



COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP SOLANO JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

October 3, 2022

CAP Solano JPA

Dawn La Bar,
Chair/Executive Director
1000 Webster Street
Fairfield, CA 94533
707.428.7749
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Honorable Wendy G. Getty
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: Community Action Partnership Solano Joint Powers Authority (CAP Solano) Response to 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report, Shelter Solano, Inc.: A Review of its First Three Years Operating an Emergency Shelter in Solano County

JPA Board of Directors

Dawn La Bar,
Chair
City of Fairfield
Kathy Lawton-Caesar,
Vice-Chair
City of Suisun City
Emily Cantu,
Treasurer and Secretary
City of Vacaville
Erik Upson
City of Benicia
Pamela Caronongan
City of Rio Vista
Natalie Peterson
City of Vallejo
Anne Putney
Solano County

Honorable Judge Getty:

The following is CAP Solano's response to the above-mentioned Grand Jury Report, which was approved by the CAP Solano Board on September 22, 2022:

FINDING 1: Shelter Solano, Inc.'s lack of unrestricted funding prevents the shelter from operating at capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS 1 A: Local agency partners associated with Shelter Solano, Inc. must assist acquiring funding streams that increase the number of unrestricted beds.

RECOMMENDATION 1 B: Local agency partners adopt a regionalized service delivery and funding model that does not restrict bed usage based on a bed-night rate agreement with the county and/or donor city, but rather allows access to beds based on client need regardless of the city of origin and works toward reducing the number of homeless living on the streets.

JPA Response: The JPA agrees with this finding. Members of the JPA, as staff to each respective jurisdiction, have been working with the Regional Homeless 2x2 Subcommittee (2x2) and SHELTER Solano beginning in 2021 to modify the funding plan to facilitate a transition away from 'per bed' rates. The JPA anticipates this will be complete when the facility at 310 is fully converted as part of the proposed Regional Navigation Center Plan in 2022 – 2023.

FINDING 2: The Solano County Civil Grand Jury found it difficult to track money and funding between SHELTER, Inc., and Shelter Solano, Inc. Often, the names of the two entities are used interchangeably. It is unclear which funding sources are specifically awarded to Shelter Solano, Inc. and which



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funding sources are awarded to SHELTER, Inc.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Local agency partners establish a transparent system of tracking and reporting funds that clearly differentiates between SHELTER, Inc. and Shelter Solano, Inc.

JPA Response: The JPA disagrees with this finding. The JPA contracts with the City of Vacaville to serve as the JPA's Fiscal Agent. The City of Vacaville tracks all funding allocated through the JPA, including funds to both SHELTER Inc. and SHELTER Solano. Reports are made at each CAP Solano JPA meeting, with a clear delineation as to what agency receives the funds, how much is remaining in the grant, and what the funds are to be used for. These meetings are public, per the Brown Act. Each JPA funded agency is also monitored by the Fiscal Agent, and the JPA is subsequently monitored and audited each year by the state funded agency to ensure compliance.

Additionally, CAP Solano JPA is in the process of creating a public report to be maintained on the CAP Solano JPA website that will provide a list of all CAP Solano JPA and Continuum of Care (CoC) funded agencies, the amount of funding received, what the funding is to be used for, and subsequent outcomes.

FINDING 3: Confusion exists in the Solano community regarding what services and/or programming in Solano County is provided by SHELTER, Inc. and what is provided by Shelter Solano, Inc.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Local agency partners work together to develop and implement transparent reporting of services and programming that clearly differentiates between those provided by SHELTER, Inc. and those provided by Shelter Solano, Inc.

JPA Response: the JPA disagrees with this finding. Shelter Solano, Inc. is the operational entity running the local shelter known as Shelter Solano which SHELTER, Inc. is a local non-profit administering a variety of local programs designed to assist individuals who are in jeopardy of becoming homeless.

Additionally, SHELTER, Inc. is contracted for the administrative operations of Shelter Solano, Inc. The JPA contracts with the City of Vacaville to serve as the JPA's Fiscal Agent. The City of Vacaville tracks all funding allocated through the JPA, including funds to both SHELTER Inc. and SHELTER Solano. Reports are made at each CAP Solano JPA meeting, with a clear delineation as to what agency receives the funds, how much is remaining in the grant, and what the funds are to be used for. These meetings are public, per the Brown Act. Each JPA funded agency is also monitored by the Fiscal Agent, and the JPA is subsequently monitored and audited each year by the state funded agency to ensure compliance.



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CAP Solano JPA is also in the process of creating a public report to be maintained on the CAP Solano JPA website that will provide a list of all CAP Solano JPA and Continuum of Care (CoC) funded agencies, the amount of funding received, what the funding is to be used for, and subsequent outcomes.

FINDING 4: The Solano County Civil Grand Jury found it unclear which funding sources awarded to SHELTER, Inc, are specifically assigned to Shelter Solano, Inc., and which funding sources were awarded to SHELTER, Inc. to provide services in Solano County.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Local agency partners work with SHELTER, Inc. and funding providers to establish a more transparent and reconciliation method to clearly disclose which funding sources they receive specifically for Shelter Solano, Inc. and which funding sources SHELTER, Inc. receives that are earmarked for SHELTER, Inc. to provide services in Solano County.

JPA Response: As with findings 2 and 3, the JPA disagrees with this finding. The JPA contracts with the City of Vacaville to serve as the JPA's Fiscal Agent. The City of Vacaville tracks all funding allocated through the JPA, including funds to both SHELTER Inc. and SHELTER Solano. Reports are made at each CAP Solano JPA meeting, with a clear delineation as to what agency receives the funds, how much is remaining in the grant, and what the funds are to be used for. These meetings are public, per the Brown Act. Each JPA funded agency is also monitored by the Fiscal Agent, and the JPA is subsequently monitored and audited each year by the state funded agency to ensure compliance.

Additionally, CAP Solano JPA is in the process of creating a public report to be maintained on the CAP Solano JPA website that will provide a list of all CAP Solano JPA and Continuum of Care (CoC) funded agencies, the amount of funding received, what the funding is to be used for, and subsequent outcomes.

FINDING 5: There is a lack of metrics and comprehensive data collection to inform decision- making, to monitor and measure program efficacy and performance, as well as outcomes across the homeless service continuum.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Across the continuum of services, develop metrics to measure and monitor program efficacy, performance, and outcomes, to include a transparent system of reporting.

JPA Response: The JPA disagrees with this finding. With each funding award received, the JPA must go through a rigorous and timely process for both the JPA and the CoC to determine funding priorities, prepare and distribute a public Request for Proposals, and have a comprehensive Review and Rank process in



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place that scores each application based on the funding need, agency history, performance, and outcomes. This is a transparent and public process, with the exception of the names of the experienced participants on the Review and Rank panels, due to the political nature of their service. Applications, total scores, and recommendations are published publicly, recommendations are made to the entire CAP Solano board for approval, and each applicant can appeal the recommendation as well as request a follow up meeting to review their scores for future improvement. Outcomes are reported publicly each month for agencies awarded funding and are considered in any future applications.

FINDING 6: Despite improved collaboration between the service providers, funders, municipal government, and county, there remains a lack of an overall leadership role/authority.

RECOMMENDATION 6 A: Overall leadership with authority to address homelessness is required to provide direction, ensure timely coordination of services, demand accountability, and liaison with the community.

RECOMMENDATION 6 B: All stakeholders request the county provide the leadership, authority, and accountability to ensure timely coordination of services delivered in the most efficient, effective manner.

JPA Response: The JPA concurs with this finding. The JPA is supportive of the work the Cities have been doing since 2021 in forming a Regional Homeless 2x2 Subcommittee (2x2). The 2x2 has been meeting monthly on average, and recently began the discussion on how best to address homelessness regionally. With the support of the JPA, the 2x2 agreed to modify the current Community Action Partnership of Solano Joint Powers Authority (CAP Solano JPA) agreement established in 1999 and restructure the board to include elected officials from each jurisdiction. A new Technical Advisory Committee will be established with representatives from each jurisdiction experienced in homeless initiatives and policies.

The newly restructured CAP Solano JPA will be the central coordinator of services and funding, providing a countywide, centralized agency for establishing and distributing necessary resources. This restructure is expected to be complete in the fall of 2022.

FINDING 7: The SCCGJ found no evidence that CAP Solano, JPA is registered as a public agency with the State of California or Solano County as required.

RECOMMENDATION 7: CAP Solano, JPA file the necessary forms with the State of California and Solano County and consistently meet filing requirements.

JPA Response: The JPA was not aware of this reporting requirement and will



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research the process to begin doing so.

FINDING 8: The public is unaware of the volume of money coming into Solano County to address the homeless issue.

RECOMMENDATION 8: CAP Solano, JPA should create a dashboard disclosing the money coming into Solano County; how it is used, by whom, and their return on investment (program outcomes).

JPA Response: The JPA does not fully agree with this finding. While the JPA is in the process of creating a comprehensive report to include all CAP Solano and CoC funded agencies, the JPA cannot require each jurisdiction to do the same. The JPA would, however, support expanding this report in the future under the newly restructured CAP Solano JPA to include additional jurisdictional funding sources and uses.

FINDING 9: Feedback from multiple stakeholders and document review during the SCCGJ's investigation revealed that CES is not currently providing the expected services.

RECOMMENDATION 9 A: The appropriate authority assesses Resource Connect's current state of operations to identify its readiness to provide the expected services in a user-friendly, timely manner, that reduces the long waitlists currently in place.

RECOMMENDATION 9 B: Create a post-assessment strategy to move Resource Connect towards operating at a level that meets standard expectations for their role.

JPA Response: the JPA cannot agree nor disagree with the finding, since the JPA is not aware of what feedback the Grand Jury received as far as "expected services". The JPA does agree that there are a lack of services in general to support the myriad needs, not just in Solano County, but also in California and the nation, for homeless prevention, sheltering, mental health services, substance abuse services, and permanent supportive housing that all leads to and perpetuates homelessness. This is not because of the failure of Resource Connect, but a significant lack of resources for which they have to work with.

FINDING 10: Lack of housing makes it difficult for individuals to successfully graduate out of Shelter Solano, Inc. into permanent housing as required by the Housing First Delivery Model used in Solano County.

RECOMMENDATION 10 A: To successfully address homelessness in Solano County requires that the county and cities work together to secure housing in their respective communities.



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RECOMMENDATION 10 B: Engagement and education of the general public around homelessness is required to gain the public's understanding, trust, and input in supporting the county's homeless residents.

JPA Response: The JPA agrees with this finding. It is expected that the newly restructured CAP Solano will be expanding on the extensive work CAP Solano has already begun to increase affordable and permanent supportive housing here in Solano County to improve collaboration amongst each jurisdiction.

FINDING 13: Direct observation, document review, and feedback during the Solano County Civil Grand Jury investigation revealed gaps in service delivery along the entire continuum of services.

RECOMMENDATION 13 A: The county secures a comprehensive independent assessment across the continuum of homeless services to include:

- leadership
- level of collaboration among stakeholders
- funding
- how services are accessed
- Quality of services provided
- measurement of outcomes
- mechanism to ensure accountability
- transparency of reporting

RECOMMENDATION 13 B: The county develops a strategic plan that includes a timeline for the implementation of recommendations from the independent assessment in recommendation 13 A.

JPA Response: The JPA concurs with this finding. The newly restructured CAP Solano JPA is expected to continue the update to the 5-Year Regional Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 currently underway with the goal of prioritizing funding toward the highest, most critical need.

FINDING 14: A document review conducted by the Solano County Civil Grand Jury revealed discrepancies and inconsistent accounting and reporting practices among the entities providing services to the homeless in Solano County.

RECOMMENDATION 14 A: Entities use a consistent reporting mechanism for the awarding of funding to keep the community informed and assured that the money is being spent effectively and as intended.

RECOMMENDATION 14 B: County performs or hires a Forensic Accountant to perform a Forensic Audit on money being spent across the continuum of



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homeless services in Solano County.

JPA Response: As with Finding 9, the JPA cannot agree nor disagree, since the JPA is not aware of, nor did the JPA have the opportunity to review the documents the Grand Jury reviewed and referenced that “reveal discrepancies and inconsistent accounting and reporting practices”. The JPA does disagree with any reference to discrepancies with any reporting or accounting practices in relation to any JPA funded agencies, as the JPA contracts with the City of Vacaville to serve as the Fiscal Agent. Fiscal mechanisms are in place to ensure all JPA funded agencies comply by the same standards, and in relation to their respective funding source, to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines. In addition, both CAP Solano JPA and the related agencies are audited and monitored regularly and no such findings are reported by the state on the JPA.

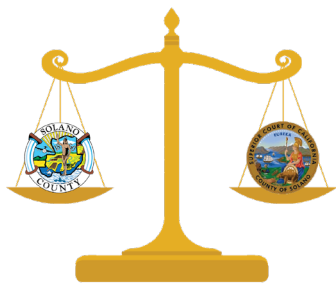
Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dawn M. La Bar,
Chair/Executive Director
CAP Solano JPA

Attachment: Solano County Grand Jury letter dated June 29, 2022

cc: CAP Solano JPA Executive Board



SOLANO COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

Hall of Justice

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Fairfield, California 94533
(707) 435-2575 (P) / (707) 435-2566 (F)
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www.Solano.Courts.Ca.Gov

June 29, 2022

Sent via email

Dawn La Bar, Executive Director
Community Action Partnership of Solano Joint Powers Authority (CAP Solano JPA)
1000 Webster Street
Fairfield CA 94533

RE: 2021-2022 Grand Jury Report Entitled: **Shelter Solano, Inc.: A Review of its First Three Years Operating an Emergency Shelter in Solano County**

Enclosed please find a copy of the above named report by the 2021-2022 Solano County Grand Jury. This report is provided to you **in advance of public release** as provided for in Penal Code §933.05(f). Please note that Penal Code §933.05(f) specifically prohibits any disclosure of the contents of this report by a public agency, its departments, officers or governing body prior to its release to the public, which will occur on **Tuesday, July 5, 2022**.

You are required to respond in writing to the Presiding Judge and to provide an electronic copy in pdf form to the Grand Jury regarding the Findings and Recommendations contained in the report pursuant to Penal Code §933.05. This section of the Penal Code is very specific as to the format of the responses. The Penal Code §933 (c) is also specific about the deadline for responses. You are required to submit your response to the Grand Jury by **Monday, October 3, 2022**, on signed letterhead. Each final report, together with the required responses will be filed with the clerk of the court and forwarded to the State Archivist for retention in perpetuity §933 (b). If no response is received from the agencies or elected officials a notation will be included on the filed report.

The electronic copy should be sent to the Grand Jury office at cdclower@solano.courts.ca.gov.

Responses are public records. Should you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Clower, Administrative Assistant to the Grand Jury at (707) 435-2575.

Sincerely,

Carl W. DuBois, Foreperson
2021-2022 Solano County Grand Jury