



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SONOMA

DENISE L. GORDON
Court Executive Officer

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Deputy Court Executive Officer

GRAND JURY

AUGUST 6, 2009

OCT 29 2009

TO: RICHARD KLEIN, FOREPERSON, CIVIL GRAND JURY
FROM: DENISE GORDON, CEO, SUPERIOR COURT
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE 2008-2009 GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

RECEIVED

On June 29, 2009, the Sonoma County 2008-2009 Grand Jury submitted a report entitled "The Sonoma County Grand Jury – Achieving and Maintaining Diversity of Membership," and asked the court to respond to several of the recommendations in that report. While the Office of the Attorney General has concluded that "the Legislature has removed the local courts from being treated as county agencies for purposes of a grand jury's investigating and reporting on their fiscal and administrative operations." (76 Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen. 70, 76-77 (1993)), the Court wants to acknowledge the positive partnership and discussions between the Court, Grand Jury and other public members during outreach focus groups conducted last year and believe it is important to comment on the success and findings of these efforts. The Court will continue to work with the Grand Jury to develop ways for expanding efforts to obtain a larger pool of applicants that are representative of Sonoma County's diverse population.

R-1: That future Grand Juries and the Superior Court use the media to bring its concerns about diversity to the citizens of Sonoma County. Radio, television and print media should be used to inform citizens about the existence and scope of the Grand Jury's duties, and for the need for citizen participation. The information must be delivered in the languages of the targeted communities whenever possible.

Response: Agree. The Court continues to utilize the media to facilitate recruitment of grand jurors and to broadcast press releases to a broad network of media outlets, including those that serve diverse populations and publish in both English and Spanish, in an effort to promote public education, awareness, and interest in serving on the civil grand jury and yield greater diversity. The Court will continue its commitment and efforts to attract and recruit a pool of grand jurors that both reflects and represents the citizens of Sonoma County.

R-2: That the Grand Jury website be kept current at all times. New material should be posted within 72 hours of release.

Response: Agree. While the Court already fulfills its obligation to the Grand Jury by maintaining on its own Web site recruitment information and copies of Grand Jury reports and responses in a timely fashion, it does support and recommend that the Grand Jury secure further funding and support from the County to empower its efforts to operate its own Web site to update and post information and materials within the timeframes suggested whenever possible.

R-4: That the Court and the Grand Jury use the media to inform the public when a report is published.

Response: Agree. The Court routinely issues a press release to its media contacts when a Grand Jury report is published and makes available copies to the public via its Hall of Justice location and Web site, and will continue to do so in the future.

R-5: That the Superior Court continue to work with the Grand Jury to drive a continuous program for citizen awareness, and encourage citizen use of the Grand Jury.

Response: Partially agree. While it is beyond the purview of the Court to engage in these efforts directly, the Court supports the Grand Jury's intent and work to improve citizen awareness and encourage citizen participation. As mentioned before, the Court will, within the scope of its role, continue its efforts to support the Grand Jury by recruiting a broad and diverse group of citizens to serve on the Grand Jury.

cc: Hon. Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge
José Octavio Guillén, Court Executive Officer

Grand Jury Letterhead

(Date)

Honorable Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Superior Court
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: Requested Responses to the 2008-2009 Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Nadler:

Attached is the 2009-2010 Grand Jury's response to the 2008-2009 Grand Jury Report on "The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury—Achieving and Maintaining Diversity of Membership".

Sincerely,

Cal Kimes, Foreperson
2009-2010 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury

Cc: Jose Guillen, Court Executive Officer
County Administrator Office
County Clerk's Office

2009-2010 Sonoma County Grand Jury Responses to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2008-2009 Grand Jury

Although the 2009-2010 Grand Jury did not conduct focus groups, contacts with individuals and groups within Sonoma County indicate that the finding of last years Grand Jury are as valid today as when the focus groups were conducted.

The 2009-2010 Grand Jury therefore agrees completely with Findings F1 through F6 of the 2008-2009 Report.

We have also reviewed each of the recommendations of that Grand Jury and have the following comments:

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1 That future Grand Juries and the Superior Court use the media to bring its concerns about diversity to the citizens of Sonoma County. Radio, television and print media should be used to inform citizens about the existence and scope of the Grand Jury's duties and for the need for citizen participation. The information must be delivered in the languages of the targeted communities wherever possible.

Response: Agree. Recommendation Implemented.

Current Grand Jury is in complete agreement with this recommendation.

R2 That the Grand Jury website be kept current at all times. New material should be posted within 72 hours of release.

Response: Partial agreement. Recommendation to be Implemented whenever possible.

While the current Grand Jury agrees with this recommendation in concept, it must be realized that it simply may not be possible to meet the 72 hour time frame in all instances. However, every effort will be made to keep the website as current as administratively possible.

R3 That representatives of the Grand Jury make themselves available to speak to community organization and attend community events to inform the public regarding the function of the Grand Jury.

Response: Agree. Recommendation Implemented.

The current Grand Jury is active in this area. Jurors attended the Harvest Fair and spoke to over 100 individuals regarding the functions of the Sonoma County Grand Jury and its need for more active community participation. Jurors will attend community events as they occur.

A listing of potential speaking venues has been prepared and a letter drafted to solicit speaking engagements.

R4 That the court and the Grand Jury use the media to inform the public when a report is published.

Response: Agree. Recommendation Implemented

This has been the ongoing practice of both the court and the sitting Grand Juries. This Jury will of course continue this practice.

R5 That the Superior Court continue to work with the Grand Jury to drive a continuous program for citizen awareness and encourage citizen use of the Grand Jury.

Response: Agree. Recommendation Implemented.

Members of the 2009-2010 Grand Jury and Superior Court Administrative staff have met and pledged to continue the cooperative effort already in place.