non-profit providers. (F7)

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

The OCCS Administrative Unit will continue to collaborate with OoA staff and providers before implementing changes.

R7. The Grand Jury recommends that the Orange County Community Services and Office on Aging jointly collaborate with those non-profit providers having continuing problems implementing the new invoice system. The basis of the collaboration is to determine what additional training, documentation, and materials are needed to get the new invoicing system to function effectively for these non-profits and to get their outstanding invoices for services paid immediately. This collaboration shall occur within thirty days of the publication of this report/investigation of the Office on Aging. (F8)

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

All OCCS contracted providers have successfully transitioned to the new system, ensuring contract compliance. While some providers may have had implementation questions, primarily due to limited digital literacy or reliance on outdated software, the OCCS Administrative Unit addressed these issues promptly with tailored training and ongoing technical support.

R8. The Grand Jury recommends that the Office on Aging collaborate with Orange County Human Resources Services as soon as the Office on Aging is aware of any vacancy that will need to be filled. With the growing older adult population in Orange County, it is imperative that the Office on Aging be fully staffed at all times. (F9)

Response: *The recommendation has been implemented.*

The OoA will continue to collaborate with Orange County Human Resource Services as soon as the OoA is aware of any vacancy.

R9. The Grand Jury recommends that the Board of Supervisors consider providing the Orange County Older Adults Advisory Commission with more authority by requiring the Office on Aging to respond in writing within fourteen days of any requests made by the Advisory Commission. The written response should include whether, how, and when the request will be implemented. If a request is denied, the Office on Aging shall provide a written response explaining why it was denied. This recommendation is to be implemented effective as of September 30, 2025. (F10)

Response: *The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.*

Additional authority is not required in order for the OoA to timely respond to OAAC. The OoA is committed to working with Commission members to improve communications, which will be a focus during OCMPA implementation.

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

August 26, 2025

Submitting Agency/Department: County Executive Office

Approve proposed response to FY 2024-25 Grand Jury Report "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders"
- All Districts (Continued from 8/12/25, Item 53)

The following is action taken by the Board of Supervisors:

APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER ☒

APPROVED AS AMENDED TO AMEND THE RESPONSE TO FINDING 1 (F1) TO READ "THIS FINDING IS NOT DIRECTED TO THE CORRECT AGENCY. THE OFFICE ON AGING DOES NOT OVERSEE AND IMPLEMENT THE PREPARATION PROCESS FOR THE MASTER PLAN FOR AGING. THE COUNTY IS PROACTIVELY SPEARHEADING THE ORANGE COUNTY MASTER PLAN ON AGING (OCMPA) TO ENSURE SERVICE NEEDS ARE IDENTIFIED AND CONSIDERED THROUGH THE OC CARES MODEL AND THE ANNUAL SFP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS."

Unanimous ☒ (1) NGUYEN: Y (2) SARMIENTO: Y (3) WAGNER: Y (4) CHAFFEE: Y (5) FOLEY: Y

Vote Key: Y=Yes; N=No; A=Abstain; X=Excused; B.O.=Board Order

Documents accompanying this matter:

- ☐ Resolution(s)
- ☐ Ordinances(s)
- ☐ Contract(s)

Item No. 33

Special Notes:

Copies sent to:

CEO – Liz Guillen-Merchant
Superior Court
Grand Jury

9/9/25



I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Minute Order adopted by the Board of Supervisors, Orange County, State of California.
Robin Stieler, Clerk of the Board

By: Alessandra Esquivel
Deputy B3412D28E08E475...

DocuSigned by:



Agenda Item

AGENDA STAFF REPORT

ASR Control 25-000572

MEETING DATE: 08/12/25
LEGAL ENTITY TAKING ACTION: Board of Supervisors
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DISTRICT(S): All Districts
SUBMITTING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: County Executive Office (Approved)
DEPARTMENT CONTACT PERSON(S): Dylan Wright (714) 480-2788
Liz Guillen-Merchant (714) 834-6836

SUBJECT: "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders" Grand Jury Response

CEO CONCUR Concur	COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW No Legal Objection	CLERK OF THE BOARD Discussion 3 Votes Board Majority
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Budgeted: N/A **Current Year Cost:** N/A **Annual Cost:** N/A

Staffing Impact: No **# of Positions:** **Sole Source:** N/A

Current Fiscal Year Revenue: N/A

Funding Source: N/A

County Audit in last 3 years: No

Levine Act Review Completed: N/A

Prior Board Action: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Approve proposed response to FY 2024-25 Grand Jury Report entitled, "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders!"
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to forward this Agenda Staff Report with attachments to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court and the FY 2024-25 Grand Jury no later than September 11, 2025.

SUMMARY:

Approval of proposed response to FY 2024-25 Grand Jury Report entitled "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders!" will fulfill the County's required response to the Grand Jury.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On June 10, 2025, the Orange County Grand Jury released a report entitled "Orange County Should Have More Respect for Its Elders!" The report directed responses to findings and recommendations to the Orange County Office on Aging, Orange County Community Services and the Board of Supervisors. Attachment B is the County's proposed response to the Grand Jury.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

N/A

STAFFING IMPACT:

N/A

ATTACHMENT(S):

Attachment A - Grand Jury Report

Attachment B - Draft Response

Attachment C - Draft Transmittal Letter