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COUNTY OF SOLANO

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June 5, 2017

The Honorable Robert C. Fracchia
Presiding Judge
Solano County Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Response to 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report Entitled: Solano County Family Justice Center

The Honorable Robert C. Fracchia, Presiding Judge of the Solano County Superior Court:

Under Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, we are responding to the following recommendations contained in the 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report regarding the Solano County Family Justice Center.

Finding 1- The Solano County Family Justice Center building does not accommodate a sufficient number of on-site partners or provide adequate privacy.

Response to Finding 1 -The District Attorney and the Director of the Solano Family Justice Center partially disagree with this finding. Since the inception of the current administration beginning in October 2014, the goal at the Solano Family Justice Center has been to increase direct services on site to victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, elder abuse and human trafficking. Given the limited space at the center, the Office of Family Violence Prevention (hereafter OFVP) and on-site partners have collaboratively worked together to strategize and maximize the utilization of available space while still maintaining confidentiality and privacy.

Recommendation 1 - The Solano County Family Justice Center reconfigure the current building to accommodate more on-site partners to reach the model of a “one-stop” and provide sufficient privacy.

Response to Recommendation 1 - The recommendation has been implemented. Angel Aguilar, the new Director of the Solano Family Justice Center, has taken further steps to increase direct services to victims of crime while maintaining confidentiality and privacy and utilizing the limited space in the most efficient manner. Mr. Aguilar has re-assigned the on-site partners to better suit the services that they provide. Each on-site partner is assigned an office. Confidential meetings with victims and survivors take place in offices behind closed doors. To further ensure privacy, “white noise machines” are placed outside the office door during confidential meetings. To accommodate additional on-site partners, all OFVP staff members have relocated to one office. As services and programming at the SFJC continue to increase, it is our hope that this will lead to a larger space than 604 Empire Street.

Finding 2 - The number of on-site partners has been inconsistent and the “one-stop” idea has not developed as envisioned.

Response to Finding 2- The District Attorney and Solano Family Justice Center partially disagree with this finding. Although the number of on-site partners has been inconsistent at times, the Center has always worked to ensure that essential services were rendered such as: domestic violence advocacy, court accompaniment, restraining orders, crisis intervention, safety planning, and basic need assistance. A Family Justice Center is defined in Penal Code section 13750 as a multiagency, multidisciplinary center where public and private agencies assign staff members on a full time or part time basis in order to provide services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, elder or dependent abuse, and human trafficking from one location in order to reduce the number of times a victim has to tell their story, reduce the number of places a victim must go for help, and increase access to services and support for victims and their children. Pursuant to Penal Code section 13750(c), “Staff members at a family justice center **may** be comprised of, but are not limited to, the following: law enforcement personnel, medical personnel, District Attorney, victim witness program personnel, domestic violence shelter service staff, community based rape crisis, domestic violence, and human trafficking advocates, social service agency staff members, child welfare agency social workers, county health department staff, city or county welfare and public assistance workers, non-profit agency counseling professionals, civil legal service providers, supervised volunteers from partner agencies, and other professionals providing services.”

The Solano Family Justice Center currently has the following personnel on site:

- **Law Enforcement Personnel** - District Attorney Investigator.
- **Medical Personnel** - Courage Center II Forensic Examiner.
- **District Attorney** - Deputy District Attorneys are frequently on site for multi-disciplinary interviews, follow-up on cases, victim interviews, training, and meetings with partners and members of the law enforcement community .
- **Victim Witness Program Personnel** -Victim Witness Advocate.
- **Domestic Violence Shelter Service Staff**- Safequest Solano (a non-profit organization).
- **Community Based Rape Crisis/DV/Human Trafficking Advocates** - Solano Advocates for Victims of Violence (SAVV- nonprofit organization), Trauma Recovery Center (TRC), Safequest.
- **Social Service Agency Staff Members** - Health and Social Services Eligibility Worker and Family Stabilization Unit Worker will be on site this month.
- **Child Welfare Agency Social Workers** - Child Welfare Social Workers are on site frequently for MDI interviews and meetings.
- **County Public Assistance Worker** - Solano Coalition for Better Health (regularly), Health and Social Service Eligibility Worker (will be on site this month).
- **Non- Profit Agency Counseling Professionals** - Child Haven (children’s mental health), Victim Witness Advocate (adult and child mental health), and TRC (on site in July for children and adult mental health).

- **Civil Legal Service Providers** - One bilingual pro-bono attorney who specializes in family law and immigration, and an additional pro-bono attorney who assists with family law consultations; OFVP assists with restraining orders and civil harassment orders; Safequest assists with restraining order; SAVV assists with restraining orders for Spanish speaking clients.
- **Supervised Volunteers from Partner Agencies** -We currently have volunteers and interns working under the supervision of the Family Justice Center Director.

Recommendation 2 – Solano County Family Justice Center actively recruits more on-site partners to better serve domestic violence victims with the comprehensive services they will need for support.

Response to Recommendation 2 – The recommendation has been implemented. However, we continue to strengthen our collaboration within the community in an effort to better serve those in need.

Finding 3 – Transportation to the Solano County Family Justice Center does not effectively serve the needs of clients.

Response to Finding 3 - The District Attorney and the Solano Family Justice Center partially disagree with this finding. The Solano Family Justice Center is centrally located in Fairfield, which is desirable due to the close proximity to the courthouse and the District Attorney’s Office. However, it poses challenges for those who reside in other parts of the county. Efforts to address this issue include: (1) Providing protective orders to victims at the Vallejo Courthouse, (2) Conducting multi-disciplinary interviews at a partner satellite office in Vallejo and (3) OFVP staff meetings with victims out in the field on an as needed basis.

Recommendation 3 – The Solano County Family Justice Center secure funding to effectively provide transportation to its clients.

Response to Recommendation 3 - The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. We are in the process of analyzing our budget and looking into alternative means of funding for transportation to the Solano Family Justice Center. Our target date to complete the analysis is August 31, 2017.

Finding 4 – There is insufficient public awareness of the Solano County Family Justice Center for victims to identify what resources, support and services are available.

Response to Finding 4 -The District Attorney and Solano Family Justice Center disagree with this finding. The mission of the District Attorney’s Office is to “Seek and Do Justice.” Consistent with this mission is to ensure that every victim of crime is treated with dignity and respect. To this end, it is imperative that crime victims know their rights and the available services and resources.

On a regular basis, the Solano Family Justice Center reaches out to members of the community to raise awareness of services available at the center. Some of those events include the following:

- Annual Health Fair (First Health Fair held October 2015 where 500 attended and in 2016 it was attended by over 1000 people, and will continue annually)

- Elder Abuse Forum (First held June 2016 and will be held again this year on June 15, 2017. We sought and obtained funding for an extra help elder abuse DA Investigator who is currently handling elder abuse cases.)
- Domestic Violence Vigils held annually in October in Fairfield and Vallejo
- Human Trafficking Forums held in Vallejo and Fairfield
- Vacaville Fiesta Days
- Dixon May Fair
- Travis AFB Air Show
- Solano County Fair
- National Night Out (locations in Vallejo, Fairfield, Suisun, and Vacaville)
- Coffee with DA

Furthermore, the Solano Family Justice Center has conducted presentations to community based organizations to raise awareness of the services at the center such as:

- Help Me Grow Solano
- Adult Protective Services
- Uplift Family Services
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Office of Education
- Solano Superior Court-Civil and Family court staff
- Health and Social Services
- Solano Youth Council
- Law enforcement agencies
- Kaiser Family Violence Prevention Taskforce (Vallejo, Vacaville, and Fairfield)

Recommendation 4 – Solano County and the Office of the Family Violence Prevention update current resource guides and websites to list what resources, support and services are available at this Solano County Family Justice Center for domestic violence victims and their families.

Response to Recommendation 4 –The recommendation will be implemented in the near future. It will be updated by the end of June 2017.

Findings 5 – Funding from the County to provide sufficient financing for the Solano County Family Justice Center has increased.

Response to Finding 5 - The District Attorney and Solano Family Justice Center agree with this finding. Both Salaries and benefits and operational costs have increased over the years.

Recommendation 5a – Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention staff increase expertise in grant-writing and aggressively pursue new grants to reduce county expenses for the Family Justice Center.

Response to Recommendation 5a - The recommendation has been implemented. Since October 2014, our office has aggressively pursued grant opportunities that would better assist victims of crime. In February 2016, the Courage Center II, a child advocacy center, opened at the Solano Family Justice Center. In collaboration with Napa/Solano SANE/SART, we applied and received a grant from Kaiser Foundation to make that happen. In April 2016, our office successfully obtained a grant for the underrepresented and underserved population in the amount of \$350,000 for two years. That grant has enabled our office to hire two Tagalog speaking victim witness advocates to serve victims in the Filipino community. California Office of Emergency Services awarded our office \$532,430 to address service gaps and needs of crime victims in Solano County. This grant opportunity has enabled advocates to reach out to students in middle school and high school. It also supports SafeQuest Solano, an on-site partner, to provide daily elder abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence advocacy. Our office worked collaboratively with our on-site partners to successfully apply for a Trauma Recovery Center grant in the amount of \$602,000 for two years. This grant funded by Victim Compensation Board will provide wrap-around services for all victims of violent crime. The grant will also provide for on-site mental health clinicians. We continue to search for grant opportunities to help fund programming and services at the SFJC. We contract with grant writers on an as needed basis.

Recommendation 5b – Solano County Family Justice Center establish a relationship with a non-profit foundation to help solidify the center’s financial stability.

Response to Recommendation 5b -The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the near future. We are currently in the process of forming a new foundation to help financially support the center. The process should be completed within the next several months.

Finding 6 – There is no regular calendar of meetings for collaboration between domestic violence victim support agencies in the County to address both duplication and adequacy of services available.

Response 6 - The District Attorney and Solano Family Justice Center disagree with this finding. The Center holds meetings on a regular basis. All on-site partners meet monthly. Solano Partnership Against Violence (SPAV) together with on-site partners meet monthly. The OFVP staff meets regularly, every other Monday. Lastly, the data and research committee meet twice a month.

Recommendation 6 – The Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention conduct quarterly collaborative meetings of domestic violence victim support agencies.

Response to Recommendation 6 - The recommendation has been implemented.

We would like to thank the Solano County Grand Jury for their time and attention to this matter.

We appreciate the Grand Jury’s recommendations made to the Solano Family Justice Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Angel Aguilar".

Angel Aguilar

Director of the Solano Family Justice Center

Dated:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Krishna A. Abrams".

Krishna A. Abrams

District Attorney

KAA:mpm

cc: Grand Jury