

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors' Response

Case 21-06: Hotel Emergency Housing for Homeless Western Slope

The Grand Jury has requested responses from the Chief Administrative Officer to Findings 1, 3, and 5, and to Recommendations 1, 3, and 5. The Probation Department was asked to respond to Findings 1 and 3, and Recommendations 1 and 3. The Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) was also asked to respond to Findings 1 and 3, and Recommendations 1 and 3. County Counsel was asked to respond to Finding 5 and Recommendation 5. The Auditor-Controller was also asked to prepare a response to this report.

Consistent with previous practice and pursuant to Board Policy A-11, the Chief Administrative Office is responsible for coordinating the County's response to the Grand Jury. Responses to the Grand Jury Report are directed by Board Policy A-1 1 and Penal Code 933.05. Accordingly, the Chief Administrative Office has reviewed and compiled the responses from all non-elected department heads into this Initial Draft Response for the Board's consideration.

FINDINGS

- F1. Probation and HHS have a limited number of hotels available to them, resulting in both departments using the Quality Inn at a disproportionately higher rate than other hotels.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors acknowledges there are a limited number of hotels available within (he County. Based on data from the County's financial tracking system for Fiscal Year 2020-21, HHS spent 6% of their total on the Quality Inn, while Probation spent 50% of their total.

Probation responded they do not prioritize the Quality Inn location above any other beyond the hotel's proximity to Probation's main office, and the use of this location as an effective strategy for supporting supervision practices meant to enhance public safety.

HHS verified that for HHS programs that allow for hotels to be utilized on a temporary basis, Clients, not staff select the locations.

- F3. The Grand Jury found examples that HHS did not follow its written procedures for invoice approval.

The Board of Supervisors disagrees partially with this finding.

The Board of Supervisors finds it difficult to respond to this finding due to the absence of documentation supporting the examples found by the Grand Jury.

- F5. There are no formal contracts in place between the County and hotel vendors.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The CAO should direct County departments to coordinate housing stays and work to use an expanded list of hotels, as appropriate, for emergency housing of their clients on the Western Slope. This directive should be given by September 30, 2022.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. HHSA has verified that for HHSA programs that allow hotels to be utilized on a temporary basis, clients, not staff select the locations, therefore, there is no need for County departments to coordinate housing stays. However, Probation will contact other hotels in El Dorado County to assess their interest in serving their clientele in an effort to establish an expanded list of hotels for emergency housing for their clients on the Western Slope and report back to the CAO no later than January 31, 2023.

- R3. Probation and HHSA management should send a monthly report to the CAO demonstrating they are consistently following their internal written procedures for processing hotel vendor invoices, from receipt through fiscal oversight, until it is sent to the Auditor-Controller's Office. This monthly reporting process should begin by September 30, 2022.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

This recommendation would create an increased and unreasonable workload. If it is determined the departments are not following their internal written procedures, the appropriate staff should be held accountable by their supervisor.

- R5. The CAO should direct County Counsel to determine whether contracts should be in place with hotels that are used by the County departments for emergency housing hotel stays. The County Counsel should respond to the CAO by November 30, 2022.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

County Counsel reports directly to the Board of Supervisors and, as such, is not subject to the direction of the CAO. Moreover, whether contracts should be in place with hotels that are used by County departments for emergency housing hotel stays is a policy matter beyond the purview of the County Counsel. Nevertheless, in response to this recommendation, the CAO will confer with the County Counsel prior to November 30, 2022, to assess whether there are any legal requirements impacting how the County secures emergency housing hotel stays on the western slope.