



SANTA CRUZ  
COUNTY  
GRAND JURY

Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

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## Responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails.....”

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Caitlin Smith <Caitlin.Smith@santacruzcounty.us>

Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 4:35 PM

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached for the Board of Supervisors, the Public Defender, and Sheriff's responses to the findings and recommendations in the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report, “Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to ‘Kick The Can’.”

Best,

Caitlin C. Smith

County Supervisors' Analyst

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

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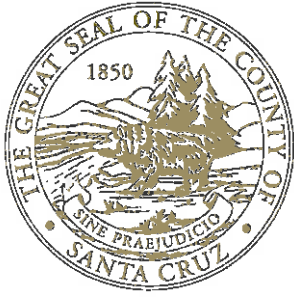
To email all five members of the Board of Supervisors at once,

please use: [BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:BoardOfSupervisors@santacruzcounty.us)

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### 4 attachments

-  **Future of our Jails response Cover letter.pdf**  
37K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Board of Supervisors response.pdf**  
321K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Sheriff's response.pdf**  
256K
-  **Future of our Jails Report-Public Defender Response.pdf**  
212K



# County of Santa Cruz

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## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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FIFTH DISTRICT

August 8, 2023

The Honorable Syda Cogliati  
Santa Cruz Courthouse  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**RE: Response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'"**

Dear Judge Cogliati:

The purpose of this letter is to formally transmit the responses of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Santa Cruz County Public Defender, and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report titled "Envisioning the Future of our Jails – We Continue to 'Kick The Can'."

Sincerely,

ZACH FRIEND, Chair  
Board of Supervisors

ZF: cs  
Attachment

CC: Clerk of the Board  
Santa Cruz County Grand Jury



**The 2022–2023 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury  
Requires the**

**Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors**

**to Respond by August 23, 2023**

**to the Findings and Recommendations listed below  
which were assigned to them in the report titled**

**Envisioning the Future of our Jails**

*We Continue to “Kick The Can”*

Responses are **required** from elected officials, elected agency or department heads, and elected boards, councils, and committees which are investigated by the Grand Jury. You are required to respond and to make your response available to the public by the California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#).

Your response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

## Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

1. **For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
  - a. **AGREE with the Finding**, or
  - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
  - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
2. **For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
  - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
  - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
  - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
  - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
3. **Please confirm the date on which you approved the assigned responses:**

We approved these responses in a regular public meeting as shown  
in our minutes dated August 8, 2023.

4. **When your responses are complete, please email your completed Response Packet as a PDF file attachment to both**

The Honorable Judge Syda Cogliati [Syda.Cogliati@santacruzcourt.org](mailto:Syda.Cogliati@santacruzcourt.org) and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).

**If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling 831-454-2099 or by sending an email to [grandjury@scgrandjury.org](mailto:grandjury@scgrandjury.org).**

# Findings

**F1.** Permanent mandatory overtime for Corrections Officers has a negative effect on them that leads to high turnover, and the need to hire more COs and train them, which is inefficient and demoralizing for the Sheriff's Office.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

**F2.** Overcrowding at the Main Jail would be alleviated if the Blaine Street Women’s Jail and the second unit at Rountree could be reopened.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Blaine Street Women’s Jail was reopened on May 19, 2023. Opening the second unit at Rountree would help ease overcrowding but would not solve it entirely. Overcrowding is a result of many different factors including but not limited to our administratively separated population, different classifications of incarcerated persons, and factors such as mental illness and substance abuse.

**F3.** Keeping women who do not need to be in a high security facility in the Main Jail is clearly detrimental to their mental health, and to their chances of staying out of jail once released.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's assessment. The Blaine Street Women's Jail is more conducive to programming and a better overall environment. However, mental health and recidivism are more complex issues and cannot be reduced to merely the environment in which one is housed while in custody; nor is the security level of a custodial facility determinative to its effectiveness of future recidivism rates.

**F4.** Reopening Blaine Street and the second unit at Rountree would give the Sheriff's Office much more scope to balance the jail population between the three facilities and would allow some inmates from the Main Jail to move to Rountree and take advantage of the programming available there.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):



**F5.** Lack of programming at the Main Jail is bad for inmate welfare, both their mental health while on the inside, and their ability to stay out of the criminal justice system once released.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff's assessment. There is value in programming for incarcerated persons, and it can have a positive effect on their well-being, should they choose to participate. However, mental health and recidivism are much more complex than issues such as environment and access to programming.

**F6.** Programs such as those run by the Public Defender’s Office and CAFES that reduce recidivism are effective because they give former inmates the mental health and/or substance abuse treatments they need, as well as case management and supportive housing.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

**F7.** Lack of continuing care for released inmates, most especially those with mental illness, SUD and/or who will be homeless after release, significantly contributes to recidivism, which then contributes to the need for a new jail.

- AGREE**
- PARTIALLY DISAGREE**
- DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

**F8.** Some continuing care does exist, but is massively underfunded, especially for former inmates who need supportive housing.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

There is a need for additional continuing care in the community, particularly for those suffering from mental illness or substance use disorders. Supportive housing is especially critical for former inmates who are unhoused and struggling with these challenges. There is also a need to make continuing care that does exist less diffuse and difficult to access.

**F9.** The Main Jail is old, has been overcrowded, and does not meet current requirements for incarceration.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The Main Jail is old, overcrowded and in need of replacement. The Main Jail is not conducive to modern Corrections practices and would not be built the same way under current practices, policies, and community expectations. However, the Main Jail has passed all Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Inspections and does meet current requirements for use as a corrections facility.

**F10.** The Main Jail might be adequate for incarcerating inmates who need to be in a high security facility, providing it can be renovated to meet current incarceration requirements for a much reduced population.

**AGREE**

**PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

**DISAGREE**

**Response explanation** (required for a response other than **Agree**):

The current Main Jail needs to be fully replaced. The building is old, resulting in continual and costly maintenance, and lacks the modern design and infrastructure needed to ensure efficient and secure operations.

A new jail facility can address these shortcomings by incorporating state-of-the-art systems, improved inmate management techniques, and enhanced facilities for staff and inmates alike, while prioritizing the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders through better programming spaces, educational resources, and medical and mental health services. Additionally, a new facility can be designed with sustainability in mind, promoting energy efficiency while creating a safer and more effective environment for both staff and inmates that meets modern correctional standards.

Furthermore, continued operation of multiple facilities in different parts of the County is costly and not an efficient use of limited staffing resources. Consolidating facilities to a smaller geographic area would allow more efficient utilization of staffing.

## Recommendations

**R1.** In the next budget cycle the Board of Supervisors should allocate more funding to the Sheriff's Office to be used to increase Correctional Officer pay, and/or give out increased hiring or retention bonuses as the Sheriff's Office determines. (F1)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

### Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a three-year agreement with the Santa Cruz Correctional Officers Association, resulting in an approximate 11% increase with additional incentives for Supervising Correctional Officers (4%) and a Longevity/Retention Bonus for all Correctional Officers with over eight years of service (3%). Contract provisions intentionally focused on recruitment and retention to address the historical difficulty in filling vacancies for Corrections Officer positions. The challenges faced by Santa Cruz County are not unique and are compounded by the need for extensive backgrounds, 24/7 operations, and the nature of the job.

In addition, the Board approved a recruiting and hiring incentive program in October 2021 that pays \$10,000 (subject to legally required taxes) to a new hire in the classification of Corrections Officer and/or lateral transfer upon completion of the new hire probationary period, which is one year or 2080 County service hours. These efforts have yielded 34 new hires since October 2021. County staff will continue working collaboratively on strategies to stabilize the Corrections workforce, which is critical to sustaining stable and experienced personnel in performing their essential work to ensure the safety and care of all individuals incarcerated.

**R5.** The Public Defender’s Office should receive funding in the next budget cycle to provide adequate anti recidivism programs. (F7 – F9)

**HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done

**HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

**REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

**WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

**Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:**

The FY 2023-24 budget provides the Public Defender’s Office with funding to provide holistic representation to the people they represent. This holistic model of representation supports countywide efforts to reduce recidivism and connect people to meaningful, stabilizing services and support in the community. Funding allocations are determined annually as part of the budget cycle. The FY 2024-25 budget will be developed beginning in fall 2023 and ending in spring 2024 during which time staff will determine how much additional funding is available to support these programs.



**R6.** In the next budget cycle, County Behavioral Health should be funded to adequately treat released inmates with mental illness, including supportive housing where necessary. (F6 – F9)

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**HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done

—

**HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe

**-x-**

**REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)

—

**WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

**Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:**

The FY 2023-24 budget provides County Behavioral Health with funding to treat mental illness and provide supportive housing to those in need of these services, including released inmates. Funding allocations are determined annually as part of the budget cycle. The FY 2024-25 budget will be developed beginning in fall 2023 and ending in spring 2024 during which time staff will determine how much additional funding is available to support these programs.

**R7.** The Sheriff's Office should commission a study to determine the most effective use of the three jails and any modifications to existing facilities needed to house the expected jail population into the future. This study should be completed by the end of 2024. (F4, F9, F10)

- HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

**Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:**

The Sheriff's Office and County Administrative Office have been exploring the best approach to conduct this study, known as a Facility Needs Assessment. In the next six months, they will determine whether to issue a Request for Proposals to identify a consultant for this assessment.