



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

County of Napa 2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury



Consolidated Final Report



**County of Napa Civil Grand Jury
1754 Second Street, Suite D
Napa, CA 94559**

Serving Napa County & Its Citizens Since Statehood

June 30, 2025

To the Citizens of Napa County and the Hon. Scott R.L. Young, Napa County Superior Court Presiding Judge and Civil Grand Jury Judicial Liaison:

California maintains its unique position as being the only state which annually empanels a Civil Grand Jury. California's annual empanelment of a civil grand jury in each of its 58 counties is enshrined in its constitution and represents the State's commitment to effective and efficient governance.

The civil grand jury's duty is to act as a watchdog to both county and local governments to help ensure the efficacy of government and to investigate, and report on, concerns of which it is, or those of which it is made, aware. To this end, the 2024-2025 civil grand jury reviewed multiple topics, selecting four for a full investigation and report. Moreover, it fulfilled its responsibility to review detention centers within the county, issuing a statement describing that review in summary.

An additional focus of this year's civil grand jury was to reach a broader audience with our reporting. To support this effort, we looked at the use of social media, attended and presented at public meetings of the Board of Supervisors and various School Boards and became the first Napa County civil grand jury to publish its reports in both English and Spanish. The civil grand jury believes these methods to be effective in reaching a broader audience and would welcome all future juries to consider other steps that might create a stronger impact.

The Consolidated Report that follows is a compilation of several months of investigation by the 16 members of this year's jury. Many interviews with the stakeholders of the various investigations were conducted and thousands of pages of documentation reviewed and referenced. The effort was a heavy lift, and I want to both congratulate and commend the jurors who sacrificed a significant amount of their time to gather and verify the information and documentation required by these reports. They worked

together tirelessly and professionally, with much respect towards one another earning my enduring appreciation and esteem for the citizens that they are.

It has been my honor to serve as this year's foreperson and as a member of the 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Roosa

Arthur Roosa
Foreperson
2024-2025 Civil Grand Jury

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2024-2025 Grand Jury Membership Roster

Samuel Brinker	Napa
Paul Cantey	Napa
John Dunbar	Napa
Kathy Fritz	Napa
Addison Holmes	Napa
Deborah McGrath	Napa
Kimberly McMaster	Napa
Patrick Muleady	Napa
Mary Nevius	Napa
Jose Palma	American Canyon
Arthur Roosa	Napa
Marie Skillings	Napa
Robert Van Der Velde	Napa
Russell Wilsey	Napa
Margaret Woodard	Napa
Richard Yarlott	Napa



Front Row: Marie Skillings, Richard Yarlott, Mary Nevius, Hon. Scott R.L. Young, Arthur Roosa, John Dunbar, Margaret Woodard, Robert Van Der Velde
 Back Row: Kathy Fritz, Paul Cantey, Patrick Muleady, Russell Wilsey, Kimberly McMaster, Samuel Brinker, Deborah McGrath, Jose Palma

Acknowledgements

The 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury acknowledges the following individuals for their assistance to and support of the Civil Grand Jury:

- Hon. Scott R. L. Young, Judicial Liaison, Napa County Superior Court
- Silva Darbinian, Chief Deputy County Counsel, Napa County
- Bob Fleshman, Chief Executive Officer, Napa County Superior Court
- Heidi Van de Ryt, Court Executive Assistant, Napa County Superior Court
- Oscar Ortiz, Napa County Sheriff
- Tracy Schulze, Napa County Auditor-Controller
- Daniel Sanchez, Senior Management Analyst, Napa County
- Kyung Lee, Napa County ITS
- Alice Danner, Staff Services Analyst, Napa County
- The Peter and Vernice Gasser Foundation, Nancy Watt, Chief Executive Officer
- Mitch Wippen, Chief Operations Officer, The Gasser Foundation
- Napa Chapter, California Civil Grand Jury Association
- Dan Evans, Editor, *Napa Valley Register*
- Laura Gregory, photographer, Grand Jury group photo
- Maggy Walton and Napa Printing

2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury Final Reports

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A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2024-2025

April 23, 2025

FINAL REPORT

**The Votes Are In -
and Were Counted Securely and Accurately**

**A Look Inside Napa County's
2024 General Election Process**

SUMMARY

Questions regarding the validity of elections across the United States grew out of public claims of fraud, miscounts and unlawful behavior related to the 2020 General Election. In response, the 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury investigated the safety, accuracy, and security of the election process for the 2024 General Election in Napa County.

The Civil Grand Jury conducted its investigation using three methods: interviews, research, and first-person observations of the election processes and procedures. As a result of this investigation, the Civil Grand Jury determined that the 2024 election process in Napa County followed local, state and federal regulations and laws and was safe, secure, and executed with integrity.

After a thorough review of the detailed regulations and procedures performed by and under the supervision of Napa County's Registrar of Voters, the Civil Grand Jury found the County Elections staff to be dedicated and committed to completing their duties, exhibiting expert knowledge of the regulations and laws governing their work.

The observations and detailed descriptions in the report validate the integrity of the elections in Napa County.

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

- Napa County's 2024 General Election was safe, secure, and performed with integrity.
- The election procedures were followed in accordance with the law.
- The legally required manual audit of the election was secure and accurate.
- The confidentiality of a voter's ballot was maintained and protected throughout the entire election process.
- No eligible vote, cast in the prescribed manner, was found to be uncounted.
- The Napa County election computer systems were secure.
- The Voter Registration Database was maintained accurately.
- The election process was transparent, and observers were welcomed and encouraged to witness the activity.
- The Napa County Elections Division's office workspace was inadequate and warrants improvement.
- Napa County Elections Division website lacked information and organization to assist voters and the community in an easy-to-understand format.

- Napa County Elections Division did not maintain its own social media accounts as required by the Napa County Social Media Use Policy, leading to personnel utilizing personal accounts for county business.
- Napa County Elections Division outreach lacked effective strategies to target soon-to-be-of-age eligible voters.

BACKGROUND

The Napa County Civil Grand Jury chose to investigate the safety, accuracy, and security of the 2024 General Election process in Napa County due to public accusations of fraud, miscounts, and unlawful behavior related to the 2020 General Election across the country.

The 2024 General Election in Napa County, which occurred on November 5, 2024, included 60 voting contests spread over 206 different precincts.¹ Of the 85,150 registered voters in Napa County, 66,634 votes were cast, totaling approximately 78% of registered voters. While most Napa County voters chose mail-in ballots (61,783), live ballots totaled 4,851.²

The primary focus of the Civil Grand Jury investigation was centered on addressing a series of questions:

- Are poll books maintained accurately?
- Can a person vote twice?
- Can a person vote in the place of someone else?
- Are ballots protected and kept confidential?
- Are computer systems used in voting secure?
- Is every vote counted?

METHODOLOGY

Civil Grand Jury members researched local, state, and federal laws and regulations for elections. These laws and regulations described local procedures in detail and limited variation or interpretation of the process.

The Civil Grand Jury conducted interviews with members of the Napa County Elections Division staff and Napa County employees about their general roles and responsibilities during an election in Napa County. Jury members also observed election activities in person. The Civil Grand Jury selected voting centers in Napa County to observe the facilities, processes, and procedures, and observed all the at-large processes at the Napa County Elections Division office on First Street in Napa.

¹ November 5, 2024 General Election Napa County Election Division Final Certified Results, available via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/DocumentCenter/View/35129/Final-Certified-Summary-Report-2024-PDF>

² Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

The investigation also included monitoring of Napa County Elections Division policy and procedures and confirmed compliance with state and federal law.

DISCUSSION

Accurate Maintenance of Poll Books

Voter Registration

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act) permitted voters to update their voter registration, specifically their address, upon renewing or obtaining a driver's license or REAL ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The Act removes an important roadblock, increasing voter accessibility for eligible voters.³

Voters may also register at the California Secretary of State's Online Voter Registration page or at the Napa County Elections Division office. A first-time voter needs to provide a valid driver's license, REAL ID or the last four digits of their Social Security Number to confirm their United States citizenship and residency in Napa County.

All registered voters receive, via the United States Postal Service (USPS), their mail-in ballot sent to their last known address. Updates to a voter's address may be resolved via the DMV, USPS or directly with the Napa County Elections Division, depending upon the circumstances. Any mail-in ballots returned to the Elections Division due to an address discrepancy await the voter's initiative to resolve the issue.

Voter Registration Database

The Voter Registration Database contains registered voter information such as name, address, voting precinct, if the voter was issued a mail-in ballot, and if identification needs to be verified.⁴ The accuracy of the Napa County Voter Registration Database is maintained with monthly updates from information provided by the DMV, Department of Health and Human Services deceased persons update, and from the Department of Corrections for those recently incarcerated with a felony conviction. This database

³ California National Voter Registration Act Manual, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/nvra/laws-standards/nvra-manual>

⁴ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

maintains changes of address, changes based on minimum voting age (currently 18), deaths, and incarcerations.⁵

Designated Voter Registration database computers at all vote centers are on a secure, closed network and only have access to the database information.⁶

Generation of Ballots

Napa County Elections Division staff worked with a state approved vendor to generate ballots. This vendor received a list of names and addresses for registered voters from the Voter Registration Database to print and mail ballots and return envelopes. Voters could return completed ballots by mail, in person to the Elections Office, or at an official ballot drop off location.

Mail-in envelopes have barcodes that are used to identify an individual voter's envelope. Only the first ballot cast by a voter, based on the date received by Elections Office personnel, whether by mail, in person at the Elections Office, or at an official ballot drop off location, are considered the eligible ballot that moves forward to be counted.⁷

Voting Twice: Is It Possible?

Voting In-Person

To assist in the authentication of the process, a selected number of Civil Grand Jury members voted in-person to observe the processes for a physical ballot and an electronic marked ballot. In both scenarios, the voter completed a voter identification form to allow the Voter Registration Database staff at the Vote Center to verify the address and voting precinct. The voter was able select either a paper ballot or an electronic marking ballot. See examples in Appendix A and Appendix B.

⁵ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

⁶ California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system> ; and California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> ; and California Secretary of State, Voter's Choice Act, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>

⁷ California Secretary of State, Electronic Poll Books, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/poll-books> and California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

Electronic ballots were read by a machine connected only to its own printer. The machine was activated by a microchipped card, which an eligible voter acquired from election staff at the time of voting.

Mail-in Ballots

The instructions contained in the mail-in ballot included how to sign and return the envelope via USPS or at a drop-box location. This signature was critical to voter identification and was described in the signature verification section. Ballots returned via USPS followed USPS procedures documented and described via:

<https://about.usps.com/what/government-services/election-mail/>.

The Napa County Registrar of Voters confirmed receipt from the USPS any election mail postmarked by the election deadline for seven days following Election Day. This ensured that voters whose ballots may have had a flaw or required signature verification had an opportunity to correct the issue in time to have their ballots counted.

Ballot Drop Boxes and Chain of Custody

Drop box locations were determined by the County Registrar of Voters using population, geographic area, voter convenience, proximity to public transportation, security and funding data.⁸ The County Registrar of Voters determined that 11 drop box locations throughout the County were warranted in 2024.⁹

The County Registrar of Voters was responsible for establishing drop-box collection of ballots and chain of custody procedures. Napa County followed the prescribed procedures set forth by the Secretary of State, including chain of custody for all ballot collections.¹⁰

Voters were also able to bring their mail-in ballot to any vote center to vote using a ‘live’ ballot. This process involved ‘spoiling’ the mail-in ballot to prevent two ballots being cast by one voter. A vote center employee confirmed the precinct of the voter and eliminated or “spoiled” their mail-in ballot from being counted. This voter information was immediately updated in the Voter Registration Database.

⁸ California Secretary of State, Vote-by-Mail Ballot Drop Boxes and Vote-by-Mail Drop-Off Locations, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/vote-mail-ballot-drop-boxes-and-drop-locations>

⁹ Napa County, Drop Box Locations, accessed via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/2355/Drop-Box-Locations>

¹⁰ Ibid.

Preventing Casting a Ballot That's Not Your Own

Sorting Ballots

In a dedicated room, completed ballots held within their mail-in envelopes were stored in trays for processing. The sorting process of mail-in envelopes occurred in multiple steps resulting in an organization by precinct. This precinct organization was not required, but Napa County chose to do so to make the mandated manual recount process more efficient.

Signature Verification

Signature verification was performed by Elections Division staff and occurred on desktop computers on a closed network. Software facilitated the California Secretary of State's regulations to ensure a consistent approach to signature verification.¹¹ The regulations required that elections officials "must compare the signature on a voted vote-by-mail envelope...to the voter's signature(s) in the voter's registration record prior to counting a ballot."¹²

The overall training and process of signature verification followed the California Secretary of State's Signature Verification code of regulations that states: "examination of the signature shall be liberally construed in the favor of the voter."¹³ Signature verification cards and letters were sent out by Napa County Elections Division as soon as they received mail-in ballots with problematic signatures. This process of 'curing' the signature required the voter to return the card to the Elections Division Office with a resolved signature. This card had to be received by the elections official no later than 5 PM two days prior to the certification of the election.¹⁴ Until the signature was verified, the mail-in envelope containing the ballot was set aside and remained in the secure sorting room.

Out of the 61,783 votes cast by mail-in ballot for 2024 General Election in Napa County, 244 signatures were challenged without curing the signature, for a 99.6% signature verification rate.¹⁵

¹¹ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ California Legislative Information: Elections Code accessed via: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=ELEC§ionNum=3019

¹⁵ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

Ballots are Confidential and Protected

Boards/Canvassing

The boards/canvassing process began with the delivery of a tray of mail-in envelopes sorted by voting precinct to groups of three or four individuals. As prescribed by regulation, a specifically sequenced process separated the ballots from their mail-in envelopes and prepared the ballots for the scanning and counting of votes. Any damaged ballots that would prevent a successful scan were set aside for duplication (see process as described below). Ballots were separated from the envelopes and no longer had voter information. They were protected and sealed in rooms that were locked, alarmed, and had constant video coverage. At the end of the boards/canvassing, sealed boxes of ballots, organized by precinct, were delivered to the counting room.

Voting Computer Security

Preparation for Counting Ballots

In preparation for the election, Napa County performed its logic and accuracy quality assurance process on the official counting/scanning equipment. In accordance with the law and California Secretary of State regulations, testing was completed on February 9, 2024, and documented the equipment functioning as expected in preparation for the 2024 General Election.¹⁶

Napa County utilized Dominion Voting Systems for its counting/scanning and ballot adjudication processes. This system was approved by the California Secretary of State, having met specific requirements.¹⁷ Had there been any problems during the election counting/scanning of ballots, the vendor's technical staff were available for assistance.

Every Vote is Counted

Ballot Counting

Sealed boxes of ballots from the boards/canvassing process were opened by authorized staff engaged in the scanning. In most cases, if a ballot was rejected by the scanner due to errors reading the tick marks, tears, crease or fold problems, the individual conducting the scanning resolved the problem. An example ballot is included

¹⁶ California Secretary of State, Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 24043, RE: Voting Systems: Logic and Accuracy Test Reporting, January 25, 2024, accessed via:

<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/2024/january/24043nr.pdf>

¹⁷ California Secretary of State, Certified Voting Technologies Used by County, accessed via:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ovsta/frequently-requested-information/voting-systems-used-counties>

in Appendix B. If a ballot still could not be scanned, the Elections personnel conducting the scanning removed the page(s) and placed them in the duplication bag. To maintain tracking and accountability, the Elections staff made a note updating the physical count for the box seal.

If valid, the contest was tallied and maintained by the system until a report was generated by a user. No vote count was available until manually requested, which occurred during reporting. If a contest had an invalid vote such as an over-vote, where a voter voted for more than the choices available in a contest, the vote was not counted for that specific contest, and its scan was placed in a watch folder for the ballot adjudication process.

Ballot Adjudication

Adjudication is defined: “to decide the correctness of a ballot and accept or deny the ballot.”¹⁸ The adjudication process was performed by trained Elections staff. Staff selected a batch number of scanned ballots to perform the adjudication. The Civil Grand Jury found the Vote Counting Standards, established by the California Secretary of State, to be useful in researching ballot adjudication, and a relevant excerpt is available in Appendix C.

The standards for valid and invalid ballots are detailed. According to regulation, there are more reasons to honor the intent of the voter than to mark a contest invalid.¹⁹ The Civil Grand Jury found Napa County Elections Division performed the adjudication process in accordance with the law.

Duplication of a Ballot

“(A) duplicated ballot is a ballot which is a true copy of the originally cast ballot. It is created when damage, improper marking or some other action/defect prevents the original ballot from being read by a ballot tabulating machine and is used to properly process and count the votes originally cast by the voter. A duplicated ballot also is necessary for a ballot cast using a remote accessible vote-by-mail ballot.”²⁰

Napa County Elections Division staff operated in a group of four people when it was necessary to duplicate ballots using electronic marking machines. One person held and

¹⁸ California Secretary of State, Statewide Voter Registration Systems, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/statewide-voter-registration-system>

¹⁹ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

²⁰ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

read aloud the original ballot. A second individual witnessed the accuracy of what was stated as the vote. A third individual stood at the electronic marking machine and marked the called-out vote. A fourth individual confirmed the mark was accurate. For the 2024 General Election, Napa County duplicated 2,411 ballots, or 3.62% of those returned.²¹

Reporting Results

Napa County, like all other California counties, provided elections results in a series of reporting instances. The first report for Napa County was on election night at 8:01 p.m. local time and included all ballots cast in-person on election day. This initial report included early voting ballots deposited at vote centers or drop boxes, as well as mail-in ballots received by noon the Saturday before election day. Reporting thereafter was provided at determined increments based upon volume of ballots received until every identified eligible vote was counted.

The results were made available on the Napa County Elections Division website. The results were not easy to find and required following a small link among regular text to get to the reporting page. The Civil Grand Jury recommends a modernization review of the Elections Division website. This is explored further in the website section of the report.

Of the 85,150 registered voters in Napa County, 66,634 cast votes, which was a 78% turnout for the 2024 General Election. No votes were miscounted by the electronic counting machines in service in Napa County and the manual tally, as required by law, matched the electronic count as well.²²

Manual Recount or 1% Manual Tally Audit

A manual recount, also known as the one percent manual tally, has been required by the California Secretary of State since 1998.²³ The manual recount is a one percent count of every contest in a randomly generated one percent of precincts. The manual recount and random generation were only accessed after all identified eligible votes were counted. The total number of ballots audited across these two categories was 3,597 ballots, or 5.40% of the overall ballots for the 2024 General Election.²⁴

²¹ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

²² Report of 1% Manual Tally, Napa County, December 3, 2024, appendix E.

²³ California Secretary of State, One Percent Manual Tally, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/one-percent-manual-tally> ; and California Elections Code 15360, One Percent Manual Tally [15360- 15360.], accessed via: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=ELEC§ionNum=15360

²⁴ Napa County Elections Division, Vote Analysis, November 5, 2024 General Election.

The manual tally process, observed by Civil Grand Jury members, was followed in accordance with the law. For the 2024 General Election, “Napa County did not have any discrepancies on the Manual Tally” and achieved 100% accuracy.²⁵

Election Certification

All election results were required to be complete and certified by December 3, 2024, within 30 days of election day.²⁶ The Napa County Registrar of Voters sent a certified statement, available in Appendix D, to the California Secretary of State once all eligible ballots had been counted. Certified results were also posted on the County’s website.

Records Management

All digital and physical election documentation and materials, including ballots and mail-in envelopes, were sent to the Napa County Records Center. The records management process at the Napa County Records Center is set forth by the California Secretary of State and requires retention for 22 months after the certification of the election on December 3, 2024.²⁷

Outreach

As a requirement of the Voter’s Choice Act of 2016, California counties must develop an Election Administration Plan (EAP) or outreach plan in collaboration with the public.²⁸ This plan also sets forth how county elections officials utilize social media, newspapers, mail, radio, and television to disseminate voter information. Napa County’s EAP can be accessed via: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/2242/Election-Administration-Plan>.

Napa County Elections Division is required to use Napa County’s official government social media accounts. However, in 2024, it was observed that the Napa County Registrar of Voters used personal social media accounts for some voter outreach.

²⁵ Report of 1% Manual Tally, Napa County, December 3, 2024, appendix E.

²⁶ California Secretary of State, Ballot Counting, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/ballot-counting> ; and California Secretary of State, News Release: “California’s Vote Counting Process: By Law, Counting Can Take Up to 30 Days to Ensure Voters’ Rights and Integrity of Elections”, November 15, 2022, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/news-releases-and-advisories/2022-news-releases-and-advisories/californias-vote-counting-process-law-counting-can-take-30-days-ensure-voters-rights-and-integrity-elections>

²⁷ California Secretary of State, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum # 22216, RE: General Election: Preservation of Election Materials, September 9, 2022, accessed via: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ccrov/2022/september/22216sr.pdf>

California Secretary of State, Records Management Handbook, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/records-management-and-appraisal/records-management-handbook>

²⁸ California Secretary of State, Voter’s Choice Act, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail>

Issues with Napa County Elections Division social media presence was previously documented in a 2020-2021 Napa County Civil Grand Jury Report.²⁹

Napa County's Social Media Use Policy states that "Napa County Department Heads...must designate authorized Social Media administrators."³⁰

The Civil Grand Jury recommends Napa County Elections Division appoint a social media administrator to configure social media accounts for the division, removing any personal accounts from involvement in official county business.

The Civil Grand Jury further recommends that additional outreach to juveniles or those coming of voting age, be incorporated into future iterations of the Napa County EAP. While California Election Code 2105.7 provides for such outreach by the Napa County Juvenile Detention Center, that effort is restricted to those detained and, as such, has limited effect. General voter information should be provided by the Napa County Elections Office for public posting at juvenile locations throughout the county, including community centers and other public and event spaces, to reach more individuals approaching voting age.

Napa County Elections Website

The Civil Grand Jury review of the Napa County Elections website found the site lacked cohesive information and proper links to related material, as well as other challenges to accessing information. Additionally, documentation was found on pages not accessible to or from the Elections pages.

The Elections website is operated by Napa County's webmaster within Countywide Communications Division and would benefit from updated website standards as recommended in the 2023-2024 Civil Grand Jury Report.³¹

While Elections Division staff demonstrated expert knowledge, backed up by process and procedural documentation held under statute and other regulations, the website presented little of this information to the public. The Civil Grand Jury recommends a review, reorganization and a modernization of the Elections content and website occur.

²⁹ Napa County Civil Grand Jury, Inquiry Report, 2019-2020, Napa County Elections: Results You Can Count On, accessed via: <https://www.napa.courts.ca.gov/system/files/napa-county-elections-results-you-can-count-c.pdf>

³⁰ Napa County Social Media Use Policy, accessed via: <https://services.countyofnapa.org/AgendaNet/DownloadDocument.aspx?type=BOS&doctype=ATTACHMENT&id=22227>

³¹ Napa County Civil Grand Jury, 2023-2024, Napa County's Communication with Its Citizens, accessed via: <https://www.napa.courts.ca.gov/system/files/general/napa-countys-communication-its-citizens.pdf>

Accessibility in Voting

While the Civil Grand Jury did not observe all voting center locations in Napa County, those that were observed met accessibility requirements for individuals with mobility issues. Civil Grand Jury members also observed voting materials in a variety of languages. Napa County provided volunteers who made recommendations to improve voter access for voting and to elections materials for voters with disabilities or those with lower English proficiency. The Voting Accessibility Advisory and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee had input and collaboration with the Napa County Elections Division. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.countyofnapa.org/401/Get-Involved>.

Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail Ballot

Remote voting has been available for many years with expansions to cover military, overseas voters, and voters with disabilities. Different than a mail-in ballot, the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail or RAVBM is mainly for those requiring assistance in reading and/or marking their ballots. RAVBM permits these voters to vote privately and independently without voting via the internet. Napa County Elections Division has specific procedures related to the RAVBM, and they are in accordance with the law.³²

Napa County Elections Division Workspace

Civil Grand Jury members observed multiple activities on different days throughout the election process at the Elections Office on Second Street in Napa. During these visits, jury members noted workspace was limited, especially for rooms dedicated to perform the complex functions of elections procedures. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County Board of Supervisors, in collaboration with the Registrar of Voters, review workspace requirements and establish a plan for addressing shortcomings with the present work environment.

³² California Secretary of State, Ballot Counting, accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/ballot-counting> ; and California Secretary of State, Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail (RAVBM), accessed via: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/remote-accessible-vote-mail>

FINDINGS

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

F1. Napa County's 2024 General Election was safe, secure, and performed with integrity.

F2. The 2024 election procedures were followed in accordance with the law.

F3. No eligible vote cast in the prescribed manner was found to be uncounted.

F4. The Napa County election computer systems were secure.

F5. The Voter Registration Database was maintained accurately.

F6. The confidentiality of a voter's ballot was maintained and protected throughout the entire election process.

F7. The legally required manual audit of the election was secure and accurate.

F8. The election process was transparent, and observers were welcomed and encouraged to witness the activity.

F9. The Napa County Elections Division's office workspace was inadequate and warrants improvement.

F10. Napa County Elections Division website is lacking information and organization to assist voters and the community in an easy-to-understand format.

F11. Napa County Elections Division did not maintain its own social media accounts as required by the Napa County Social Media Use Policy, leading to personnel utilizing personal accounts for county business.

F12. Napa County Elections Division outreach failed to use effective strategies to target soon-to-be-of-age eligible voters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. The Napa County Board of Supervisors examine the need to upgrade the Napa Elections Office to ensure adequate office workspace for future elections. This examination should include collaboration with and input from the Napa County Elections Division staff, and should occur within 60 days, with a report of recommendations released in 45 days.

R2. The Napa County Elections Division review its website for modernization and standards to help the organization of information. The Elections website should include the public reports required by the state. Recommendation for a review and generation of areas of improvement of the website be within 60 days and implementation of changes within 180 days from the identification of the areas of improvement.

R3. The Napa County Elections Division set up and maintain its own social media accounts to distribute voter information, and staff should refrain from using personal accounts to communicate official county business. Both of these recommendations should be implemented within 90 days.

R4. The Napa County Elections Division examine its outreach program directed to those coming of age to vote. This outreach should be added to the next iteration of the Napa County Election Administration Plan (EAP). Materials should be readily available and circulated within 30 days.

COMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury commends the Napa County Elections Division Staff and Registrar of Voters. These individuals executed their duties expertly and conducted their operations in a manner that ensured the elections were safe, secure, and conducted in accordance with the law and procedures. The Elections Division staff governed the process with integrity and transparency.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury requires the Napa County Board of Supervisors to respond to F9 & R1.

The Civil Grand Jury requires the Napa County Registrar of Voters to respond to F9, F10, F11, F12 and R1, R2, R3, and R4.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury invites, but does not require, the Napa County Countywide Communications Division (or the Public Information Officer) to respond to F10 and F11 and R2 and R3.

APPENDIX A:

QR Code Example (Spoiled) Ballot from Electronic Marking Machine

OFFICIAL BALLOT GENERAL ELECTION TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024 COUNTY OF NAPA 4TH CONGRESSIONAL, 3RD STATE SENATE, 4TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS
Instructions to Voters: If you make a mistake, contact Elections Staff before placing your ballot in the envelope or ballot box.

2117551

Ballot Type 13



PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT
KAMALA D. HARRIS / TIM WALZ

UNITED STATES SENATOR, FULL TERM
ADAM B. SCHIFF

UNITED STATES SENATOR, PARTIAL TERM
ADAM B. SCHIFF

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE District 4
MIKE THOMPSON

STATE SENATOR District 3
CHRISTOPHER CABALDON

MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY District 4
CECILIA M. AGUIAR-CURRY

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER Trustee Area 5
GERALD PARROTT

GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER Trustee Area No. 7
JULIANNA HART

MAYOR
SCOTT SEDOLEY

PROPOSITION 2
YES

PROPOSITION 3
YES

PROPOSITION 4
YES

PROPOSITION 5
YES

PROPOSITION 6
YES

PROPOSITION 32
YES

PROPOSITION 33
YES

PROPOSITION 34
NO

PROPOSITION 35
YES

PROPOSITION 36
NO

MEASURE B
BONDS YES

MEASURE U
YES

MEASURE G
YES

SPOLIED

APPENDIX B:

Example Ballot Card with Timing Ticks Marks and Scanning Target

OFFICIAL BALLOT
GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024
COUNTY OF NAPA
4TH CONGRESSIONAL, 3RD STATE SENATE,
4TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS

BALOTA OFICIAL
ELECCIÓN GENERAL
MARTES, 5 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2024
CONDADO DE NAPA
DISTRITOS NOS. 4 DEL CONGRESO,
3 DEL SENADO ESTATAL, 4 DE LA ASAMBLEA

1017770 CARD 1 OF 2
Ballot Type 3

Instructions to Voters:
To vote, completely fill in the oval to the right of your choice. Use a blue or black ink pen to mark your ballot. NO RED INK.
If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

Optional Write-In:
To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, write the person's name in the write-in space and fill in the oval.

Instrucciones para los electores:
Para votar, llene el óvalo completamente al lado derecho del objeto de su elección. Utilice una pluma de tinta azul o negra para marcar su balota. NO UTILICE TINTA ROJA.
Si comete un error, pida una balota nueva.

Para introducir un candidato - opcional:
Para introducir el nombre de un candidato debidamente calificado, escriba el nombre de la persona en el espacio en blanco y llene el óvalo correspondiente.

PARTY-NOMINATED OFFICES CARGOS NOMINADOS POR LOS PARTIDARIOS	VOTER-NOMINATED AND NONPARTISAN OFFICES CARGOS NOMINADOS POR LOS VOTANTES Y NO PARTIDARIOS	US REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS REPRESENTANTE DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS EN EL CONGRESO
<p>Candidates for these offices are the official nominees of the party displayed with their name. Se muestran los nombres de los candidatos oficiales del partido para estos cargos.</p> <p>PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT PRESIDENTE Y VICEPRESIDENTE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vote for One Party Vote por un Partido</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR. For President/Para Presidente</p> <p>NIKOLE SHANAHAN For Vice President/Para Vicepresidenta</p> </div> <div> <p>American Independent Americana Independiente</p> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>CHASE OLIVER For President/Para Presidente</p> <p>MAK TER BAAT For Vice President/Para Vicepresidenta</p> </div> <div> <p>Liberarian Libertaria</p> </div> </div>	<p>Candidates display a party preference (or none) for the information of voters. This is not a party endorsement or approval. Se muestra la preferencia de los candidatos por un partido (o ninguno) para informar a los votantes. Esto no es un respaldo ni aprobación de un partido.</p> <p>VOTER-NOMINATED OFFICES CARGOS NOMINADOS POR LOS VOTANTES</p> <p>There are two U.S. Senate contests on this ballot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One for the regular 6 year term ending January 3, 2031 One for the remainder of the current term ending January 3, 2025 <p>You may vote for both contests</p> <p>Se incluyen dos contiendas del Senado de los EE. UU. en esta balota electoral.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Una para el periodo ordinario de 6 años que termina el 3 de enero de 2031. 	<p>District 4 Distrito 4</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Vote for One Vote por Uno</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p>JOHN MUNN Party Preference: Republican Preferencia de Partido: Republicano Ranchero/Farmer Bancheiro/Agricultor</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>MIKE THOMPSON Party Preference: Democratic Preferencia de Partido: Demócrata Member of Congress Miembro del Congreso</p> </div> <p>STATE SENATOR SENADOR ESTATAL</p> <p>District 3 Distrito 3</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Vote for One Vote por Uno</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>CHRISTOPHER CABALDON Party: Christiana Partido: Christiana</p> </div>

APPENDIX C:

Vote Counting Standards³³

20982. General Vote Counting Standards

The following general standards shall apply in the counting of all ballots and votes, regardless of the voting system used, for both the initial count and for any recount.

A ballot that is not marked as provided by law must be segregated and counted in the manner directed by the elections official. Any ballot that contains personal information, or that is torn, bent, or mutilated shall be segregated as directed by the elections official and a duplicate ballot shall be prepared pursuant to Elections Code section 15210.

A ballot that contains marks or markings not related to an indication of the vote choice for a contest and that are not personal information shall be counted. Duplication is not required unless the ballot contains personal information, or the condition of the ballot or markings on the ballot interfere with the ability of the vote tabulation equipment to tally the ballot.

A vote for any candidate or ballot measure shall not be rejected solely because the voter failed to follow instructions for marking the ballot. If, for any reason, it is impossible to determine the choice of the voter for any candidate or ballot measure, the vote for that candidate or ballot measure shall be considered void.

A mark is considered valid when it is clear that it represents the voter's choice and is the technique consistently used by the voter to indicate his or her selections.

1. Such marks may include, but are not limited to, properly filled-in voting position targets, checkmarks, X's, circles, completed arrows, or any other clear indication of the voter's choice, such as the word "yes" next to a candidate's name or a voting position target for a ballot measure.
2. Conversely, a mark crossed out by the voter, or the word "no" next to a candidate's name or a voting position target for a ballot measure shall not be considered to be a valid vote but will, instead, be deemed an indication that the voter did not choose to cast a vote for that candidate or measure.

³³ California Secretary of State, Signature Verification, Ballot Processing, and Ballot Counting (Emergency Regulations), accessed via:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations>

3. In determining the validity of a partially filled-in voting position target, the consistency of a voter's marks on the entire ballot shall be taken into consideration. A "hesitation mark" such as a dot in the voting position target shall not be considered a valid mark unless it is demonstrated that the voter consistently marked his or her ballot in such a manner.

If a contest is marked with more choices than there are offices to be filled or measures that may prevail, the vote shall not be counted for that contest, but shall be counted in all other contests in which there is no overvote and the voter's choice can be clearly determined.

If a contest is marked with fewer choices than there are offices to be filled or measures that may prevail, the vote choice(s) for all otherwise properly marked candidates or measures shall be counted.

Write-in votes shall be counted pursuant to the provisions established in Elections Code sections 14420, 15342 and 15342.5.

APPENDIX D:

Napa County Certification of Results

**CERTIFICATION OF
COUNTY CLERK/REGISTRAR OF VOTERS OF THE
RESULTS OF THE CANVASS
OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2024,
GENERAL ELECTION**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF Napa

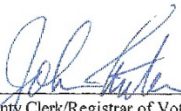
} ss.

I, John Tutour, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters of County of Napa, do hereby certify that, in pursuance of the provisions of Elections Code section 15300, et seq., I did canvass the results of the votes cast in the General Election held in said County on November 5, 2024, for measures and contests that were submitted to the vote of the voters, and that the Statement of Votes Cast, to which this certificate is attached is full, true, and correct.

I hereby set my hand and official seal this 3rd day of December, 2024, at the County of Napa

Seal Affixed





County Clerk/Registrar of Voters
County of Napa
State of California

Canvass Certification of Elections Official
(11/2024)


APPENDIX E:

Napa County Report of 1% Manual Tally, page 1

REPORT OF 1% MANUAL TALLY [Elections Code section 15360]	
County: <u>Napa</u>	
Election: <u>2024 General Election</u>	
Manual tally method used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One Part [section 15360(a)(1)] <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Part [section 15360(a)(2)]	
Date and time notice provided (attach copy of the notice): <div>9/11/2024 6:07 PM</div>	
Internet website where additional information about the manual tally is posted, if applicable: <div>https://www.countyofnapa.org/2972/Ready-Set-Vote</div>	
Date and time the manual tally commenced, beginning with the random selection of precincts and batches (must be after the close of the polls on Election Day): <div>Random was drawn 11/5/2024 at 8:17 pm and began manual tally on 11/22/2024 at 8:00 am</div>	
Date and time the manual tally finished: <div>11/26/2024 at 4:30 pm</div>	
Estimated number of members of the public who observed the process: <div>4</div>	
Total number of ballots counted in this election (official canvass numbers):	
Polling place / vote center ballots (including provisionals)	4,851
Vote-by-mail ballots	61,783
Total number of ballots manually tallied:	
Polling place / vote center ballots (including provisionals)	241
Vote-by-mail ballots	3,356

APPENDIX E:

Napa County Report of 1% Manual Tally, page 2

Precincts in the county for this election (attach list describing all precincts with the number of ballots in each, indicating whether ballots are polling place / vote center, vote-by-mail, or provisional):	
Total number of precincts in the election	204
Total number of precincts selected for the manual tally	11
Batches of vote-by-mail or provisional ballots (attach list describing each batch with the number of ballots in each, indicating whether ballots are polling place / vote center, vote-by-mail, or provisional):	
Total number of batches in the election	
Total number of batches selected for the manual tally	N/A
Method used to choose precincts and batch of ballots to manually tally (include description of random selection method):	
<p>We utilized DFM's random precinct generator, Job EMMR082, for our precinct selection process. The job was generated by a volunteer from the public. This job selects 1% of precincts at random and includes any additional precincts required to cover contests not initially included in the 1% selection. This approach ensures a comprehensive and unbiased selection of precincts for our analysis.</p>	
<i>attach additional pages if necessary</i>	
Description of any discrepancies noted (include details about each discrepancy and how each was resolved; also include anything unusual observed during the manual tally process or anything that may improve the manual tally process):	
<p>Napa County did not have any discrepancies on the Manual Tally.</p>	
<i>attach additional pages if necessary</i>	
This report is submitted pursuant to Elections Code section 15360(f).	
Submitted on this date: 12/3/24 by:	
Elections Official Name: John Tuteur	Signature: 
EMAIL Form	



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2024-2025

March 21, 2025

FINAL REPORT

**Helping Napa Public Schools Make the Grade:
Does Bond Financing Pass the Test?**

SUMMARY

In the 2024 General Election, Napa voters narrowly approved Measure B, a \$230 million local bond measure to finance capital projects planned for the Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD). The 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury observed that the NVUSD Board of Trustees has placed four bond measures on ballots in the last six general elections. The Civil Grand Jury decided to investigate the appropriateness and effectiveness of this reliance on bond financing.

Most public school districts in California depend on state financial support which can fluctuate significantly based on the State's annual financial conditions, which makes local budgeting of the resources needed for expensive and often multi-year initiatives challenging and complicated. Raising local revenues through bond sales can help stabilize local school district financing. Measure B funds are committed for repairs, renovations and classroom updates for Napa-based campuses within NVUSD.

After a seven-month investigation, the Civil Grand Jury made six findings of facts and six recommendations regarding NVUSD's use of bond financing for capital projects and the oversight of the allocation of funds.

- **Reliance on Bond Financing:** Bond financing is the primary source of funding for NVUSD capital needs. The Civil Grand Jury recommends NVUSD maintain an ongoing campaign using multiple media outlets and distribution tools to inform stakeholders and the general public on the details and progress of the projects associated with bond fund allocations.
- **Web Accessibility and Public Trust:** The NVUSD website is complex to navigate, making it challenging to access bond financial data and reports. Noting narrow bond election results, the Civil Grand Jury recommends that NVUSD proactively distribute information and updates to inform the general public on how bond funds are being allocated and used, to help build community trust.
- **Use of Bonds for Salaries:** While permissible in limited circumstances, using bond funds for NVUSD employee salaries may reduce public trust by contradicting public pledges and bond ballot language that states, "no funds for administrators". The Civil Grand Jury recommends NVUSD refrain from using bond funds for any district salaries, operating expenses or other administrative activities.
- **Public Awareness of Citizen Bond Oversight Committees:** California's Proposition 39 (2000) requires school boards to establish independent oversight committees and conduct annual financial and performance audits until all bond funds are

spent. The Civil Grand Jury recommends NVUSD inform the general public about the role of bond oversight committees and actively encourage participation from stakeholder groups, especially community members and parents of students, to participate on such committees.

- **Citizen Bond Oversight Committee Training:** NVUSD Bond Oversight Committees lack thorough and independent training on the roles, scope of work, and authority of its members. The Civil Grand Jury recommends NVUSD provide independent training of Citizen Bond Oversight Committees, starting with the new Measure B committee.
- **Facilities Master Plan and Public Participation:** NVUSD's 2016-2025 Facilities Master Plan was developed and implemented with only limited public participation. The Civil Grand Jury recommends NVUSD fully implement its existing facilities planning policy by establishing a Facilities Advisory Committee consisting of staff, parents/guardians and business, local government, and other community representatives.

Prior to the publication of this report, the Civil Grand Jury learned that NVUSD began implementing elements of these recommendations shortly after Measure B was certified in December of 2024. The Civil Grand Jury commends the district staff and Board of Trustees for these actions.

METHODOLOGY

The 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury interviewed officials from the Napa County Office of Education and the Napa Valley Unified School District, as well as members of the Measure H and Measure A2 Bond Oversight Committees. Members of the Civil Grand Jury attended meetings of the Measure H and Measure A2 Bond Oversight Committees.

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed the budgets of the Napa Valley Unified School District, audits of Measure H bond spending, the annual reports of the Measure H Bond Oversight Committee, the minutes and recordings of Bond Oversight Committees, and the documents cited below in this report.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury observed that the Napa Valley Unified School District (“NVUSD” or “district”) Board of Trustees has placed four bond measures on the ballots in the last six general elections. The Civil Grand Jury decided to investigate whether the district is relying appropriately on bond funding to finance capital projects in its 10-year Facilities Master Plan. The Civil Grand Jury’s review was limited to the use of bond financing, not the specifics, merits, or prioritization of any particular bond-funded projects.

California School Financing

K-12 public education financing in California has a complex structure. To assist policy makers, California school business officers have developed “The Bottom Line”³⁴, a guide to essential information about school business and finance. K-12 funding is generally provided through a combination of local, state, and federal sources.

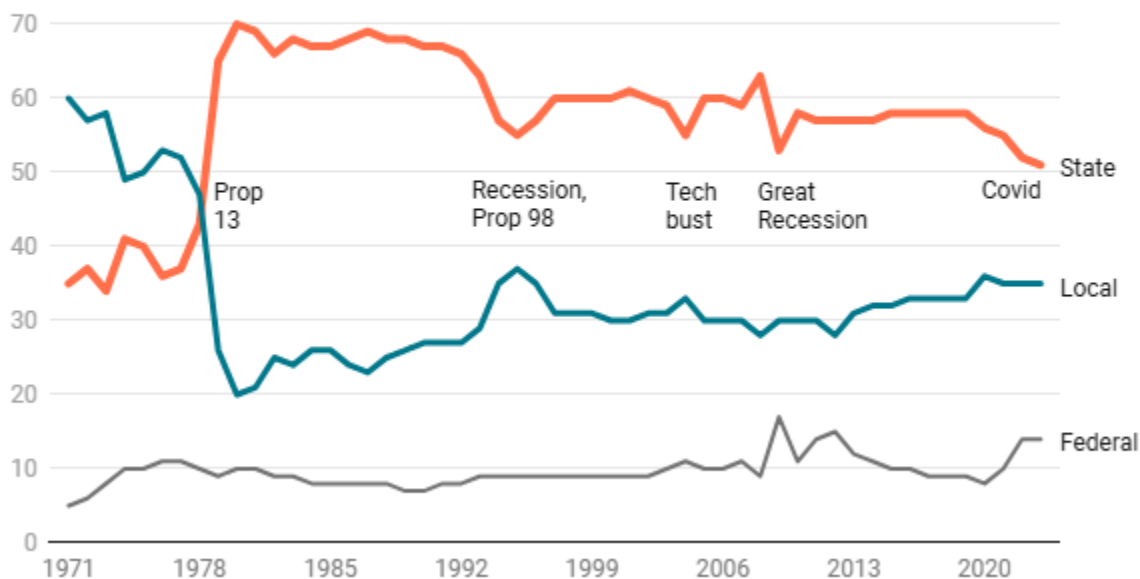
Proposition 13, passed in 1978, sharply curtailed local property taxes, causing increased reliance on state funding, primarily through income taxes. Proposition 13 limited property taxes to 1% of assessed value, limited annual increases due to inflation to 2% per year, and permitted reassessments of value only when properties changed hands. It also required a two-thirds majority approval by voters for any local “special purpose” taxes.

³⁴ California Association of School Business Officials, “The Bottom Line: A CASBO guide on school business and finance in California” (2023) available at <https://www.casbo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CASBO-Guide-to-School-Business-and-Finance.pdf>.

Ten years later, in 1998, California voters passed Proposition 98, which mandates minimum education spending. In 2013, the California Legislature passed the Local Control Funding Formula (“LCFF”) which combined a myriad of previously existing K–12 funding streams, including revenue limits, general purpose block grants, and most state categorical programs.³⁵

Revenue sources for California K-12 schools since 1970

Percentage of public school funding from state, local, and federal sources



36

LCFF funding provides an allocation to each district based primarily on average daily attendance, supplemented by additional allocations based on “unduplicated percentage of targeted disadvantaged pupils. Targeted pupils are those classified as English learners (EL), meet income requirements to receive a free or reduced-price meal (FRPM), foster youth, or any combination of these factors (unduplicated count).”³⁷ Local property taxes are used to meet the LCFF allocation, and the state funds for any shortfall beyond this level. If local property taxes exceed the LCFF allocation, the district retains this additional revenue and does not receive LCFF funding, though remains eligible for various categorical funding for specific purposes. These districts are referred

³⁵ California Department of Education, “Local Control Funding Formula Overview”, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>.

³⁶ This chart is from Ed 100, “What are Basic Aid districts”, <https://ed100.org/blog/basic-aid>.

³⁷ California Department of Education, “Local Control Funding Formula Overview”, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>.

to as “basic aid”, “excess revenue”, or “community supported” districts. Although the property tax base in Napa County has been rising each year for many years due to increased property values, NVUSD is not a “basic aid”, “excess revenue” or “community supported” district, though it may meet the criteria in coming years.³⁸

The “local control” of LCFF allocations provides broader flexibility for local school districts to use funding to meet local needs and includes a requirement for Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP) for each district to set goals, plan actions, and leverage resources to meet those goals to improve student outcomes. Although flexible,

“... the amount of actual, discretionary money available from year to year for school districts can be very limited. The Base Grant must primarily support core expenses for teacher and staff salaries and health benefits, which account for the largest percentage of school expenses (typically 85-90% of a district’s budget). Fixed costs for categories such as utilities and maintenance must also come out of the base. The state has also increased the obligation of districts to fund retirement and pension costs. Fiscal pressure against the Base Grant can be extreme, especially when coupled with inflation increasing faster than the growth in school districts’ annual, ongoing LCFF base revenues and cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).”³⁹

Districts are also required to maintain a minimum 3% reserve for contingencies (though encouraged to maintain reserves closer to 2 months of operating expenses, or 16.6%), and devote at least 3% of general unrestricted funds to facilities and maintenance.⁴⁰ These fiscal pressures have limited the ability of school districts, including NVUSD, to use general funds to address long-term facility needs. Instead, most districts turn to bond financing, combined with matching state funds, for capital projects. For example, in the most recent 2024 general election, 18 North Bay Area public school districts sought bond funding (14 passed), and 266 local school bond measures were on the ballot statewide, of which 204 or 77% passed, for a total of \$45.4 billion in bonds.⁴¹

³⁸ Calistoga Unified, St. Helena Unified, Howell Mountain Elementary and Pope Valley Elementary Districts are all “community supported” districts, as local property tax revenues exceed the LCFF allocations, as is the Napa Valley Community College District under a similar funding formula for community colleges. For a useful explanation of basic aid or community supported districts, see Ed 100, “What are Basic Aid Districts”, <https://ed100.org/blog/basic-aid>.

³⁹ California Association of School Business Officials, “The Bottom Line: A CASBO guide on school business and finance in California” (2023), page 4, <https://www.casbo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CASBO-Guide-to-School-Business-and-Finance.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Cal. Code Regs. Title 5 (Education) § 15450.

⁴¹ California Local Government Finance Almanac, “Local Measure Results: November 2024”, <https://californiacityfinance.com/Votes2411final.pdf>

Over the past 20 years, California voters approved \$181 billion in local bonds for public school and community college facility projects.⁴²

California Proposition 39, passed in 2000, allows 55 percent of local voters to approve school bonds, lowering the threshold from the previous two-thirds (66.7%) requirement. It imposed accountability requirements on districts that want to issue school bonds, including establishing citizen oversight committees to review all bond expenditures.⁴³ Proposition 39 contained ballot language that includes “a requirement that the proceeds from the sale of the bonds be used only for the purposes specified in Article XIII A, Section 1(b)(3) [facilities], and not for any other purpose, including teacher and administrator salaries and other school operating expenses.” However, California Attorney General Opinion 04-110⁴⁴ concludes that “a school district may use Proposition 39 school bond proceeds to pay the salaries of district employees to the extent they perform administrative oversight work on construction projects authorized by a voter approved bond measure.”

K-12 school districts rely on local bonds to generate the funds needed for major capital projects. In addition, the State’s “School Facility Program” financing model for school districts generally requires local matching funds for new construction and modernization of facilities.⁴⁵ The State dollars typically are allocated to districts to reimburse for projects that have been completed and on a first-come, first-served basis. According to

⁴² Official Voter Guide, 2024 Election, Prop 2 Analysis by the Legislative Analyst, <https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/propositions/2/analysis.htm>.

⁴³ Implementing Proposition 39, California Education Code section 15282 provides in part that “The citizens’ oversight committee shall consist of at least seven members to serve for a term of two years without compensation and for no more than two consecutive terms. While consisting of a minimum of at least seven members, the citizens’ oversight committee shall be comprised as follows:

- (1) One member shall be active in a business organization representing the business community located within the district.
- (2) One member shall be active in a senior citizens’ organization.
- (3) One member shall be active in a bona fide taxpayers’ organization.
- (4) For a school district, one member shall be the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the district...
- (5) For a school district, one member shall be both a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the district and active in a parent-teacher organization, such as the Parent Teacher Association or school site council...”

⁴⁴ Attorney General Opinion 04-110, found at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/opinions/pdfs/04-110.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Public Policy Institute of California, “Equitable Funding for School Facilities”, <https://www.ppic.org/publication/policy-brief-equitable-state-funding-for-school-facilities/>

the legislative analysis accompanying AB 247 (2024), the bill to place Proposition 2 on the 2024 ballot:

“[State] K-12 allocations for new construction funds have been depleted since September 2018 while modernization funds were fully allocated in February 2019.

According to the Office of Public School Construction (OPSC), as of June 26, 2024, \$1.186 billion in new construction applications and \$2.282 billion in modernization applications have been submitted beyond Proposition 51 funding availability.”⁴⁶

Proposition 2, approved by the voters in 2024, provides for an additional \$10 billion in state-issued bonds, \$8.5 billion of which is for public school facilities, with \$4 billion of that \$8.5 billion allocated for renovation of existing buildings.

Napa County Office of Education

County offices of education, including the Napa County Office of Education (NCOE), have a narrowly defined role in overseeing district finances limited to ensuring school district fiscal solvency, with virtually no authority to manage local district bond funds. The “county superintendent of schools has fiscal oversight responsibility over school districts in the county... and authority to declare a district in jeopardy of being unable to meet its financial obligations through a qualified or negative certification at interim financial reporting periods or at any time during the year.”⁴⁷ The Civil Grand Jury heard testimony that NCOE provides technical assistance to Napa County districts only when asked to do so by any one of the five districts within its purview.

Napa Valley Unified School District

Established in 1965, Napa Valley Unified School District serves the communities of Napa and American Canyon and surrounding areas. The district is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, elected by the voters by district. The Board hires the Superintendent, who in turn oversees the activities of the district, directly supervises district administrators, and makes operational recommendations to the Board for approval. Over 16,500 students attend twenty-seven schools in grades TK-12.⁴⁸ As set

⁴⁶ Assembly Floor Analysis, “AB-247 Education finance: school facilities: Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Schools and Local Community College Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair, and Safety Bond Act of 2024”, https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billAnalysisClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB247

⁴⁷ California Department of Education, “Criteria and Standards for Fiscal Solvency”, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fq/fi/ss/cs/overview.asp>

⁴⁸ “About NVUSD”, <https://www.nvusd.org/about>

forth in Table 1 below, the NVUSD budget⁴⁹ for 2024-25 totals over \$264 million, and as indicated in Table 2 below, it maintains reserves above state minimum requirements. According to district officials, NVUSD currently has a \$40 million balance in “Fund 40” for facilities, in addition to the General Fund reserves.

TABLE 1: NVUSD GENERAL FUND BUDGET, 2024-25

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
REVENUES			
LCFF Sources	\$209,518,337	\$12,639,019	\$222,157,356
Federal Revenue ⁵⁰	\$0	\$9,004,431	\$9,004,431
Other State Revenue	\$3,822,933	\$25,163,576	\$28,986,509
Other Local Revenue	\$1,949,250	\$2,255,643	\$4,204,893
TOTAL REVENUE	\$215,290,520	\$49,062,669	\$264,353,189

⁴⁹ The 2024-25 budget report is 124 pages, from which the details presented here are extracted. The NVUSD budgets for the past several years are found at <https://www.nvusd.org/about/contact/business-services/financial-reporting>.

⁵⁰ “Federal Revenue” includes restricted COVID-related federal funding which will expire at the end of the current budget year, as well as restrict funds for special education as projected when the 2024-25 budget was created. As of the writing of this report, federal education funding is under review by the federal government and the availability of it is the subject of litigation.

EXPENDITURES

Certificated Salaries ⁵¹	\$88,508,844	\$30,844,605	\$119,353,449
Classified Salaries	\$28,873,947	\$15,635,557	\$44,509,504
Employee Benefits	\$38,472,601	\$24,081,877	\$62,554,478
Books and Supplies	\$3,831,738	\$13,651,005	\$17,482,743
Services and Other Operating Expenditures	\$25,347,625	\$16,479,119	\$41,826,744
Capital Outlay	\$207,000	\$71,385	\$278,385
Other Outgo - Transfers of Indirect Costs	\$12,200	\$0	\$12,200
Other Outgo (Transfers of Indirect Costs)	\$(6,996,580)	\$6,321,617	\$(674,963)
TOTAL	\$178,257,375	\$107,085,165	\$ 285,342,540

TABLE 2: NVUSD GENERAL FUND RESERVES, 2024-25

Non-spendable	\$220,658
Restricted	\$2,325,366
Committed	\$48,414,093
Economic Uncertainty	\$31,782,505

⁵¹ “Certificated” are district employees such as teachers who require a valid credential/permit to qualify for the position, and classified are the non-certificated employees.
<https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/certification-glossary/certificated-staff>.

In 2016, the district identified over \$500 million in capital project needs, stating:

“the majority of Napa’s schools were built more than 60 years ago and are falling behind basic standards. As a result, our classrooms, labs, and school facilities face numerous challenges, including roofs that leak, unreliable heating, cooling, and ventilation systems, and safety hazards such as asbestos. Additionally, we have over 100 temporary structures that have exceeded their intended lifespan, posing safety risks such as water leakage, necessitating their removal.”⁵²

The NVUSD Board of Trustees placed a bond measure (Measure H) for \$269 million on the 2016 general election ballot, which exceeded the 55% supermajority requirement by 350 votes, passing with 55.99% in favor.⁵³ Measure H did not fund all of the capital needs of the district, and costs continued to increase. The district placed two separate measures on the 2022 general election ballot: Measure A1 for issuance of \$200 million in bonds for schools in Napa and surrounding areas, and Measure A2 for \$25 million for schools in American Canyon. Measure A2 passed with 65.68% in favor. However, Measure A1 with 54.62% in favor failed by 130 votes to reach the 55% approval threshold. In the 2024 election, the district tried again with Measure B for \$230 million in bonds specifically for Napa schools, which narrowly passed the 55% threshold by 37 votes.

Citizen Bond Oversight Committees

Citizen Bond Oversight Committees (“BOC”) were created for Measure H and Measure A2, and recruitment began for a committee following the 2024 passage of Measure B. Members of the Civil Grand Jury reviewed minutes and recordings of BOC meetings, reviewed Measure H BOC annual reports and audits, attended meetings of the Measure H and Measure A2 BOCs, and interviewed members of both BOCs. Because the Measure A2 committee has been active only since 2023, no audit or annual reports were available to review.

The Civil Grand Jury’s investigation found that appointments to the BOCs have fulfilled the required categories of membership. Also, those committee members have engaged in thoughtful questioning and discussions about the bond funded projects within their authority. Of note, BOCs are not engaged in planning or prioritizing projects, though

⁵² Facilities Master Plan, and “Measure B”, <https://www.nvUSD.org/about/contact/school-planning/measure-b>.

⁵³ Napa County current election results are found at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/402/Election-Results> and historical election results from 2016 onward are found at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/DocumentCenter/Index/1083>.

members have expressed a willingness to do so. Their roles have been limited to reviewing spending only after it has occurred.

BOC members reported initial training and understanding of their authority has been limited, with members initially unclear about the scope of work and extent of their responsibilities. As noted in recommendation R5, the Civil Grand Jury concludes that the BOCs would benefit from thorough, independent training, both upon the formation of the committees and when any new members are added. Organizations such as the California Association of Bond Oversight Committees can provide appropriate training.

Allocation of Bond Funds

The Civil Grand Jury has found that all but a small percentage of bond funds expended since the passage of Measure H have been used for capital expenses, which is consistent with the measures' ballot language. Nearly all of the Measure H funds have been expended, and approximately one half of the Measure A2 bonds have been sold to generate funds, with many projects underway. Measure B bonds are scheduled to be sold in the spring of 2025, and the district has begun recruitment for a Measure B Bond Oversight Committee.⁵⁴

The ballot language for Bond Measure H (passed in 2016) included the following provision consistent with Proposition 39 (ALL CAPS as in original text):

“NO ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES: PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THE BONDS AUTHORIZED BY THIS PROPOSITION SHALL BE USED ONLY FOR THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION, REHABILITATION, OR REPLACEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE FURNISHING AND EQUIPPING OF SCHOOL FACILITIES, AND NOT FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE, INCLUDING TEACHER AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR SALARIES AND OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES.”

Similar ballot language was included in Bond Measure A2 (passed in 2022) and Bond Measure B (passed in 2024). Although this language would appear to prohibit expenditure for NVUSD employee salaries, the district relied on Attorney General Opinion 04-110 creating an exception for salaries for work related to bond-funded projects.

⁵⁴ NVUSD Board of Trustees Resolution 25-17, January 16, 2025, found at <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=36030213&AID=990540&MID=34993>

Proponents of NVUSD bond measures - including district officials - have campaigned on the basis that bond funds are used exclusively for capital projects, not administrative salaries. In the Measure B campaign, the Registrar of Voters published the proponents' "Rebuttal to Argument Against Measure B" that stated: "Yes on B stays local. Accountability measures keep Measure B funds locally controlled, for Napa schools only. No money for administration. Funds are for voter-approved projects, with independent oversight and annual audits."⁵⁵ Despite these statements, the Civil Grand Jury found that a small percentage of bond funds have been used by NVUSD for salaries. Measure H BOC annual reports and audits are available to the public⁵⁶ and were reviewed in detail by the Civil Grand Jury. As outlined in Table 3 below, each year the district allocated from .08% to 1.15% of bond proceeds to salaries and benefits.

⁵⁵ "Rebuttal to Arguments Against Measure B", found at Napa County Elections website <https://www.countyofnapa.org/DocumentCenter/View/33464/November-5-2024---Measure-B---Rebuttal-to-the-Argument-Against---Napa-Valley-Unified-PDF> (emphasis added).

⁵⁶ The Measure H audits are found via the NVUSD Measure H Bond Oversight Committee site at <https://www.nvUSD.org/bond-oversight-committee-measure-h> and directly online at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16yZgrWFO8Nj704CKk6d8pO9T78rmPZu0>.

**TABLE 3:
NVUSD SALARIES AND BENEFITS AS PERCENTAGE OF
TOTAL MEASURE H EXPENDITURES**

Category	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Classified Salaries	\$203,043	\$339,179	\$376,281	\$86,548	\$4,129
Classified Benefits	\$67,334	\$115,501	\$119,135	\$35,003	\$396
Total Expenditures	\$79,154,27	\$65,490,430	\$43,111,051	\$24,304,585	\$6,024,184
% Expenditures for Salaries & Wages	0.34%	0.69%	1.15%	0.50%	0.08%

As of the writing of this report, the 2023-24 fiscal year audit was not yet published, and the district reported that no salaries had been charged to Measure H bond funds during that or the current fiscal year.

The Measure H Bond Oversight Committee inquired about the practice of using some bond funds for salaries related to bond projects and was informed by district staff that bond counsel and auditors have approved such expenditures as consistent with the Attorney General's opinion.⁵⁷

Charging employee salaries against the funding source may be appropriate practice in project management in the private sector. However, the Civil Grand Jury concluded that while minimal and possibly permissible in limited circumstances, charging NVUSD employee salaries against bond funds may reduce public trust by contradicting public pledges and bond ballot language that states, "no funds for administrators." In its current practice, NVUSD has stopped charging any salaries to bond funds, and the Civil Grand Jury recommends that it continue to avoid charging any salaries to bond funds.

⁵⁷ Measure H Bond Oversight Committee Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2022-2023.
<https://www.nvusd.org/bond-oversight-committee-measure-h>

Public Outreach

Tight bond election results in recent years suggest that NVUSD can and should do more to inform citizens about district fiscal needs in general and bond financing in particular. Detailed information regarding bond spending is available online, but it can be difficult to find on the district's complex website and requires reviewing lengthy documents.

NVUSD should proactively distribute information and updates to inform the general public on how bond funds are being allocated and used. The Civil Grand Jury notes that the district recently engaged a communications consulting firm to assist with this work.⁵⁸ The district could publish periodic reports, send information to parents through district communication channels, use social media for information directed to the general public, and post signage at project sites where bond-funded work is in progress. NVUSD should maintain an ongoing campaign using multiple media outlets and distribution tools to inform stakeholders and the general public on the details and progress of the projects associated with bond fund allocations. The Measure A2 Bond Oversight Committee page reports expenditures by school, updated approximately every two months⁵⁹. Such regular updates, by school and by project, are appropriate and beneficial to all interested parties. The district is also encouraged to publish such regular reports for the recently passed Measure B.

Public Participation in Capital Projects Facility Master Plan Development

The Civil Grand Jury found that public participation in facilities planning is limited, with the process being primarily driven by NVUSD staff and approved by the district Board of Trustees. The district developed a 10-year Capital Projects Facilities Master Plan in 2016, which has been described as a living document updated during that period based on Measure H implementation plans. A new Facilities Master Plan will be required to update the 2016 plan and to comply with state requirements. NVUSD Policy 7110: Facilities Master Plan provides relevant language that directs this effort:

“The district's facilities master plan shall be based on an assessment of the condition and adequacy of existing facilities, a projection of future enrollments, and alignment of facilities with the district's vision for the instructional program.

To solicit broad input into the planning process, the Superintendent or designee may establish a facilities advisory committee consisting of staff, parents/guardians, and

⁵⁸ Item 2.4, Agreement with Q Communications, NVUSD Board of Trustees meeting packet, January 16, 2025.
https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SB_Meetings/ViewMeeting.aspx?S=36030213&MID=34993&Tab=Agenda&enIID=gjJx9jDUJbWMCRT0zEIOjA%3D%3D

⁵⁹ <https://www.nvUSD.org/about/contact/school-planning/measure-a2>

business, local government, and other community representatives. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the public is informed of the need for construction and modernization of facilities and of the district's plans for facilities.”⁶⁰

The district does not have a Facilities Advisory Committee as contemplated by the policy, but with a new or updated Facilities Master Plan being required for eligibility for state matching funds⁶¹, this is an opportunity to expand public participation by creating such a committee. The Civil Grand Jury heard testimony that BOC members and others are ready, willing and able to participate in the planning process. As noted in our recommendation R6, the Civil Grand Jury recommends full implementation of the Facilities policy by creating a Facilities Advisory Committee before a new Facilities Master Plan is developed.

FINDINGS

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

F1: Bond financing is the primary source of funding for addressing the capital needs of the Napa Valley Unified School District.

F2: The NVUSD website is complex to navigate making it difficult to find bond financial data and reports.

F3: Charging NVUSD employee salaries against bond funds, while permissible in limited circumstances, may reduce public trust by contradicting public pledges and bond ballot language that states, “no funds for administrators”.

F4: NVUSD does not adequately inform the general public that the Citizen Bond Oversight Committees play critical roles in satisfying California’s Proposition 39 (2000), which requires school boards to establish independent oversight committees and conduct annual financial and performance audits until all bond funds have been spent.

F5: NVUSD’s Citizen Bond Oversight Committees lack thorough and independent training on the roles, scope of work, relationship with school district personnel, and authority of its members.

F6: The creation and execution of NVUSD’s 2016-2025 Facilities Master Plan had only limited public participation.

⁶⁰ NVUSD Policy 7110: Facilities Master Plan is found at the NVUSD Policies website, <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=36030213>.

⁶¹ Education Code § 17070.54.

COMMENDATION

The 2024-25 Napa County Civil Grand Jury commends the volunteer members of the NVUSD Bond Oversight Committees for their monitoring spending of Measure H and Measure A2 bond funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1: NVUSD should maintain an ongoing campaign using multiple media outlets and distribution tools to inform stakeholders and the general public on the details and progress of the projects associated with bond fund allocations, and do so by September 30, 2025.

R2: Narrow bond measure election results strongly suggest that NVUSD should build community trust by proactively distributing information and updates to inform the general public on how bond funds are being allocated and used, and do so by September 30, 2025.

R3: NVUSD should continue its current practice to refrain from using bond funds for any district salaries, operating expenses or other administrative activities.

R4: NVUSD should inform the general public about the role of bond oversight committees and actively encourage stakeholder groups, especially community members and parents of students, to participate on such committees, effective no later than 90 days after the publication of this 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury report.

R5: NVUSD should arrange for independent training of Citizen Bond Oversight Committees, starting with the new Measure B committee, and do so by September 30, 2025.

R6: NVUSD should implement fully its existing facilities planning policy by establishing a Facilities Advisory Committee consisting of staff, parents/guardians, and business, local government, and other community representatives, and do so before a new Facilities Master Plan is created and no later than June 30, 2026.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Napa Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees is *required* to respond to F1-F6 and R1-R6 within 90 days of receipt of this report.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury invites, but does not require, the Napa County Superintendent of Schools to respond to F1-F6 and R1-R6 within 60 days of receipt of this report and invites, but does not require, the Measure H Bond Oversight Committee and the Measure A2 Bond Oversight Committee to respond to F1-F6 and R1-R6 within 90 days of receipt of this report.



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2024-2025

April 23, 2025

FINAL REPORT

Pope Valley Union Elementary School District Overcoming a Troubled Past

SUMMARY

Located in northeastern Napa County, the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District (PVUESD) is a small, rural public school offering Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through eighth grades. With an enrollment of approximately 50 students, PVUESD faces unique challenges. Its remote location, small student population, staffing challenges, and a history of leadership struggles underscore the pressing need for transformative, sustainable solutions to secure the school district's future.

Last year, the community was impacted by the trial and conviction of a former school employee for sexual abuse, involving both current and former students. The abuse, which spanned over a decade, created significant rifts within school personnel and among student families. After receiving and evaluating a citizen complaint alleging discrimination and unequal treatment by the school administration against Hispanic or Spanish-speaking families, the 2024-2025 Napa County Civil Grand Jury conducted an 8-month investigation into the allegations which uncovered widespread issues with district leadership and school operations.

The Civil Grand Jury made several key findings and recommendations about PVUESD, related to systemic issues involving governance, management of school operations, and community engagement.

- PVUESD failed to provide a safe learning environment and requisite education for its students.
- The PVUESD Board of Trustees (School Board) failed to deliver the necessary oversight and direction for PVUESD operations and academic performance. At this time, the School Board appears to be focused on addressing past deficiencies and committed to providing the necessary oversight and direction to improve PVUESD operations and academic performance. The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the School Board develop and implement a long-term strategy for the school district, prioritizing operational effectiveness and significant improvements in academic outcomes.
- Prior school superintendents/principals failed to ensure student safety, address academic instruction and student performance gaps, or manage the school and staff effectively. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the School Board ensure that school leadership possesses the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively prioritize student safety and educational excellence.
- The Superintendent/Principal, who held the position during this Civil Grand Jury investigation, implemented policies and procedures to stabilize and build sustainable long-term operations, enforce student safety protocols, and improve academic instruction and student performance. The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Superintendent/Principal continue to monitor and refine these policies and procedures regularly to ensure their effectiveness.

- While the Civil Grand Jury investigation found no evidence of discrimination or unequal treatment by the school administration against Hispanic or Spanish-speaking families, the past lack of bilingual support revealed communication gaps, leaving Spanish-speaking parents and English Second Language learners feeling isolated and disconnected. The Civil Grand Jury strongly recommends continued school administration efforts to foster greater inclusivity within the community.
- Inadequate communication by district and school management following the trial and conviction of a former school employee for student sexual abuse left parents feeling disconnected and frustrated. The Civil Grand Jury recommends regular and consistent updates to inform the public, rebuild trust, promote inclusivity, and improve transparency in decision-making to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community.
- School bus transportation service was found to be inadequate to serve the district, with persistent equipment problems undermining reliability. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the School Board and Superintendent/Principal develop and execute a permanent solution to provide safe and reliable transportation for students.
- The school community is divided, with one group of parents and teachers supporting changes in the school and another favoring a return to prior practices and personnel. The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the School Board and Superintendent/Principal take deliberate steps to promote open and constructive dialogue among all stakeholders.

Pope Valley Union Elementary School has faced many challenges over the past decade, and district and school leadership have implemented changes to improve school operations and student outcomes. Increased involvement by parents and the community will increase School Board and Superintendent/Principal accountability regarding academic performance, measurable student development, and on-campus safety. The Civil Grand Jury believes this commitment, along with continuity and consistency in school operations, will promote long-term success for both the students and the community of Pope Valley.

BACKGROUND

Napa County has five public school districts: Napa Valley Unified, St. Helena Unified, Calistoga Joint Unified, Howell Mountain Elementary, and Pope Valley Union Elementary. Among these, Howell Mountain and Pope Valley have the lowest enrollments, each with fewer than 100 students.

Pope Valley is a small, rural, unincorporated community in northeastern Napa County with a residential population of approximately 673 people.⁶² The demographics are diverse, with approximately 49.8% of the population identifying as Hispanic and 43.4% as White. Many residents work in agriculture, particularly in vineyards and wineries.

The average annual household income is \$102,242 with a median household income of \$71,250. Several families have deep, generational roots in the area.

According to the Napa County Historical Society, the first Pope Valley School was founded in 1859⁶³. In the 1940's, five one-room schoolhouses were combined into the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District (PVUESD). PVUESD is now one campus, Pope Valley Elementary, serving TK through eighth grade.

The Pope Valley Union Elementary School District has received significant media attention in recent years due to the trial and conviction of a former employee for sexual abuse involving current and former students. This case has led to ongoing feelings of distrust towards school leadership and staff among some residents.

The Civil Grand Jury received a citizen complaint alleging instances of misconduct by teachers and staff at the school, unrelated to the resolved criminal abuse case. The complaint also alleged mistreatment of Spanish-speaking parents and students. In response, the Civil Grand Jury initiated a comprehensive investigation of the complaint and the school's overall operations. Although the criminal case is outside the scope of the Civil Grand Jury, the Civil Grand Jury noted the profound impacts of the conviction on the school staff and local community.

⁶² Point2Homes: www.point2homes.com/US/Neighborhood/CA/Pope-Valley-Demographics.html

⁶³ Napa Historical Society: <https://napahistory.org/pope-valley-schools-a-primer/>

METHODOLOGY

This report draws on comprehensive Civil Grand Jury interviews and reviews of school, state, federal, and local materials.

Civil Grand Jury interviews included management and staff from Pope Valley Union Elementary School District and Napa County Office of Education, management from Howell Mountain Elementary and St. Helena Unified school districts, and parents of students in Pope Valley Union Elementary School.

Documents from the following sources were reviewed:

- Pope Valley Unified Elementary School District
 - Website (www.pvk8.org)
 - Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)
 - School Accountability Report Card (SARC)
 - Audit reports
 - School Board meeting minutes
 - 2024 Revitalize and Rebuild Plan
- California Department of Education
 - California Education Code
 - California School Dashboard
 - District Profile
- US Department of Education
- Napa County Office of Education (NCOE)
- California School Board Association (CSBA)
- Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT)
- Press coverage
- Court transcripts

DISCUSSION

School District

Pope Valley Union Elementary School, located at 6200 Pope Valley Road, features three main buildings. The older building, constructed in 1969, includes the main school office for the Superintendent/Principal, and two rooms for small group work, a first aid room, and staff room. The newer building, completed in 1982, houses four classrooms: a Learning Center, TK-2 classroom, 3-5 classroom, and a 6-8 classroom. Additionally, there is a new Multipurpose Room (MPR) building, and a portable classroom used as the school library on the west side of the school. The MPR serves as a multi-purpose room for art, music, indoor physical education, and rainy-day lunches.

The California Department of Education School Dashboard provides historical information about the Pope Valley school demographics and performance. School enrollment has fluctuated over the years but generally has been about 50 students. About 70% of the students are of Hispanic heritage.

Pope Valley Elementary School Enrollment by School Year⁶⁴

	<u>2019-20</u>	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2021-22</u>	<u>2022-23</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
Students	50	46	50	57	55	48

Students are taught in small, mixed-grade classrooms with a student-to-teacher ratio of about 12:1. This high-touch learning environment allows for individualized attention and support.

³ California School Dashboard, <https://www.caschooldashboard.org>. Enrollment and financial data are from School Accountability Report Cards found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/sa/index.asp>.

2024-25 Pope Valley Elementary School Student Enrollment by Grade Level

GRADE LEVEL	NO. OF STUDENTS
Kindergarten	4
Grade 1	5
Grade 2	6
Grade 3	4
Grade 4	4
Grade 5	5
Grade 6	6
Grade 7	5
Grade 8	9
Total Enrollment	48

Pope Valley's school district appears to have more funding than most California school districts. It is a basic aid district, meaning it retains revenue from local property taxes that exceed the state's funding formula requirements. Additionally, it receives constitutionally guaranteed state basic aid funding. Property tax revenue accounts for approximately 80% of the district's revenues. Per-pupil funding is \$33,092, compared to Napa Valley Unified School District per-pupil funding of \$10,328.⁶⁵

At the start of the 2024-2025 school year, there were four full-time credentialed classroom teachers and a part-time Special Education teacher on the school payroll. Prior to the completion of this report, adjustments were made in the teaching staff,

⁶⁵ NVUSD Financial Hub, <https://nvusdk12caus-25-us-west1-01.preview.finalsitedcn.com/about/departments/business-services/financial-hub>.

including shifts in grade assignments and the non-renewal of several teachers’ contracts for the 2025-26 school year due to performance issues.

Positions at the school historically have been difficult to fill primarily due to its rural location. As a result, teacher and staff salaries are comparatively higher than other schools in California. A limited number of job applicants resulted in a small pool of candidates which contributed to the hiring of staff who were related by family. A number of past and present school employees are from two local families, which has raised concerns about conflicts of interest.

Student academic achievement data is evidence of poor performance in the Pope Valley district. Pope Valley student academic scores in math and reading are consistently below grade-level standards. PVUESD has an average math proficiency score of 25% (versus the California public elementary school average of 35%) and reading proficiency score of 15% (versus the 45% statewide average).

The school has a high percentage of socially disadvantaged students (95.8%) and English learners (39.6%), factors which have been shown to influence academic success. Overall, school class performance has been well below state standards and often rated as “red,” the lowest rating on the California School Dashboard. Records reinforcing low performance levels existed prior to and since impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Academic Performance by Year
(point scores compared to standard)⁶⁶**

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
English	-31.4	No data	Very Low	-103.3	-77.8	-81.5
Math	-36.4	No data	Low	-81.3	-62.1	-67.6

The school has faced challenges serving special needs students due to a lack of an appropriately credentialed teacher, resulting in difficulties executing statutory requirements such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In California, special needs students are those with disabilities that negatively impact their education and require special education services. An IEP is a written annual statement outlining a child's current performance levels, learning goals, school placement, and services.

⁶⁶ The California School Dashboard reports that state law suspended reporting of data for 2020-21, and allowed reporting of data using one of five status levels (ranging from Very High, High, Medium, Low, and Very Low) for 2021-22 due to COVID.

Additionally, students often face difficulties securing reliable transportation due to the considerable distance between their homes and the school, as well as the work commitments of their parents and caregivers. To address this challenge, the school provides bus transportation for its students.

School Board

The PVUESD Board of Trustees (School Board) consists of five elected officials, with one member newly elected in 2024. Many Board members have served multiple terms, with one trustee having served over 25 years. The current President, a former student of the school, has served for approximately two years, first as Secretary and then as President.

None of the trustees have prior experience in public education. They are generally long-term community members, some of whom have children or grandchildren who attend or have attended the school. Filling School Board positions has been challenging, as few community members have applied, and candidates often run unopposed.

The School Board appoints and evaluates the district Superintendent/Principal. It oversees the establishment of the district's budget, curriculum, policies, and academic achievement standards.

The School Board plays a critical role in student and district performance. The California School Board Association (CSBA) states that for a school board to operate effectively they must “maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress” while involving the community, including parents, students and staff. CSBA⁶⁷ outlines the main functions of a School Board as follows:

- Setting Direction by establishing a long-term vision for the school district
- Establishing Structure with an effective and efficient organizational framework
- Providing Support for the superintendent and staff in demonstrating professional behavior, making informed decisions, and effectively allocating resources
- Ensuring Accountability to the public by monitoring and evaluating the district's performance
- Providing Community Leadership by advocating for children, the school district, and serving as leaders within the community

⁶⁷ CSBA, “Roles and Responsibilities”, <https://www.csba.org/GovernanceAndPolicyResources/EffectiveGovernance/RoleandResponsibilitiesofSBMs.aspx>

Based on interviews with the school staff and parents, the Civil Grand Jury concluded that before 2023, the Pope Valley School Board was inadequately performing these functions. The Board did not have a well-defined vision to guide the school's future direction. The Board had taken a hands-off approach to academic performance, failing to monitor or improve student outcomes. As a result, students graduating from Pope Valley were underprepared for high school and often required special attention to succeed in high school. The previous Superintendent/Principal was not held accountable by the School Board for the poor academic instruction and performance of the students and operated with almost complete autonomy from the Board. Although Board members stated that they raised concerns about academic performance with the previous Superintendent/Principal, no follow-up action appears to have been taken when improvements did not occur.

The Board stated that they were unaware of the ongoing abuse at the school until it became public knowledge with the indictment of an employee for child abuse including past and current PVUESD students. While it is understandable that legal confidentiality was necessary during the criminal investigation, parents reported that the overall communication from the Board was poorly managed. This has resulted in community distrust and division.

In 2023, the School Board hired a new Superintendent/Principal. She is a PhD candidate with a background in education and change management. The new Superintendent/Principal is receiving Board support for key initiatives to implement changes to the curriculum and school management. In interviews with the Civil Grand Jury, School Board members expressed a determination to improve academic performance and rebuild community trust.

Several critical areas are still to be addressed by the School Board. There is no district strategic plan to guide the long-term improvement of the school and ensure this progress is sustained. Additionally, the Board has yet to communicate a plan to rebuild community trust in the school following the abuse case and to enhance parent engagement moving forward.

The Civil Grand Jury learned from Board members that there are no training standards for Board members, even for the newly elected/appointed. Moreover, Board members claimed it had been years since they have taken any training. In California, new school district board members undergo specific training to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively oversee school operations and support student success. The CSBA offers many school board training programs including ethics, board orientation and governance, and fiscal responsibility.

Superintendent/Principal

The District Superintendent/Principal undertakes broad leadership duties for the district, including managing budgets, formulating policies, collaborating with the Board and community, and providing comprehensive reporting, while also overseeing day-to-day operations of the school. This includes guiding curriculum development, supervising staff, ensuring student welfare, and fostering engagement within the community.

The Superintendent/Principal role for the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District is a combined position, a common practice for small school districts in California. The Superintendent/Principal reports to the School Board while teachers and classified staff report to the Superintendent/Principal.

Over the past five years, PVUESD has seen three different people in the Superintendent/Principal role. The former Superintendent/Principal served for over seven years, resigning in winter 2022 and officially departing in April 2022 to lead another district. Subsequently, a Napa County Board of Education (NCOE) employee was contracted by the School Board as interim Superintendent/Principal for one year (2022-2023) as they searched for a permanent replacement.

The Superintendent/Principal, as of this report, is in year two of a three-year contract with PVUESD.

Through interviews with PVUESD staff and parents, the Civil Grand Jury was told previous superintendents lacked focus on student academics and safety, demonstrated little accountability for the behavior of teachers and classified staff, and mismanaged school operations. The current Superintendent/Principal is focused on these critical areas, according to interviews with school staff and parents.

Some parents interviewed by the Civil Grand Jury expressed concerns regarding the quality of teaching, citing a need for educators to increase focus on student achievement, establish clear lesson plans, set measurable goals, and improve instructional techniques. These concerns align with the fact that student achievement scores have remained flat and below average.

Until recently, teachers operated independently, without a structured curriculum, policies, or goals to guide their activities. There were no measures in place to evaluate teacher performance or hold them accountable for poor academic outcomes. In at least one incident, a teacher engaged in corporal punishment without facing any consequences. Teachers and staff were not provided with clear guidelines on appropriate vs. inappropriate behavior, particularly regarding having one-on-one interactions with students. School staff also informed the Civil Grand Jury that the

former Superintendent/Principal allowed the convicted former school employee to be alone with individual students in a manner that the school staff thought was concerning.

At this same period, all school employees were to complete their annual mandated reporter training on child abuse and neglect reporting and identification. This training is mandatory for all employees, including teachers, teacher's aides, and classified employees. However, the Civil Grand Jury learned that documentation of this training may have been falsified. The Civil Grand Jury found no reports by school employees of incidents of concern or suspected abuse, despite the activities occurring over many years.

Keeping the school premises secure is an expectation for all campuses. The Civil Grand Jury learned there was a lack of oversight regarding visitors on school property in the past. The campus was easily accessible, with no gate around the property, and parents and other visitors roamed the grounds unmonitored and unaccompanied.

Despite having an English learner population of 39.6%, there were no bilingual teachers on staff prior to January 2024. The school relied on a Spanish-speaking school secretary to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents, although the individual did not perform this function in an official capacity.

Special needs students were underserved with no certified special needs teacher on staff for several years.

The Civil Grand Jury acknowledges the current Superintendent/Principal commitment to restoring trust and ensuring accountability in the school community. Efforts are underway to establish foundational standards, policies, rules, and a curriculum aimed at enhancing academic achievement while strengthening overall school operations. These changes are outlined in the long-range Revitalize and Rebuild Plan for the school.

The school has experienced positive changes during the 2024-2025 academic year, marked by key personnel adjustments that indicate a commitment to holding teachers accountable for their performance and student outcomes.

- A bilingual teacher has been added to the staff, providing support for Spanish-speaking students.
- Teachers were reassigned to different teaching assignments to mitigate use of long-term substitute teachers with Grade 7/8 students and to ensure that the youngest students receive instruction from a bilingual teacher to help bridge cultural gaps and improve foundational learning and academic performance.
- A Learning Center model was established to enhance teaching and learning practices for both special and general education students by offering hands-on,

personalized learning experiences that foster collaboration, independence, and academic growth.

- To better serve the school's Hispanic community members, the school offers a certified interpreter and on-demand access to the Language Line translation service.
- The school has a part-time Special Education teacher who holds a Master of Science in Special Education and is a former SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) director.

Beyond these changes, the current Superintendent/Principal has also increased financial reserves over the past two years. The school received positive certifications from NCOE and the California Department of Education in their Interim Financial Reports indicating that the school district is projected to meet its financial obligations for the current and the next two fiscal years. This evidences financial health and stability, showing that the district is managing its budget and resources.

To enhance communications, the school's website has been updated and improved, now providing content in Spanish, and expanded to include school reports, student events, board meeting information, as well as helpful resources for students, parents, and teachers. School announcements and updates also are available in Spanish. Additionally, a contract has been signed to upgrade the student information system, providing real-time access to grades, attendance, and other student-related information for parents, students, and educators.

To enhance parental engagement within the school community, a Parent Advisory Council was established in October 2024. This council complements existing school-parent collaboration efforts, such as the Pope Valley English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting nights.

School Transportation

The challenges involving the school's bus transportation system have impacted operations and community trust for an extended period. A driver shortage, persistent mechanical failures, extended repair times, and unreliable service have hindered the school's ability to maintain consistent transportation for students. Resolving this concern has become a top priority for the Superintendent/Principal and Board, reflecting their commitment to provide reliable, safe, and efficient transportation options for students.

The Civil Grand Jury learned the school district completed the legal process for the disposal of its two oldest buses during the 2024 calendar year.

Two propane buses purchased in 2021 have not solved the ongoing transportation challenges. The Civil Grand Jury learned that the buses have been frequently out of

operation. Repair times are lengthy and frequently unsuccessful, leaving the school without bus service for extended periods of time. Negotiations with bus companies for repairs or leasing alternatives have proven unsuccessful, particularly due to complications related to propane bus designs and driver requirements. While regular maintenance costs over the past year have not been excessive at \$7,726, the disruptions have damaged community goodwill and trust.

The two current buses transport about 20 children, about half of the student population, during the school week. The Civil Grand Jury learned that one or both buses have been out of service for nearly one out of every four days. It is not uncommon for only a single bus to be available when two are required to cover the school geography. This results in extended travel times of up to one and a half hours for some students, as the single bus covers two routes before arriving at the campus destination.

The Board recently purchased a 14-passenger minibus equipped with a gas engine. Combined with an existing nine-passenger van, transportation operations comply with California school transportation regulations, meet field trip needs, and offer a cost-effective temporary solution.

California school districts are not required to provide transportation, but many like PVUESD provide bus service to offer students safe and reliable access to school. Transportation must be provided for students with disabilities if it is necessary for them to benefit from special education.⁶⁸

Community Relations

The Pope Valley school community is small, comprised of between 20 to 30 families. Many working parents face schedules that start early, limiting their ability to attend school meetings or events. Monthly School Board meetings are typically sparsely attended by the public. Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings often have low parent participation. Some parents interviewed by the Civil Grand Jury expressed concerns about insufficient advance notice of meetings and activities, which has additionally hindered engagement.

The Civil Grand Jury interviewed PVUESD parents to gain an understanding of their perspectives on the school, its teachers, and staff. The Civil Grand Jury found no evidence to substantiate the original complaint's claims of mistreatment of students or disrespect toward family members based on their Hispanic heritage. Some examples of communication issues were raised, primarily stemming from errors in the electronic notification system. Despite this, Hispanic parents told the Civil Grand Jury that they

⁶⁸ Federal Regulation "Individuals with Disabilities", 34 CFR §300.34 (c)(16)

and their children felt welcome at the school. Although the inconsistent translation services prior to 2023 may have caused Spanish-speaking families to feel excluded, translation issues appear to have been resolved under the current school leadership.

The Civil Grand Jury found general agreement among interviewees that the community is divided. Many parents have maintained personal relationships with teachers and staff over the years and do not wish to see personnel changes at the school. Some teaching staff have contacted parents directly to express their opposition to changes being made at the school. Some families appear resistant to additional changes at the school, such as the implementation of new safety protocols, adjustments to teaching staff, and curriculum enhancements aimed at improving student instruction and performance. Conversely, other parents embrace these changes and express a desire to collaborate more closely with the school to support students' success.

The School Board and the School Superintendent/Principal should proactively attempt to unite the community and rally them behind improving the school for the sake of the students. The Board should coordinate with the Supervisor/Principal to send out regular, bilingual notifications, both electronically and in writing, to the school community regarding dates, agendas, and announcements for all Board meetings. The Superintendent should enhance community trust and transparency by continuing to provide regular updates in a bilingual format about the school's progress, challenges, and the reasons behind decisions and staffing changes.

Resources for School Districts

Enhancing the overall management and performance of a school is a multi-faceted challenge. The Civil Grand Jury has identified several resources to offer PVUESD with meaningful support and guidance throughout this process:

- The Napa County Office of Education (NCOE). The NCOE's mission is to provide leadership to support the success of public education. Their responsibilities include assuring appropriate educational environments and curricula for students in Napa County. They provide direct oversight and approval of local school district budgets, but do not directly oversee school performance and operations. They do provide a wide variety of support services upon request, including student education programs, administrative services (district audits, attendance auditing, teacher credentialing), and instructional services (local educator professional development and assistance with curriculum development, student assessments, library and technology services). NCOE also provides student literacy and math programs, mental health services, and cultural diversity training.

- California's Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT). Although its primary mission is to help resolve school district financial issues, it also can provide services such as management assistance, professional learning opportunities, intervention identifying specific district issues, strategic planning, and comprehensive school assessments. Civil Grand Jury members attended a FCMAT presentation and determined the services available are relevant to Pope Valley's needs.
- The California School Boards Association (CSBA) provides standard and customizable training programs for school boards and members, including hosting an annual educational symposium.

FINDINGS

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

F1. The Pope Valley Union Elementary School District failed to provide a safe learning environment and requisite education for its students.

F2. The PVUESD Board of Trustees (School Board) failed to deliver the necessary oversight and direction for PVUESD operations and academic performance. At this time, the School Board appears to be focused on addressing past deficiencies and committed to providing the necessary oversight and direction to improve PVUESD operations and academic performance.

F3. Prior school superintendents/principals failed to ensure student safety, address academic instruction and student performance gaps, or manage the school and staff effectively.

F4. The Superintendent/Principal, who held the position during this Civil Grand Jury investigation, implemented policies and procedures to stabilize and build sustainable long-term operations, enforce student safety protocols, and improve academic instruction and student performance.

F5. While the Civil Grand Jury investigation found no evidence of discrimination or unequal treatment by the school administration against Hispanic or Spanish-speaking families, the past lack of bilingual support revealed communication gaps, leaving Spanish-speaking parents and English Second Language learners feeling isolated and disconnected.

F6. Inadequate communication by district and school management following the trial and conviction of a former school employee for student sexual abuse left parents feeling disconnected and frustrated.

F7. School bus transportation service was found to be inadequate to serve the district, with persistent equipment problems undermining reliability.

F8. The school community is divided, with one group of parents and teachers supporting changes in the school and another favoring a return to prior practices and personnel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1. The School Board develop and implement a long-term strategy for the school district, prioritizing policies and procedures to ensure academic performance and operational effectiveness, and do so by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.

R2. The School Board ensure that school leadership possesses the necessary qualifications and experience to effectively prioritize student safety and educational excellence and do so by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.

R3. The Superintendent/Principal continue the ongoing improvement process at Pope Valley Union Elementary School and ensure that changes instituted continue should school management change and do so by the 2025-2026 academic year.

R4. Regular updates by the School Board and Superintendent/Principal to inform the public, rebuild trust, promote inclusivity, and improve transparency in decision-making to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community, and do so by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.

R5. The Board of Trustees and Superintendent/Principal develop and execute a permanent solution to provide safe and reliable transportation for students by the start of the 2025-2026 academic year.

R6. The Board of Trustees and the Superintendent/Principal use the various resources, training, and support opportunities available through the Napa County Office of Education (NCOE), Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT), California School Board Association (CSBA) and other educational and leadership resources and implement plans by the start of 2025-2026 academic year.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District Board of Trustees is required to respond to F1-F8 and R1-R6, within 90 days of receipt of this report.

INVITED RESPONSES

The Civil Grand Jury invites the Pope Valley Union Elementary School District Superintendent/Principal to respond to F4-F8 and R3-R6, within 60 days of receipt of this report.

The Civil Grand Jury invites the Napa County Superintendent of Schools to respond to F1-F8 and R1-R6, within 60 days of receipt of this report.



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY 2024-2025

May 29, 2025

FINAL REPORT

Behind the Curtain: Napa County Use Permit Process

Summary

In recent years, the Planning Department and Planning Commission of Napa County have faced criticism, largely due to lawsuits filed by wineries over their use permits. These legal disputes have spotlighted issues surrounding the transparency and accessibility of the permitting process, raising questions about the approval procedures for winery permits.

Given these concerns, the Napa County Civil Grand Jury conducted a seven-month investigation into the permitting procedures and practices in the county. The investigation centered on the organization, efficiency, and transparency of the department's operations, along with the clarity and accessibility of the permitting process to the public.

This report highlights facts and five key findings and recommendations related to the structure, effectiveness, efficiency, and public accessibility of the county permitting system.

- The use permit application process in Napa County may extend over multiple years, particularly for complex cases that involve appeals or challenges.
- Pre-application review meetings are optional and come with a fee, which may discourage applicants from using this helpful resource. The Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Napa County Board of Supervisors make pre-application meetings mandatory, eliminate upfront costs, and fold costs into the full permit fee for those who proceed.
- The County's 80% cost recovery fee model creates added burdens for applicants, with more challenges expected with the planned shift to 100% cost recovery. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County Board of Supervisors implement a standardized fee structure for all applications based on project complexity whenever possible, to ensure fairness and greater transparency.
- The winery database is outdated and inaccurate, limiting its usefulness as a reliable permitting resource. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County Board of Supervisors update and maintains the winery database as the authoritative and trusted reference for permits in the County.
- There is no current process for conducting random audits to ensure winery permit compliance. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County Board of Supervisors establish a funded audit program to monitor winery compliance.
- The Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department faces structural inefficiencies, including a high supervisor-to-staff ratio and a lack of effective management structure. The Civil Grand Jury recommends the Napa County

Board of Supervisors review the department's management structure to create a more effective organization

The investigation found the Planning Department to be generally composed of skilled, capable, and reliable professionals. However, the Civil Grand Jury identified several areas for improvement.

Background

The process for issuing and enforcing permits in Napa County has been the focus of numerous disputes over the years, several of which have been controversial. These conflicts often draw significant media coverage and have resulted in multiple legal challenges against the county. As a result, the Civil Grand Jury decided to pursue this investigation into the County permitting procedures and practices, focusing on the organization, efficiency, and transparency of the department's operations. This report focuses on Napa County and not the City of Napa, as each has its own planning department.

The 2014-2015 Civil Grand Jury issued a report titled "Are Napa County Wineries Following the Rules" that looked at the permitting and compliance of Napa County wineries. This current review is not intended to focus only on wineries, but because of the importance of wineries to the County, some of the same issues from the 2015 report are still relevant today.

Methodology

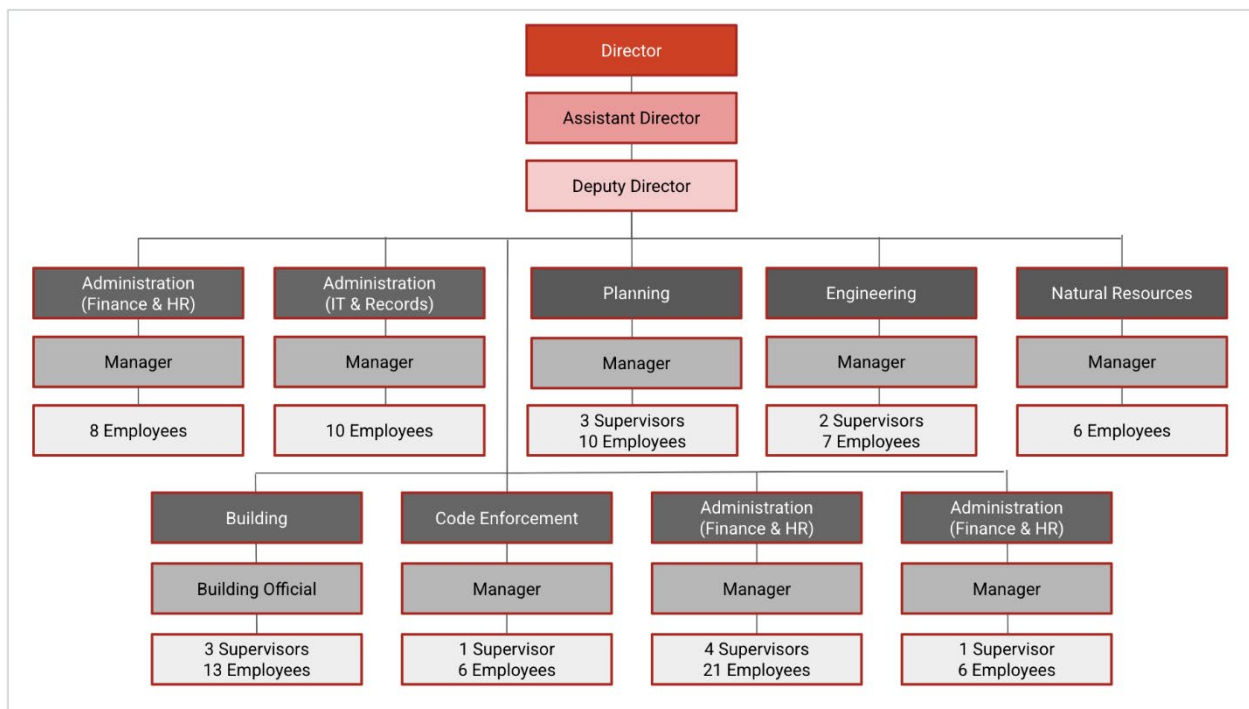
The Civil Grand Jury conducted a series of interviews with members of the Planning Commission and the Napa County Planning Department across multiple divisions. Interviews were held with representatives of local non-profit organizations to understand how the environmental community views the work of the Planning Department. Representatives of wine business interest groups were interviewed to get their impressions of the permitting process for founding and operating a winery in Napa County.

The Civil Grand Jury reviewed online articles from numerous sources discussing planning issues and relevant court challenges over the last several years. Additionally reviewed were the Planning Department website, resources available for permit applicants, and the available online databases of current proposed projects. The Civil Grand Jury also reviewed documents such as the General Plan and Napa County Ordinances.

Discussion

The Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department (PBES) manages the County's permitting process, ensuring that development aligns with local regulations in unincorporated areas of Napa County. According to its mission, PBES works with the community to promote public health, safety, and sustainability while balancing agricultural, environmental, and economic priorities. Roughly 100 employees work within the department.

Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department



The Planning Department assists applicants throughout the permitting process by providing guidance, reviewing applications, and ensuring compliance with County regulations. Their evaluations are expected to be fact-based, objective, and impartial.

Application forms are found on the County of Napa Planning website at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/1826/Planning-Documents>. Once an application is complete it is sent to the Napa County Planning Commission for a final decision. The Planning Commission is composed of five appointed officials, each representing a specific district and serving under an assigned county supervisor. The commission is

responsible for reviewing and approving development proposals. Additional information about the Planning Commission can be found online on the County of Napa Planning Commission website at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/1449/Planning-Commission>. Decisions made by the Planning Commission can be appealed to the Board of Supervisors, which has the authority to uphold, modify, or overturn the ruling.

Permitting Process

The Napa County Planning Department outlines the building permitting process on its website, describing it as a series of six key steps listed below. Detailed charts can be viewed in the Appendix. There are currently around 140 PBES applications open according to the county's Current Project Explorer. It is important to recognize the wide range of permit applications the department manages. While most permits are administrative and approved quickly, this Civil Grand Jury report focuses on the lengthier, more complex permits required for major modifications and winery use permits.

1. Determining the Location and Project Type: Identifying the project location and understanding which specific type of permit is required.
2. Using the Supplied Checklist: Gathering all necessary documentation according to the project type, ensuring that all requirements are met.
3. Submitting the Application: Completing and submitting the application through the county's online permit application center.
4. Application Review: The relevant divisions within the Planning Department review the application to ensure compliance with regulations and standards.
5. Permit Issuance: Once approved, the permit is formally issued, allowing the project to proceed.
6. Inspections: Necessary inspections are conducted throughout the project to ensure it complies with the approved plans and local codes.

A common complaint heard by the Civil Grand Jury was that the permitting process can be long, causing delays to the proposed project timeline. In most cases though, the process seems to function fairly smoothly. The assigned staff planner generally reviews the application for completeness within 30 days of application filing and issues a completeness review letter. The duration of the permitting process is influenced by multiple factors, including the level of involvement of county and government agencies, regulatory reviews, and procedural requirements. A significant portion of the timeline can also be attributed to delays on the applicant's side, as applications often remain in their possession while they gather necessary information or fulfill requirements. However, these delays are not always visible to the public, leading to a perception that

the process is solely prolonged by the Planning Department. Greater transparency in tracking application progress could help clarify these distinctions.

The permitting process can be complex, and depending on the project, may involve navigating a variety of regulations and requirements. While the Planning and Conservation Divisions offer virtual or in-office pre-application meetings to help applicants understand the process, these meetings are not mandatory. Moreover, applicants are required to pay for these consultations, even if they choose not to proceed with their application. This fee structure may deter applicants from using this potentially valuable resource, particularly smaller developers or individual applicants who might be reluctant to take on extra expense.

Both the applicants and the County could benefit from fostering a clearer, more collaborative approach to the permitting process from the outset. Ensuring that applicants are fully aware of the necessary documentation, review timelines, and potential challenges would help streamline the process, particularly for large-scale or high-profile projects. The Civil Grand Jury finds that charging for initial permit application consultations may discourage applicants from seeking the guidance they need, potentially leading to a more cumbersome process overall.

Community input in the permitting process in Napa County does not officially occur until the application reaches the Planning Commission. For large and complex projects, this is often very late in the project planning process, making it difficult for applicants to adequately address concerns or modify their plans in response. This late engagement by the public limits the applicant's ability to be responsive to community feedback, particularly for larger or controversial projects that might generate significant public interest or opposition.

Fees and Cost Recovery

One of the most frequent complaints heard by the Civil Grand Jury was that the cost of permitting in Napa County was excessive. For small, common, well-defined projects, there is a set fee schedule found on the Planning Department website at <https://www.countyofnapa.org/DocumentCenter/View/35640/PBESPWFire-Fee-Schedules---Effective-01-06-2025>. For larger projects, PBES operates under a cost recovery approach, setting fees with a goal of recovering 80% of the County's costs incurred in the review process. The County Board of Supervisors approved a fee update (<https://www.countyofnapa.org/3296/Example-Fees-For-Common-PBES-Projects>) in November 2024 for several government services, which went in effect in January 2025. This Order established a new goal of recovering 100% cost recovery to planning and public works fees.

The goal of reducing the burden on taxpayers for the permitting process is a worthy one, but it can cause several unintended consequences. When the County is being fully reimbursed for the time expended on a permit application, it could influence the sense of urgency to complete the process in an efficient manner. The resolution approving the fee increase acknowledged this issue, noting that: *“PBES staff is responsible for ensuring that costs charged to the project are reasonable and appropriate. Staff has an obligation to work efficiently and avoid unnecessary charges. Likewise, staff must ensure that all time devoted to an Hourly project is recorded accurately.”* In addition, because the permit fees are based on cost recovery, there is effectively no upper limit to how much the permit application process can cost. Napa County has posted a chart of example fees (<https://www.countyofnapa.org/1726/Fees-Payments>) to help guide applicants but that is only a general guide. There is no way for an applicant to confidently estimate what the final cost of their permit application will be. This can make project planning, budgeting, and financing very difficult. The Civil Grand Jury recommends that a standardized fee structure for all applications be implemented whenever possible. By using the historical average costs for similar projects to set the fees, the overall goal of cost recovery could still be met. For exceptionally complicated or unusual projects, the County should be willing to commit to a maximum amount that any permit will cost. This maximum could also be based on historical data to achieve cost recovery goals.

Winery Permits and the Winery Database

Since 1990, the Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) has governed how wineries can operate in the unincorporated areas of Napa County. Although some wineries have been “grandfathered in”, the ordinance provides a permitting framework for most wineries, specifying such things as the scale of production, which events can be held, number of daily visitors, and other operational details. The WDO does allow for wineries to sell and market wine, not just produce it, but such marketing activity must be “accessory” and subordinate to production. And all accessory uses must be contained in less than 40% of the winery's footprint. The WDO also includes restrictions on grape sourcing. The 2008 Napa County General Plan included an action item, Action Item AG/LU-10.1: “Maintain a data base of all wineries including their production capacity, marketing events and other characteristics that could influence analysis of cumulative effects or the winery's effect on neighbors.” In response, the current Napa County Winery database was established. The data is online and available to the public.

The database shows that there are over 500 wineries in Napa County. The Civil Grand Jury was informed by representatives of the wine industry that many wineries do not know what the current permit conditions are for their operating permits. Conditions vary almost on a winery-by-winery basis so there is little consistency. Moreover, winery representatives stated that they are hesitant to inquire about their permit conditions for fear that they will discover previously unknown restrictions on their operations. When they look at the information in the winery database, many see that the permit information is not up to date, making the database not as useful or reliable as it could be.

Issues continue to arise related to winery permit expectations. Recently, winery owners have expressed confusion about whether trade visits count as winery tastings as defined by their permits. They have been conducting these types of trade visits for many years believing they are part of operating a winery. County officials have stated they believe the visits are limited by their operating permit, meaning many wineries are operating out of compliance.

The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that the database was established as a planning tool and was not necessarily intended to be used to determine all the current permit conditions for wineries in the County. Nevertheless, the database is frequently used for that purpose. This creates confusion and uncertainty and has resulted in at least one lawsuit. The Civil Grand Jury believes that the current database would be more effective if it were updated to accurately reflect the current operating conditions for each winery listed. This update would be particularly valuable in minimizing potential misunderstandings during property sales or transfers. This is likely to be a time-consuming exercise and may involve substantial discussions with some of the affected wineries. However, in the long run, it would reduce misunderstandings and legal challenges, especially when existing wineries are purchased.

Compliance and Inspections

Currently, Napa County does not have a routine program for compliance-based audits of permit holders. Instead, audits are conducted only in response to complaints received by the department. The five-person code enforcement team is fully occupied with inspections triggered by public complaints. Given the uncertainty about winery permit operational requirements, and the absence of any compliance audit program, winery owners know that they are unlikely to be challenged about operational changes. For example, County officials say they will not enforce visitation limits unless a complaint is received. Under this policy, any visitor limits in a permit become nearly meaningless.

Much of the focus of the Civil Grand Jury report from 2015, “Are Napa County Wineries Following the Rules”, centered around compliance and inspections of wineries. The report states that the Planning Commissioners directed the Planning Department to initiate an annual “spot” audit of winery production in 2005. An audit program was established which reviewed approximately 20 wineries per year. The 2015 report notes that 30% of one inspector’s time was devoted to winery compliance audit program. The 2015 report indicates that these audits found wineries to be noncompliant on one or more issues between 29% and 40% of the time. However, the audits did not assess water usage or wastewater treatment, allowing the possibility that the actual rate of violations might have been higher.

The 2015 report recommended that the Planning Department increase the number of yearly winery code enforcement audits so that every winery would be audited at least once every five years. The Board of Supervisors agreed with this recommendation. This would have resulted in an inspection rate of about 100 audits per year.

At this time, there is no permit compliance audit program in Napa County as the audit program was suspended in 2015. Reinstating winery audits would help ensure compliance with permit requirements and reinforce confidence in the regulatory process. In addition, fines collected for violations observed could partially fund the inspection program, resulting in a low net cost to the County.

Management

This Civil Grand Jury investigation was not initiated to evaluate the management or the organizational structure of the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department. However, during the investigation, multiple interviewees from outside the department voiced some concerns including allegations of questionable practices such as favoritism towards some wineries and vindictiveness towards others. Some interviewees suggested that the current hiring process lacks fairness, with family members and friends allegedly receiving preferential treatment and often working together in the same department.

With the Civil Grand Jury investigation focused on permit enforcement, management issues within the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department became evident. The Enforcement Department consists of six technical staff, including two supervisors, and an Office Assistant. The Code Compliance Manager has only one direct report, the Code Compliance Supervisor, while four Compliance Officers report to the Supervisor. This results in a supervisor-to-staff ratio of 1 to 2. In contrast, the Federal Government typically operates with a 1 to 12 supervisor/non-supervisor ratio.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Human Resources, “Position Management and Position Classification Policy Handbook”,

Additionally, the recent turnover rate has also been high. In the past year, two of the four code compliance officers resigned, and the Code Compliance Manager was recently dismissed after less than a year in the role for unclear reasons. This represents a 50% turnover rate, far exceeding the generally acceptable level of 10-15%.⁷⁰ This high turnover rate often signals problems in management, culture issues, or a negative work atmosphere.

Although the Civil Grand Jury did not investigate all management-related allegations, the department's organizational structure itself appears top-heavy. Such structures are often associated with higher costs, slower response times, and less effective decision-making.

Findings

The Civil Grand Jury finds:

F1: Pre-application review meetings are optional and come with a fee, which may discourage applicants from using this, reported as helpful, resource.

F2: The County's 80% cost recovery fee model creates added burdens for applicants, with more challenges expected with the planned shift to 100% cost recovery.

F3: The winery database is outdated and inaccurate, limiting its usefulness as a reliable permitting resource

F4: There is no process in place for conducting random audits to ensure winery permit compliance in the County.

F5: The Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department faces structural inefficiencies, including a high supervisor-to-staff ratio and a lack of effective management structure.

https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/position_management_and_position_classification_handbook_5_15_18_0.pdf

⁷⁰ Greg Lewis, "Industries with the Highest (and Lowest) Turnover Rates," <https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-strategy/industries-with-the-highest-turnover-rates>

Recommendations

The Civil Grand Jury recommends:

R1: The Napa County Board of Supervisors make pre-application meetings mandatory, eliminate upfront costs, and fold costs into the full permit fee for those who proceed, and to do so by July 2026.

R2: The Napa County Board of Supervisors implement a structured fee system based on project complexity whenever possible to ensure fairness and greater transparency, and to do so by July 2026.

R3: The Napa County Board of Supervisors update and maintain the winery database as the authoritative and trusted reference for permits in the County, and to do so by July 2027.

R4: The Napa County Board of Supervisors establish a funded audit program to monitor winery compliance, and to do so by July 2026.

R5: The Napa County Board of Supervisors evaluate alternative management structures for the Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department to establish a flatter, more effective organization, and to do so by July 2026

Required Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Napa County Board of Supervisors is required to respond to F1-F5 and R1-R5 within 90 days of receipt of this report.

Appendix

Napa County Permitting Process Flow Charts

Source: Napa County Planning Department.

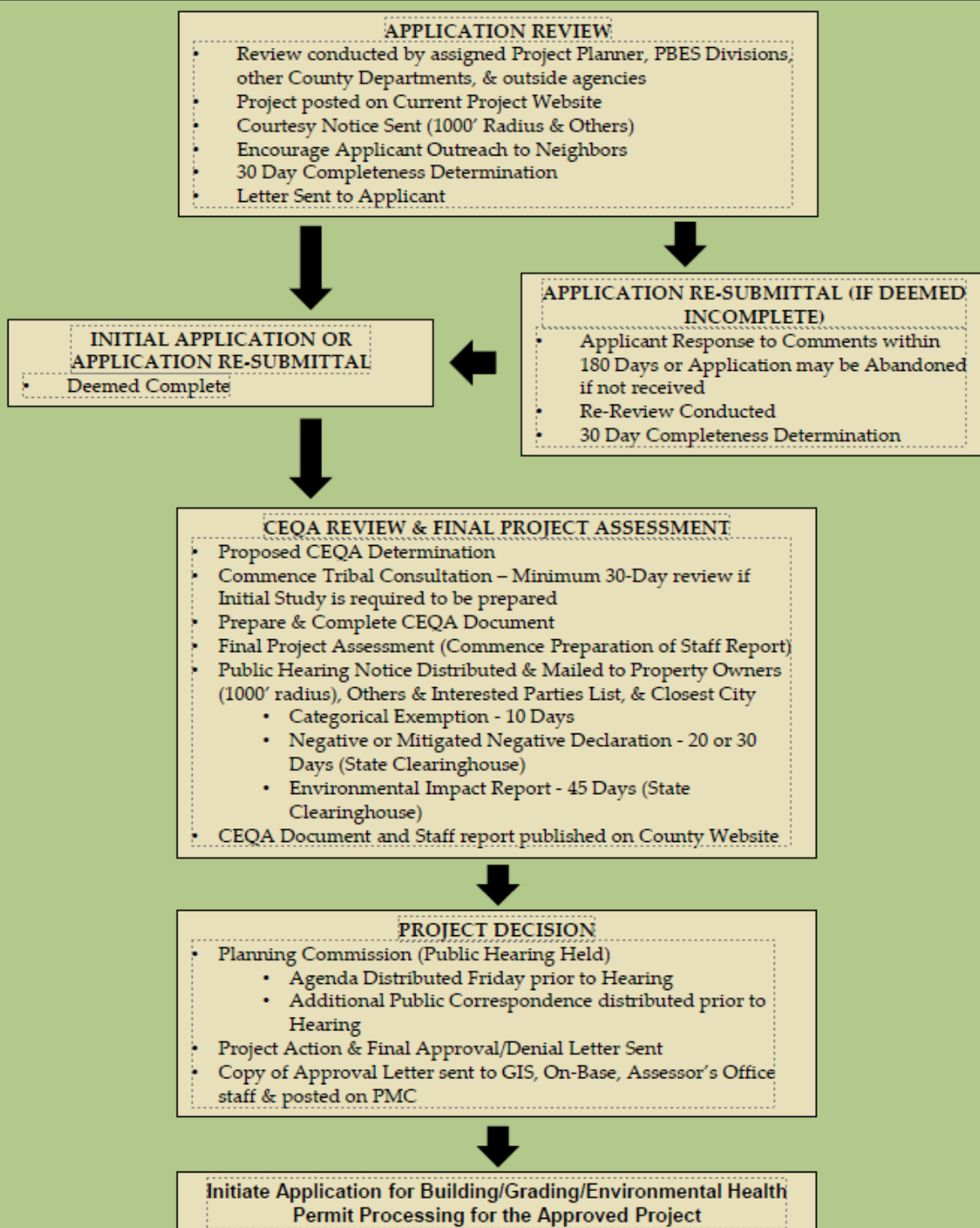


A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

PLANNING, BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS



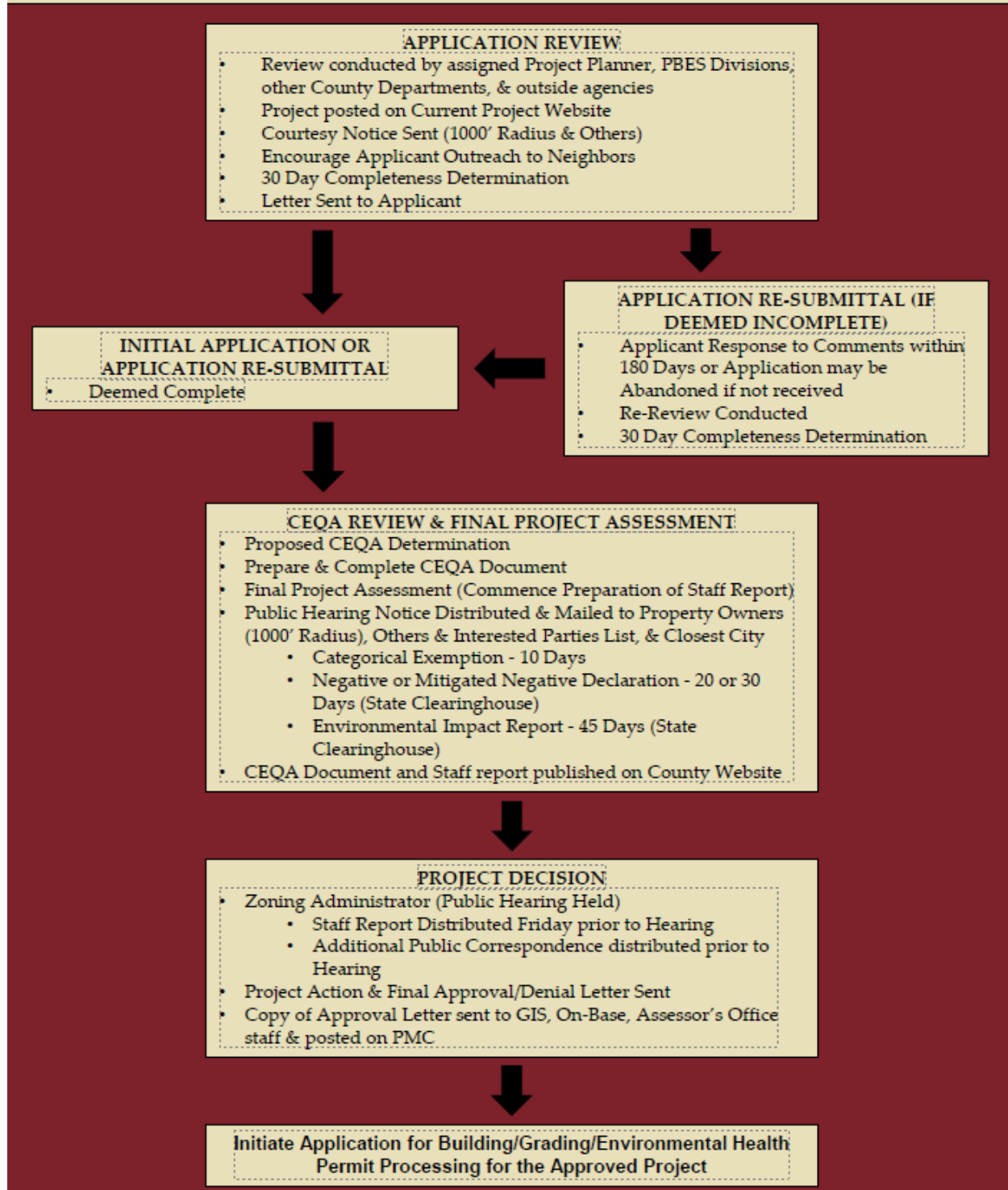


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PLANNING, BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR PUBLIC REVIEW PROCESS

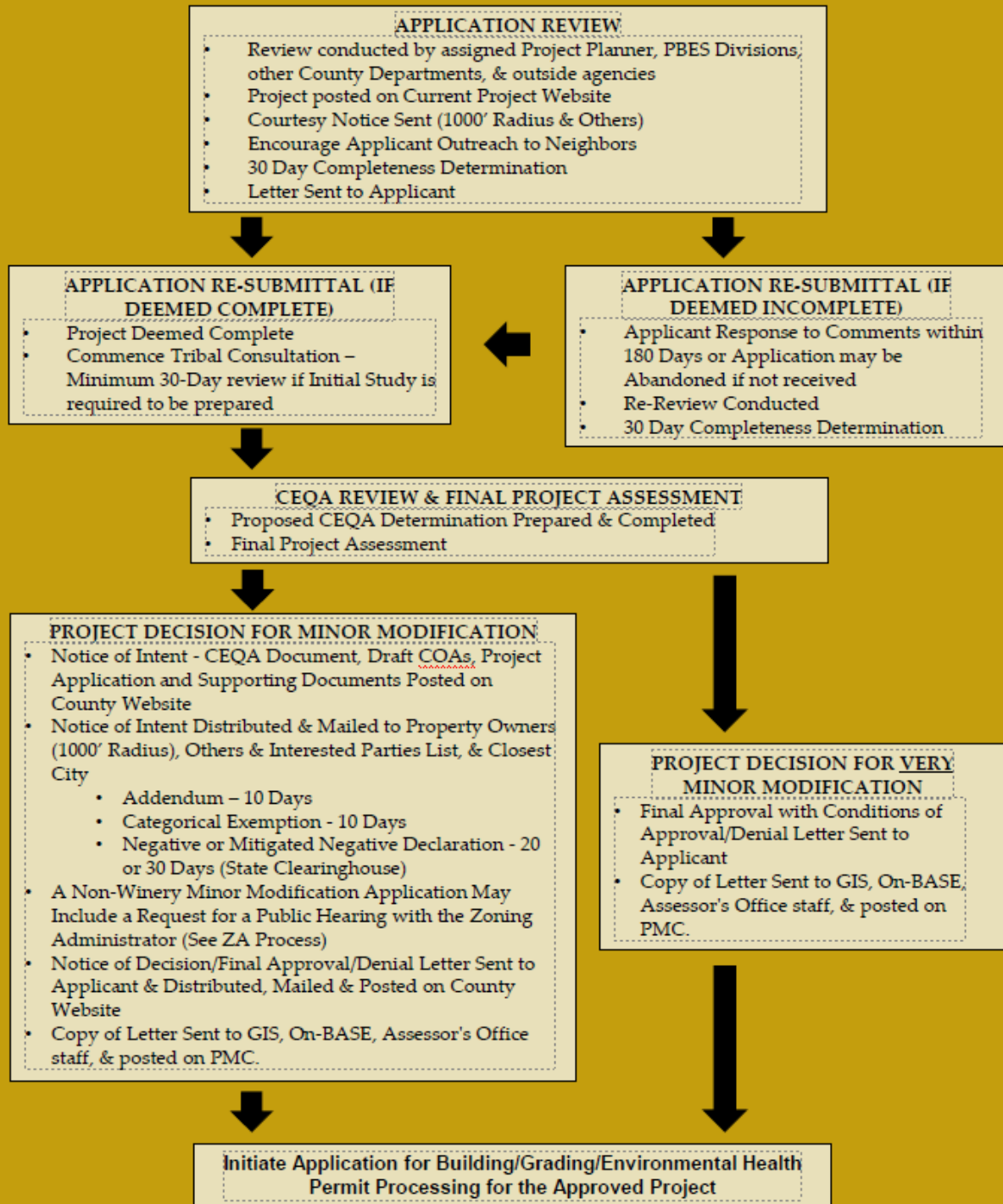




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PLANNING, BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

REVIEW PROCESS FOR MINOR MODIFICATION PERMITS (WINERY & NON-WINERY) & VERY MINOR MODIFICATION (NON-WINERY)



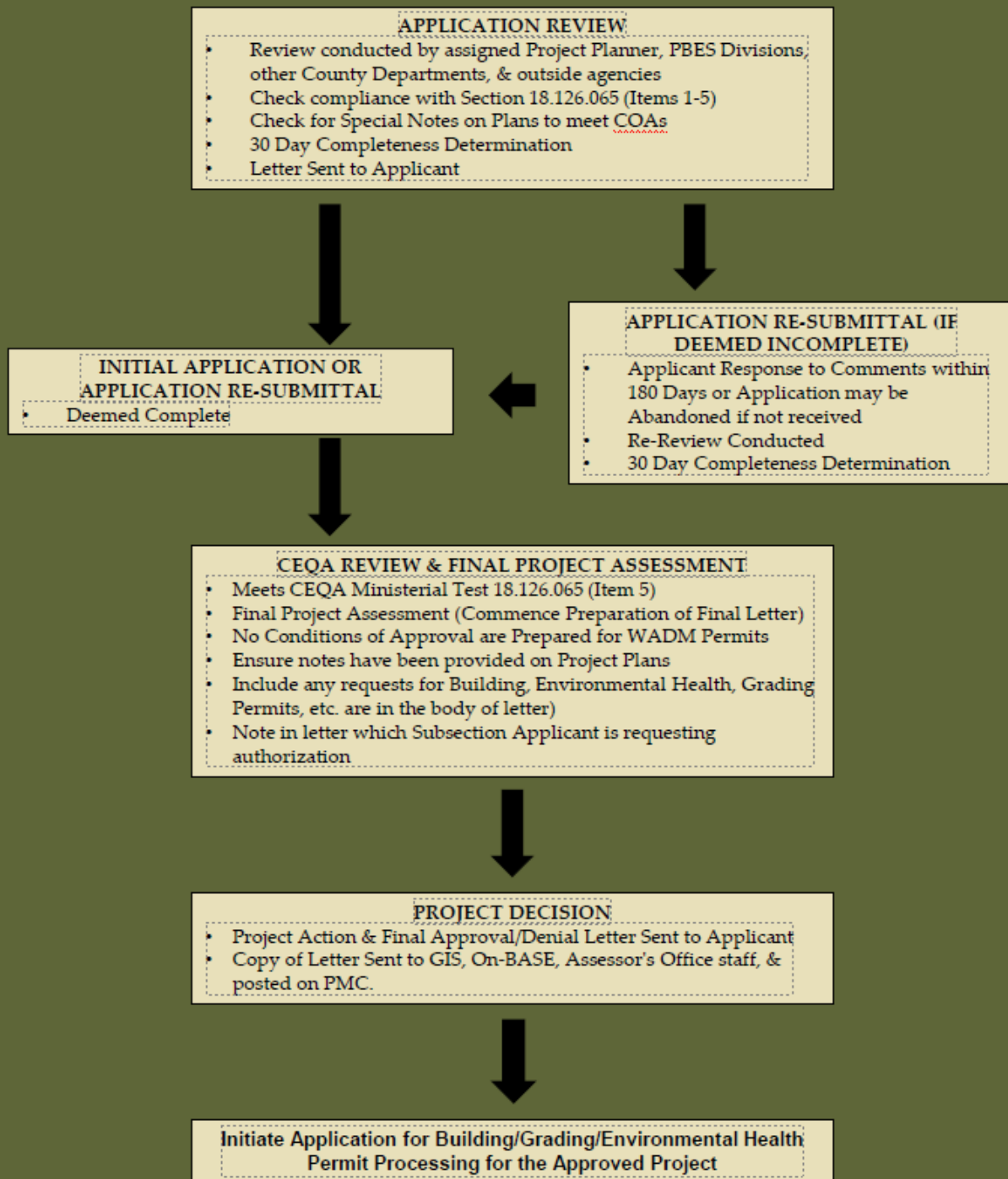


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PLANNING, BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

PLANNING APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

WINERY ADMINISTRATIVE PERMIT PROCESS





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NAPA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2024-2025

May 29, 2025

Statement on Annual Inspections of Napa County Detention Facilities

SUMMARY

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 919(b), the Napa County Civil Grand Jury conducted its required annual review of the county's detention facilities. This inquiry included on-site inspections of the current downtown Napa County Jail, the almost finished new Napa County Detention Center, and the Juvenile Hall. During tours of the facilities, members of the Civil Grand Jury held detailed discussions with facility administrators and correctional officers regarding management, day-to-day operations and protocols, security details, inmate programs and rehabilitation.

The Civil Grand Jury determined not to conduct a full investigation at this time, as the new facility is not yet operational.

DISCUSSION

New Napa County Detention Center

In 2023, Napa County started building a new facility with 304 beds and a 28-bed medical unit to replace the current downtown Napa Jail, which was damaged in the 2014 earthquake. After experiencing weather-related construction delays, the facility is expected to open in the summer of 2025.

Functional spaces will include housing, medical clinic, intake and release, food and laundry, central control, interview and visitation, custody administration, support services, outdoor recreation, administration, and a public lobby. The design includes ample, flexible program space to support a variety of rehabilitation programs and reduce recidivism.

Since 1975, the Napa County Jail has been managed by the Department of Corrections rather than the Sheriff's Department. This arrangement made Napa County unique among California's 58 counties. The Department of Corrections manages the jail, including all aspects of inmate care, treatment, and programs related to sentencing alternatives.

The new facility, located along Napa-Vallejo Highway 221, encompasses 109,300 square feet. The \$96.6 million project was developed using a "Design-Bid-Build" process, including pre-cast concrete cells. Funding sources included California Senate Bill 864 and Senate Bill 844 via the State Lease Revenue Bond Program.

Current Downtown Napa County Jail

The downtown Napa jail opened in 1976 with 60 beds and expanded to 276 beds in 1989. The facility houses pre-sentenced and sentenced inmates. The Department of Corrections is responsible for the coordination of all programs and services related to institutional care, treatment, and rehabilitation of inmates.

The future of the downtown jail site is under consideration by county officials, with options including demolition or redevelopment such as new housing or other commercial uses.

Juvenile Justice Center (Juvenile Hall)

The Probation Department operates the Juvenile Justice Center as a 24-hour secure facility with a capacity of 50 individuals. The age range is 14-25 years old with stays usually between 25 and 55 days. It consistently operates well under capacity.

The youth receive support from trained counselors and engage in various structured services, such as mental health support, cognitive behavioral programming, individual counseling, education, pet therapy, art appreciation, spiritual services, and organized recreational activities.

The Juvenile Justice Center is located at 212 Walnut Avenue in Napa.



An artist rendering of the Napa County Detention Center at 2200 Napa-Vallejo Highway.



The downtown Napa Jail at 1125 Third Street in Napa.



The Napa County Juvenile Justice Center at 212 Walnut Avenue in Napa.



The Napa County Juvenile Justice Center at 212 Walnut Avenue in Napa.



**A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service**

**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY 2024-2025
June 30, 2025
FINAL REPORT**

2023-2024 Continuity Report

**A Review of Responses to the Reports
of the 2023-2024 Napa County Civil Grand Jury**

INTRODUCTION

California Penal Code Section 933 requires elected officials or agency heads to respond within 60 days of the issuance of a Grand Jury report that requires their response and requires governing bodies to respond within 90 days. Section 933.05 specifies the way the responding parties are to make their responses. The responses are transmitted to the presiding judge of the superior court.

The response to a *Finding* must be provided in one of the two following formats:

1. The respondent agrees with the finding.
2. The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding. In such case, the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation for the reason thereof.

The response to a *Recommendation* must be provided in one of the following four formats:

1. The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
2. The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future with a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with a description of the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency, or public agency, when applicable. The timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation thereto.

The 2023-2024 Napa County Grand Jury issued its Consolidated Report on June 30, 2024. The report consisted of 5 individual final reports. Their findings, recommendations and the responses thereto follow.

SKYLINE ACADEMY AT JUVENILE HALL

Report Date: 4/20/2024

Response Date Chief Probation Officer: 8/20/2024 (122 Days)

F1. Although Skyline Academy was scheduled to open at the end of 2023, the Jury's investigation detected limited organized effort toward the opening, no urgency, and minimal forward progress.

The Chief Probation Officer disagrees with the finding.

Contrary to this finding, the Skyline Academy opened as a pilot program in Juvenile Hall in January 2024 and has since served seven in-custody youth with enhanced evidence-based programming, prosocial activities, and targeted interventions addressing criminogenic needs. This initiative required a substantial coordinated effort among multiple agencies, community partners, and stakeholders, all working towards a common goal.

The project's success necessitated extensive infrastructure work, including approvals, funding allocations, and conceptual designs. Construction in a detention facility demands multiple levels of legal compliance and design review, which naturally take time to work through county and state processes. The preparatory phase involved significant data mining, financial and resource reviews, and reallocation of staffing resources, alongside efforts to recruit for hard-to-fill positions.

Recognizing that the heart of every successful program lies in its people, the project emphasized staff involvement. Experts in their respective fields were given the opportunity to contribute through a committee-based approach, ensuring buy-in and long-term sustainability. The pilot program aimed to keep youth local, focusing on their rehabilitative goals, and provided staff and providers the chance to engage with the youth prior to the formal program launch. This approach allowed the youth to have a voice in their own rehabilitation process. The pilot program has been serving seven Napa County youth who would have otherwise been transferred outside of the county, away from their families. The pilot program underscores the commitment to building a culture of support, safety, rehabilitation, and opportunity for the youth. The program continues to develop and is scheduled to formally open by the end of Summer 2024, reflecting a deep commitment to fostering a supportive and rehabilitative environment for youth in need.

F2. Repeated requests for details on the development of Skyline Academy went unmet, leading the Jury to conclude that no formal project plan is being implemented.

The Chief Probation Officer partially disagrees with the finding.

All requests for information made directly from the Chief Probation Officer were provided timely, which is the expectation, and all staff will be notified via memo of this standard. The definition or expectations of a formal project plan may be interpreted differently, as the focus was on designing and developing a program that meets the individual needs of youth, creating linkages

to robust community supports, engaging a variety of stakeholders, organizing construction projects, completing contracts and requests for proposals, creating new logos, increasing youth literacy and educational opportunities through new tablets for youth and career-technical education, painting murals to soften the look of the facility, seeking ways to expand opportunities for youth both inside and outside of the program, increasing mental health services, and creating programming infrastructure that is culturally relevant and in the native language of the youth and their families when possible.

The development and implementation of the pilot program involved numerous stakeholders and was structured through the department's strategic planning initiative, intentionally designed to leverage a committee structure. This collaborative approach ensured that subject matter experts within the department had the authority and ability to contribute to the design, creation, and implementation of the program, resulting in a more innovative and community-focused initiative. The pilot phase was led by a committee of staff and has allowed for valuable learning and adjustments, ensuring that the final program is well-suited to the needs of the youth and families they serve. By fostering a collaborative environment and involving various experts in leadership roles, the program aims to deliver targeted and effective interventions for youth. The formal program documents are being finalized, with full implementation scheduled by the end of Summer 2024, reflecting a steadfast dedication to building a supportive, accountable, and rehabilitative culture for youth.

F3. The Jury found that normal operations in the Prospect wing of Juvenile Hall (which houses short-term youth) have been resumed following the suspension of Covid restrictions.

The Chief Probation Officer agrees with the finding.

R1. By October 1, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct the Napa County Probation Officer to develop and implement a detailed project plan for the Skyline Academy. The plan should formalize the project scope, be updated monthly, and provide a timeline, steps toward completion, assigned tasks, progress towards goals, available resources, and a budget.

The Chief Probation Officer: This recommendation will not be implemented, because it is not warranted.

The Skyline Academy is scheduled to formally open by the end of Summer 2024, making this level of detailed project planning for implementation unnecessary. The program has been in a pilot phase since January 2024.

The need for this program arose, in part, from the rapid passage of Senate Bill 823, which realigned the Division of Juvenile Justice population in California from the state to the local level. This historic change required a complete redesign of how serious and violent youth were handled statewide. Napa County did not open a Secure Track Program, which is designed for youth who would have otherwise been sent to the state Division of Juvenile Justice. Napa

County prioritizes the rehabilitation of youth while holding them accountable for their behaviors with the goal of rehabilitation prior to adulthood. Consequently, the County has not sent many youths to the state for care and could not sustain opening a Secure Track Program.

The Skyline Academy is designed to be a local program that meets the individualized needs of youth with the goal of preventing escalation into a Secure Track Program and enabling re-entry into the Napa Community rehabilitated, with positive supports in place and a new opportunity to be a productive member of our society. The program will have set policies that meet Title 15 regulations as required by law, and a program handbook to ensure that youth, families, and staff understand the programmatic goals.

Additionally, the budget has been approved in a public meeting by the SB 823 subcommittee of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council for fiscal year 2024-2025. No additional staffing resources are requested for this program, as the Napa County Probation Department is allocating only previously existing positions to operate the Skyline Academy. For ongoing data collection and program evaluation, Napa County has partnered with the University of Cincinnati to assist in the design of programmatic data and outcomes.

The Board of Supervisors agree with the Chief Probation Officer.

R2. By October 1, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct the Napa County Probation Officer to identify a project manager to be accountable for the timely and successful completion of Skyline Academy.

The Chief Probation Officer: The recommendation has been implemented.

The Napa County Probation Department recruited and hired a Chief Deputy Probation Officer to oversee Juvenile Hall, who also serves as the project manager for the program. Additional support includes the Assistant Chief Probation Officer and the Chief Deputy overseeing the Juvenile Division to ensure the program operates as intended both during the pilot phase and the formal operations phase.

The Board of Supervisors agree with the Chief Probation Officer.

**NAPA COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT:
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE CONFUSING**

Report Date: 5/1/2024

Response Date County Executive Officer: 8/6/2024 (97 days)

Response Date Fire Administrator: 8/6/2024 (97 days)

Response Date PBES Director: 8/6/2024 (97 days)

Response Date County Fire Marshal: 8/6/2024 (97 days)

F1. Napa County has only one full-time Fire Plans Examiner. After this report was written, the Jury learned that the department had hired a second Fire Plans Examiner.

The County Executive Officer and Fire Administrator agree with the finding.

An additional Fire Plans Examiner position was recommended and authorized in the FY2023-24 annual budget. This position was recruited and hired on March 4, 2024. This addition has significantly bolstered our capacity to review and approve building permit applications in a timely manner, thereby addressing the backlog previously identified.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Fire Administrator.

F2. All Napa County building permits must be approved by the Fire Plans Examiner.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director agree with the finding.

The Fire Marshal agrees with this finding. The Fire Plans Examiner's role is pivotal in ensuring that all construction plans adhere to stringent fire safety regulations to safeguard public health and property.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

F3. As a result of staff shortages, projects throughout the county are delayed and customers are in a holding pattern pending approvals for extended periods of time.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director agree with the finding.

To mitigate delays caused by staffing shortages, we have initiated cross-training programs for additional staff members, including the Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshals. This proactive measure ensures that there is adequate coverage during absences or peak workload periods. Furthermore, engaged third-party reviewers can assist as needed, ensuring continuity in our service delivery.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

F4. The Jury found that an annual golf tournament held in Napa County has consistently been allowed to not comply with the permit application rules.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director disagree with the finding.

The annual golf tournament is not considered a Temporary Event and therefore not subject to the County's Temporary Events License Permit and related review procedures, and submittal and processing deadlines. The annual golf tournament is reviewed and authorized under a Site Plan Approval, which is governed by the Use Permit for the Resort that has been in place since 1964.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and the Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

F5. The Napa County permit matrix to be a complex five-page document that is confusing to the average applicant.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director partly disagree with the finding.

The permit matrix was intended to be an internal guidance document for staff to facilitate their review of building permit applications. It was not intended for public use and as such was not written in layman's terms. As part of the goals for the Building Division for fiscal year 24/25 detailed above, Staff will be reviewing the information and content on the web site and preparing enhancements to the available documents that will provide a better understanding of the permitting process.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

F6. The PBES is currently without a formal process for customers to provide feedback, either in person or on the website.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director partially disagree with the finding.

Staff has conducted one-on-one meetings and group discussions with industry professionals and builders regarding the permitting process this past year in order to obtain feedback regarding our online digital permitting process. This approach not only provided us feedback on the process of permitting it also gives the building staff an educational opportunity to discuss

particular permitting requirements and develop productive relationships with the design and building construction community. The Building Division intends to expand upon these efforts to conduct surveys of the permitting process which will be sent out to applicants who have used the system in the past year.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

F7. The PBES does not assign specific field inspectors for entire projects leading to potential conflicting opinions about required corrective actions.

The County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director partially disagree with the finding.

Building inspectors are assigned to a mapped district. Every effort is made to have the same inspector conduct inspections for the same project; however, individual inspectors may be unavailable. As such, rather than delay the progress of construction, other inspectors may be called upon to provide a timely inspection. Additionally, workload in one area may be greater, so two inspectors may be needed to cover the demand for that district. With that said, the inspectors strive for consistency and are all trained on the California Building Code. With regard to inspections related to correction notices, on occasion an inspector may not be available for a follow-up inspection, and a different inspector may be assigned to conduct the inspection. The inspector will typically focus solely on the items the prior inspector noted and confirm those they have been corrected. If they see additional items that the prior inspector may have inadvertently overlooked, they are advised to honor the prior inspector's corrections unless they observe a life safety violation.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer and Planning Building and Environmental Services Director.

R1. By December 31, 2024, the Jury recommends that a qualified fire code plans examiner be hired to ensure the department has adequate coverage to meet the demands of the building permit submissions.

After this report was written, the Jury learned that the department had hired a second Fire Plans Examiner. No Official Response received - action completed before report was completed.

R2. The Jury recommends that PBES immediately cross-train a staff member to cover the work volume during staffing shortages or vacancies. The department should not allow a position to remain vacant for any extended length of time.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

The Napa County Fire Marshal's Office acknowledges the importance of cross training to mitigate staffing challenges. We have commenced cross-training initiatives across various disciplines within the Fire Marshal's Office to ensure operational continuity and minimize the impact of staffing fluctuations on our service delivery.

The Napa County Fire Marshal's office remains committed to upholding the highest standards of fire safety and efficiency in building permit processing.

Within the past year, the Building Division has become fully staffed at 16 employees and will be able to cover shortages. The Building Division currently has the following staffing:

- 4 permit technicians and 1 supervisor
- 4 plans examiners and a 1 supervisor
- 5 building inspectors and 1 supervisor

While every effort is made to maintain a full staff, we occasionally experience higher or lower permitting demand based on the ebbs and flows of the construction industry. During periods of high demand, we may utilize outside contract services to help fill shortages and to adhere to permitting timelines. We agree cross training is important and have begun a process of training amongst peers as well as disciplines in the building division. Managing the fluctuations of building permits can be challenging and having staff cross trained along with maintaining a full staff is critical to allow a consistent permitting process.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Fire Marshal, and Director of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R3. The Jury recommends that PBES immediately require compliance with the 60 (50) day rule for all applicants of temporary events license permits.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

While the recommendation is directed toward the annual golf tournament at Silverado Country Club, which is regulated by a Site Plan Approval (not Temporary Event requirements), staff is currently working on an update to the Temporary Event Policy Manual which is anticipated to be presented to the Board of Supervisors in winter of 2024 for discussion and potential adoption. The update will consider revisions to application and processing timelines, establishing an enforcement mechanism, among other process improvements.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R4. By December 31, 2024, the Jury recommends that PBES initiate a comprehensive review of existing policies and procedures regarding temporary events license permits to ensure future compliance and accountability.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented. Please see response to Recommendation 3.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R5. By December 31, 2024, the Jury recommends that PBES modify the existing internal matrix into a format understandable by applicants.

Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

As staff are in the process of developing guidance documents to better inform the public on the building permit process, the matrix has been removed from the County's website to prevent confusion in the meantime staff will implement these guide changes by December 31, 2024.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R6. By September 30, 2024, the Jury recommends that PBES develop a customer feedback option, in person and online, as part of the application process. PBES should retain these records for potential performance improvement and evaluation purposes.

Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

The Building Division has prepared a survey of the permitting process which will be sent out to applicants who have used the system in the past year and will send out by August 30, 2024. Additionally, the survey will be sent out via email link once an applicant has completed the plan review process, and a permit has been issued. Once construction has completed, another survey will be sent requesting feedback on the inspection process and the overall experience. We will implement this automated survey by December 31, 2024. We are looking forward to receiving feedback and improving our permitting process where feasible.

Staff will also continue to conduct one-on-ones and group discussions with industry professionals and builders regarding the permitting process.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R7. The Jury recommends that, whenever possible PBES send the same inspector to conduct follow-up inspections.

Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services: The recommendation has been implemented.

Inspectors are currently assigned districts (as noted in the Finding 7 response) corresponding to areas in which they are responsible for inspections. Staff strives to have the same inspector out for the same project; however, inspectors are sometimes unavailable due to personal leave, like time off, sickness, or needing to care for a loved one. Other inspectors may need to fill in to fulfill a timely inspection. Additionally, workload in one area may be greater, so two inspectors may be needed to cover the demand for that district. On occasion, an inspector may not be available for a follow up inspection that they provided a correction notice on. A different inspector may conduct the inspection. The inspector will typically only be looking at what the prior inspector noted and just confirms those items are corrected. If they see additional items that the prior inspector missed, they are advised to honor the prior inspector's corrections unless they observe a life safety violation. In these rare occasions, the inspector then uses their judgement when requiring additional corrections while considering the safety of the building and its occupants.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R8. The Jury recommends that PBES immediately establish a protocol for resolving conflicting code interpretations by different inspectors on the same project.

Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

Building inspectors are trained under the same California Building Code and strive for consistency as described in the response to Recommendation 7. There are occasions when the Building Code may not be entirely clear, and the inspector may need to interpret the intent of the code language. When this occurs, it typically results in a discussion with the other inspectors and the Field Inspection Supervisor. In the morning before the inspectors head out for the day, inspectors will discuss code corrections from the prior day as well as review any issues that might arise with the inspections assigned for that day. This is an opportunity to promote a balanced understanding of the code across the inspection team. Currently, these discussions are organic in nature and brought up as issues come up with the individual inspector. The Field Inspection Supervisor will establish a more formal protocol to promote uniformity and consistency in this process by December 31, 2024.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

R.9 By December 31, 2024, the Jury recommends that PBES provide mobile compatible electronic devices for each field inspector capable of reviewing plans and prior inspection notes.

Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services: The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

In the fall of 2023, a single iPad was issued to the inspection team to allow preliminary testing of a mobile tablet device in the field. Based on the feedback received, the testing was expanded to include the purchase and issuance of two additional tablets to the inspection staff.

Subsequently, two more tablets have been requested, bringing the total number up to five (5). This will enable each of our inspectors the ability to result inspections, view previous inspection results and comments, and access digital plans while conducting their inspections in the field. It is important to note that iPads and other remote electronic devices are limited by the wireless network coverage throughout the County. The hills and valleys in the County result in some areas lacking cell coverage, preventing the devices from communicating with the permitting software at the County offices. Despite these challenges, it has been proven that an iPad or similar device is useful in most parts of the County. We will have the 5 iPads implemented by September 30, 2024.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of the Department of Planning, Building and Environmental Services.

NAPA COUNTY'S COMMUNICATION WITH ITS CITIZENS

Report Date: 3/27/2024

Response Date Board of Supervisors: 8/6/24 (142 days)

Response Date County Executive Officer: 8/20/24 (156 days)

Response Date Sheriff: 8/20/24 (156 days)

Response Date County Office of Emergency Operations: 8/20/24 (156 days)

F1. Since the 2016 Napa County Grand Jury report on county websites, the county has increased its senior communication staff, appointed a webmaster, and implemented improved methods of communicating with citizens for routine, non-emergency notifications.

The County Executive Officer (CEO) and Board of Supervisors agree with the finding.

The County has taken substantial steps towards enhancing its capabilities and expanding its outreach efforts. The County has implemented several improved methods for routine, non-emergency communications with its residents. The website has been redesigned to be more user-friendly and informative, making it easier for residents to find the information they need. Staff regularly issue news releases to keep the public informed about county activities and initiatives. The social media presence has been significantly expanded, allowing the County to engage with the community in real-time and provide timely updates. Additionally, video storytelling has been embraced to convey important messages and showcase county projects and events in a more dynamic and engaging manner. In addition to producing unique video features highlighting the county, a new monthly countywide newscast was launched in April 2024. This newscast aggregates important county news, programs and services, and engagement opportunities in a format that is digestible, educational, and engaging to the public. These efforts are part of the County's commitment to ensuring transparent, effective, and accessible communication with all Napa County residents.

F2. Napa County has made some improvements to provide timely and accurate information to citizens through enhanced website design and performance.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors agree with the finding.

The ongoing process of digitizing services, evaluating content, and arranging graphics is a continuous endeavor. In addition to standard website maintenance and updates, the County has undertaken several initiatives to improve user experience and access to important information. Key changes include:

- Updates to the website's terminology to make it more intuitive for users to navigate.
- Streamlined top-level navigation and the addition of a "How do I?" section.
- An expanded Newsroom to share timely, relevant information with residents.
- Reorganized content into thematic "buckets" to streamline access to related services.

- The launch of the 'Open Napa County' page under the 'Government' section, providing a centralized location for related public search services and enhancing public and staff user experience.

Additionally, various services previously only available in paper format have now been digitized. This includes the development and implementation of digital PDF applications in several departments, with more to come. The County launched the airport runway webcam, providing real-time updates to the public, and refreshed the web presence for Health & Human Services (HHSA) behavioral health, the Planning Department, and County Fire, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information. Staff conducted an extensive review to identify outdated COVID-19 documents and incorporated initiatives such as the Affordable Accessory Dwelling Unit and Child Care Facility Forgivable Loan Programs. A version update to the County's software platform was also completed, ensuring smooth operations and effective communication. Efforts to enhance the County's program in search engine optimization (SEO) and analytics are ongoing. These efforts aim to expand from countyofnapa.org to include other domains and functions such as readynapacounty.org, napalibrary.org, and livehealthynapacounty.org, as well as social media and other applications. This initiative will develop a program framework and foundation configured to support scalability and county-wide accessible data, ultimately supporting a holistic strategy and user experience.

Later this year, Napa County will embark on a comprehensive website redesign, incorporating further design and structural enhancements.

F3. A sizable portion of Napa County website traffic is via mobile devices. Some website content is not optimized for smaller screened mobile devices.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors agree with the finding.

More than 50% of the County's web visitation is via mobile devices. Responsive design has evolved from solely responding to the change in device size to now encompassing a multitude of available data elements that reflect the user's experience. The evolution of responsive web design in 2024 heralds a new era of adaptability and innovation in web development. Beyond simply fitting content to different screens, responsiveness now includes a holistic approach to design that considers device types, emerging interfaces, user preferences, and accessibility standards. By embracing this evolution, the County can craft digital experiences that transcend boundaries and empower users in an increasingly interconnected world.

While most of the county's website content is optimized for smaller screened mobile devices, some third-party applications are not. The County will coordinate solutions with vendors to ensure that digital services are accessible and user-friendly across all devices.

F4. The county has not published to citizens a county strategic plan which outlines how to facilitate the distribution, efficiency, and quality of public information.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors disagree partially with the finding.

The Communications team has written a strategic communications plan; however, while it is a public document, it has not been shared with residents as it is an internal working document intended to guide efforts in informing, educating, and engaging citizens in Napa County.

The primary purpose of the communications plan is to foster effective communication among the Napa County Board of Supervisors, the residents of Napa County, and the departments and staff of Napa County government. Public access to government and the free flow of information are essential pillars of the democratic process. Therefore, this plan is intended to streamline access and enhance transparency within Napa County Government.

In today's service delivery landscape, effective communication plays a vital role in disseminating information, raising awareness about government services and policies, advocating for change, and supporting decision-making processes. Public communication is of utmost importance in empowering the residents of Napa County with knowledge about their expectations from county government. By engaging in dialogue and encouraging meaningful participation, the community can actively contribute to the development and progress of the county.

Objectives:

1. Establish a cohesive and effective communication framework for Napa County that fosters collaboration, empowers employees, and ensures consistent messaging and branding.
2. Enhance Napa County's communication efforts to expand its reach, engage the community, and promote transparency through proactive and creative storytelling across various platforms.
3. Establish transparent and open channels of communication with the community of Napa County, fostering engagement, collaboration, and understanding.
4. Enhance internal communications within Napa County by fostering a sense of community, sharing information effectively, and facilitating engagement among employees.
5. Enhance Napa County's emergency response communication by developing comprehensive strategies that facilitate effective information dissemination, preparation, and collaboration during critical situations.
6. Align legislative goals with effective communication strategies to facilitate the development, understanding, and engagement of Napa County's legislative platforms and processes.

Residents can see the results of the strategic communications plan through the numerous initiatives and improvements the County has implemented, ensuring transparent, effective, and accessible communication with all Napa County residents.

F5. Napa County's overall communication efforts, while focused on "telling Napa County's story", is not engaging the community in a two-way conversation which could facilitate citizen engagement.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors disagree partially with the finding.

The County's social media strategy is intended to actively engage the community, share updates, and encourage dialogue. Staff monitor and respond to comments, messages, and mentions on social media platforms in a timely and professional manner.

From strategizing and developing communications to disseminating content, staff seek opportunities to extend the conversation beyond a specific communication. This is achieved by consistently ending messages with a call to action, which may include directing the audience to learn more on a specific platform or website, taking a survey, or providing a number or email to continue the conversation.

Additionally, individual board members and staff regularly participate in and host events that promote face-to-face interactions among residents, enabling dialogue and a sense of belonging. The County organizes public forums, town hall meetings, and online feedback platforms to gather community input and address concerns promptly and transparently.

The County has actively engaged in and hosted town halls and community events focused on various subjects, including fire/emergency preparedness, Mt. Veeder storm damage and roads updates, PG&E underground electric power lines, road pavement projects, and transportation. Each of these events provides an opportunity for two-way conversation.

Staff worked closely with CAL Fire/Napa County Fire and AP Triton, the consultants developing the Fire Master Plan, to engage the community through various communication channels, including hosting a Fire Master Plan Virtual Town Hall.

Engaging the community in a two-way conversation is a collaborative effort involving all departments and elected officials, not solely the responsibility of the Communications Department. Staff are committed to fostering an environment where community input is solicited, ensuring a more connected and engaged Napa County.

F6. Napa County lacks a formally articulated plan to continuously re-evaluate and update its communication strategies adapting to changing digital messaging technologies in order to assure that messaging remains timely, effective, and relevant.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors agree with the finding.

The communications team pairs the county-wide communication plan with project and departmental plans to re-evaluate and update its communication strategies. This undertaking is completed in tandem with departmental subject matter experts to align with services, staff capacity, and public expectations.

For example, Napa County has launched a public website chat feature and a live streaming translation tool for Board of Supervisors meetings. The team continues to meet with vendors, participate in forums, and assess current solutions to propose to departments. Each department's specific communication tools fall under its jurisdiction due to unique compliance requirements, staff participation, and business practices.

The communication's team's strategy involves regular re-evaluation and updates with Napa County IT to stay current with technological advancements and continue to meet the community's needs effectively.

F7. The switch from Nixle to Everbridge did not go through an RFP or similar evaluation process which has led to disruptions in citizen alert contacts that have not been satisfactorily resolved.

The CEO, Board of Supervisors, and Sheriff agree with the finding.

Napa County contracted with Nixle in 2014. In 2015, Everbridge acquired Nixle and, along with it, Napa County's contract. Napa County extended, renewed, and/or amended this contract for several years. Although acquired by Everbridge, the emergency alert platform continued to be named "Nixle." On October 4, 2022, the Board of Supervisors approved a three-year renewal of the County's contract with Everbridge; at that time the Board was also informed that subscribers to the Nixle platform would be moved to the Everbridge platform. Because the contract was with Everbridge and that contract was renewed, the change from the Nixle to the Everbridge platform did not require a separate RFP process.

At the time of the platform change, Everbridge verbally represented to Napa County that all the subscribers to Napa County messaging in Nixle would seamlessly be moved over to their Everbridge platform without the necessity to re-subscribe. Based on these representations and to maintain the large subscriber base in Nixle (approx. 186,000 subscribers), the County chose to continue the Everbridge contract and not seek other proposals via the traditional RFP process.

Problems and inconsistencies related to delivery of messages to original Nixle subscribers after the transition to Everbridge were noticed early on. At the time of the initial transition from Nixle to Everbridge, the County Office of Emergency Services (OES) was housed solely in the CEO's office. On July 1, 2023, the interim CEO, in his role as Director of Emergency Services, appointed the Sheriff as the Assistant Director of Emergency Services, pursuant to Napa County Ordinance 2.80.060. The OES staff physically moved offices from the downtown Napa administration building to the Napa Sheriff's Office in south Napa. The OES budget was transitioned into the Sheriff's Office overall budget, and day-to-day OES oversight and operations were put under the direction of the Sheriff's Office.

In the first meeting between OES and the administration team at the Sheriff's Office in July of 2023, the Sheriff's Office prioritized diagnosing the issue with the transition from the Nixle to the

Everbridge platform. A County Information Technology (IT) expert was assigned to work closely with OES to identify the issue and work towards a solution. The Sheriff also briefed the CEO, Board of Supervisors, and County Counsel. County Counsel sent a demand letter to Everbridge as part of the plan to address the issue, which helped spur a meeting to resolve the problems. Within two weeks of the meeting between Everbridge representatives, IT, and OES staff, the Sheriff's Office learned that the Nixle platform subscribers were never moved into the Everbridge platform. Instead, Everbridge built a software solution to act as a "bridge" by which messaging in Everbridge would be sent over to the Nixle program and the original Nixle subscribers would then receive the message. The crux of the problem referred to in the Jury's finding is that the software bridge was not reliable.

In August, approximately one month after the issue was identified, Everbridge agreed to do and did a large data migration, moving the subscribers out of Nixle and into Everbridge so that the system would no longer rely on the software "bridge." OES conducted a test messaging campaign in August of 2023, which included 184,328 subscribers that were part of the large data migration. As part of the test, subscribers were asked to confirm receipt of the message.⁷¹ 70,417 subscribers confirmed receipt, which is 38.2% of the contacts that the message went out to, representing a relatively large number of responses. Of note, in marketing, the average open rate is somewhere between 15% and 25% and asking someone to take action (i.e. text back to confirm receipt) results in responses ranging from 1.5% to 3%.

For SMS campaigns, the open rate is around 65% with a click-through rate of about 20%. The takeaway from the August 2023 test was that more than 10 times what is typically expected of an email marketing campaign and nearly twice of what is expected of a SMS campaign was accomplished after Everbridge completed the data migration. This large response rate gives the County confidence that the data migration was successful. While the August 2023 test campaign was successful and resolved the initial platform transition difficulties, the OES team and Everbridge continue to have regular meetings to improve the system's capabilities.

F8. County emergency notifications using the alert technology Everbridge are not reliably reaching all enrolled citizens, and it is unknown exactly how many residents are receiving messages.

The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff agree with the finding.

However, the County is interested in understanding the evidence the Jury used to support this finding that not all enrolled citizens are receiving messages after the August 2023 data migration. While there are known examples of this issue from before the large data migration in August of 2023, evidence that the problem continued afterward have not been found. The Nixle system did not have a "confirm receipt" feature similar to Everbridge, making it impossible to

⁷¹ One key difference between the two systems is that messaging that solicits a response can be sent in Everbridge while Nixle does not have that capability.

conduct a comparable test with Nixle. The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff agree that the Everbridge notification system was not reliable at reaching all enrolled citizens prior to the data migration.

It is important to note that no system can guarantee an exact number of subscribers reached for any given communication. Factors such as cell phone coverage, mobile device settings, and whether mobile devices are on or off, without power, etc., can impact message delivery. Due to these factors, Napa County OES, the CEO's Office, and the Sheriff's Office have established redundancy systems. These include partnerships with local radio stations, community outreach for emergency broadcast information, Genasys software for evacuations, Hi-Lo Sirens during evacuations, door-to-door notifications in evacuated areas, traditional media outlets, and social media accounts managed by Napa County, Napa Sheriff's Office, County fire, and municipal partners.

While Everbridge certainly damaged trust during the initial transition from the Nixle platform, the current reach and data from both test alerts and real-world alerts indicate that the technology is now working at the same level of reliability as the previous opt-in service.

F9. The Everbridge emergency notification mobile app for phones and other mobile digital devices is not performing reliably for citizens.

The Sheriff, OES, Board of Supervisors, and CEO disagree wholly with the finding. During the investigation to identify why some previous Nixle subscribers were not reliably receiving alerts, the team discovered that the issue was related to the software "bridge" rather than a full data migration solution (as mentioned in the response to Finding 8). The team also learned that there were no reports of failures from users who downloaded and used the Everbridge mobile application.

The County does not agree that the system is currently not performing reliably and would be interested in any evidence or examples of subscribers who signed up through Everbridge, or whose subscriber information was part of the large data migration in 2023, not reliably receiving messages at this time. Upon obtaining such information, the County and Everbridge can investigate and correct any ongoing issue.

F10. The enrollment process for Everbridge is cumbersome and not well understood by the citizenry.

The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff agree with the finding.

The enrollment process prior to January 2024 was more cumbersome. However, as part of the continuing efforts between OES and Everbridge to improve the system's capabilities, beginning in January 2024, residents can now subscribe by simply texting their zip code to 888-777, which enrolls them into the Nixle platform. Everbridge now automatically ports over (data migration, not a software bridge) Nixle subscriber data into the Everbridge system on an hourly basis.

Before this new solution, residents using this simple subscriber method would only be added to Nixle, and the system would rely on the problematic software “bridge” mentioned in Response to Finding 7 or have their contact number or email manually entered into Everbridge by OES staff as they periodically checked the Nixle system for any new subscribers.

The Board and Sheriff are pleased that this enrollment issue has been resolved, and new subscribers should find the process efficient and effective.

F11. Everbridge has not fulfilled all of its contractual obligations with Napa County.

The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff disagree wholly with the finding.

The contract executed between Napa County and Everbridge has been reviewed by the County, with assistance from County Counsel, and no breach of contract has been identified at this time. As indicated in Response to Finding 7, the issues caused by the initial transition from the Nixle platform to the Everbridge platform were problematic, but the parties were able to promptly resolve those issues.

Should OES be made aware of any concerns or evidence supporting the Jury’s concerns that issues are continuing, OES will promptly work with Everbridge to resolve them. Since July of 2023, the staff at Everbridge has been responsive to the County’s concerns and have worked diligently on addressing the challenges identified by the OES team. We are confident that any ongoing issues will be similarly corrected by Everbridge.

F12. Napa County’s staff have improved measures to facilitate communication with citizen’s diverse languages and for those having disabilities or special needs.

The CEO and Board of Supervisors agree with the finding.

Recognizing the diverse community the County serves, staff remain dedicated to ensuring effective communication for all residents. The Office of Emergency Services (OES) continues to prepare a bi-weekly translation schedule for emergency communications, guaranteeing that critical information reaches non-English speaking populations promptly. Additionally, staff have initiated work on creating a comprehensive language access plan. This endeavor involves close collaboration with members of the Board of Supervisors and department heads, with a goal of establishing guidelines and resources that promote inclusivity and accessibility in all county communications. By prioritizing language access, staff strive to enhance engagement and participation among diverse communities throughout Napa County.

R1. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county communications staff to annually implement and publish to county residents an updated strategic communication plan that results in timely and efficient two-way messaging with the public through digital, print, and broadcast media.

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

The County Communications team already operates with a comprehensive communication plan that serves as a roadmap for our efforts. This plan is a fluid document, allowing us to tailor our strategies based on the specific message and target audience, new communication technologies, and evolving appetite of how people consume information. Our primary focus is on delivering tangible results that meet the community's needs, rather than detailing the process.

Our approach is dynamic and adaptable, ensuring that we can effectively communicate across various platforms including digital, print, and broadcast media. While we continually refine our strategies to enhance engagement and transparency, we believe that the community is more interested in the outcomes of our communication efforts rather than the intricacies of the plan itself. Our commitment remains to ensure timely, efficient, and effective two-way communication with the public, and we invite residents to experience the results of these efforts through our various communication channels.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R2. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county senior communications staff to meet with all county department heads to assess their communication needs so that they can message effectively and consistently with their target audiences.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Deputy CEO - Communications regularly attends department head meetings to stay informed about departmental communication needs. All departments with staff serving in a PIO role are invited to participate in the County Communications Collaborative. For departments without a dedicated PIO, regular outreach is conducted through check-in emails and meetings to identify and support their communication needs.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R3. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county department communications staff to create a monthly review of county social media accounts, websites, and other digital communication channels to assure that information stays current.

The recommendation has been implemented.

County communications staff regularly reviews and maintains the accuracy of information across social media accounts, websites, and other digital communication channels. We have implemented a process for individual departments to review and provide feedback on a monthly basis, ensuring that all digital communications remain current and effective.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R4. By September 30, 2024, the Napa County Sheriff direct their communication staff to create a monthly review of their social media accounts, websites, and other digital communication channels to assure that information stays current.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented.

The Sheriff will implement this recommendation within the timeframe identified by the Jury.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff.

R5. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors require all county and department websites to offer a live chat feature on each county department website to help citizens get quick answers to their questions and facilitate timely assistance.

The recommendation has been implemented.

Napa County has implemented a website chat feature on countyofnapa.org, staffed by the Napa County Library reference team. This chat tool supports both the public and county staff in locating services and answering questions.

Key features of the website chat tool include:

- Staffed by library staff who assist the public similarly to how they handle library reference questions, aiming to connect users to the necessary resources.
- Available on every page of the website.
- Supports three languages: English, Spanish, and Tagalog.
- Accessible seven days a week.

When the chat tool is not actively staffed, users can leave a message that will be responded to during business hours.

Compatible with both mobile devices and desktops.

This initiative ensures that citizens receive timely assistance and quick answers to their questions, enhancing the overall accessibility and responsiveness of county services.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R6. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county communications staff to develop and make public the metrics and analytics which monitor county efforts to evaluate effective two-way communication strategies with citizens.

The recommendation has been implemented.

The Communications team reviews metrics on a daily basis and provides an internal report on a monthly basis. Measuring communication success is essential to fine-tune strategies, engage audiences effectively, and drive results. Data-driven decision-making is a continuous process, utilizing multiple metrics and analytics tools to track and measure progress.

As we prepare for a redesign of the County's website, we are enhancing our program in search engine optimization (SEO), Google Analytics, and browser ads. This effort will expand from countyofnapa.org to include other domains/functions such as readynapacounty.org, napalibrary.org, livehealthynapacounty.org, and potentially social media and other applications where we drive web traffic within our digital communications. The goal is to develop a program framework that supports scalability and provides county-wide accessible data to support a holistic strategy and improved user experience.

Key tools the County employs include:

- Analytics: Tracks website traffic and user behavior.
- Social Media Insights: Built-in analytics tools on social media platforms that track post-performance, audience demographics, and engagement.

Key metrics for measuring communication success include:

- Engagement Metrics: These help us understand how the audience interacts with our messages, such as open rates, click-through rates (CTR), and social media likes, shares, and comments.
- Reach and Impressions: These metrics measure how many people see our messages.
- By leveraging these tools and metrics, staff aim to continually refine communication strategies to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R7. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors have county communications staff ensure that county initiatives and programs are available to all of our citizens, including those who speak languages other than English and those with special needs or disabilities.

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. Countywide Communications promotes and encourages accessibility but does not have oversight of all county initiatives and programs. However, we continually seek opportunities to implement more inclusive practices. Some of the areas where we have control and have implemented accessibility measures include:

- Website Translation: The County's website incorporates Google Translate to support multiple languages.
- Social Media: We translate social media posts to reach a broader audience.
- Board Meetings: We have implemented the Wordly AI language translation platform to offer live Spanish translation at all Board of Supervisors meetings.
- ADA Compliance: An ADA page on the website provides information and resources for individuals with special needs or disabilities.
- Partnerships: We work with the risk team to provide remediation for any person seeking services with special needs or disabilities.
- Procurement: Our procurement language includes requirements for ADA compliance and is in the process of adding language suggesting Spanish as a preferred language.

These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to making county programs and services accessible to all citizens, regardless of language or special needs. The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R8. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors establish a Napa County Communications Citizen Advisory Board with the goal of providing community input into Napa County communication priorities.

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

The communications team is staffed with professionals from diverse backgrounds, bringing over 70 years of combined experience. In 2023, we established the County Communications Collaborative to enhance communication strategies and practices within Napa County. This group meets monthly and includes full-time Public Information Officers (PIOs) and individuals with PIO responsibilities, allowing them to exchange insights, best practices, and innovative approaches in their communication efforts.

Additionally, county communications staff participate in the Napa County PIO Network, a collaborative group made up of representatives from various sectors, including:

- The county and each of the five jurisdictions
- Public safety (fire, police, sheriff)
- Education (Napa County Office of Education, Napa Valley Unified School District, Napa Valley College, Pacific Union College)
- Transportation (Napa Valley Transportation Authority, CalTrans, California Highway Patrol)
- Healthcare (Queen of the Valley, Kaiser, St. Helena Adventist)
- Nonprofit organizations (Community Organizations Active in Disaster)
- Other entities such as the Veteran's Home, Napa State Hospital, and PG&E

This network is committed to working together to elevate our collective impact in communicating with residents. County communications staff also are members of statewide and national associations and attend conferences and training programs to stay abreast of the latest communications tools and strategies, ensuring effective communication with stakeholders. Associations include CAPIO (California Public Information Officials), 3CMA (City-County Communications & Marketing Association), NAGC (National Association of Government Communicators), NACIO (National Association of County Information Officers), PRSA (Public Relations Society of America), and GSM (Government Social Media).

Our existing advisory boards and regular community meetings provide ample opportunities for constituent input. We regularly review questions, concerns, and issues raised by the public through the Board of Supervisors, their aides, and department heads. This feedback loop allows us to remain flexible and responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

We do not take a one-size-fits-all approach to communication. Instead, we remain nimble in our strategies to effectively address the diverse needs of our residents. Through our active participation in training and collaboration with other professionals, we continuously develop our skills and improve our communication practices.

The establishment of a separate Communications Citizen Advisory Board is therefore unnecessary, as our current structures and processes already facilitate robust community engagement and input into Napa County's communication priorities.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the County Executive Officer.

R9. By December 31, 2024, the Sheriff's Department OES prepare and execute updated plans to fix deficiencies in alert notification measures ensuring that accurate and timely emergency information is disseminated to the public and media when needed. This may require assessing alternative emergency notification system providers to resolve ongoing Everbridge deficiencies.

This recommendation has been implemented.

Since July 2023, Everbridge has been responsive and continues to be responsive in improving the reliability and effectiveness of their platform. As indicated in Response to Finding 7, the most recent contract with Everbridge was a three-year renewal of the previous contract.

Everbridge had acquired Nixle in 2015, and the renewed contract contemplated that, during this period, the County's subscribers would be migrated from the Nixle platform to the Everbridge platform. As the Jury found, however, this transition was not seamless. Beginning in July 2023, the issues were quickly identified and addressed, and now the system appears to be functioning properly.

Beginning in the spring 2025, the Sheriff will recommend to the Board of Supervisors to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for messaging services beyond October 2025 when the Everbridge contract expires. Everbridge can certainly submit a proposal as part of that process, and other providers will also be invited to submit proposals.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff.

R10. By September 30, 2024, the Sheriff's Department OES collaborate with Napa County communication staff to address problems with the "Alert Napa County" citizen enrollment process including increased awareness of how to enroll, streamline the enrollment process, and improve citizen's ability to manage their own alert notification preferences.

This recommendation has been implemented.

As indicated in Response to Finding 10, beginning in January 2024, residents can now subscribe by simply texting their zip code to 888-777. Additionally, logging into their online

account allows citizens to opt into the notices that they wish to receive. OES continues to work with Everbridge to ensure the platform functions correctly and is as user-friendly as possible.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Sheriff.

RAISING AWARENESS OF ELDER ABUSE IN NAPA COUNTY

Report Date: 4/24/2024

Response Date County Sheriff: 7/3/2024 (70 days)

Response Date City of Napa: 7/16/2024 (83 days)

Response Date County Director of HHS Agency 9/11/2024 (140 days)

F1. The Jury found that Napa County has many dedicated people in county agencies and nonprofits who are working hard to help the elderly age gracefully.

The City of Napa agrees with this finding.

The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding. County staff in HHSA, the District Attorney's Office, the Sheriff's office, and those working across the network of community-based organizations are dedicated to improving the lives of older adults in Napa County. The Director appreciates the grand jury for their thorough assessment and investigation of the issue of Elder Abuse and their recognition of the hard work being done across the County to support older adults, respond to incidents, prevent elder abuse, and more broadly to provide support to aging gracefully.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

F2. The Jury found that no one appears to be accountable for ensuring that all mandatory reporters know their responsibilities. Many do not have sufficient training to identify elder abuse. Many may not know the correct procedure for reporting elder abuse, exposing them to liability for failing to report.

The City of Napa partially agrees with the finding.

Employees of Napa Police Department are mandated reporters and we have a documented process for investigating and cross reporting elder abuse cases to Adult Protective Services (APS). Napa PD policy includes a supervisory expectation to report any deviations from the established policy. The City of Napa has no informed opinion about the accountability of mandated reporting requirements for the other agencies in Napa County.

The Director of Health and Human Services Agency partially disagrees with this finding. There is no single entity that has legal jurisdiction over mandated reporting and instead the law imposes this responsibility on various entities, employers, and professions.

California law mandates certain individuals report known or suspected instances of elder or dependent adult abuse. Specifically Welfare and Institutions Code section 15630 provides in relevant part that, "Any person who has assumed full or intermittent responsibility for care or custody of an elder or dependent adult, whether or not that person receives compensation, including administrators, supervisors, and any licensed staff of a public or private facility that provides care or services for elder or dependent adults, or any elder or dependent adult care

custodian, health practitioner, or employee of a county adult protective services agency or local law enforcement agency is a mandated reporter." Reports of known or suspected abuse of elder and dependent adults within long-term care facilities and community care facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and law enforcement. Instances of such abuse occurring outside of any of these facilities are the jurisdiction of the county office of Adult Protective Services (APS) and law enforcement.

In carrying out this reporting responsibility, a wide range of employers and professions need to ensure the completion of mandated reporter training and report known or suspected instances of abuse, including but not limited to health practitioners, clergy members, bank/financial institution employees, animal control and code enforcement employees, etc. California law mandates that long-term care facilities, community care facilities, and residential care facilities, for the elderly provide such training. The State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) or the State Department of Social Services (CDSS) is charged with reviewing each long-term care facility to ensure compliance with these training requirements.

Here in Napa County, our HHSA Adult Protective Services (APS) program provides mandated reporter trainings in partnership with other agencies and institutions to help various employers and their staff comply with their legal obligations to know and report abuse. In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, our APS program conducted 13 trainings to local community-based organizations and law enforcement. In Fiscal Year 2024-2025, APS staff are planning to host a series of trainings for mandated reporters, inviting all known organizations who employ mandated reporters to help support their awareness and understanding regarding reporting processes and local contacts. It is also worth noting that earlier this year, HHSA took the initiative to request, and the Board of Supervisors approved, the addition of another supervisory position in the APS program. This increase in staffing allows our APS program to expand upon elder abuse awareness and education with the goal of providing support to the wide array of mandated reporters. Additionally, HHSA recently posted a CDSS video regarding elder abuse on its website and shared the video link with agencies and institutions who employ mandated reporters. Finally, although HHSA is not charged with legal or regulatory oversight of those agencies, as previously noted in the response to Finding 1, the Agency is an active participant in a collaborative network of entities who work together to ensure that older adults are protected from harm and receive the support they need.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

F3. The Jury found that the constellation of services available to the elderly is broad and complex making it a challenge for some people to find the resources they need.

The City of Napa agrees with this finding.

The Director of Health and Human Services Agency agrees with this finding. There are indeed a wide range of services available for older adults in Napa County, and this very rich array means there is a continual need to ensure awareness of and support in navigating them. Fortunately,

because of the strategic and thoughtful approach of the many providers of such services, there are also continual efforts to address this issue.

First, HHSA helps to address this issue structurally by maintaining an integrated Comprehensive Services for Older Adults (CSOA) Division providing co-located services for older adults at a centralized location. Within the CSOA division, HHSA administers distinct state funded and regulated safety net programs for older adults including In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), APS, and Public Guardian Services. These services are enhanced by co-located and embedded services for older adults provided by our Behavioral Health Division and Self Sufficiency Services Division. However, it is understood that the needs of older adults are far-reaching and often span beyond directly administered County-run programs.

That leads to the second important point. This issue cannot be adequately responded to without highlighting the important and critical fact that Napa County is also part of two-county Napa-Solano Area Agency on Aging (AAA). By way of background, the California Department of Aging (CDA) contracts with and oversees local AAAs that coordinate a variety of services for older adults, adults with disabilities, informal caregivers and family caregivers. AAAs address the needs and concerns of all older persons at the regional and local levels through funding under the Older Americans Act. AAAs coordinate and offer services that help older adults (age 60 and older) remain in their homes and provide core services related to nutrition, health and wellness, caregiver support, legal assistance, transportation, and supportive services.

Our Napa-Solano AAA operates under a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JEPA) between Napa County and Solano County. Pursuant to the terms of the JEPA, the two counties agreed that the infrastructure needed to manage the AAA would be provided Solano County Health and Social Services who works in close partnership with Napa County HHSA and community-based organizations. Further, an Oversight Board exists as part of the AAA's governance structure and that Board includes representatives from both counties' Boards of Supervisors. Napa County HHSA provides a pro-rata share (based upon the population of older adults that reside in both counties) of the funding necessary to support the AAA's staff and program costs.

Noteworthy is the fact that AAA funded services include the provision of a service called "Information and Assistance," typically referred to as "I&A." Simply put, that service is specifically aimed at the very issue of assisting individuals to find needed services and resources. As part of our Napa-Solano AAA, the entity designated to provide I&A services in Napa County is Providence Community Health (throughout this Response, this refers to the entity formerly known as Collabria Care and hereinafter referred to as "Providence"). Unique to Napa County is the fact that the I&A program is enhanced by additional discretionary funding that this County provides directly to Providence through the intentional use of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds. For over two decades, HHSA has supported the County by carrying out a grant award process to help direct MSA funding to enhance community health, and most recently HHSA aligned this funding to operationalize areas identified in our Community Health Improvement Plan and Napa Older Adults Assessment.

It is worth noting that Providence has been the recipient of MSA funds to provide I&A for Napa County for several years starting in Fiscal Year 2021-2022 through to present. The HHSA Director is unaware of any other County using discretionary MSA funds to amplify the provision of I&A services in its community. The Director wishes to acknowledge the Napa County Board of Supervisors for setting these funds aside for over two decades to meet the County's most pressing needs. It is this type of forward thinking and investment of discretionary funding that has positioned the County well and HHSA is proud to manage the process that helps to prioritize the use of such funds, including that they be directed toward older adult services. Responses to subsequent findings and recommendations further explain how the County and HHSA is working to continually address the issue of ensuring that people can find the resources they need in conjunction with critical partners.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

F4. The Jury found that information sources and service delivery are often online. Ongoing efforts to get technology into the hands of the elderly is hampered by their lack of computer literacy resulting in a continuing need for in-person information and services.

This finding is not within the purview of the City of Napa.

The DHHS agreed with the finding and stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

F5. The Jury found that services such as Providence Home Health Napa “Caregiver Resources” and “Information and Assistance” exist to meet the needs of the elderly and their caregivers. These services appear to be underutilized.

This finding is not within the purview of the City of Napa.

The DHHS partially disagreed with the finding and provided an explanation. The response stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

F6. The Jury found that more outreach is needed to make the community aware of elder abuse and available services.

The City of Napa agrees with this finding.

The DHHS agreed with the finding and stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

F7. The Jury found that an affluent population makes Napa County particularly vulnerable to elder financial scams. Experts predict that emerging artificial intelligence technologies will make financial scams a bigger problem. The best deterrent to this type of fraud is for potential victims to have the capability and strategies to identify them beforehand.

The City of Napa agrees with this finding.

The DHHSa partially disagreed with the finding and provided an explanation. The response stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

F8. The Jury found that the elderly population in Napa County is increasing. As the elderly population increases, the demand for resources needed to keep them safe will also increase. Additional social workers and mental health therapists will be needed in the county.

The City of Napa partially agrees with this finding.

City services aimed at providing resources to serve a growing elderly population are needed to keep our community members safe. The City of Napa has no informed opinion about the adequacy of social workers or mental health therapists to serve this population in Napa County. The DHHSa agreed with the finding and stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

F9. The Jury found that law enforcement training on how to identify and report elder abuse is limited.

The response partially agreed with the finding and provided an explanation.

The City of Napa partially agrees with this finding.

The training for Police Officers starts in the State of California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (CA POST) Basic Law Enforcement Academy. Additional limited self-paced multimedia training and advanced investigative training is available through CA POST courses.

The DHHSa disagreed with the finding and provided a brief explanation. The response stated this Board of Supervisors supported this position.

R1. By September 30, 2024, HHSA develop and annually distribute a simple, brief card or letter to all mandatory reporters in Napa County. This form would inform them of their reporting responsibilities, and how to report and link to online resources for additional information.

The recommendation has been implemented.

HHSA's APS Program staff are in the process of finalizing a trifold hand-held card that contains information on elder abuse, including how to identify signs of abuse, to whom reports are made, and the timeframe for reporting. This will be made available on HHSA's website and provided to organizations identified as mandated reporters throughout the County. This will be completed by September 30, 2024.

Additionally, as previously noted, HHSA has updated its website for APS to include a CDSS video that briefly describes the responsibilities of mandated reporters. A link to our website and this video will be sent with additional information to organizations identified as mandated reporters in the County. Additionally, the Napa County HHSA APS program is expanding mandated reporter trainings to increase their frequency and establish a clear schedule with its County- and nonprofit-mandated reporting partners.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency. The Board of Supervisors would like to ask Grand Juries to consider directly interviewing individuals and families with lived experience in the subject matter. The Board believes that the report would be strengthened by interviews with people who can directly speak to the impacts of elder abuse in their lives. Finally, the Board would also like to request that Grand Jury's reports note the source of their facts. While the Board understands the confidentiality of Grand Jury interviews, the sources of the Grand Jury's facts can be useful to further understand the report's subject matter.

R2. By December 31, 2024, HHSA develop a “Healthy Aging Guide” for Napa County to aid the elderly, families, and caregivers in understanding how to better assess their needs and locate the available resources. Such a guide needs to go far beyond the simple list approach of the current Napa County Aging and Disability Resource Guide. HHSA should utilize county partners such as the Library and County Communications staff as well as other avenues to distribute this to the people who need the information.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented. This recommendation will be implemented by September 30, 2024.

This response also includes efforts that go far beyond, as explained below. First, the Director agrees with the Grand Jury's Finding Number 3 that it can be a challenge for older adults and their caregivers to identify available resources, as there exists a broad constellation of services that can easily become overwhelming without support. This finding is also supported by data collected through the NOAA indicating the need for additional resources designed to aid elderly families and caregivers in how to access services. HHSA in collaboration with the Napa/Solano Area Agency on Aging, Healthy Aging Population Initiative (HAPI), and Providence, the County's I&A provider, produces the "Napa County Aging and Disability Resource Guide" referenced in this recommendation. This guide is currently being revised and represents a significant collaborative effort to produce a single source of reference for older adults and caregivers to

identify what services are available. It is an extremely useful tool. HHSA will work with the above partners to distribute this guide in accessible locations, such as the Napa County Library. However, a comprehensive, organized list of available resources alone is not sufficient to support all older adults in accessing the services that meet their needs. Therefore, as previously noted, the County has further enhanced the provision of I&A in our community through a separate contract with Providence. This contract builds upon the AAA contract for I&A services with Providence to serve as the gateway to navigating older adult services throughout the County. A unique feature of our County's I&A program is that it is partially operated onsite at HHSA where space is provided within our Comprehensive Services for Older Adults divisions. Co-locating this entry point for navigating older adult services within HHSA helps to centralize referrals and coordination with HHSA's directly administered older adult programs.

HHSA is also bolstering its support to increase awareness about I&A by committing resources to producing a video that helps direct older adults and caregivers to a single navigation point of contact and provides a brief overview of the rich array of services available in our community. HHSA reached out to Providence to collaborate on the content of this video production. This should help to increase utilization of I&A and nicely supplements the Aging and Disability Resource guide with easy-to-access personal system navigation and care coordination. HHSA is targeting that both the updated resource guide and video will be completed by September 30, 2024.

Finally, the Napa-Solano AAA Executive Director, the Independent Living Center (ILC) for Napa County the Disability Services and Legal Center), and Providence have jointly submitted a Letter of Interest to the California Department of Aging (CDA) to pursue the creation of an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for Napa County. The ADRC is a partnership model whereby AAAs and ILCs can collaborate, integrate resources, and develop efficiencies that help them respond to increasing consumer service needs and expectations, and higher service demands given the growing number of Californians seeking Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS). ADRCs are designed to develop coordinated networks to assist older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in navigating the complex system of LTSS using a "No Wrong Door" partnership model. HHSA is excited that the AAA, ILC, and Providence are pursuing an ADRC and looks forward to the enhanced support to residents of our community.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

R3. By December 31, 2024, HHSA work in conjunction with the Commission on Aging, the Elder Abuse Task Force, and Healthy Aging Population Initiative (HAPI) to develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan aimed at both the elderly and the wider community. The objectives of this plan are to break down barriers for elder support, increase community engagement and inclusion, educate the community on recognizing and avoiding financial scams, and increase the awareness and understanding of elder abuse.

The recommendation requires further analysis.

HHSA participates in the Commission on Aging meetings, Elder Abuse Task Force meetings, HAPI meetings and various NOAA workgroup meetings. HHSA appreciates the ability to work in conjunction with these groups and individuals to enhance communication on these important issues.

The Director also incorporates prior responses which explain that Providence serves as the County's Information & Assistance (I&A) provider. Therefore, they are a critical and central player in the development of any communication plan since the goal is to direct residents to a single point of contact for older adult services and resources. Similarly, it is important for HHSA to work in collaboration with our AAA Executive Director, particularly as an ADRC is being pursued to ensure alignment of messaging and effort. At the same time, consistent with HHSA's prior Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 and our current Strategic Plan for 2024-2026, we have dedicated resources to building awareness of programs and services through increased communications.

In 2022, HHSA began publishing a quarterly 'Be Well' publication and in 2023, HHSA was fortunate to add a Communication Manager to support enhanced communications across all mediums. That position has been recently filled as of July 1, 2024. In the Summer 2024 Issue of 'Be Well,' an article was included that shared information about our APS program, elder abuse, and how to recognize and report suspected elder abuse. With June being Elder Abuse Awareness Month, it is a natural and appropriate time to elevate awareness through a targeted communication plan. HHSA's Communications Manager will work with APS staff to carry out a multi-media campaign to elevate awareness and understanding of elder abuse. It is anticipated that this will include radio spots, informational pamphlets, mailers, and a social media campaign. As mentioned previously, HHSA staff are already working with Providence to create a video that will be distributed online and through social media which will provide information on the I&A Program, how to access information, and where services are located. HHSA also recently added an APS Social Worker Supervisor to enhance programming, including additional community outreach, communication, and education in collaboration with HAPI, the Commission on Aging, and the Elder Abuse Task Force. Finally, HHSA is in the process of contracting with Wine Down Media to support agencywide communications about its many programs, services, and relevant topics, and focusing on older adults is necessarily included in that investment.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

R4. HHSA continues ongoing work with the District Attorney's Office and nonprofit organizations to develop and enhance scam awareness and promote prevention campaigns. The objectives of these campaigns are to assist the elderly to recognize and avoid potential scams and know how to respond if faced with one.

The recommendation has been implemented.

On June 28 of this year, the Napa County District Attorney's Office, along with Molly's Angels of Napa Valley, and HHSA, hosted the S.A.F.E. (Seniors Against Financial Exploitation) workshop.

This event highlighted the collaboration between agencies working to prevent and address financial exploitation of older adults in Napa County.

The morning session was open to older adults in the community and focused on financial abuse and scam prevention as well as healthy aging. Among the presenters were APS staff, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, law enforcement, a gerontologist, and a panel of older adults who have experienced financial abuse. As mandated reporters, financial institutions play an important role in identifying and reporting abuse, and therefore, the afternoon session was geared toward staff from local financial institutions and focused on providing them information as to how to identify and report suspected financial elder abuse.

The event was a success with over 150 older adults in attendance and over 50 institutions represented. The feedback solicited about the event was very positive and there is interest in making this event an annual occurrence.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

R5. Beginning July 1, 2024, Napa County HHSA proactively increase their involvement in the California Master Plan for Aging to help shape future programs and be more aware of resources and grant availability.

The recommendation has been implemented.

By way of background, the California Master Plan for Aging (MPA) is a broad set of initiatives providing opportunities for local government agencies, AAAs, community-based organizations, and other healthcare providers to meet the needs of an aging population. The MPA sets forth five goals: Housing for all Ages & Stages; Health Reimagined; Inclusion & Equity, Not Isolation; Caregiving that Works; and Affording Aging. Within each of the five goals are four to six strategies that address Transportation, Elder Abuse, Caregiving, Income Security, and more. First and foremost, it should be noted that HHSA has been at the forefront of providing the foundation to help shape these priorities for Napa County. As previously noted, HHSA worked directly with our community-based organizations and Commission on Aging staff to help bring the multi-year NOAA to fruition. Both the Director of HHSA and staff from the County Executive Office are part of the Project Oversight and Support Team and HHSA staff also participate in the Steering Committee, and over \$400,000 in total funds from the County and HHSA (through the strategic alignment of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding) has been leveraged to make the NOAA possible in the first place. This work is being carried out thoughtfully in conjunction with our AAA Executive Director to help ensure alignment since the AAA plays a critical role and is required to develop a separate Four- Year Area Plan for Napa and Solano counties.

Second, HHSA also worked strategically and collaboratively to align the priority areas from its recently completed Community Health Assessment (CHA), done in conjunction with Providence, with the NOAA. Both the CHA and NOAA were presented to the Board of Supervisors on April 24, 2024. The presentation highlighted the fact that five priority areas emerged through our CHA and NOAA, consisting of Housing, Economic Stability, Access to Health Services, Racial Equity & LGBTQ Inclusion, and Behavioral Health, and within those areas, issues that were further elevated by the NOAA included Transportation, Fall Prevention, Food Access, Access to Dental

Care, and Communications/Digital Inclusion. Noteworthy is the fact that these areas align with the priorities in the MPA.

Beyond an obvious alignment with our CHA and NOAA to the MPA, is the fact that HHSA, using the CHA and NOAA, is developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) with the input of community stakeholders. Our CHIP is being operationalized through the launching of a multi-pronged funding opportunity leveraging MSA, MHSA, and Opioid Settlement Funds resulting in 36 contracts to community-based providers. A total of approximately \$10.8 million in contracts that span two and three years each are directed specifically at community health, with \$3 million of the \$5 million in MSA funds directed at services for older adults. HHSA presented a summary of these investments and their alignment to our CHA, NOAA, and CHIP to the Board of Supervisors on June 4, 2024. This evidences that HHSA is aware of the available resources and has been very involved in addressing the priority areas in the MPA vis-à-vis our local work on our CHA, NOAA, and CHIP.

Further, a critical program within HHSA is our IHSS program. Effective May 2024, with the unanimous support of our Board of Supervisors, HHSA was able to increase the wages paid to our IHSS providers to \$20 per hour for the essential caregiving support they provide to older and disabled adults allowing them to remain in their homes. This was a significant increase from \$17.45 per hour and reflects the strategic investment by the County to help bolster caregiving resources in our community, including the provision of care by friends and family, all in alignment with the goals and strategies of the MPA. HHSA also works collaboratively with Solano County as part of our Napa-Solano AAA. The Director of Napa County HHSA, in partnership with the Director of Solano County Health and Social Services, prioritized the recent addition of a new position within the AAA to enhance the staffing infrastructure. The additional staffing, which we anticipate being filled within the next six months, will help our AAA assist with the MPA work in Napa County, explore and develop new programs, including creation of an ADRC, and, as both counties have discussed, assist in writing grant proposals relating to aging services for both Solano and Napa County.

Finally, with this new Fiscal Year 2024-2025, HHSA added an HHSA Management Analyst position to the Agency. This position will report to the Director of HHSA and among the many Agencywide priorities, this position will be dedicated part-time to help bolster the support of the NOAA work, work with the AAA Executive Director and Deputy Director of HHSA-CSOA division, and community-based organizations to help support the provision of older adult services in Napa County. It is this type of forward thinking, marshalling of resources, and overwhelming investment in services by HHSA and the County that positions us well to continue meeting the needs of our aging population.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

R6. Beginning July 1, 2024, law enforcement establishes periodic training that reinforces how to recognize and report elder abuse.

This recommendation has not yet been implemented.

The Napa County Sheriff's Office will work to implementing a tracking system for periodic trainings that reinforces skills and best practices in several topics, including elder abuse. The Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a well-trained and prepared work force to keep Napa County safe. In addition to the training that Deputies already receive related to elder abuse through the Police Academy and the Field Training Program, in 2019 the legislature passed, and the Governor signed, Senate Bill 338. SB338 created more policy mandates for law enforcement related to elder abuse and added a mandate for a minimum of 2 hours of training. The Napa County Sheriff's Office has implemented the requirements of SB338, reflected in the Sheriff's Office's Senior and Disability Victimization Policy, specifically Policy #317, which is a comprehensive policy that is 15 pages long and covers all recommendations described in SB338. In addition, all Deputies, after the Police Academy but prior to starting the Field Training Program, receive training on elder abuse as part of a series of training videos produced by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards in Training (POST). Patrol Deputies, throughout their careers, will receive refresher trainings, known as "line-up training" or "briefings", headed by their supervisors, on a variety of topics to help refresh and sharpen their skills; these trainings often include topics related to elder abuse. Further, all Deputies are required to read and understand the policies of the Sheriff's Office and the Senior and Disability Victimization Policy provides an easily available resource - in addition to Sheriff's Office leadership - to any Deputy needing a refresher or guidance related to elder abuse at any time. The Sheriff's Office recognizes the importance of promptly identifying, preventing, and addressing elder abuse in all its forms and is committed to ensuring that all Sheriff's Deputies are proficient in doing so. Accordingly, the Sheriff's Office will remind supervisors to include elder abuse as part of their regularly scheduled training programs, which will focus on reinforcing how to recognize and report elder abuse.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

City of Napa

The State of California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (CA POST) has established training guidelines for law enforcement personnel as it relates to incidents of reported or discovered elder and dependent adult abuse. The initial training for Napa Police Officers is handled by the CA POST certified Basic Law Enforcement Academy, pursuant to California Penal Code §13515.295 (identified by CA POST as Learning Domains LD-7: Crimes Against Persons/Death Investigations and LD-37: People with Disabilities). Additional training comes in the form of participation in the POST certified Napa Police Department Field Training Program, through on-the-job-experience, and advanced officer training.

The City of Napa Police Department has continued to offer training in this area in a limited capacity, but recognizes the importance of the Grand Jury's recommendation to establish a more formal program for periodic training on this topic.

By August 1, 2024, the Napa Police Department Professional Standards and Training Unit will identify and assign a 2-hour CA POST multimedia refresher training to re-affirm a baseline level of knowledge for City of Napa Police Department sworn Police Officers and designated professional staff to ensure employees can properly identify and respond to reports of elder and dependent adult abuse in our community. This individual self-paced training will be documented using the CA POST PASs system and completed by assigned on-duty personnel by September 30, 2024.

Additionally, the City of Napa Police Department will ensure departmental policy is updated and clarified. By August 1, 2024, the Napa Police Department Professional Standards and Training Unit will identify dates to conduct in-person review of department policy (City of Napa Police Department General Orders §319 - Senior and Disability Victimization) and regional reporting procedures with on-duty sworn personnel. This in-person training will be documented using Napa Police Department training rosters and will be completed by October 31, 2024.

R7. By September 30, 2024, HHSA develop plans for hiring additional social workers and mental health professionals to meet the growing demand of the increasing elderly population.

This recommendation has been implemented.

While we recognize that the growing elderly population will require increasing staffing to meet their needs, we already have the requisite mechanisms in place to increase that staffing as circumstances change. Since 2017, HHSA has expanded the number of APS social workers from four to seven. Just this year, an additional Social Worker Supervisor was added to support the growing unit and resource increased outreach, training, and education on elder abuse. Our caseloads in Napa County are consistent with comparable counties, and we continue to maintain excellence in timeliness standards. The Grand Jury astutely recognizes that responding to and preventing elder abuse exists in a broad context and array of services and therefore, responding to the needs of a growing older adult population requires more than planning for additional staffing.

By way of background, the mental health services directly provided by HHSA for older adults includes our Older Adult Full-Service Partnership (OAFSP) program where the overall goal is to divert adults with serious mental illness (SMI) to be maintained in the community living as independently as possible. HHSA also provides case management support to older adults who are conserved and non-conserved. Our OAFSP program provides clients with assistance with housing, linkage to employment and education, linkage to medical services, caregiving resources, social security, transportation, food resources, and any other identified barriers. The embedded unit within our CSOA division is staffed by a Supervising Mental Health Counselor, four Mental Health Counselors, and one Senior Mental Health Worker. Although there is currently one vacancy, HHSA, in conjunction with its Behavioral Health division leadership, continually evaluates staffing needs to ensure programs are appropriately and efficiently

resourced. HHSA will bring forward any needed requests for staffing in the normal course of business.

It is worth noting that HHSA also supports the provision of mental health services to older adults through numerous contracts with community-based providers. As previously explained, one of the many funding opportunities HHSA has made available over the years has included MSA grant awards and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for services supported by MHSA funding. Through the MHSA RFP process, HHSA has been intentional in supporting community-based programs that support mental health services to older adults reflected in contracts totaling almost a million dollars over the next two years. These programs include Molly's Angels Comprehensive Assistance and Resources for the Elderly (CARE) program which will reduce social isolation and depression among older adults through wrap-around supportive services, Mentis' "Healthy Minds, Health Aging" program that provides therapeutic intervention for adults 60 years of age and older, a contract with Mentis to help implement Napa County's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention with benefits to older adults, and Up Valley Family Center's Senior Wellness Program providing individual and group counseling for older adults. While HHSA maintains staffing resources we are also continuously aligning and leveraging funding to meet the mental health and social service needs of Napa County's older adults in other ways.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Director of Health and Human Services Agency.

HITTING THE RESET BUTTON: ADDRESSING GANGS

Report Date: 4/10/2024

Response Date City of Napa: 6/18/2024 (69 days)

Response Date Napa County Sheriff/District Attorney: 7/3/2024 (84 days)

Response Date Board of Supervisors: 8/6/2024 (118 days)

Response Date Napa County Probation Department: 8/6/2024 (118 days)

Response Date NVUSD: 8/7/2024 (119 days)

Response Date NCOE: 8/14/2024 (136 days)

F1. The Jury found that gang activity and gang association in Napa County are on the rise.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree with this finding.

F2. The Jury found that due to the employment demographics in Napa County, increasing numbers of children are left unsupervised. This situation was exacerbated by the Covid Pandemic.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and the Sheriff agree in part with this finding but would be interested in looking into more evidence to in support of this finding, or learning if it is California-wide, or unique to Napa County.

F3. The Jury found current gang activity and recruitment is more apparent in middle school and even younger ages.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree with this finding.

F4. The Jury found that despite it having been proved to be successful, vocational curriculum has been eliminated within the NVUSD.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree with this finding.

NVUSD disagrees with this finding. NVUSD has not eliminated its vocational curriculum.

NVUSD's vocational curriculum offerings have been relabeled as Career Technical Education or "CTE," and as described in more detail below, NVUSD has extensive offerings for students at all of NVUSD's high schools.

F5. The Jury found that Napa County has little to no after school activities for teens and preteens. There is a need for organized free programs, including sports and other after school activities.

The City of Napa disagrees partially with the finding. While the City of Napa agrees that additional programs would be beneficial to the community, we disagree that there are little to no programs available. Programs are available, as discovered by the members of the Grand Jury, however not all families are aware of the programs or may experience barriers to participating in the programming. For example, some programs may require a guardian or parent to pick up the child at a specific time.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree in part, that more free and affordable programs would be good for the community. We disagree, however, with the description of "little to no" after school activities. In addition to the affordable programs for teens and pre-teens offered by the various Parks and Recreation departments of the various cities in Napa County, the Napa Valley Boys and Girls Club and the Boys and Girls Club of St. Helena and Calistoga offer a variety of after school programs for affordable fees that are largely subsidized by both government grants and local philanthropy. Napa County also offers a variety of youth sports including soccer (all levels), rugby, lacrosse, football, baseball, among others. The various youth sports organizations vary in pricing but most offer scholarships and financial aid with the assistance of local philanthropy. The Napa Sheriff's Activities League (SAL) also offers a variety of free sports programs including Boxing, Baseball skills, Judo, and Wrestling. SAL also has an after-school fitness center in East Napa. The SAL programs are free of charge. Besides SAL Boxing, there are four additional boxing clubs in Napa that are fee based, but affordable. The local mental health non-profit, Mentis, also offers "Napa Valley Teens Connect", which offers mental health, empowerment, wellness programs at various NVUSD school sites.

The School District disagrees with this finding in part. While the School District agrees that more after-school activities are needed throughout the County, as described in more detail below, the School District offers a number of organized free programs, including sports and other after-school activities at every single school in the School District.

F6. The Jury found that gang activity is supported by illegal money-making opportunities which can be attractive to underprivileged youth.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree with this finding.

F7. The Jury found that coordination and communication among law enforcement, educators, and local service providers is not effective.

The City of Napa disagrees partially with the finding.

The city supports additional efforts and recommendations to improve coordination and communication between partner agencies, however information that impacts the safety of the children is freely shared between public safety and academic organizations. Napa Police Department Youth Services/Student Resource Officers (SROs) and Napa Valley Unified School District are in regular communication. Leadership of these organizations also meet quarterly.

The District Attorney and Sheriff partially disagrees with this finding.

We support efforts to expand coordination and communication to share information and intelligence through relationships, phone calls, and virtual and in-person meetings. The Napa County law enforcement community, and particularly the members of this community involved in juvenile crime prevention and enforcement, is small. Napa Police Department's Youth Services Bureau (YSB), the various School Resource Officers (SROs) from all agencies, juvenile probation officers, prosecutors, and many of the service providers are in frequent communication already. Their meetings and relationships are such that they can discuss or call one another with any questions or information as needed.

F8. The Jury found that data on gang membership and activity is limited and ineffective at gang intervention and prevention.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff agree that the data is limited, and that this limitation can hinder gang intervention and prevention.

F9. The Jury found that some state legislation and propositions passed by the voters are hindering law enforcement's ability to interdict gang crime and, in doing so, improve gangs' ability to make money, which attracts more gang members.

The City of Napa agrees with the finding.

The District Attorney and Sheriff Office agree with this finding.

R1. By December 31, 2024, Napa Valley Unified School District and Napa County Office of Education will implement programs that focus on elementary and middle schools with gang prevention and parental education programs.

The School District already offers a wide range of curricular and community resources to students and their families to educate, intervene, and support students so that they make good choices in their lives, resist the allure of gangs, and are able to focus on their future goals, including college and vocational careers. The following summarizes existing programs, partnerships and parental education programs that were offered in 2023-2024 and which will continue in 2024-2025. We are always open to additional opportunities and partnerships with not only the Napa County Office of Education but other community organizations and groups.

Prevention and Intervention Services Impacting Students and Families

1. **Positive Behavior Intervention and Support:** All school sites participated in a relaunch of Positive Behavior Intervention Support ("PBIS") in August 2023. PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. When implemented with fidelity, PBIS improves social-emotional competence, academic success, and school climate. It also improves teacher

health and well-being. It is a way to create positive, predictable, equitable, and safe learning environments where everyone thrives.

2. **Social Emotional Learning:** To support our students on their educational journey we have a multi-faceted approach to social-emotional learning (“SEL”).
 - a. At the elementary level, curriculum such as the TOOLBOX Project, Second Step, and Building Effective Schools Together (“BEST”) all support children in understanding and managing their emotional, social, and academic success by uncovering human capacities that reside within all of us.
 - b. In the middle grades, the Second Step Middle School program provides schools with a common language that helps everyone reinforce social-emotional skills and concepts throughout the school day. These skills are taught and supported through the Advisory period.
3. **Wellness Centers:** Seven campuses now house Wellness Centers, including the four middle schools: American Canyon Middle School, Redwood Middle School, Silverado Middle School, and Unidos Middle School. Wellness counselors and licensed social workers/mental health therapists are available to support students; outside referrals are also made as needed. Youth Outreach Coordinators coordinate services and work in partnership with student leaders to design and facilitate wellness-related events on school sites. Research shows that wellness services result in greater school and student outcomes, including improved academic performance, increased school engagement, reduction in suspensions and expulsions, decreased referrals to Special Education, and increased graduation rates.
 - a. Our Community Schools also support student wellness.
 - b. NVUSD partners with Care Solace to support our community’s mental health.
4. **Partnership with Napa CARES:** School District staff are members of Napa Connection and Resilience to Empower Students (“CARES”) is a network led by the Napa County Office of Education (“NCOE”) that unites non-profits, Local Education Agencies (“LEAs”), and Community-Based Organizations (“CBOs”) to enhance school safety by addressing the needs of Napa’s youth through holistic, wraparound services. This initiative facilitates effective communication between multiple agencies, resulting in streamlined and increased access to services for youth and their families. By providing individualized support through an intensive case management approach, Napa CARES enhances early intervention and violence prevention. This is achieved by offering youth and families facing challenges a comprehensive “backpack of services” tailored to their unique situations.

Connections with Law Enforcement Agencies

The School District has existing collaborative partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, such as our School Resource Officer (“SRO”) program, in addition to the Napa County Probation Department, as well as other community organizations and experts that we routinely partner with to provide students with resources and support. This support can be one-on-one, small group, or large group presentations, depending on the need.

Parent Education Programs

NVUSD provides parent education and support to all school sites through the Community and Parent Liaison. The Community & Parent Liaison provides a home to school connection to foster the academic and socio-emotional growth of our students, while providing parents voice and support around parent education, parent engagement, and parent advocacy.

The School District's partnership with On the Move supports Family Resources Centers ("FRCs") at McPherson, Napa Junction, Phillips, Shearer, and Snow Elementary Schools. FRCs bridge the gap between home and school. They provide full wrap-around service support for families. FRCs support Parent University which engages parents in school health and wellness efforts and provide parents with the knowledge, skills, and support needed to maintain their children on the path of health, wellness, and academic success. These services are strategically located so that all NVUSD parents/legal guardians can access services provided through the FRCs.

Safe Transportation / Safe Routes to School Program

The School District collaborates with the Napa County Bicycle Coalition and participates in the Safe Routes to School Program, which ensures that elementary and middle school students can safely navigate their way to school. Recognizing that not all students are driven to school by their parents due to work commitments, this program addresses and removes barriers to safe walking and biking. Initiatives such as walking school buses and community rides offer family-friendly opportunities for students to experience biking in a positive, group setting. By promoting these safe routes, we aim to help students avoid potential threats, including gang-related activities in the community.

Youth Development / Leadership Skills Programs

Through partnership, the School District provides youth leadership development programs that foster positive relationships, increase healthy choices, and develop leadership skills. These program options foster student engagement and support, which contribute to protective factors such as enhanced self-esteem, improved relationships with peers, teachers and school, and parents/caregivers, and the ability to resist pressures to join gangs while focusing on future goals, including college and vocational careers.

1. Mariposa and Bridging Brothers serve over 150 youth across 10 middle and high schools in Napa and American Canyon. Mariposa is a girl empowerment initiative with an emphasis on Latino culture and is implemented in all middle and high schools across the district. Bridging Brothers is a program designed to support young men and aims to be introduced in the coming year at all locations where Mariposa is offered.
2. The School District partners with On the Move to support The Neighborhood Initiative which aims to build a neighborhood in Napa where every child can claim a future in which all possibilities are real and attainable. We do this by increasing educational outcomes for children and youth, engaging families to empower themselves and their children, and developing community leadership. The most common demographic in the Initiative is first generation Latino children, youth and families. The Initiative runs four core programs on different sites and a common thread linking all of the programs is a

“Pipeline of Success” in which each program builds upon the next in order to show the leadership development and growth of the youth over time.

- a. Elementary School Leadership Academies at McPherson and Phillips Shearer Elementary Schools and Shearer TK-8 School
 - b. A Middle School Leadership Academy at Silverado Middle School
 - c. A High School Leadership Academy at Napa High School
 - d. Family Resource Centers at both McPherson and Phillips Elementary Schools
3. Joven Nobel Con Palabra: Starting in 2024-2025, the district will partner with National Compadres Network and the Napa Valley Education Foundation to provide a three-day in-person training to all NVUSD social workers and counselors. Upon completion, staff will receive the Joven Noble Con Palabra Curriculum Certificate which allows staff to provide a youth leadership development program that supports and guides youth by focusing on the prevention of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, relationship violence, gang prevention and school failure. Napa County Probation Officers will join NVUSD in this training.

New Graduation Requirements Effective Starting in 2024-2025

In October 2021, the state of California passed AB101 which requires school districts to add a one-semester course in ethnic studies to the graduation requirements beginning with the graduating class of 2029-30. To meet this graduation requirement, the NVUSD Board of Education reviewed various options and ultimately approved changes to the high school graduation requirement policy beginning with the Class of 2028. The policy includes the adoption of a stand-alone, one-semester Ethnic Studies course and a stand-alone, one-semester Health Education course in ninth grade. These two courses will support students transitioning from 8th to 9th grade. Ethnic Studies courses have proven to support higher attendance rates, increased engagement, lower disciplinary incidents, and improved academic achievement, especially for at-risk youth. The addition of a health course is aimed at improving NVUSD’s ability to implement the California State requirements for health education supporting student social, emotional, physical and mental well-being by developing life-long skills and habits.

Gang Awareness Night

In April 2024, the District had planned a “Gang Awareness Night” with the Napa County Probation Department, but, due to unforeseen circumstances, this event was cancelled. We plan to hold this event during the 2024-2025 school year instead. At this event, parents learn the common indicators of gang involvement, proactive measures to support children, strategies for intervention, and the many resources available to help support our young people.

The NVUSD Board of Education adopted Vision 2024 and a new Strategic Plan in June 2024. One of the 15 strategies is focused on the development of “a comprehensive approach to improvement in school and district safety”. As the District implements this plan, we will look to strengthen and expand our support of student safety and parent engagement through prevention and intervention.

First, regarding Finding 5, we would like to note that the Napa County Office of Education (NCOE) has extensive programs in partnership with all five school districts in the county to provide and support after school/expanded learning programming. NCOE directly runs the current COOL School expanded learning programs at the following elementary schools: Alta Heights, Bel Aire Park, Northwood, Phillips Snow, Shearer, and Vichy. Programs are open every school day until 6PM and during winter and summer breaks. The program aligns with the school day curriculum and includes social- emotional learning, enrichment activities, STEAM, sports and active recess, and provides a healthy snack. The program also includes daily time for homework support and reading. The remainder of the elementary schools in the County have afterschool programs provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs and district-run programs. NCOE directly runs ACE programs at Silverado Middle School and Calistoga Junior/Senior High school as well as the middle school grades at Shearer; the remainder of middle schools are served by Boys and Girls Clubs. Additionally, there are Community School programs designed to provide wrap-around support services to those students most in need at McPherson, Phillips, Shearer, Snow, Silverado, Valley Oak, Calistoga Elementary and Junior/Senior High, Howell Mountain K-8, Pope Valley K-8, and Camille Creek.

Additionally, all middle and high schools are served by the Mariposa program, which is dedicated to addressing the needs of Napa's youth by offering essential social-emotional support in a safe environment that promotes growth and leadership. A majority of participants in Mariposa are Latinx girls with additional representation from students of color and those who identify as LGBTQ+. Over the last three years, interested students have also had the opportunity to participate in Ballet Folklorico, connecting with their heritage and culture. While our programs target students who are most at risk of gang involvement, participation is voluntary, and we recognize that those students are not always as likely to attend. We have cultivated strong partnerships with school district administrators, nonprofit and community organizations, and we are redoubling our efforts to more effectively collaborate with law enforcement, SRO's, probation and other agencies that deal with gangs, to assist us in identifying the students most at risk and finding incentives to encourage their participation in our programs. To that end, we will be holding a meeting on September 5 with representatives of all relevant agencies, non- profits, school districts, and others who might be able to assist us in developing a strategic plan for expansion and improvement of gang prevention and parental education programs. As a result of this meeting, it is anticipated that a countywide strategic plan will be developed and circulated by the end of September 2024 and program implementation will begin by December 31; as recommended.

R2. By the fall of 2025, Napa Valley Unified School District and Napa County Office of Education restore free high school vocational curriculums (CTE- Career and Technology Education) and partner with local industries to align their course offerings with labor market needs.

As mentioned above, vocational curriculum, which has been relabeled Career Technical Education or "CTE," has not been eliminated within the School District. We support Career Technical Education in all five high schools, and all CTE programs include

industry-aligned classes and programs. CTE course offerings available at district high schools from the 2023-2024 school year include the following:

1. **American Canyon High School**
Business, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Education, Sports Medicine, Sustainable Construction
2. **Napa High School**
Engineering and Robotics, Manufacturing and Product Development, Medical Science, Sustainable Construction
3. **New Technology High School**
Digital Design
4. **Valley Oak High School**
Design, Visual and Media Art
5. **Vintage High School**
Agriscience, Animal Science, Business, Culinary Arts and Hospitality, Multimedia Production, Printing and Graphics, Woodworking

The alignment of college and career readiness is a priority of the Board of Education and staff as evidenced in the new NVUSD Vision 2040 and Strategic Plan.

During the 2023-2024 school year, NVUSD partnered with one of the leading National organizations in CTE who supported the evaluation of our current CTE programs. As a result, NVUSD is redesigning the CTE programming in order to align with industry demands and position students to have a competitive advantage in the current regional workforce. This work is led by the District's College and Career Leadership Team that includes Executive Cabinet, site leaders, CTE and general education staff, TK-12 parents, as well as students. As a first step, we transitioned all CTE teachers to our District from the Napa County Office of Education and provided summer professional learning. We also applied for a \$2 million grant through the Golden State Pathways Grant to support the alignment and expansion of CTE over the next 3-5 years.

Agriculture Innovation Center

The district was awarded the K12 Strong Workforce Program Round 6 Grant for the Agricultural Science Innovation Center at Vintage High School. The district was one of 33 Local Education Agencies ("LEAs") funded out of 55 total applicants and was awarded \$755,496 (see Bay Area R6 K12 SWP Preliminary Awards for more details). The funding will help us upgrade CTE pathways, integrate technology, provide relevant support for underserved populations, and facilitate student transitions to Napa Valley College in Agricultural and Natural Resource Pathways and Agricultural Science.

We will upgrade three existing CTE pathways: Agriscience, Culinary & Hospitality, and Animal Science, as well as help us explore the addition of one new pathway: AgTech. This revitalization of our CTE Pathways will include upgrading curriculum and aligning innovative technology; targeting recruitment, counselor and scheduling support for CTE Pathway completion; increasing continuation to post-secondary education pathways with our partnership with Napa Valley College; and increasing CTE teacher capacity through externships and professional

development. Given Napa County's agricultural industry, the district is very excited about its ability to pursue this grant and expand its CTE offerings for students.

Work Based Learning

At New Technology High School, during the 2023-2024 school year, the district piloted students having "work experience" as a course offering for credit while students are also enrolled at the school. Overall, the District was pleased with the results and will continue with the work experience program this upcoming school year, as well as look to expand at American Canyon High School (ACHS).

In addition, since 2019, in conjunction with the Napa Valley Education Foundation ("NVEF"), the district has sponsored the Summer Mentor Program. Over 100 students typically participate during the summer in paid mentorships. In 2022, the district launched its own program where students are mentored by District employees in Maintenance and Operations and Transportation. This expanded in 2023 and 2024 to include the District's Communication, Food Service (NOSH), Human Resources, Instructional Services, and Technology departments.

Expanded Partnership with Napa Valley College

The district is launching an Early College Program with Napa Valley College ("NVC") at New Technology High School beginning in the 2024-2025 school year.

NVC and the District came together for the first-ever joint board meeting on March 19, 2024 to discuss crucial initiatives aimed at enhancing student opportunities and outcomes. At the forefront of the discussions were key programs such as dual enrollment, career pathways, and the Early College Program at New Technology High School, highlighting the collaborative efforts between NVC and the District to align their visions for student success. NVC has also expanded its dual-enrollment course offerings from 10 classes (available during the 2021-2022 school year) to 18 (available during the 2024-2025 school year).

NCOE: We want to note that Finding 4, indicating that "vocational curriculum has been eliminated" is not accurate. The Napa County Office of Education has traditionally operated a robust program of vocational or what is now termed Career Technology Education (CTE) classes, from the time that it was funded through the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) model in which NCOE was directly funded for these programs, to the current system under the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) model in which the high school districts receive CTE funding from the State. Since the onset of LCFF in the 2013-14 fiscal year the three Napa County districts with high schools (NVUSD, St. Helena and Calistoga) have contracted with NCOE to operate some of these programs for them. CTE programs have always had a requirement to work with labor partner advisory groups and to ensure that our programs are meeting the needs of the current labor market. When the labor market shifts, courses that are not preparing students for increasing-demand jobs are eliminated, sometimes causing chagrin in the community when a favorite class is dropped. But we know that industries change, and the skills students need for success must keep up with the needs of the labor market.

During the 2023-24 school year, NVUSD indicated that they wished to directly operate the CTE programs in their district starting in 2024-25. NCOE has been designated by the California Department of Education as a Technical Assistance Center for this region, and we will continue

to provide professional development and assistance to the CTE teachers and programs in NVUSD. The Napa County Office of Education's College and Career Readiness Department provides Career Technical Education (CTE) support and work-based learning experiences to 24 career pathways in 10 industry sectors across Napa County and around the region. Pathways are taught by CTE credentialed teachers, meet the University of California 'A-G' requirements for admission, industry certification and/or earn college credit through articulation or College and Career Access Partnership (CCAP) agreements. Centers of Excellence Labor Market Information (LMI) data for the North and East Bay is used to determine needs in Napa County.

Current Industry Sectors:

1. Agriculture and Natural Resources
2. Arts, Media and Entertainment
3. Building and Construction Trades
4. Business and Finance
5. Education, Child Development and Family Services
6. Energy, Environment and Utilities
7. Engineering and Architecture
8. Health Science and Medical Technology
9. Hospitality, Tourism and Recreation
10. Manufacturing and Product Development

High school students throughout Napa County have had opportunities for paid internships in local business and industries for several years during the summer break, and there are plans to continue and expand internship options so that all students get the chance to work in a real business and observe and learn the skills they will need for success. Camille Creek, although it is the smallest of the high schools with the most students at-risk for gang involvement, offers 2 programs, Culinary and Welding, and students have the opportunity for paid internships. These programs provide students with real world experiences and a roadmap for how they can be prepared to be hired for entry-level jobs in the career area of their choice. They also learn about all aspects of the industry that they will need to know to get hired and to advance in their chosen field.

R3. By the fall of 2025, Napa Valley Unified School District and Napa County Office of Education, to maximize OTS (out of school time), partner with non-profit stakeholders to provide enriching experiences that provide lasting developmental benefits.

Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD)

Besides the myriad academic, co-curricular, and social-emotional in-school experiences our certificated and classified staff members provide our students every day of the school year, our District provides students with significant OTS activities. These programs provide a safe environment for students to learn and play until 6:00 pm. We have maximized our ELOP funding, particularly with respect to elementary students, to ensure that they have a safe, engaging, and welcoming environment in which they can play and learn after-school and during vacation breaks between school sessions. Moreover, as described above, we have many

existing partnerships with a variety of nonprofit and community organizations that help support both our students and our families. Among the many skills that are supported in the OTS programs, some of them include:

1. Elementary students learn how to socialize, regulate their emotions, make friends, and engage in healthy physical activity.
2. Middle school students learn about developing positive relationships (e.g., navigating friendships, healthy boundaries), responsible technology use; they also have recreational opportunities and homework tutoring is available.
3. All students have more specialized interventions and OTS programs and supports that can be tailored to them on a case-by-case basis. These programs are outlined in more detail below.

Elementary School After-School Programs

1. **Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (“ELOP”):** The State provides funding for after-school, intersession, and summer enrichment programs for TK-6 graders. In 2023-2024, the School District was able to utilize ELOP funding to develop:
 - a. Expanded TK to all elementary schools in the district. In 2021, we had only 7 TK classrooms; in the 2024-2025 school year, we will have 19 TK classrooms.
 - b. Expanded childcare, after-school programs, & enrichment opportunities: The District collaborates with numerous community organizations and over 2,500 TK-6th grade students enroll in these programs. Our families benefit from our partnerships with NVUSD Childcare, Boys and Girls Club, and Cool School. Parents know that their students have a welcoming place where their students can learn, have fun, and be safe when not in school. These programs provide free access for qualifying families in grades TK-6, often serving our most vulnerable populations.

Middle School After-School Programs

1. **Community Partnerships:** All middle school students have access to expanded learning through Boys and Girls Club or ACE Excel (NCOE). Academic intervention and enrichment are embedded in the after-school program at the middle school level.
2. **Expanded Athletic Programming:** Beginning in 2022-2023, our middle schools offered two competitive 6th grade sports and seven competitive sports for 7th and 8th grades. The district continued to offer a full range of competitive sports at the middle school level.

High School Intervention and After-School Programs

NVUSD partners with Boys and Girls Club of Napa Valley to provide after-school programming to high school students. The partnership in 2023-2024 increased after-school services to high school students from 69 students to 114 students. During this time, high school students are receiving academic supports and career-aligned learning to help them succeed and thrive so that they can have the full complement of life choices they deserve.

Finally, we are always open to additional opportunities and partnerships community organizations, nonprofits, and other individuals and groups that can help our students.

Napa County Office of Education (NCOE)

As mentioned in response to Recommendation 1, the Napa County Office of Education partners with all school districts to provide Out of School time expanded learning programming (before, after; and intersession). NCOE provides programming to TK-8th grade students directly operating the COOL School and ACE programs at 10 school sites in Napa County. We partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Napa to support programming at 5 additional sites in Napa. We also partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Calistoga/ St Helena to provide programming at 5 Up Valley sites. Expanded Learning programs are offered until 6PM each day and are available to all students, regardless of family income level. Additionally, 30 days of intersession programming (during school breaks) are available and open from 8AM-6PM. Our programs offer a balance of academic intervention and enrichment plus physical activities throughout the regular school year and summer. We pride ourselves on delivering engaging programming that supports student growth by following the 12 after school quality standards.

There are numerous organized sports programs operated by groups outside the school system that include soccer, baseball, and tennis, among others. An issue with expanding these programs, or even keeping them alive, is the lack of available land for suitable fields. While the school districts may have suitable property, there are issues of safety, liability, school district priority, and supervision that make the districts reluctant to open them to outside groups after school, on weekends and in the summer. Purchasing land in Napa County is prohibitively expensive, and there is often resistance by nearby residents of any identified property to the additional noise, traffic, and litter that turning empty fields into sports arenas for children may bring. We hope that by gathering all relevant parties to a meeting on September 5 we can develop a plan to overcome the resistance. Additional opportunities for engagement in afterschool activities might take place in the public libraries, which may be able to offer programs that will bring more children to organized activities, and businesses may be willing to offer additional internships, job shadows, or employment opportunities in the service of reducing the allure of gangs.

R4. By December 31, 2024, Napa Valley Unified School District and Napa County Office of Education establish a bi-annual meeting between the Napa Valley Unified School District, Napa County Office of Education and business community organizations such as Rotary, Elks, Moose, Napa Chamber of Commerce, and the Napa County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to create job opportunities, internships, and training for credits.

Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD)

The Superintendent, administrative team, and NVUSD Board of Education Trustees leverage various opportunities to engage with the local agencies and organizations when possible and as necessary. For example, and most recently, the district engaged in a yearlong process to produce its 15-year strategic vision (Vision 2040) and 2024-2029 action plan where community members, from a variety of local organizations, were invited to participate and provide feedback on its development. In fact, the district gathered approximately 70,000 data points through this yearlong engagement process that informed the development of the vision and plan. The district leverages and appreciates many opportunities such as this one, to proactively engage and

partner with local agencies and community-based organizations while it aims to continuously improve the school system for all students.

In the 2023-2024 school year, the district launched its first industry advisory for the Agriculture Science Innovation Program, where industry experts consult with District personnel to help ensure that we better prepare students for the 21st century workplace. We have approximately 15-20 industry and community partners who advise District staff on current industry standards. Additionally, NVUSD staff established foundational partnerships with economic, workforce and educational partners, such as the Economic Development Division of Napa, Workforce Alliance of the North Bay, Yountville and Napa Chamber of Commerce during the 2023-2024 school year. The Executive Director of the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay is a member of the NVUSD College and Career Readiness Leadership Team that meets monthly.

NVUSD will formalize these relationships through the development and launch of the Economic, Employment, Education Collaborative ("E3 Collaborative"). The E3 Collaborative brings industry partners, commerce, workforce, K-14 education together in support of a shared vision to create a talent pipeline in high wage, high demand local and regional industries and support students' career goals.

Napa County Office of Education (NCOE)

The Napa County Office of Education launched the Napa County Collaborative (NCC), in 2022, a regional partnership composed of K-12 partners, higher education, local government, business and community partners. The committee formed to align career readiness and workforce development with the goal of building a relationship infrastructure for ongoing work together. By braiding our approaches and combining resources we will meet the needs of our region and expand diverse opportunities for students. The NCC meets bi-monthly and hosts a yearly meeting to review CTE pathways and labor market information as well as make suggested changes to curriculum and equipment that meets labor market needs. We will continue to expand this work, incorporating additional community partners and ensuring we are addressing the needs of all students with engaging hands-on opportunities and internships. A new opportunity has become available to introduce middle school students to trade careers such as electrical, plumbing, HVAC, welding, and others. A non-profit established by former State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson will provide field trips to eighth graders, so that they can learn about the opportunities in these careers, including apprenticeships, while they are studying to learn the trade so that they leave after completing their studies with a certification AND a bank account, instead of debt accrued during 4 or more years of college. This is an attractive option for many students and families, and an option they may not be aware of. We piloted this program in the spring by taking 7th and 8th graders from Howell Mountain and Pope Valley to the electrical apprenticeship program in Napa. The students were very excited about being there, and they left with a great deal of information about the program and the salaries earned by certified electricians! The directors of these apprenticeship programs have offered to speak to parent groups so that parents understand the economics of being certified in a trade, so that the parents don't automatically discourage their children who express interest in these career fields.

We appreciate this recommendation, as it will bring in employers of small businesses, who may not have been involved when we try to develop internships. This will open up a greater variety of career areas as well.

R5. By September 30, 2024, the Napa County Board of Supervisors and Napa City Council identify financial resources to support community efforts to help families in need.

Napa City Council

This recommendation requires further analysis during the City's annual budget process.

The recommendation is not clear on which programs named in the Grandy Jury report require additional financial support from the City of Napa. Additionally, the City's budget is adopted on a fiscal year (July 1-June 30) basis. Requests for expanded or new programming would be best identified through the established budget process which will begin again in early 2025 with adoption of the fiscal year 2025-26 budget by the City Council in June 2025. The City of Napa can be immediately supportive of existing programs through additional communication via the Youth Services Bureau of the Napa Police Department, the School Resource Officers (SROs), Napa Police Department's Special Enforcement Unit (SEU), Homeless Intervention Coordinator, and the City of Napa's various social media platforms.

Napa County Board of Supervisors

The recommendation has been implemented.

In addition to implementing the recommendation, further analysis is required.

Throughout the year, Napa County and the State of California may develop additional financial resources to support families in need.

Below is a current list of resources available to help families:

1. **CalWORKS:** Temporary Cash assistance to eligible families with or expecting children
2. **General Assistance:** Short-term financial assistance in the form of a loan for low-income residents without children
3. **Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI):** Cash assistance for aged, blind, or disabled non- citizens who are not eligible for SSI/SSP solely due to their immigration status
4. **Medi-Cal:** Medical assistance program for low-income individuals that offers free or low-cost health coverage for children and adults
5. **Covered California:** For persons not eligible to Medi-Cal, there is financial assistance through Covered California
6. **County Medical Services Program:** Limited-term health coverage for uninsured low-income adults between ages 21-64 who are not eligible for Medi-Cal or Covered California
7. **CalFresh:** Supplemental monthly food benefits to assist low-income households
8. **CalWORKS Housing Program:** Assists CalWORKS families that are homeless or at risk of losing their housing, obtain sustainable housing
9. **Bringing Families Home:** Assists Child Welfare Services families that are homeless or at risk of losing their housing to obtain sustainable housing

10. **WIC:** Nutrition program that helps individuals who are pregnant and/or have children up to age 5
11. **Refugee Cash Assistance:** Refugee Cash Assistance is available to certain groups and is available for up to 12-months from date of admission to the U.S.
12. **CalFresh Market Match:** Doubles benefits with using CalFresh at local Farmers Markets
13. **Food Banks:** The CANV Food Banks provides nutritious food to low-income individuals throughout Napa County
14. **Free Produce Markets:** Free produce markets at various locations throughout the month providing farm fresh produce
15. **CANV Silver Fox:** Provides food to low-income residents over 60 years of age
16. **Meals-On-Wheels:** Delivers meals to homebound seniors
17. **Congregate Lunch Sites:** Napa Senior Center, South Napa Shelter, and the Salvation Army provide congregate lunch and/or grab and go meals on various days
18. **Napa County Resource Guide 2023:** Community Resources available to workers to provide customers as needed.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Grand Jury's points regarding the impact of poverty as a significant factor influencing gang activity. Further work is needed to partner with local municipalities on housing, public safety support and addressing issues such as stress and poverty to help families create a welcoming and safe environment free of gang activity.

The Board of Supervisors commends the Grand Jury for its work. However, the Board would like to note that the report did not appear to include interviews with current or former gang members. Individuals with lived experience with gangs could have provided valuable insights into addressing this ongoing community concern.

The Board of Supervisors would also like to request that Grand Jury's reports note the source of their facts. While the Board understands the confidentiality of Grand Jury interviews, the sources of the Grand Jury's facts can be useful to further understanding the report's subject matter.

R6. Beginning July 1, 2024, the Napa County Board of Supervisors and Napa City Council support legislation to roll back decriminalizing drug and theft crime.

Napa City Council

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

While there may be specific legislative efforts related to strengthening drug and theft crime laws that the city chooses to support, it is unreasonable to have a blanket statement of support for legislation without first reviewing proposals. The city is guided by both Policy Resolution R2019-083 and an annually adopted Legislative Platform to guide the process for supporting or opposing legislation or other legislative actions.

For example, in May 2024 the city sent letters of support for AB 1772, AB 2934, AB 1960, AB2814, AB 3209, SB 1242, AB 982, AB 1802, AB 1972 and other legislation strengthening organized retail theft enforcement and penalties. These letters of support were sent only after careful consideration of the impacts to the City of Napa and its residents, as well as

conformance with R2019-083 and the 2024 Legislative Platform. The city would similarly review and act in accordance with those policy guidance documents for any support or opposition of future legislation proposing roll backs to decriminalizing drug and theft crime.

Napa County Board of Supervisors

The recommendation requires further analysis.

The Board took several positions in support of legislation to increase penalties for the possession or distribution of fentanyl in 2023. In December 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted a legislative and regulatory platform setting its priorities for 2024. In addition to emphasizing the protection of victims' rights, the Board focused on youthful offenders: "Napa County supports the overarching goal of providing early interventions to reduce the causes of crime among individuals under the age of 26. The County should nonetheless retain local authority to impose appropriate consequences when early interventions prove ineffective." This language covers the recommendation specific to drug and theft crimes and other legislation addressing youth crime and reducing repeated instances of victimization, including by theft. For 2024 and into the future, implementation of this recommendation will require ongoing analysis of existing and future legislation. Based on the Board's direction set forth above, staff currently track proposals related to theft and drug crimes introduced in the Legislature. The legislative process in California is ongoing for the 2024 session. Staff continue to analyze relevant measures based on Board direction and provide updates to the Board as appropriate. The Board will consider this analysis when formally taking positions on legislation relevant to decriminalization drug and theft crimes.

Further analysis of proposed measures will be required to implement this recommendation. For this reason, the Board anticipates retaining similar language in future legislative and regulatory platforms. The Board and staff will monitor future legislative proposals related to the decriminalization of drug and theft crime, conduct analysis, hear staff recommendations, and take positions as it finds appropriate.

R7. By December 31, 2024, the Napa Valley Unified School District and the Napa County Office of Education strengthen the current stakeholder task force (law enforcement and schools) including non-profits which specialize in gang prevention and intervention and local industries.

Napa Valley Unified School District (NVUSD)

The School District is aware of the recent decision by the City of Santa Rosa to relaunch its gang crimes team in 2023 to curb street violence and understands from recent incidents in our own community, as well as from the conclusions of this Report, that gang violence is on the rise in our county. However, the district believes that the strengthening of the Gang Violence Task Force, which was initiated in the early to mid-2000's, is best served by law enforcement, not the schools. While we are happy to participate in the work of the task force, as a school district, our primary objective is not to resurrect or "strengthen" a gang task force, but to educate children. Below, we have listed the existing partnerships that we have with law enforcement and other community groups to address safety concerns and gang prevention in our schools.

Collaborative Partnerships with Law Enforcement Agencies & Community Groups

The district has extensive collaborative partnerships with law enforcement agencies across the county, including with the Napa County Sheriff Department, American Canyon Police Department, City of Napa Police Department, the Napa County Probation Department as well as with the District's School Resource Officers, the Napa County Office of Education, mental health advocates and experts, school counselors, and social workers. NVUSD hosts School Law which is a monthly meeting between NVUSD Student Services Staff and NPD and ACPD to support ongoing communication and partnership.

In addition, the district consults with numerous other community experts in an effort to address key issues facing our students and to provide additional resources and support for them.

Some of those key partnerships include:

1. **FOCUS Program:** The district participates in the Focusing on Children Under Stress ("FOCUS") Program, led by the Napa County Office of Education, which supports children who may have experienced trauma, including being victims or witnesses of violence such as gang-related incidents. This program enhances communication between law enforcement and other first responders, schools, and community-based organizations ("CBOs"). Law enforcement and other first responders initiate notifications that are sent to designated school officials and include only the name and school of the student, without disclosing specific details of the incident. This process enables the monitoring of any potential effects on the student and ensures that appropriate support is provided as needed.
2. **411 Tip Line:** The district also collaborates with law enforcement to manage the anonymous tip texting line, Tip 411. This service allows students and others to confidentially report suspicious activities, such as bullying, gang related acts such as planned fights, graffiti tagging, or bringing weapons on school grounds. Additionally, the district utilizes a digital footprint program to evaluate and address students who may pose a threat to themselves or others, ensuring that any incident is handled with utmost seriousness.

District Coordinator of Safety & Emergency Services

The School District has appointed a full-time Coordinator of Safety & Emergency Services, who will actively collaborate with law enforcement and first responders to develop comprehensive emergency response protocols and safety measures to ensure school security. The Coordinator is working closely with the Superintendent and leadership to establish a district-wide incident command team, which will provide support to individual school incident command teams during emergencies and crises and facilitate internal communication within the District. Additionally, the Coordinator will oversee the support and implementation of comprehensive school safety plans, conduct safety assessments, and provide training and support to ensure preparedness. These efforts also include participation in a county-wide initiative aimed at strengthening support and response relationships among all six school districts, law enforcement, and first responders, fostering a robust countywide collaboration.

Further efforts led by the Coordinator will involve the establishment of school multidisciplinary teams to conduct behavioral threat assessments. Behavioral threat assessments are evaluations designed to identify individuals who may pose a threat of violence and to intervene

with appropriate resources to prevent such violence. To ensure these assessments are unbiased, the teams will comprise individuals with diverse backgrounds and expertise across various disciplines. The goal of these assessments is to detect when an individual may be on a path towards violence and to guide them onto a new, positive path by providing necessary support and resources, ultimately preventing violence in schools.

Napa County Office of Education (NCOE)

NCOE has created or is connected to several programs and coalitions that focus on prevention and intervention, but we agree with the recommendation and the need to expand and focus our efforts. To address school climate and safety, NCOE created a network called Napa Connection and Resilience to Empower Students ("CARES") that unites non-profits, Local Education Agencies ("LEAs"), and Community-Based Organizations ("CBOs") to address the needs of Napa's youth through holistic, wraparound services. This initiative facilitates effective communication between the school districts and multiple agencies, resulting in streamlined and increased access to services for youth and their families. By providing individualized support through an intensive case management approach, Napa CARES enhances early intervention and violence prevention. This is achieved by offering youth and families facing challenges comprehensive services tailored to their unique situations.

NCOE has also brought the FOCUS Program to Napa County after seeing its success in other areas of the state. The Focusing On Children Under Stress ("FOCUS") Program supports children who may have experienced trauma, including being victims or witnesses of violence such as gang-related incidents. This program enhances communication between law enforcement and other first responders, schools, and community-based organizations ("CBOs"). Law enforcement and other first responders initiate notifications that are sent to designated school officials and include only the name and school of the student, without disclosing specific details of the incident. This process enables the monitoring of any potential effects on the student and ensures that appropriate support is provided as needed, while maintaining student and family confidentiality.

Additionally, the CATALYST Coalition was formed in 2005 as an answer to the higher- than-average youth substance use rates in Napa County. CATALYST focuses on reducing and preventing underage alcohol, marijuana and tobacco use in Napa County with the collective strengths, expertise, and engagement of our broad collaborative of interested community members. Community members meet and collaborate on ways to prevent youth substance use in Napa County, including activities for Take Down Tobacco, Red Ribbon Week, Alcohol Awareness Month, student wellness fairs, Social Host Awareness campaigns, substance use treatment, counseling, parent support group and much more. We also partner closely with the UpValley Family Centers to do this work, as well as the Napa Opioid Safety Coalition to inform parents and students about the dangers of even casual drug use. As our work continues to evolve, we have developed two spin-off coalitions-Open Doors and Napa CARES. While focused on student wellness efforts, these groups are creating access to student and family support.

Napa County Office of education also has connections to several other groups who may be able to support these efforts. Although not directly related to gang involvement, a newly formed group called Pro-Inclusion Napa, whose aim is to reduce hate, is interested in becoming part of our task force. They have had students develop posters to counter the hate messages that have been seen around the county, and these posters were displayed in City Hall from July 2 through August 8th. Perhaps we can redirect some students to join the "Kindness" gang, and work with students in our elementary and middle schools to develop anti-hate campaigns.

R8. By September 30, 2024, the City of Napa Police Department create a succession plan for the Community Service Officer role in the Juvenile Diversion Program, including program expansion.

City of Napa

This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The City of Napa Civil Services Rules govern how vacancies are filled and require a thorough, fair and competitive process, and therefore the City cannot pre-designate a replacement for any classified position. However, the City of Napa appreciates the Grand Jury's recognition of the importance of continuity in the Community Service Officer role in the Juvenile Diversion program and has created methods to document processes and procedures, and ensure that all program staff are knowledgeable about the services provided. Further, the City of Napa and the Police Department are supportive of professional growth for all employees and have expanded access to internal and external development trainings and will continue to do so to allow for multiple staff to seek promotion or transfer into the Juvenile Diversion Program as positions become available.

R9. By December 31, 2025, the Napa County Sheriff, the City of Napa Police Department, the City of St. Helena Police Department, the City of Calistoga Police Department, the District Attorney's office and the Napa County Probation Department create an integrated data collection system to improve the efficiency of trend monitoring associated with gangs and gang crimes.

City of Napa

This recommendation requires further analysis.

With the dissolution of the CALGangs data system (AB90 - 2017), each law enforcement agency in Napa County now maintains their own data on criminal behavior in each community. Currently, Napa Sheriff's Office and Napa Police Department share a records management system (Mark43) that allows law enforcement staff to see unrestricted criminal data. These agencies are the larger agencies in our County and account for most of the criminal and gang related activity. Other agencies maintain their own records, but information is also shared among all agencies as needed.

By October 1, 2024, the City of Napa Police Department will collaborate with partners at the Napa Sheriff's Office, St. Helena Police Department, Calistoga Police Department, District

Attorney's Office and Napa County Probation to review current data collection systems and develop a joint recommendation on options for replacement or improvements to assist law enforcement in monitoring gang activity trends. The Police Chief will report outcomes of this collaborative effort to the Napa City Council.

Napa County Sheriff and District Attorney

The District Attorney and Sheriff will not be able to implement this recommendation.

Creating an "integrated data system" for the purposes described by the Jury would meet the definition of a "shared gang database" as described in California Penal Code 186.34 (a) (4) and therefore trigger all of the restrictions and limitations created by the 2017 bill that became law, AB-90, including control from the California Department of Justice.

Further, it would fall under Part 23 of Title 28, Code of Federal Regulation which contains the onerous implementing standards for operating multijurisdictional criminal intelligence systems. California Penal Code section 186.34(c) (1) creates additional burdens on law enforcement wishing to utilize a shared gang database, including the requirement that, before designating or identifying a person in the database, the local law enforcement agency must "provide written notice to the person, and shall, if the person is under 18 years of age, provide written notice to the person and the person's parent or guardian, of the designation and the basis for the designation[.]" Each agency must also provide the person information on how to petition to have their information removed from the database. The statute additionally sets forth provisions related to information requests by designated persons as well as mandatory agency responses, including time limitations for agency response.

The administrative burdens and bureaucratic process of running such a system would place the agencies included by the Jury's recommendation in a costly and time-consuming endeavor that would be sure to create significant "intelligence gaps" of information, which defeats the purpose identified by the Jury. To put it simply, maintaining a legal shared gang database under the laws and regulations as they are today is a much more regulated, complicated and onerous task than it was in decades prior.

As mentioned in our response to Finding 7, however, the Napa County law enforcement community is relatively small and the relationships are well established, making collaboration and resource sharing an asset during any gang related criminal investigation. Like the Jury, the Napa County Sheriff's Office and District Attorney's Office are concerned about gang activity in Napa County. We are dedicated to addressing the issue of criminal gang activity, including that which involves Napa County youths, as well as to sharing information with all agency partners.

Napa County Probation Department

The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable. While Napa County Probation is dedicated to community safety and rehabilitation of offenders, legislative changes have shifted the landscape of data collection specific to gang activity. These changes include the dissolution of the CALGangs data system in 2017 with the passage of AB 90. In addition to dissolving CALGangs, AB 90 imposed increased restrictions and limitations on

data collection. An integrated data system, as recommended, is subject to the provisions of Penal Code Section 186.34(a)(4) and Part 23 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulation, which aim to ensure the protection of constitutional rights (civil rights and civil liberties) and further an individual's reasonable expectation of privacy. The current laws and regulations require significant costly systems and procedural burdens that would be challenging to implement.

Napa County is unique in its collaboration between departments. Our law enforcement departments have built solid relationships over time that allow for effective communication and partnerships. Napa County Probation has a dedicated gang officer in both its adult and juvenile probation units, focusing on the accountability and rehabilitation of known gang offenders. These officers work in concert with local law enforcement regularly to share information, address issues and concerns that arise, and communicate about trends in gang activity. The Napa County Probation Department is grateful to our local law enforcement agencies, who regularly collaborate and participate in fieldwork with probation officers to enhance community safety as it relates to gang activity.

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the Chief Probation Officer.