

COUNTY OF SONOMA
TREASURER-TAX COLLECTOR
ADMINISTRATION CENTER
P.O. BOX 3879
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95402



TOM FORD
TREASURER-TAX COLLECTOR
707-565-3233
FAX # 707-565-2610
E-mail: tford@sonoma-county.org

September 4, 2003

Honorable Allan Hardcastle (7.0001)
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
600 Administration Dr., Room 107
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

SUBJECT: *Response to 2003 Grand Jury Report*

Dear Judge Hardcastle:

Please find attached the Central Collections Department's response to the 2003 Grand Jury Report concerning the Public Defender.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact this office.

Sincerely,

Tom Ford
Treasurer-Tax Collector

TF:cp

c: Honorable Mark Tansil, Former Presiding Judge
Mike Chrystal, County Administrator
Eeve Lewis, County Clerk
Paul Kelley, Chair, Board of Supervisors
Denise Gordon, Court Executive Officer

2 1374
SEP 16 2003
GRAND JURY

AT

9/5/03

SONOMA COUNTY CENTRAL COLLECTIONS

RESPONSE TO THE 2002/2003 GRAND JURY REPORT

PROFESSIONALS DEFEND SONOMA COUNTY'S INDIGENTS

I. RESPONSE TO FINDINGS:

F3 (page 57) The County Office of Collections checks on 20-25% of indigent clients' financial evaluation forms for accuracy of reported assets.

The Respondent partially agrees with this finding.

Central Collections Office checks all financial evaluations on defendants who fill out the Central Collection Financial Evaluations. The financial evaluation forms referred to in the Grand Jury's Report are obtained and retained by the Public Defender.

II. RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS:

R3 (page 7) The Public Defender and the Director of Collections should implement a process that provides a more rigorous examination of financial data using asset and credit checks to ensure those who can pay for their defense do so.

The Recommendation has been implemented.

The Director of Collections in consultation with the Public Defender has already put in place procedures to duplicate confidential financial applications of our clients and the Public Defender's Office will send copies to the Collections Department. The applications will be treated confidentially, but used to assist in collecting court ordered public defender fees. The Grand Jury should be aware that the Penal Code exempts certain clients from paying any fees and for the rest; the final decision on fees if disputed by a client, is made by the Courts.