

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Citizen Complaint Procedure

Report Date: 6/8/20

Response by: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

1. The county agrees with the findings numbered F1, and F3.
2. The county partially agrees with the findings numbered F2.
3. The county disagrees with the findings numbered _____.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation numbered _____ has been implemented.
2. Recommendation numbered R1, R2, R3 and R4 will be implemented.
3. Recommendation numbered _____ is in the process of being implemented.
4. Recommendations numbered _____ require analysis.
5. Recommendation numbered R5 will not be implemented.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: _____



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET TEAM

825 5th Street, Suite 111, Eureka, CA 95501-1153
Telephone (707) 445-7266 cao@co.humboldt.ca.us

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: AMY S. NILSEN, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2019-20 GRAND JURY REPORT "CITIZEN FEEDBACK PROCEDURE"
DATE: 8/25/2020

In the Grand Jury Report, Citizen Feedback Procedure, the Grand Jury has requested that your Board respond to Findings 1 through 3 and Recommendations 1 through 5. I am proposing the following response as detailed below.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: *The mission of the County government is to serve the public; however, few departments surveyed by the Civil Grand Jury have a written policy for receiving and processing citizen input relative to service provided. (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5)*

Response: Agree

Finding 2: *Customer satisfaction surveys are useful for monitoring an organization's effectiveness; however, only one of the County departments surveyed by the Civil Grand Jury has a customer satisfaction survey in place. (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5)*

Response: Partially agree

The Board agrees that customer satisfaction surveys are useful for monitoring an organization's effectiveness, but it is not the only tool to use. Other measures are useful as well, such as data provided to state and federal agencies regarding program outcomes, and other reports regularly prepared and submitted by county agencies. Also, the Board is unaware of the departments surveyed by the Grand Jury as the identities of those interviewed are confidential. It should also be noted that many of the mandatory services provided to residents such as child welfare, incarceration, indigent defense can be taxing services to provide.

Finding 3: *When citizens do not know how to complain to a specific department, they may bypass that department and go to the Board of Supervisors, the Chief Administrative Officer, or the Civil Grand Jury. This denies an opportunity for the department to become aware of and address potential problems. (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5)*

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors establish standards for a citizen complaint/comment process (positive and negative) and then direct each department within the County to develop a written policy and publish a citizen complaint/comment process to be approved by the Board. This should be completed by February 1, 2021. (F-1, F-3)*

Response: This recommendation will be partially implemented.

The Board will direct the County Administrative Office, through the cross-departmental Hum21 group, to establish a complaint/comment process with an electronic form to be posted on the county web site, which will allow residents to submit comments to any department. The county will not develop a policy around citizen comments and complaints, as there are already government code-mandated complaint processes, such as the Grand Jury complaint process. In addition, several county departments already have some version of a complaint/comment process, including the Assessment Appeals Board regarding property assessments, the Sheriff, and the Public Works – Roads Division has an online form to submit roads concerns.

Recommendation 2: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors direct each department within the County to develop and utilize a customer satisfaction survey with the intent that each department work towards continued improvement. This should be completed by February 1, 2021. (F-2)*

Response: This recommendation will be implemented when financial and personnel resources are available.

The Board will direct the County Administrative Office, through the cross-departmental Hum21 group, to establish a complaint/comment process with an electronic form to be posted on the county web site which will allow residents to submit comments to any department. A customer satisfaction survey is one tool that can be used, and staff will review this recommendation when financial and personnel resources are more readily available.

Recommendation 3: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors require citizen complaint/comment forms and customer satisfaction survey forms to be easily accessible in electronic and paper formats, as part of County standards. This should be completed by February 1, 2021. (F-1, F-2, F-3)*

Response: This recommendation will be implemented.

The Board will direct the County Administrative Office, through the cross-departmental Hum21 group, to establish a complaint/comment process with an electronic form to be posted on the county web site, which will allow residents to submit comments to any department. In addition, paper forms will be made available to all county departments to print out and make available to residents as appropriate.

Recommendation 4: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors require citizen complaint/comment policy to include a process acknowledging receipt, as part of County standards. This should be completed by February 1, 2021. (F-1, F-2, F-3)*

Response: This recommendation will be implemented.

The county will develop a complaint process for citizens to electronically submit forms online for departments to address directly, and this tool will have an automatic acknowledgement function. Comments received on paper will include a space that allows citizens to request follow up from the department to whom they are submitting comments.

Recommendation 5: *The Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors require each department that has a complaint/comment policy or a customer satisfaction survey to report the findings to the Board of Supervisors at least annually. This should be completed by February 1, 2021. (F-1, F-2, F-3)*

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented.

The Board will direct the County Administrative Office, through the cross-departmental Hum21 group, to establish a complaint/comment process with an electronic form to be posted on the county web site, which will

allow residents to submit comments to any department. In addition, paper forms will be made available to all county departments to print out and make available to residents as appropriate. The county surveyed nearly 20 other counties in California and did not find any county that required departments to report findings to their respective Boards. It should be noted that due to the nature of resident comments and complaints, some of the comments are likely be sensitive and will include sensitive information and topics that may be exempt from disclosure pursuant to state law and will not therefore be reported to the public.