

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT

Report Title: Collaborative Community Quest

Report Date: June 17, 2022

Response by: Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

FINDINGS

The Board of Supervisors agrees with Findings 1, 2, and 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 will not be implemented.

Recommendation 2 has been implemented.

Date: _____ Signed: _____

Number of pages attached: 3



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FROM: ELISHIA HAYES, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO 2021-22 GRAND JURY REPORT “COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY QUEST”
DATE: NOVEMBER 29, 2022

In the Grand Jury Report, “Collaborative Community Quest,” the Grand Jury has requested that your Board respond to Findings 1, 2 and 3 and Recommendations 1 and 2. I am proposing the following response as detailed below.

FINDINGS

Finding 1: *Although tribal community representatives engage with Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services’ Child Welfare Services (DHHS-CWS), tribal members and compliance monitors have expressed dissatisfaction with the process and outcomes of engagement.*

Response: Agree

Finding 2: *Although DHHS-CWS has established an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program, Humboldt County does not have a specified Office of Tribal Affairs to address matters of importance to the County’s sovereign nations including child protection and extending to justice-related issues as well as cultural protocols and social services.*

Response: Agree

Finding 3: *Humboldt County does not have a specified Office of Tribal Affairs to promote County-Tribal partnerships facilitating collaboration through coordination of intergovernmental services while respecting tribal sovereignty.*

Response: Agree

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Board of Supervisors authorize the creation of an independent Office of Tribal Affairs by January 1, 2023. This office will advise all County departments and the Board of Supervisors on matters of importance to tribal communities and Native Americans wherever they live in Humboldt County and will encourage collaboration with all Humboldt County governmental entities.

This recommendation will not be implemented.

Creation of an independent Office of Tribal Affairs has merit, especially considering the tribal presence in Humboldt County. However, such a recommendation is outside the scope of this report as the responsibilities being recommended impact all county departments and the Board of Supervisors. Such a recommendation would need to be evaluated at a broader level and include discussion with all department heads, the Board, and local Tribal representatives. In addition, ongoing funding must first be identified prior to authorizing creation of an Office of Tribal Affairs.

Additionally, county departments regularly coordinate with local tribes on matters concerning tribal community members and that work will continue. For example, the County Administrative Office – Economic Development Division recently collaborated with Blue Lake Rancheria on a resolution that was adopted by the Blue Lake Rancheria’s Tribal Business Council and designates an authorized representative to work with the county on economic development matters.

Other examples include collaborations between the tribes and the various branches of the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS). The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program has several standing weekly and monthly meetings with Tribal Social Services staff to consult on cases/services. The ICWA program provides the below services and ensures the implementation of all state and federal mandates governing CWS including ICWA: Emergency Response, Family Wellness Court and Family Maintenance and Family Reunification.

CWS also works with Tribal experts on its Continuous Quality Improvement program which utilizes data to continually analyze, interpret, monitor data and practice trends and, when needed, implement quality improvement strategies to ensure performance measures are met and innovative practices are identified, implemented and measured for success, including specific Tribal community needs. CWS also engages in the Workforce Development and Training program which utilizes feedback and input from multiple sources including input from local Tribes to identify, design and deliver onboarding training and ongoing professional development opportunities for staff.

DHHS’s Public Health branch staff collaborate with Tribal partners and United Indian Health Services on the Suicide and Violence Prevention program, providing community trainings, distributing lockboxes, and coordinating postvention and suicide response. Public Health staff also serves the Tribal community through the

North Coast Aids Project which provides disease prevention services, overdose prevention education and Narcan distribution at locations throughout the county, as well as the Public Health Clinic coordinating with Tribes to provide access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination resources. DHHS's Behavioral Health branch works with Tribal partners in collaboration with CWS, through Family Wellness Court, by engaging cultural coaches and attending the three-day cultural training. The Behavioral Health branch has adapted the tribally developed Humboldt Practice Model and is implementing it within the branch. Behavioral Health also has a clinician who specifically serves native CWS youth and families, including in acute crises, and staff collaborate with Tribal partners, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and law enforcement to organize regular Crisis Intervention Team trainings.

While we are not perfect, we will always do our best to collaborate with our Tribal partners, and never shy away from looking at ways to improve.

Recommendation 2: *Humboldt County Civil Grand Jury recommends that by Oct. 1, 2022, the Board of Supervisors formally support the continuance of a hybrid work model in County departments by which employees are able to work in the office and from home.*

This recommendation has been implemented.

On Feb. 8, 2022, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the county's Telework Policy which supports this recommendation.