



NAPA COUNTY OFFICE OF SHERIFF-CORONER

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Commitment to Community

Oscar Ortiz
Sheriff - Coroner

May 6, 2026

The Honorable Scott R.L. Young
Presiding Judge
Napa County Superior Court
825 Brown St
Napa, CA 94559

Dear Judge Young:

As required by Penal Code Section 933(c), enclosed is my response to the Grand Jury's report "FEAR OF ICE IN THE VALLEY?"

I want to acknowledge and thank the members of the 2025-2026 Napa County Grand Jury for their time and devotion to this report.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Oscar Ortiz".

Oscar Ortiz
Sheriff
Napa County

Cc: Foreman, 2025-2026 Grand Jury

NAPA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY REPORT
REGARDING
"FEAR OF ICE IN THE VALLEY?"

Finding:

F1: Napa County law enforcement agencies have worked well with the community to explain that they do not enforce immigration law, because it is a federal and not local function. Despite this, fears persist and therefore efforts should continue to expand the use of social and broadcast media, particularly in Spanish.

Recommendations:

R1: The Napa County Sheriff and Police Departments should continue to deepen community collaborations and encourage their public information staff to expand the use of social and broadcast media, particularly in Spanish.

Response to Finding/Recommendation 1:

The Sheriff's Office agrees in part to the finding that some levels of fear continue in the community, and that the Sheriff's Office can continue to do more, in Spanish, to provide outreach and education to the community about the role of local law enforcement. The Sheriff's Office respectfully disagrees, however, that the use of social media should be expanded.

In December, 2024 the Sheriff's Office began doing in-person Spanish speaking outreach to the community about the role of local law enforcement. The Sheriff's Office made Spanish language presentations at church services in Napa, the farmworker housing centers, at parent groups of English learners in Napa and American Canyon, during Farmworker Foundation classes in Napa and Yountville, virtually in Spanish to "Lideros Campesinas," and several other events and gatherings. In addition, as Sheriff, I have presented on this topic twice as a guest on local access cable (broadcast media) television Spanish language programs ("Charlando con Teresa Foster"), and at several other events wherein I was invited to be a presenter.

In English language, I have presented on the subject twice at the Latino Leaders Luncheon, provided information in an article in the local Farm Bureau newsletter, and granted an interview for a story in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat.

To deepen community collaboration and expand public outreach, I plan to continue to be a guest on Spanish programming, present at farmworker gatherings, and I am always willing to accept invitations to present at any other church, community or other gathering upon request. When I am not available, I have additional bilingual staff who are trained and available to do this outreach, specifically Lieutenant Felipe Hernandez. Lt. Hernandez was able to step in for me on multiple occasions in 2025 when I had a scheduling conflict. To date, the Sheriff's Department has presented to Spanish-speaking groups on at least 20 occasions and we intend to continue to expand outreach by pursuing all opportunities available to us.

Regarding the use of social media, however, immigration enforcement is a highly politicized subject. The Sheriff's Office prides itself on strictly adhering to state and federal laws which clearly define the roles, constitutional jurisdictions, and authorities of immigration enforcement (which is the authority of the federal government. Sworn members of the Napa Sheriff's Office are not cross-deputized, or statutorily authorized, to perform these duties). The Sheriff's Office does not encourage or engage in political stances on the issue of immigration. The Sheriff's Office focuses its outreach efforts on in-person presentations because it has historically proven to build stronger community relationships and trust amongst community members.

The Sheriff's Office disagrees that use of social media would effectively calm fears in the community or increase outreach. This is largely due to the fact that (1) the Sheriff's Office does not have a large following or viewership on social media that is mono-lingual/Spanish only followers; (2) historically, any posts addressing potentially political subjects have been met with divisive, hurtful, and polarizing comments that create tension and division in the community that distract from the intended message; and (3) the impact of the intended message is often over-shadowed by divisive, politically-driven comments, back-and-forth debate, negative re-posts, and shares. In addition, most of the fear in the community is generated by stories, video clips, and statements (often posted on social media) of incidents in other communities. A quick social media post in Spanish may appear to be an easier method of outreach. It would likely create a platform for potentially politically driven and divisive comments, however. The impact of in-person appearances and outreach is far greater with far less risk of creating an opportunity for unintended consequences. The personal conversations after in-person presentations often offer the most value. The Sheriff's Office strongly believes its in-person outreach efforts, while more time consuming, offers a better solution to calming fears in the community and building trust.