



**2020-2021 FINAL REPORT**

**KINGS COUNTY GRAND JURY**

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**Superior Court of the State of California**  
**County of Kings**

**Kathy Ciuffini**  
Superior Court Judge

June 4, 2021

To: Kings County Grand Jury and Affected Governmental  
Agencies and Officers

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury has submitted the enclosed reports to the Presiding Judge and/or his designee of the Superior Court in accordance with Section 933 of the California Penal Code. The enclosed reports were submitted and are hereby accepted as the final reports of the Grand Jury concerning these areas of inquiry.

The agencies and elected officials who are affected by the enclosed reports are each hereby notified that they are required to comment to the Presiding Judge and/or his designee concerning these findings and recommendations as they pertain to the subject agency or elected official. Comments are due on behalf of each elected county officer or agency head that has responsibility for the agencies and functions described in these reports within 60 days from this date. The governing bodies of the public agencies affected by the reports have a 90-day time limit within which to submit comments pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 (c). In addition, a copy of each response shall be placed on file with the clerk of the public agency on whose behalf the response is made.

Those having questions concerning their responsibilities to respond to the Grand Jury's recommendations should contact County Counsel or their agency's general counsel.

The Judges of the Superior Court wish to express our sincere appreciation for the long hours of service given by members of the 2020-2021 Grand Jury, with special thanks to their Foreperson, Thomas S. Arlitz. Selfless dedication to public service such as that demonstrated by this Grand Jury is crucial to the survival of the institution of the Grand Jury, which is itself an important part of the checks and balances necessary for our democracy to function.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kathy Ciuffini'.

Kathy Ciuffini  
Judge of the Superior Court

1640 Kings County Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230  
(559) 582-1010 ext. 6002



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

May 18, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Ciuffini  
Advising Judge, Superior Court of the State of California  
Kings County Government Center  
1400 West Lacey Boulevard  
Hanford CA 93230

Dear Judge Ciuffini:

On behalf of the members of the 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury, I am presenting the Final Report to the Superior Court and the people of Kings County.

The 2020-2021 Final Report contains investigative reports. The Reports are the result of selections from complaints initiated from concerned citizens and/or inquiries covering a wide range of topics. My sincere thanks to the members of the Grand Jury who spent countless hours working for the citizens of Kings County. Many dedicated hours went into interviews, research, drafting and collaboration among the Grand Jury members to produce a compilation of thoughtful and thorough investigations. The Grand Jury is hopeful that its efforts will benefit the citizens of Kings County as well as the public agencies that are the subject of its efforts.

The support and encouragement you provided throughout the year is appreciated. In addition, we thank the Offices of the District Attorney and County Counsel for their guidance and support on legal matters.

Our service as Grand Jurors has been rewarding and educational and we thank you for the opportunity to serve our fellow citizens in this capacity.

Respectfully,

Thomas Arlitz  
Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury 2020-2021



**2020-2021 KINGS COUNTY GRAND JURY MEMBERS**

**Thomas Arlitz**  
Foreperson

**Mike Mathis**  
Corresponding Secretary

**Stephen Naylor**  
Committee Chair

**Ronney Wong**  
Treasurer

**Ray Elizondo**  
Committee Chair

**Jerri Harper**  
Committee Chair  
Snack Master  
Social Chair

**Arnold Garza**  
Sergeant at Arms  
Committee Chair

**Dick Hoffmaster**  
Foreperson Pro Tem

**Georgina Alcala**  
Recording Secretary

**Genoveva Felix**

**Karen Ormsby**

**William Watson**

**Sue Gavini**

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# REPORTS



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## HEALTHCARE IN KINGS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

April 28, 2021

### SUMMARY

The Kings County school system consists of 28,000 students, 13 school districts and an Office of Education. Hanford Elementary School District was compared with Kings River Hardwick Elementary School District to compare health delivery within the districts. Both districts have robust COVID-19 surveillance activities and preventative procedures in place which have been approved by the Kings County Health Department. The Grand Jury was particularly interested in daily activities of the health units irrespective of the pandemic.

While both districts have school nurse-to-student ratios better than the State of California's average, the sharing of one school nurse from Kings County Office of Education between four widely separated small rural school districts, which includes Kings River Hardwick Elementary School, is a potential problem in the event of an emergency.

### BACKGROUND

School nurses have been a part of the public school education system since 1902, contributing to public health in the control of early epidemics and pandemics that included children. By the 1950's, most schools had a nurse that attended to the health needs of students by helping the control of childhood disease such as mumps, measles, rheumatic fever, chickenpox, polio, whooping cough and other common diseases such as tuberculosis. In the 1970's, laws were enacted that established the rights of all students, even those with significant health needs, to attend public schools. This was offset in California by the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 which effectively limited property taxes, a major source of school funding. Many schools eliminated the school nurse altogether, with children with disabilities being assigned to a specific "special school". The result was that children needing medication received that medication from the office staff, or a parent was required to come to the school to administer the medication. Many lawsuits ensued, especially concerning students with diabetes requiring the administration of insulin and associated blood testing for glucose levels. Funding, or the lack of it, was the reason given for the inability to hire a school nurse for every school.

The Affordable Care Act, passed in 2010, gave California the opportunity to expand its MediCal system to cover certain services provided by schools. In 2013, the funding of schools changed in a significant way with the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and also required school districts and charter schools to adopt a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). Hanford Elementary School District used this mechanism to increase funding for school health staffing.

The lawsuit over the administration of insulin in schools, *American Nurses Association et al, vs Tom Torlakson as Superintendent, etc., et al* was finally settled and filed in the Supreme

Court of California on August 12, 2013. The result was a greater understanding from all sides about the important issues around the unlicensed personnel providing more and more complex care to students who have a right to attend public school. The other issue was who oversees the health of these students if not Credentialed School Nurses (CSNs). While the lawsuit was pending, (2005-2013), hearings were held and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs) were identified as the best alternative to assist the school nurse because of nursing education and licensed status with Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) being a less desirable alternative due to their limited education and unlicensed status. Thus, many school districts now hire various combinations of CNAs, LVNs, Registered Nurses (RNs) and CSNs. LVNs and CNAs always work under the supervision of RNs or physicians.

Another development occurring in the early 2000s was the realization that California did not have enough bachelor prepared nurses let alone nurses with masters degrees. This resulted in the development of RN to Bachelor of Science Nursing (BSN) or Masters of Science Nursing (MSN) programs. Certification as a school nurse now requires a BSN, completion of an approved school nurse program, two years of successful experience as a school nurse and passing a national exam. RNs hired as a school nurse have five years to complete their credential. Holders of the school nurse credential are authorized to perform the following services:

- Conduct immunization programs pursuant to California Educational Code, Section 49403, of the California Code of Regulations
- Assess and evaluate the health and developmental status of pupils
- Interpret the health and developmental assessment to parents, teachers, administrators, and other professionals directly concerned with the pupil
- Design and implement individual student health maintenance plans, incorporating plans directed by a physician
- Refer the pupil and parent or guardian to appropriate community resources for necessary services
- Maintain communication with parents and all involved community practitioners and agencies to promote needed treatment and secure reports of findings pertinent to educational planning
- Interpret medical and nursing findings appropriate to the student's individualized education program and make recommendations to professional personnel directly involved
- Consult with, conduct in-service training for, and serve as a resource person to teachers and administrators
- Develop and implement the health education curriculum
- Act as a participant in implementing a comprehensive health instruction curriculum for students
- Counsel and assist pupils and parents in health-related and school adjustment services
- Teach health-related subjects under the supervision of a classroom teacher

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommends a multi-tiered approach to determine the ratio of credentialed school nurses to students needed for a particular school or district. Factors to be taken in consideration are the number of students with chronic health

conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and obesity, acuity of students served, social-economic status of the community and the age range of the students. A suggested needs-based nurse-to-student ratio example is:

- 1:750 well students
- 1:225 student populations that may require daily professional school nursing services or interventions such as Special Ed inclusions
- 1:125 in student populations with complex health care needs
- 1:1 may be necessary for individual students with multiple disabilities

As of June 2020, California ranked 40 out of 50 states and two entities (Washington, DC and Overseas School Health Nurses Association included) with an average of 2,240 students per school nurse. In a recent article published March 28, 2021, titled *School Nurse Workload: Staffing for Safe Care*, the position of the National Association of School Nurses is: “Access to a registered professional nurse all-day, every-day can improve students’ health, safety, and educational achievement”.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The 2020-2021 Grand Jury inquired into the well-being of students in Kings County schools with the pandemic as well as other factors of concern. Interviews were held with Kings County Public Health Department (KCPHD), Kings County Office of Education (KCOE), and Kings County Behavioral Health Services (KCBHS).

- KCPHD provided the following information relative to schools and the pandemic.
  - The Kings County Public Health Officer provides oversight for medical care provided by school nurses.
  - Early into the pandemic, KCOE nurses developed a COVID surveillance program which was recognized by California Department of Public Health and is being used by many, if not all, school districts in Kings County.
  - Close working relationships have been established between KCOE, school districts, and the KCPHD with the goal of opening schools safely.
- KCOE:
  - Provides support to the 13 school districts in Kings County, but has no authority to direct their activities. Each school district is autonomous in operation through the District’s Board of Trustees.
  - Provides a credentialed school nurse and a psychologist to districts with less than 901 students in compliance with California Education Code Section 1750.
  - Operates alternative schools such as JC Montgomery and Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) sites.
- KCBHS:
  - Assists districts in the provision of mental health to children in need.
  - Through tele-health has contracts with child psychiatrists.

The Grand Jury compared local school nursing within a large elementary school district with a small elementary district. Hanford Elementary School District (HESD), and Kings River Hardwick Elementary School District (KRHSD) were selected for comparison. Interviews were held with representatives from each school district administration, school nurse, and LVN. Each District’s web site was also viewed.

**DISCUSSION**

**Hanford Elementary School District:**

HESD is the largest school district in Kings County comprised of 11 schools – nine elementary and two middle schools. The schools are located in the city of Hanford which is the county seat. Five RNs and 11 LVNs provide health care for the students. One LVN is assigned to each school with the five RNs divided between two or three schools in close proximity. It was mentioned that some schools have students requiring tube feeding, special respiratory care or other procedures within the LVN scope of practice. An attempt is made to have similar numbers of students for each RN. The district also sponsors a mobile health clinic at one of the school sites. The RNs either have their school nurse credential or are working toward it. The following chart gives an overall view of nurse staffing of district schools. The number of students is from the 2020 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for each school.

<b>RN</b>	<b>LVN</b>	<b>School Site/ Grade Level</b>	<b># students</b>
1	1	Hamilton Elementary (TK-6)	461
	1	Kennedy Junior High (7-8)	565
1	1	Jefferson Academy (K-8)	525
	1	Lincoln Elementary(TK-6)	401
	1	Richmond Elementary (TK-6)	438
1	1	King Elementary (TK-6)	623
	1	Roosevelt Elementary (TK-6)	508
	1	Community Day School (K-8)	13
1	1	Monroe Elementary (TK-6)	708
	1	Washington Elementary (TK-6)	511
1	1	Simas Elementary (TK-6)	529
	1	Wilson Junior High (7-8)	635

**Kings River Hardwick School District:**

KRHSD serves an unincorporated agricultural area north and east of Hanford with one school, is the fourth smallest district in Kings County. The administration consists of a superintendent/principal and support staff. The nursing office is staffed with an LVN. A credentialed school nurse from KCOE is on-site one day per week and as necessary. That school nurse is also on site at each of the other three small schools one day per week.

<b>Small School Districts</b>	<b>LVN</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>RN</b>
Island Union Elem	1	435	1 for all
Kings River Hardwick Elem	1	820	4 school
Kit Carson Union Elem	1	380	districts
Lakeside Union Elem	1	<u>325</u>	
Total students		1960	

### **Comparison of schools:**

The Grand Jury then focused on comparing Kennedy Junior High School in HESD with KRH Elementary School in KRHSD by comparing each school's 2019-2020 SARC data.

	<b>KJHS</b>	<b>KRH Elementary</b>
Grades	7-8	K-8
Number students	565	840
FTE RN/ ratio	0.5 (1:1016)	0.2 (1:1960)
FTE LVN	1.0	0.8
Psychologist	0.5	0.2

Student Groups that correlate with higher LCFF funding:

Social-Disadvantaged	87.5%	31.3%
Disabled Students	12.0%	5.8%
English Learners	16.1%	4.8%
Foster Youth	0.5%	0.1%
Homeless	2.3%	0.0%

The SARC data for Kennedy Junior High reflects that increased funding was received based on the LCFF and used for funding the LVN position plus nursing office needs.

While there are significant differences between the two schools, care needs to be taken in arriving at conclusions without further information on types of disabilities and availability of other support staff such as social workers and counselors. The functional role of the LVN is similar at both schools. Both indicated that 20-30 students per day are seen in the nursing office for anything from bandages to significant health issues.

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Finding 1**

Each school district within the County has a better nurse/student ratio than California's overall statistics.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Continue working towards improving the nurse/student ratio.

Finding 2

Each school district does not meet the nurse/student ratio as per NASN guidelines.

Recommendation 2

Each school district needs to improve the nurse/student ratio to agree with NASN guidelines.

Finding 3

Kings County school districts have made progress in providing quality healthcare for students.

Recommendation 3

Continue providing quality healthcare for students.

Finding 4

Some districts have used grant writing to obtain additional funding to improve the healthcare of students.

Recommendation 4

Kings County Office of Education should provide additional resources for student healthcare grant writing.

**RESPONSE REQUIRED**

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: "...within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt..."

Hanford Elementary School District Board of Trustees  
Kings River Hardwick Elementary School District Board of Trustees

**SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:**

Original to:  
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:  
Kings County Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232

# KINGS COUNTY'S RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

## April 29, 2021

### SUMMARY

The growing crisis of homelessness has the most significant impact on the individuals experiencing it, but homelessness also has a broad effect on the entire community. The 2020-2021 Grand Jury investigated how different community organizations and government agencies responded to the challenges of providing services and resources to the homeless population in Kings County. The Grand Jury also evaluated the efforts and effectiveness of a newly formed body to address the issues of homelessness, Kings County Homelessness Collaborative.

The Grand Jury discovered as the homeless have become more visible, the community could no longer ignore them. Some of the local non-profits and faith-based organizations were first to provide basic shelter, meals, and services. The local government agencies began to increase their services and developed outreach programs to help those in need. As more funding was available from the State and federal governments, programs were able to expand to serve more people.

The leadership of the County agencies and their community partners realized that their efforts needed to be more coordinated to prevent redundancy and to increase communication which would promote sharing of ideas to better serve the homeless community.

Perception of the homeless as all mentally ill substance abusers who do not want to be helped, needs to change. A single major life event can lead to homelessness. It is essential that the community, as a whole, buy into this problem to reach any resolution of the homelessness problem.

### BACKGROUND

Homelessness is not a new phenomenon to the United States. The terms used to describe homeless individuals have changed over the years due to the circumstances of the times, the public's perception of those individuals, and the demographics of that population.

#### Definitions:

To better understand, it is important to define several of the terms specific to homelessness and the efforts to manage this complex and dynamic problem.

- Homeless  
An individual or family who have a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus/train station, or campground. It also includes individuals or families living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or safe havens.



- **Chronic Homeless**  
People living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or emergency shelter. They have lived in these situations for at least 12 months continuously, or at least on four separate occasions in the last three years, where the combined occasions total is at least 12 months.
- **Housing First**  
An approach that offers permanent affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. This population then becomes more accessible to receiving supportive services and connection to community-based supports.
- **Types of Housing**
  - *Emergency Shelter (ES)*: a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for homeless people.
  - *Transitional Housing (TH)*: a program that provides temporary housing and supportive services for up to 24 months with the intent for the person to move toward permanent housing.
  - *Rapid Rehousing (RRH)*: a program that provides financial assistance, housing subsidies, and supportive services to help those experiencing homelessness to be quickly rehoused and stabilized. This is considered permanent housing.
  - *Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)*: a program designed to provide housing and supportive services on a long-term basis to formerly homeless people who have a disabling condition.
- **Continuum of Care (COC)**  
A system to reduce the incidence of homelessness in communities/regions by helping individuals and families reach self-sufficiency and permanent housing. Awards funding from Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other sources. Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance (KTHA) is the COC administrator for this region.
- **Point-in-Time Count (PIT)**  
A HUD-mandated annual count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. This count is important data used for HUD funding.
- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**  
A local information technology system that maintains a centralized database for tracking services and impact related to individuals experiencing homelessness. HMIS allows the community to monitor the performance of programs. Kings United Way operates this system in Kings County.
- **Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance (KTHA)**  
A broad-based coalition of homeless housing and service providers, advocates, government representatives, and consumers which shapes regional planning and

decision-making. They provide funding resources to Kings County as well as operate the Coordinated Entry System.

- **Coordinated Entry System**  
Kings and Tulare counties share this system operated by KTHA. This system coordinates local services and evaluates the individual's homeless status, housing needs, vulnerability, and response to emergency services. The priority of the system placement is to single adults and families experiencing chronic homelessness or those with high service needs. The system has multiple access points: Kings 2-1-1, outreach teams, housing navigators, partner agencies, and homeless service providers.
- **Kings 2-1-1**  
Kings 2-1-1 is an informational phone line, online and text-to-chat function used to find local public resources and services such as health care, mental health, substance abuse, housing, food and utilities.

#### Historical Perspectives:

In the late 1800s, the word "*tramp*" was used to describe itinerant men (mostly white), who traveled from place to place alternating between hard work and wandering. After the Civil War, the meaning of tramp changed to describe lazy and incorrigible men. The 1920s and 1930s brought the economic hardships of the Great Depression, and so the term "*hobo*" evolved to mean migrant laborers answering the "call of the road" as they traveled on trains searching for work. Post-World War II saw the rise of "*skid rows*" which were mostly populated by older males over 50 who abused alcohol and drugs.

The development of psychotropic drugs and the civil liberties movement of the 1970s led to the transfer of mental health care away from institutions to local community-based services. This process, along with the decrease in funding for services, resulted in a large influx of mentally ill people onto the streets of local counties. The demographics of the homeless was no longer primarily white males, but now included people younger than 40, minorities, and females. In the 1990s, more families began to join the homeless population due to the lack of affordable housing. The homeless were now being characterized into three groups: transient, episodic, and chronic.

Over the past century, federal, state, and local governments have created legislation, agencies, and funding resources to help mitigate the complex problems associated with homelessness. Ultimately, the burden of specific management and delivery of services for the homeless falls on local counties and cities. These agencies are dependent on their ability to fund those services from state and federal governments, as well as grants from other outside entities.

## Current Circumstances:

According to the HUD annual PIT count, California has a disproportionately large homeless population and leads the nation with more than 151,000 homeless as of January 2019. This represents about 27% of the total homeless population in the nation, while California's overall population is only 12% of the nation. Although the numbers are significantly different, looking at the most recent 2020 PIT count in Kings County, administered by the Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance, the results are similar to the State's trends as described in the 2020-2021 California State Budget Report, *The Governor's Homelessness Plan*.

## 2020 KINGS COUNTY HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Total: 305 Homeless - 22% increase since 2019 PIT count

- 111 Chronic homeless
- 269 Slept unsheltered
  - 30 Slept in emergency shelters
  - 95 Homeless with disabling conditions
    - Mental 35%
    - Physical 30%
    - Substance abuse 24%
    - Developmental 18%
  - 6 Slept in transitional housing
  - 18 Unaccompanied youth
- 140 Women
- 165 Men
- 225 White
- 102 Hispanic
- 122 Non-Hispanic

As homelessness continues to grow in Kings County, as reflected by the PIT counts, so does the demand for resources and services.

## METHODOLOGY

The 2020-2021 Grand Jury:

- Conducted internet research of several websites to gain a better understanding of the issues and challenges associated with homelessness, including:
  - California Grand Jurors' Association
  - County of Kings
  - Kings County Department of Public Health
  - Kings Community Action Organization
  - Kings County Homelessness Collaborative
  - Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance

- Reviewed several publications related to State and local programs' efforts toward supporting the homeless:
  - 2013 Grand Jury Report on Homelessness-Kings County
  - 2019 Kings County Homelessness Gaps Analysis
  - 2019 Grand Jury Report on Homelessness-Sacramento County
  - 2020 Grand Jury Report on Homelessness-Santa Cruz County
  - 2020 Grand Jury Report on Homelessness-Fresno County
  - 2020 Point in Time Count
  - 2020 Kings County Human Services Agency Presentations on Project Roomkey and Project Homekey
  - 2020-2021 California State Budget-*The Governor's Homelessness Plan*
  
- Attended local meetings and reviewed minutes of the following organizations:
  - Kings County Board of Supervisors
  - Kings County Homelessness Collaborative
  - Kings County Behavioral Health Services
  
- Interviewed multiple directors or representatives of different Kings County agencies and non-profit organizations who provide services to the homeless, with most being members of the Kings County Homelessness Collaborative:
  - Human Services Agency
  - Behavioral Health Services
  - Department of Public Health
  - Housing Authority
  - County Office of Education
  - Hanford Police Department
  - Board of Supervisors
  - Kings Community Action Organization
  - Kings Gospel Mission

## DISCUSSION

There are various opinions and perceptions within Kings County concerning homelessness issues. The characterization of the homeless falls along an extensive spectrum from lazy people, alcohol and drug abusers, mentally ill individuals, and those who do not want to conform to societal norms, to those of lost people in personal or family crisis, victims of abuse, or often those with life changing disabilities who are seeking help. Homelessness is growing because of numerous factors and will continue to be an issue in our society. It is important to influence and motivate our local leaders to better educate the public so as to understand that homelessness is a community-wide problem.

After exposure to many articles and media programs highlighting the crises of homelessness in our state and county, the Grand Jury has directed this investigation into the overall response Kings County has made toward homelessness issues. In addition, the Grand Jury examined the newly formed Kings County Homelessness Collaborative's efforts and effectiveness regarding this growing problem.

Looking into the past, a previous report was written by the 2012-2013 Kings County Grand Jury titled *Homelessness in Kings County*. They interviewed officials of County government and the cities of Hanford, Lemoore, Corcoran, and Avenal, as well as an official from a local charitable organization. That Grand Jury also reviewed seven articles, attended a conference, and viewed a video concerning homelessness. There were about 200 homeless people in the County, mostly males who lived unsheltered, predominantly in Hanford, because of the availability of local charitable organizations that provided services and meals. Law enforcement agencies were not experiencing a great deal of trouble from the homeless because they policed themselves. That Grand Jury concluded that *the homeless do not appear to be a problem*.

Since that report was published, the homeless became more visible to the public, especially with the establishment of larger populated encampments and more individuals on the streets of Hanford. There were more problems with damaged property, sanitation, and waste removal which imposed upon the city of Hanford, local businesses, and individual landowners a significant cost to repair and clean up. The majority of homeless people continue to reside in Hanford because of the availability of services and resources. The Hanford Police Department experienced an increase in complaints including trespassing, public intoxication, theft, abandoned building “takeovers” resulting in fires, and an accumulation of trash and human waste associated with the homeless population. This led to 12 to 15 arrests from 150 response calls per month. The added burden of policing these issues caused an increased use of available resources, manpower, and officer time working with complicated situations involving individuals needing direction to essential services.

### Causes of Homelessness

The causes of homelessness are difficult to determine in individual cases, but the PIT Count homeless survey identified the top six events that lead to homelessness: loss of job 26%; eviction 18%; increased rent 10%; drug and alcohol abuse 13%; family domestic violence 10%; and divorce/separation/break-up 9%. Additional factors are California’s excessively high cost of housing and rent as well as limited inventory of affordable low-income housing.

### Kings County’s Response

There are several non-profit and faith-based organizations that stepped up to provide a large portion of immediate housing (ES, PSH, TH), food, essential personal services (bathrooms, showers, laundry, haircuts, basic health care), and referrals to other resources. A few of these organizations are Kings Community Action Organization, Kings Gospel Mission, Champions Recovery, Salvation Army, and Hanford Episcopal Church. They have been the primary source of immediate intervention to the homeless in our County. There are several County agencies or departments that have been providing services to the homeless including, but not limited to, the Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services, Public Health, Kings View, Adventist Health, County Office of Education, and Housing Authority. Many of the non-profit, faith-based organizations and outreach programs refer homeless individuals to these agencies and departments to obtain specific resources and needed care.

## Outreach

The Hanford Police Department often is the first system contact the homeless person experiences. With this in mind, the Hanford Police Department decided to create a Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART) in July 2015 comprised of two police officers dedicated to addressing the police response to homelessness. They changed their approach to dealing with the homeless to one of equal focus on outreach and enforcement. Enforcements (75%) are citations without detention with 25% resulting in arrests and in custody. Almost all those detained are cited and released from jail immediately. Usually the first contact involves outreach by providing resources, a warning and advised to leave the area due to complaints. The second or third contact usually results in an enforcement action. This approach has allowed the homeless population to develop more trust in the police; as a result of more compliance from the homeless, the number of complaints has decreased.

In 2018, officers assigned to HART researched and developed a proposal to establish an accessible Homeless Resource Center in downtown Hanford. This one-stop-shop navigation center would provide a central location for the homeless to access resources and services from key providers such as Behavioral Health Services, medical care, community partners, shelter/housing opportunities, etc. They would also be able to take care of essential needs like personal hygiene, laundry, and have WiFi connections to contact loved ones. This center would also have the advantage of data collection of the true scale of homeless persons and their needs in Kings County. This center was not proposed to be a shelter where homeless people would sleep. The proposal was presented to the Hanford City Council with the support of The Wellness Bridge, a coalition of local agencies who want to improve the situation of the homeless. The City Council was supportive of this project until a group of business owners and other citizens brought their concerns about the center. Ultimately, this project was defeated.

Besides the outreach efforts of HART, many community partners and other engaged entities such as Kings View, Human Services Agency, Adventist Health, Department of Public Health, Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance Housing Navigation, and Adult Protective Services also deploy staff who provide outreach to unsheltered homeless individuals.

## Kings County Homelessness Collaborative

As the number of homeless and complexity of providing resources and services continue to expand, some of the key stakeholders working with the homeless proposed the development of a collaborative consisting of representatives of all key agencies, departments, and non-profit organizations providing services to the homeless. The intent was to increase communication, better utilize available resources, prevent redundancies of service, and provide better case management. With the support of the Kings County Board of Supervisors, the Kings County Homelessness Collaborative (KCHC) was established in July 2019 and its by-laws were approved September 10, 2019.

As stated in the by-laws, the purpose of the Collaborative is to advise and assist the County efforts to address homelessness issues affecting the community, and report to the Kings County Board of Supervisors on a periodic basis.

The list of Collaborative responsibilities as stated in the by-laws are as follows:

1. Assist the county in assessing the community's homeless population and services, including strengths and gaps in the current system (including rural and/or underserved areas) and help to develop strategies (short-term and long-term) to meet unmet needs.
2. Recommend policies that improve quality of life for homeless persons.
3. Make recommendations on strategies, goals, and funding resources to address homelessness within the county.
4. Encourage support for the development and implementation of effective homeless programs and services.
5. Align efforts and identify/prevent the creation of redundant services.
6. Develop recommendations for participating agencies relevant to existing and proposed legislation on homelessness.
7. Assist in the production of written reports for presentation to the Board of Supervisors. Present an annual report to the Board of Supervisors.
8. With the concurrence of the Board of Supervisors, advocate for increased action to improve the situation of homeless persons.
9. Such other duties as assigned by the Board of Supervisors.

The current composition of the Collaborative membership is:

- Cities of Lemoore, Avenal and Corcoran Representative
- Director of Human Services Agency
- Housing Authority of Kings County Representative
- Director of Kings County Department of Public Health
- Director of Kings County Behavioral Health Services
- Kings County Board of Supervisors Representative
- City of Hanford Representative
- Kings County Sheriff's Office Representative
- Kings/Tulare Homeless Alliance Representative
- Kings County Area Public Transit Agency Representative
- Kings County Office of Education Representative
- Adventist Health Representative
- Kings Community Action Organization Representative
- Community Partner
- Lived Experience Representative

Immediately after the Collaborative was approved and became active, it commissioned the Kings County 2019 Homelessness Gaps Analysis. An independent contracted company, Homebase, performed an extensive study on the current strengths and areas of improvement related to the County's response to homelessness issues. This analysis provided a review and evaluation of the homeless situation in Kings County and the ongoing efforts toward resolving homelessness issues. It provided a list of seven action recommendations for County

leadership in collaboration with partners to improve the status of homelessness in Kings County:

1. Create a community engagement strategy to develop public and political buy-in to address homelessness.
2. Deepen structure for coordination of the homelessness response across Kings County.
3. Create more Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing to address high rates of single adults experiencing homelessness.
4. Establish a low-barrier shelter or navigation center.
5. Establish a coordinated landlord engagement strategy to use existing permanent housing resources more quickly and prevent homelessness for those at risk.
6. Coordinate and standardize homeless outreach.
7. Develop a comprehensive strategy.

The Gaps Analysis was completed in March 2020 and presented to the Board of Supervisors in May 2020. It provided the collaborative with some specific, objective goals so plans could be developed. With the onset of the pandemic in March, priorities needed to be changed to meet the public health issues associated with the homeless.

The County Human Services Agency became the lead to obtain emergency shelter for COVID-19-positive, exposed, and highly vulnerable individuals and Project Roomkey was operationalized. The CARES Act provided funding to obtain needed rooms. The Stardust Hotel and the Holiday Lodge were contracted to provide rooms. These services are currently continuing to be utilized. The Public Health Department and Behavioral Health Services were able to follow and provide services more readily with this housing opportunity.

Even with all the restrictions as a result of the pandemic, the efforts to improve the overall conditions for the homeless continued. The Human Services Agency spearheaded an effort to fulfill one of the Gaps Analysis recommendations to create more PSH and RRH to address high rates of single adults experiencing homelessness. This plan is consistent with the “Housing First” approach to homelessness that offers permanent affordable housing as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and then provides supportive services and connection to community.

The Human Services Agency (HSA) collaborated with Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO) and Kings Gospel Mission on developing two new housing opportunities under the specifications of the State’s Project Homekey Program. The objective is to create interim or permanent housing for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness through the acquisition and rehabilitation of various housing types, i.e., hotels, motels, residential care facilities, and apartment buildings.

- The Stardust Motel (Sunrise Apartments) will be converted to 22 studios with a minimum of two units accessible to persons with mobility disabilities and a minimum of one unit accessible to persons with hearing or vision disabilities. It will operate as a non-congregate shelter/TH managed by KCAO. As units are converted to studios they will begin to be rented as permanent housing units. Multiple services will be provided



by HSA and KCAO staff on site with accessible services from Behavioral Health Services, Public Health Department and the Job Training Office.

- Kings Triangle Courtyard is a permanent housing project that will be owned and operated by Kings Gospel Mission in partnership with the HSA. Kings Gospel has provided matching funds which included the site purchase. The project will have 24 manufactured homes that are approximately 600 square feet and have two bedrooms, one bath, one kitchen area, and a common area. There are plans to develop some retail space adjacent to this area to provide easy access to a laundromat, small store, etc.

These projects took a little under six months to obtain funding, construction plans and bids, project vetting, and approval by the County and State. They are both currently under construction. There are a number of funding sources available to assist individuals with rental costs when completed.

The Grand Jury interviewed several members of the KCHC to understand the agency's role and perception of how effective Kings County's response is toward the complex issues of homelessness, and how effective KCHC is in meeting its purpose and responsibilities.

The majority of interviewees responded positively concerning the Collaborative's overall benefit to the County's efforts to decrease homelessness. Many felt it has increased communication among the different agencies and departments involved and has allowed for more informed contact, especially with regard to case management. KCHC's role is more advisory which allows each member to maintain autonomy and to exchange ideas with less competition. When asked about centralized leadership, most responded negatively, preferring a more egalitarian format. There seems to be more cooperation and understanding among the agencies in the Collaborative, because it has created a forum for the agencies to discuss homelessness issues.

Some interviewees voiced concerns that the Collaborative had no authority or funding. Also, some members were not participating or contributing to the Collaborative. There should be a formalized meeting agenda that is mission focused. There needs to be more leadership with ownership of the problems.

## **CONCLUSION**

The issue of homelessness is not new and is not going to be solved immediately. Kings County leadership needs to continue to expand its resources and work diligently to educate and inform its residents that homelessness is a challenge and responsibility for the entire community. It is encouraging that Kings County has significantly expanded its response over the past few years by providing more services and has developed plans to increase the inventory of low-cost, permanent housing for the homeless.

A lot has been accomplished during the past year to expand the inventory of interim housing which will be converted to permanent housing units. The Human Services Agency, with the support of the Board of Supervisors, the Kings Gospel Mission and Kings Community Action Organization are to be commended on the rapid development, funding, and implementation of these projects.

It is essential that the many individuals, non-profits, faith-based organizations, as well as County agencies be recognized for their long-standing and tireless support of the homeless population in Kings County.

The newly formed Kings County Homelessness Collaborative is making a positive impact on the County's response to homelessness. There has been improvement on the cooperation among the key members of the Collaborative with more exchange of ideas and suggestions. It appears to be meeting its purpose and responsibilities even with a slow start due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

One of the critical factors that seems consistent with other County grand jury reports is the importance of educating and informing the public. This effort is essential in changing the public's perception of the homeless and can influence and motivate community interest and support. While investigating, the Grand Jury found it difficult to locate resources that had up-to-date information concerning the efforts and accomplishments of the County's response to homelessness.

The County and the Collaborative will face challenges in trying to meet the needs of the homeless population. The Homelessness Collaborative Gaps Analysis identified some key challenges:

1. Insufficient funding for new homeless-dedicated housing.
2. Too few landlords willing to rent to individuals experiencing homelessness.
3. Limited housing stock and the development of new housing for extremely low-income individuals.
4. Low turnover in existing Permanent Supportive Housing.
5. Lack of community buy-in and lack of coordinated messaging to community stakeholders.

As homelessness grows in Kings County, it may become more difficult for the Collaborative to achieve its goals. Because many members are leaders of county agencies and departments, they may be overwhelmed by the demands of their primary responsibilities. It may be necessary to establish a County division with centralized leadership. Other Grand Jury reports discussed the critical necessity in having central leadership to provide a well-coordinated, productive and efficient response to homelessness in their counties.

The final question asked during an interview is: How can the Grand Jury help your agency achieve its goals? The most consistent answer was to inform and educate the public to better understand the homeless populations and the help they need. With this report, the Grand Jury hopes it will have achieved this goal.

## **FINDINGS**

- F1. There is a lack of community involvement (buy-in) concerning homeless issues.
- F2. There is a lack of adequate low-barrier shelters to provide immediate housing, especially for single adults.
- F3. There is no centralized Homeless Resource Center accessible to the homeless.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The Kings County Homelessness Collaborative needs to develop an up-to-date, comprehensive website, as well as utilize social media to highlight the activities and successes toward improving the homeless issue in Kings County.
- R2. The Kings County Homelessness Collaborative should continue to look for new opportunities for developing and funding low barrier housing to meet the increasing volume of homeless people, especially single adults.
- R3. The Kings County Homelessness Collaborative should reexamine the previous efforts to establish a “one-stop-shop” navigation center in Hanford.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests from individuals and/or governing groups as follows:

Nathan Olson, Chairperson  
Kings County Homelessness Collaborative  
711 W. Cinnamon Drive  
Lemoore, CA 93245

Board of Supervisors  
Kings County Government Center  
1400 W. Lacey Boulevard  
Hanford, CA 93230

## **INVITED RESPONSES**

Invited responses are welcomed and encouraged by any agency, organization, or individual from Kings County.

**SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:**

Original to:

Shane Burns, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:

Kings County Grand Jury  
PO Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232

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# LEMOORE CEMETERY DISTRICT – SUNFLOWER FIELDS CEMETERY

MARCH 3, 2021

## SUMMARY

The Grand Jury conducted a review of the Lemoore Cemetery District (District) with a focus on the addition of Kings County’s newest cemetery, Sunflower Fields Cemetery. The purpose of the review was to understand the structure, function, and effectiveness of District operations.

Sunflower Fields Cemetery was designed with an emphasis on efficient maintenance while still providing a peaceful place for the families of those interred. Its addition has proven itself as an asset for the District, and its overall aesthetic value is an asset to the community.

The Grand Jury’s overall assessment of the District is that the public is being well served. The District’s success is complemented from the use of local property taxes and fees charged for services.

## BACKGROUND

The most recent review of the District by a Kings County Grand Jury was completed in 2011. At that time, Sunflower Fields Cemetery was still being developed. Since that review, Sunflower Fields Cemetery has been completed, and the District Office has moved from a small building at Lemoore Cemetery into a spacious, newly-renovated building at Sunflower Fields Cemetery. The new District Office opened in December, 2018, and Sunflower Fields Cemetery became fully operational in April, 2019.

The District operates as a *special district* authorized by California statutes. The California Special District Association describes special districts as “the most local of local governments.” Special districts are formed as a subdivision of local governments to provide specialized services to a community. They are subject to state regulations governing special districts and must conform to the requirements of the Brown Act and Public Records Act. They are required to submit annual financial reports to the Office of the State Controller and are subject to audits of finances.

The District operates with revenues from local property taxes, sales of grave sites and cremation niches, interest on investments, and payments from a lease agreement with a local farmer who farms the undeveloped acres at Sunflower Fields Cemetery.

The Grand Jury felt a review of the District was warranted to ensure all assets and finances were being managed in a sustainable way. A review would ensure that the public was being well served by the operations of the District.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The Grand Jury conducted a comprehensive study of the District using several methods. Research began by attending a webinar given by the California Special Districts Association to learn the structure, laws, and finance requirements of special districts in California. On-site visits were conducted at Sunflower Fields Cemetery. On-line research and in-person interviews were conducted. Documents reviewed include newspaper articles, California Association of Public Cemeteries publications, Employee Handbook, Training Policies and Procedures Manual, employee compensation reports, revenue and expenditure reports, board meeting agendas, board meeting minutes, annual budgets, and the most recent annual audit of financial statements available.

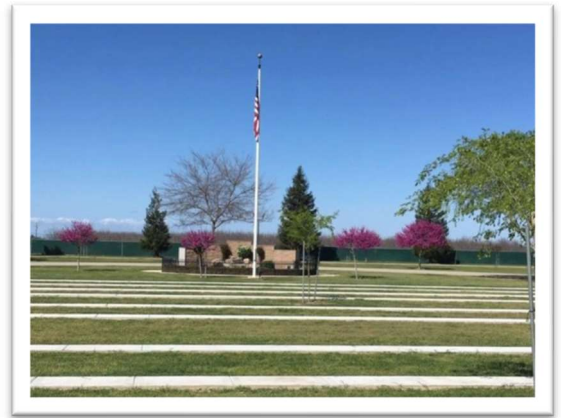
## **DISCUSSION**

### **SUNFLOWER FIELDS CEMETERY**

The newest cemetery in the District, Sunflower Fields Cemetery, is located at 9660 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Lemoore. The land and existing structures were added to the District in 2000. A private home on the property was renovated and is now the Lemoore Cemetery District Office. The District Office became fully operational at this new location in December, 2018. Sunflower Fields Cemetery became fully operational in April, 2019.

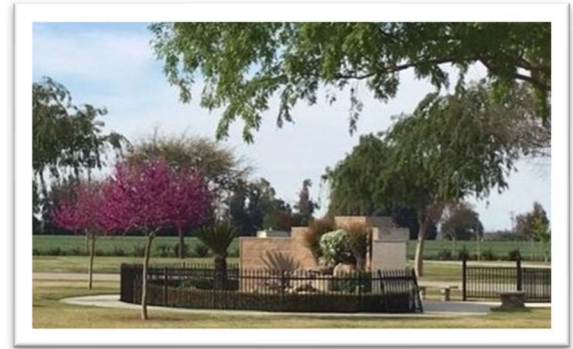
Sunflower Fields Cemetery consists of 20 total acres. Five acres are developed with 500 burial sites available. The remaining 15 acres are leased to a private citizen and used as farmland. The additional acres provide space for 2,000 future burial sites.

The contemporary design of Sunflower Fields Cemetery provides a unique cemetery experience in Kings County. The modern design features long, continuous strips of concrete which form rows for placing grave markers. The design allows headstones, flat grave markers, and personal items placed at grave sites to remain above ground level. Compared to traditional cemetery design, the strips allow for a more secure placement of grave markers and more efficient mowing and edging of the grounds.



The landscaping at Sunflower Fields Cemetery is minimal in keeping with the modern design of the cemetery. The landscape plantings were chosen for their low water usage and suitability for the climate of the local area. The landscaping choices will provide years of low maintenance greenery for the cemetery.

A large, granite niche wall serves as a centerpiece of Sunflower Fields Cemetery. The wall features 145 recessed compartments for placing cremation urns. The wall can accommodate single, double, and family niches. The granite face of each niche may be personalized with photos, engravings, and plaques. Concrete benches placed along the wall provide a comfortable sitting place for visitors. A fenced garden area serves as the backdrop for the niche wall. The garden includes a waterfall and pond feature.



The Grand Jury found the management and staff at Sunflower Fields Cemetery willing to promptly address any problems. Soon after the District Office opened, staff identified a concern with the speed of traffic along the roadway adjacent to the cemetery. The District requested Kings County Public Works change the markings on the roadway in order to prevent passing in the area of the cemetery. The markings were changed from a single yellow line for northbound traffic and a broken yellow line for southbound traffic to a double yellow line. The change reduced disturbances from vehicles during burial services and increased the safety of vehicles entering and exiting the cemetery.

Staff also became concerned with the amount of traffic noise from the roadway creating disturbances during burial services. The District implemented a policy of placing temporary signs along the roadway to alert drivers when a burial service is being conducted. The signs greatly reduced the noise disturbances during burial services.

## LEMOORE CEMETERY DISTRICT

The District currently consists of four cemeteries: Grangeville Cemetery, Lemoore Cemetery, Sunflower Fields Cemetery, and Taylor Cemetery. Grangeville Cemetery was established in 1861. Lemoore Cemetery was established in 1874. Sunflower Fields Cemetery was established in 2000. Taylor Cemetery was established in the early 1900's on private property and no longer accepts burials. The District maintains Taylor Cemetery in honor of its historical value to the community.

The District employs ten full-time employees consisting of a District Manager, Office Manager, Head Foreman, administrative staff, and groundskeepers. Additional part-time groundskeepers are hired as needed. All administrative employees are based at the District Office located at Sunflower Fields Cemetery.

The District is governed by a three-member Board of Trustees. The trustees are appointed by the Kings County Board of Supervisors for a four-year term and serve without compensation. The Board meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each month. The meetings are held at



the District Office. In accordance with the Brown Act, agendas are posted in advance and meetings are open to the public.

The District maintains a website at [lemoorecemeterydistrict.com](http://lemoorecemeterydistrict.com). The Grand Jury found the website to be up-to-date, comprehensive, and easy to navigate. Information available on the website includes photos, history of the District, Board of Trustee information, agendas, annual budget, links to public financial records, list of services offered, and price list.

Three types of burials are offered at Sunflower Fields Cemetery: casket burials, niche cremation burials, and in-ground cremation burials. A detailed price list for each burial type is available on the District's website. The price list identifies the total base costs associated with a burial. Additional fees are charged for burial of those who resided outside the city limits of Lemoore. The two categories of residents from outside the city limits of Lemoore are "non resident in county" for those who resided within Kings County and "non resident out of county" for those who resided outside of Kings County.

In November, 2020, the Board of Trustees voted to increase the prices for services. The price for plots increased by \$50, opening and closing a burial site increased by \$50, and niches increased by \$40. The price increases became effective January 1, 2021.

The Grand Jury examined numerous financial documents as part of this review. All financial information was compiled and provided by the District as budgets, financial statements, and reports to the Office of the State Controller. The Grand Jury also reviewed the most recent independent auditors' report on the District's financial statement as of June 30, 2019.

The District's annual expense budget lists three main categories of expenses: Salaries & Benefits, Services & Supplies, and Capital Assets. In fiscal year 2018-2019, expenses in these three categories totaled \$1,047,373.

The District operates with annual revenue from four sources: local property taxes, fees for services, interest on investments, and payments from a land lease agreement. In fiscal year 2018-2019, revenue from these four sources totaled \$1,033,750.

California law requires the District to collect an *endowment care fee* when a plot is sold. Endowment care fees are collected for and used only for the perpetual care and maintenance of the District once all burial plots have been sold. The fees are required to be deposited and maintained in a separate Endowment Care Fund. The fees are invested and the interest generated can be used by the District. The law requires the principal of Endowment Care Funds never be used for any purpose. As of June 30, 2019, the District reported a balance of \$2,010,288 in the Endowment Care Fund. Of that amount, \$1,471,557 is reserved as the principal of the fund and \$538,731 is unreserved interest available for use.

## **FINDINGS**

1. The District's operations are performed and managed by experienced and knowledgeable employees.
2. The District is operating well within its mission statement which states: "Our mission at Lemoore Cemetery District is to provide exceptional service to families and their loved ones and to care for the upkeep and maintenance of all cemeteries so they are aesthetically pleasing to the community. We do this as efficiently and economically as possible."

## **RESPONSE REQUIRED**

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: "...within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt..."

Lemoore Cemetery District Board of Trustees

## **SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:**

Original to:  
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:  
Kings County Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232

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**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY IN KETTLEMAN CITY:  
A COMMUNITY’S LONG-STANDING PLEA FOR IMPROVEMENTS**

**APRIL 23, 2021**

**SUMMARY**

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury conducted a review of issues surrounding pedestrian safety in the community of Kettleman City. The focus of the review was the danger faced by residents of the community, particularly schoolchildren in grades K-8, crossing State Route 41 (SR 41) at an unsignalized crosswalk in a 45-mile-per-hour speed zone. To complete the review, the Grand Jury researched what actions have been taken by county government agencies to address the danger.

Throughout the time period reviewed, the County of Kings (County), Kings County Board of Supervisors, County departments, and other government agencies have partnered with regional organizations, state agencies, and even a private business in the Kettleman City area, to secure funds for studies of the Kettleman City community. In each of those studies, the unsignalized crosswalk over SR 41 being used by schoolchildren to and from school was identified as a critical safety concern. Each final document produced from those studies confirmed the danger and validated the concerns of the community. While the work to secure grants has indeed resulted in numerous studies, plans, and goals, the Grand Jury found the work has produced few tangible improvements toward reducing the risks faced daily by pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren.

The Grand Jury found the concern and frustration expressed by community members to be warranted and recommends the Kings County Board of Supervisors, through collaboration with relevant County departments and other local, state, and federal agencies, determine and implement the next step toward improving the safety of pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, in Kettleman City.

**BACKGROUND**

Kettleman City is an unincorporated community within Kings County. With the exception of water services provided by the Kettleman City Community Services District, municipal services are provided by the County. These municipal services include, but are not limited to fire protection, sheriff patrol, libraries, planning, and roads. The Kings County Board of Supervisors is the governing body for Kettleman City and oversees the operations and budgets of County departments which provide services to Kettleman City.

The Kings County Association of Governments (KCAG) is a government agency that serves as the transportation planning organization for the Kings County region. KCAG is a joint powers authority whose members include the County of Kings and the cities of Avenal,

Corcoran, Hanford, and Lemoore. KCAG carries out planning responsibilities for the Kettleman City area and works to secure funds from federal, state, and local sources for projects. KCAG has been instrumental in securing grant funds for studies and developing plans for the Kettleman City community.

The Kings County Community Development Agency is a County agency directly accountable to the Kings County Board of Supervisors. The agency manages zoning permits, land divisions, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs in the unincorporated areas of Kings County. Federal CDBG programs are an important source of funds for developing sustainable communities by providing improvements in the quality of life for residents and expanding economic opportunities, particularly for low-to-moderate-income populations. This government agency has been an active participant in securing grant funds for studies and developing plans for the Kettleman City community.

A discussion of pedestrian safety issues in Kettleman City must include the acknowledgement of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as the owner and operator of SR 41 through Kettleman City. Consequently, signs, roadway painting, lights, etc., may not be installed on the roadway or along the right-of-way of SR 41 without Caltrans approval.

As part of this review, the Grand Jury reviewed published documents generated by the work of these government agencies spanning a period of 16 years, from 2005 through the present. During that period, the danger for pedestrians crossing SR 41 was repeatedly discussed, reported on by numerous media outlets, verified by studies, and published in multiple documents.

The following four photos illustrate the current signage used for the SR 41 crosswalk in Kettleman City:



Figure 1 - Northbound Advance Warning Signage



Figure 2 - Southbound Advance Warning Signage



Figure 3 - Southbound View of Crosswalk

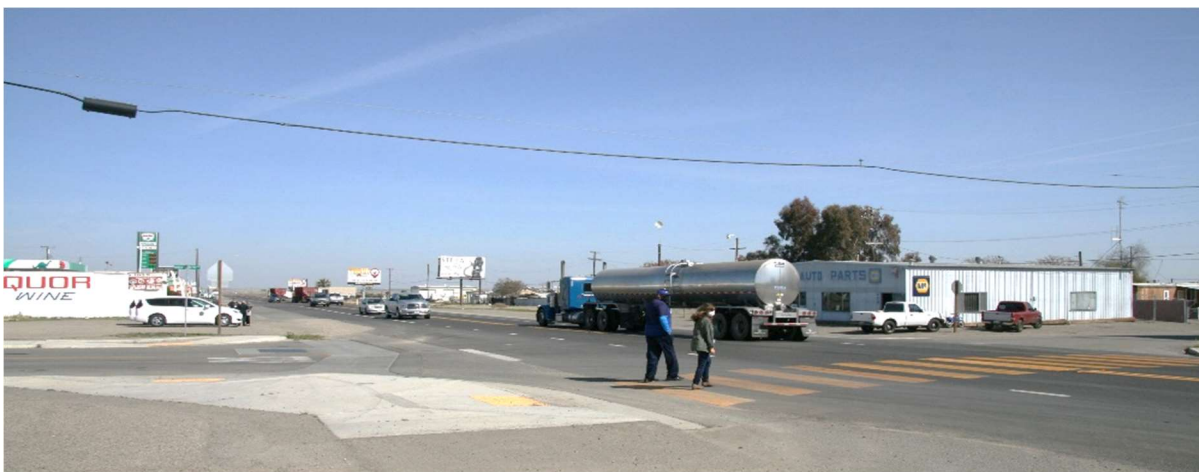


Figure 4 - Northbound View of Crosswalk

## **METHODOLOGY**

This review was completed using three primary methods: interviews, on-site visits, and online research. Interviews were conducted with community stakeholders and government representatives. On-site visits were made to the Kettleman City community and crosswalk locations throughout Kings County.

Extensive online research was conducted to review relevant documents. Documents reviewed include newspaper articles, Kings County Board of Supervisors meeting agenda packets and minutes, Kettleman City Community Plan as part of the Kings County 2035 General Plan, Kettleman City Safety and Community Study, Smart Growth SR 41 Corridor Improvement Plan, Kings County Regional Transportation Plan, Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan, 2020 California Manual for Setting Speed Limits, status reports of Caltrans Active Transportation Program projects, California Office of Traffic Safety reports, and the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

## **DISCUSSION**

Residents of all ages in the small Kettleman City community have long used walking and biking as transportation. Covering less than a square mile of land, all points within the community are easily within walking distance. The Kettleman City community includes a park with a playground, grocery store, convenience store, auto parts store, restaurants, elementary school for grades K-8, fire station, library, post office, churches, community health clinic, family resource center, and offices for the Kettleman City Community Services District.

Persons interviewed by the Grand Jury reported that residents would prefer to walk to most of the destinations within the small community, but also reported the fear of residents about crossing SR 41 to do so.

Over the past two decades, federal, state, county, and local government transportation polices have placed increased emphasis on encouraging walking and biking. These activities were encouraged as modes of transportation and not simply as a means of recreation. Towards that goal, federal and state grants were made available to perform studies, develop plans, and fund new pedestrian infrastructure projects.

As a result of these grants, multiple studies and plans have been produced addressing the Kettleman City area. The studies and resulting documents include: Kettleman City Community Plan, Kettleman City Safety and Community Study, Smart Growth SR 41 Corridor Improvement Plan, and Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan.

Information on each of these studies follows:

## 1. KETTLEMAN CITY COMMUNITY PLAN

In 2006, as part of the development of this plan, a series of ten community meetings were held in Kettleman City. Residents, community stakeholders, and representatives from state and county government agencies attended each meeting. This plan was prepared by the Kings County Community Development Agency. It was approved by the Kings County Board of Supervisors as part of the Kings County 2035 General Plan in January, 2010.

Chapter 1, Section D, of this plan states:

State Highway 41 divides the residential community. Kettleman residents have complained of the safety issues related to the speeds that highway traffic travels through the community. This traffic is strongly viewed by residents as a detrimental factor for the community, and have noted the decreased safety for pedestrians and children that must cross the highway. The Kettleman Elementary School is located on the west side of the highway, which often requires that students cross an unsafe intersection that provided little to no warning for drivers to slow down.

Chapter 7, Objective 7C.1, of this plan states:

Safety features should be implemented along critical pedestrian crossings, with the State Highway 41 crossing at General Petroleum Avenue made a priority.

## 2. KETTLEMAN CITY SAFETY AND COMMUNITY STUDY

This study was funded by a Transportation Planning Grant from Caltrans with a matching grant from Waste Management. This study was prepared for the Kings County Association of Governments and Kings County Community Development Agency. Potential funding sources were identified as part of this study. The final report was issued in October, 2010.

The Executive Summary of this study states:

The purpose of the study is to develop community identified design concepts for General Petroleum Avenue and State Route 41 (SR 41) that will enhance mobility, access, and safety for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Section 1.3 of this study states:

Most of the residential area, retail services, and primary commercial and service facilities are located west of SR 41. The service facilities include grocery stores, the post office, the elementary school, the library, the Family Resource Center,



Community Hall Building, Fire Station, and the Community Services District office. A significant residential area is located east of SR 41 . . . these east-side residents, including many elementary school students must cross the busy SR 41 at least twice a day if not more to access the school and other community and retail services. Currently there is only a single painted crosswalk on SR 41 located just south of General Petroleum Avenue. Speed limits entering and exiting the community are currently posted at 45 mph, but this speed is frequently exceeded by through-traffic. The current lack of meaningful speed enforcement and traffic control contributes to the community concern that the crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists at SR 41 and General Petroleum Avenue is not as safe as it should be.

### 3. SMART GROWTH SR 41 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This plan was funded by a grant from Caltrans with a cash match from the County. The plan was prepared for the Kings County Development Agency and Kings County Department of Public Works. Potential funding sources were identified as part of this plan. The final plan was presented to the Kings County Board of Supervisors in January, 2018.

This plan addressed deficiencies along the SR 41 corridor in Kettleman City. One of the four key deficiencies identified states:

SR 41 is a two-lane highway with a posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour (mph) slowing to 45 mph at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Traffic calming measures to slow traffic during the 1.2-mile segment transitioning from I-5 to the community do not exist. Residents must cross the busy highway regularly, yet there are no signalized crosswalks for children walking or biking to Kettleman City Elementary School or to one of the three bus stops on the west side of SR 41. During the past 10 years, eight people were killed on SR 41 in Kettleman City, including one pedestrian (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System 2003-2012). A head-on collision in 2003 killed three people and injured seven on SR 41 at 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### 4. KINGS COUNTY REGIONAL ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

This plan was prepared for the Kings County Association of Governments and was presented to the Kings County Board of Supervisors in January, 2019.

Chapter 1 of this plan states:

. . . interest in walking and biking has increased in many communities, including in Kings County, and there have been growing calls by both decision-makers and the broader public to promote and encourage these forms of transportation. For people to choose active transportation as a way of getting around, communities must provide a network of sidewalks, bike lanes, paths and trails, safe crossings, traffic-calmed

streets and other pedestrian and bicycle facilities that connect the places where people live, work, study, shop, play, and visit.

Each of these four studies and resulting documents are indeed important, in that they confirmed the daily danger faced by the residents of Kettleman City. However, they produced only one grant award since 2005 for any tangible improvement along SR 41 in the residential area.

## CALTRANS ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

During the time period reviewed by the Grand Jury, the only grant awarded for an improvement project along SR 41 in the residential area of Kettleman City was awarded to the Kings County Department of Public Works in January, 2019. This grant was awarded as a part of Caltrans' Active Transportation Program (ATP).

The 2020 Caltrans ATP Fact Sheet states:

The purpose of the ATP is to encourage an increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking, by achieving the following goals:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking.
- Increase the safety and mobility of non-motorized users.
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction.
- Enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity through the use of programs including, but not limited to, projects eligible for Safe Routes to School Program funding.
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program.
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

These stated goals of the ATP are perfectly suited for assisting county and local governments with funding pedestrian projects in small, rural communities such as Kettleman City. At the same time, these grants are highly competitive. In 2019, over 500 applications were received from throughout California in the small urban and rural category, yet only 60 were recommended for funding.

This project in Kettleman City will include the installation of two solar-powered, pedestrian-activated signs with Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at the existing pedestrian crosswalk over SR 41 at General Petroleum Avenue and two "Pedestrian Crossing Ahead" signs with RRFB. In addition, a 6-foot-wide asphalt pedestrian pathway will be constructed on the west side of SR 41 between General Petroleum Avenue and Edwards Street. The

pedestrian pathway will include flexible, reflective posts to delineate the path from the roadway.



Figure 5 – RRFB Example



Figure 6 – Flexible Delineators Example

On March 24, 2021, the California Transportation Commission allocated funding for construction of this project. The next step in the process toward completion of this project is to seek the authorization to advertise for contractors from the Kings County Board of Supervisors. As of the date of this report, that step was pending.

This project is an improvement the community members of Kettleman City have sought throughout the entire time period reviewed by this report - 16 years. The Grand Jury commends the Kings County Department of Public Works for pursuing this ATP project for Kettleman City. This higher visibility crosswalk will help to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians and will make an appreciable difference in the lives of all citizens in the community.

## SPEED LIMIT

Residents and community stakeholders, particularly elementary school officials, have long expressed their concerns with the speed of traffic flowing through the residential area of Kettleman City. The speed limit on SR 41 through the residential area is 45 miles per hour. All studies reviewed identified concerns with pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren in grades K-8, navigating an unsignalized crosswalk in this 45-mile-per-hour speed zone.

Caltrans has the authority to set the speed limit on all California state highways. Generally, speed limits are set by using the *85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed*. The Caltrans 2020 California Manual for Setting Speed Limits, Section 1.2, states:

Speed limit determinations rely on the premise that a reasonable speed limit is one that conforms to the actual behavior of the majority of drivers; one will be able to select a speed limit that is both reasonable and effective by measuring drivers' speeds. Speed limits set by Engineering and Traffic Studies are normally set near the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85 percent of the traffic is moving. . .

Any variation to setting the speed limit at the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is addressed in Section 3.4.4 of the manual and states:

When roadside development results in traffic conflicts and conditions which are not readily apparent to drivers, speed limits somewhat below the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile may be justified; however, speed limits shall not be lowered more than 5mph less than the nearest increment to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed.

Several factors combine in Kettleman City resulting in an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed of 45 miles per hour through the residential area. Factors include the close proximity to an interstate highway where drivers become accustomed to traffic flowing at speeds in excess of the speed limit, the location along a rural stretch of SR 41 where drivers become accustomed to traffic flowing at speeds in excess of the speed limit, and the lack of pedestrian infrastructure in Kettleman City, i.e., sidewalks and pedestrian signage, which would alert drivers to the possibility of pedestrians utilizing a crosswalk in the area. The combination of these factors results in traffic speeds which are dangerous for all pedestrians, but are particularly hazardous for young schoolchildren walking to and from school.

While government agencies in Kings County do not have the authority to reduce the speed limit on SR 41, they can strongly advocate for Caltrans to use all available measures to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren.

## PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

A pedestrian bridge spanning SR 41 in the residential area of Kettleman City has long been discussed by residents, school officials, and community leaders as the best solution to solving the dangers faced by pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren.

The Grand Jury found the discussion of a pedestrian bridge in documents from a January, 2011, Kings County Board of Supervisors meeting at which Caltrans officials were in attendance. The position of Caltrans officials was that the volume of pedestrian traffic crossing SR 41 did not warrant the expense of a pedestrian bridge.

The discussion of a pedestrian bridge again appeared in documents as part of a community workshop held in Kettleman City in November, 2016. The desire for a pedestrian bridge was made by community members as part of the public outreach and public input process leading up to the development of the Smart Growth SR 41 Corridor Improvement Plan. The position of Caltrans was again that the volume of pedestrian traffic crossing SR 41 did not warrant the expense of a pedestrian bridge.

In interviews conducted as part of this review, representatives from Kettleman City Elementary School relayed their constant worry for the students and their families who must rely on all traffic to stop while they cross SR 41 at least twice each day. All of those interviewed expressed their hope for a pedestrian bridge which would eliminate those dangers faced by students daily.

On March 17, 2021, a vote by the 117<sup>th</sup> United States Congress reinstated the *earmark* process after a 10-year ban. Earmarks allow individual legislators to target federal spending for specific community projects in their congressional districts. Following that vote, Congressman David Valadao, the congressman for California's 21<sup>st</sup> congressional district, which includes all of Kings County, solicited requests for community projects from throughout the district.

On March 23, 2021, the County Administrative Officer presented the Kings County Board of Supervisors with a list of community-project requests submitted from department heads and others. The Kings County Department of Public Works submitted a request for a pedestrian bridge spanning SR 41 in Kettleman City.

On March 30, 2021, the Kings County Board of Supervisors voted to submit the request for a pedestrian bridge spanning SR 41 in Kettleman City as their number one priority earmark request to Congressman Valadao.

The Grand Jury commends the Kings County Department of Public Works and Kings County Board of Supervisors for taking this step of advocating for this long-term solution of a pedestrian bridge.

State and County government representatives have repeatedly held the position that the cost of a pedestrian bridge was not feasible or not warranted for the volume of pedestrian traffic in Kettleman City. On the one hand, pedestrian bridges are unquestionably an expensive solution to reducing dangers faced by pedestrians. On the other hand, the Grand Jury finds delaying the pursuit of a pedestrian bridge at this location until after a tragedy occurs would also come with an extremely high cost.

## **FINDINGS**

F1. Over the past 16 years, the discussions, studies, and resulting documents addressing Kettleman City have produced few tangible improvements toward reducing the danger faced daily by pedestrians of all ages crossing SR 41 in Kettleman City.

F2. The signage along SR 41 approaching the Kettleman City residential area is inadequate to alert drivers to a crosswalk ahead.

F3. The safest, long-term solution to reducing the danger for pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, in Kettleman City is the construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning SR 41.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct the Kings County Department of Public Works and Kings County Community Development Agency to submit their

recommendations for the next step to be taken by the County of Kings toward making a tangible improvement in the danger faced daily by pedestrians, particularly schoolchildren, in Kettleman City.

R2. The Kings County Department of Public Works should strongly advocate for any and all pedestrian warning signage, including solar-powered flashing beacons, used by Caltrans on the state highway system to be installed along the northbound and southbound approaches to the residential area and crosswalk on SR 41 at General Petroleum Avenue.

R3. The Kings County Board of Supervisors should direct relevant County departments and agencies to actively seek funding from all potential funding sources identified in the noted studies and plans to support the construction of a pedestrian bridge in Kettleman City.

**REQUIRED RESPONSES:**

California Penal Code §933 provides in part: "...within 90 days of receipt of a report the public agency shall submit its response to the presiding judge. If the report is on an elected public official, the response shall be submitted to the presiding judge within 60 days of receipt..."

Kings County Association of Governments  
Kings County Board of Supervisors

**INVITED RESPONSES:**

Kings County Community Development Agency  
Kings County Department of Public Works

**SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:**

Original to:  
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:  
Kings County Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232

## REFERENCES

California Manual for Setting Speed Limits, 2020

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/2020-california-manual-for-setting-speed-limits-a11y.pdf>

Caltrans ATP Fact Sheet, January, 2020

<https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/local-assistance/documents/atp/2020/atpfactsheet20202024.pdf>.

Kettleman City Community Plan, 2009

<https://www.countyofkings.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=3130>.

Kettleman City Safety and Community Study, 2010

[https://www.kingscog.org/vertical/sites/%7BC427AE30-9936-4733-B9D4-140709AD3BBF%7D/uploads/Kettleman\\_City\\_Safety\\_and\\_Community\\_Study\\_Vol\\_1.pdf](https://www.kingscog.org/vertical/sites/%7BC427AE30-9936-4733-B9D4-140709AD3BBF%7D/uploads/Kettleman_City_Safety_and_Community_Study_Vol_1.pdf)

Kings County 2035 General Plan, 2010

<https://www.countyofkings.com/departments/community-development-agency/information/2035-general-plan>

Kings County Regional Active Transportation Plan, 2019

[https://www.kingscog.org/vertical/Sites/%7BC427AE30-9936-4733-B9D4-140709AD3BBF%7D/uploads/2019-03\\_KCAG\\_RATP\\_Final.pdf](https://www.kingscog.org/vertical/Sites/%7BC427AE30-9936-4733-B9D4-140709AD3BBF%7D/uploads/2019-03_KCAG_RATP_Final.pdf)

Kings County Smart Growth SR 41 Corridor Improvement Plan, 2018

<https://www.countyofkings.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=17179>.

# LETTERS



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**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

May 19, 2021

Martin Gamboa, Acting Warden  
Avenal State Prison  
#1 Kings Way  
Avenal, CA 93204

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury thanks you for the Avenal State Prison tour on March 23, 2021. James Campbell, AA/PIO Lieutenant, conducted an interesting and informative tour of the facilities.

The tour consisted of different areas such as the entrance building, housing units, agriculture unit, industrial complex, service-dog training housing unit, dining hall, vehicle sally port, complex control, and correctional treatment unit. Jaron Nash, Chief Executive Officer, provided a presentation of the COVID-19 outbreak and measures taken for containment. The Grand Jury appreciates the thoroughness of information provided by all correctional staff.

The Grand Jury thanks you, Lt. Campbell, and the entire correctional staff for their time and dedication to the community and services provided.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

May 19, 2021

Theresa Cisneros, Warden  
California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility  
900 Quebec Avenue  
Corcoran, CA 93212

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury thanks you for the tour on March 16, 2021 at SATF. Warden Cisneros offered a booklet with a wealth of information regarding the prison. We also appreciate the information provided by Lieutenant Brent Urban, Public Information Officer.

The tour consisted of different areas such as entrance building, housing units, agriculture unit, containment exercise unit, administrative security unit, dining hall, vehicle sally port, complex control, and correctional treatment unit. The Grand Jury appreciates the thoroughness of information provided by correctional staff.

The Grand Jury thanks you and your staff for their time and dedication to the community for the services provided.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**COUNTY OF KINGS  
GRAND JURY**

P.O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Office: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892 – (559) 924-1009

May 12, 2021

Mario Cifuentez, II  
City Manager  
City of Hanford  
319 N. Douty Street  
Hanford, CA 93230

Dear Mr. Cifuentez:

On behalf of the entire 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury, I want to thank you for meeting with us to discuss funds received by the City of Hanford as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

We appreciate you taking the time to make clear the process the City of Hanford used to allocate its CARES Act funds. The information you presented clarified the process.

Thank you again for meeting with us.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**COUNTY OF KINGS  
GRAND JURY**

P.O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Office: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245

[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892 – (559) 924-1009

May 12, 2021

Matthew Kredit  
Finance Manager  
City of Hanford  
319 N. Douty Street  
Hanford, CA 93230

Dear Mr. Kredit:

On behalf of the entire 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury, I want to thank you and City Manager Mario Cifuentez for meeting with us to discuss funds received by the City of Hanford as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

We appreciate you taking the time to clarify the process the City of Hanford used to allocate its CARES Act funds. The information you presented to us was informative.

Thank you again for meeting with us.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

May 19, 2021

Steve Pendergrass, Fire Chief  
City of Hanford Fire Department  
350 W Grangeville Blvd  
Hanford, CA 93230

Chief Pendergrass met with the Kings County Grand Jury on March 2, 2021 for a “meet and greet” to discuss future plans for fire protection services. The 2020-2021 Grand Jury toured the Hanford City Fire Department Station 2 on March 9, 2021.

The purpose of the visit to Station 2 was to understand and observe the operation of the new Pierce Manufacturing Fire Truck. It was impressive to see the operation of the extension ladder and bucket as it rotated and extended 110 feet. The onboard 500-gallon water tank and hydrant connections are able to supply the water line with a variable moving nozzle as the ladder extends.

The fire truck is fully equipped with all the necessary tools and equipment needed to provide state-of-the-art fire safety and first aide. Station 2 firefighters were very helpful and provided clear explanations during the Grand Jury visit in response to questions. Each firefighter demonstrated his training knowledge and provided concise answers to questions.

The Grand Jury thanks you and each firefighter for the outstanding visit. The dedication to the community is demonstrated by the quality of service provided.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

May 19, 2021

Ken Clark, Warden  
California State Prison  
4001 King Avenue  
Corcoran, CA 93212

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury toured the Corcoran State Prison on March 16, 2021. The members of the Grand Jury appreciate the commitment of staff in providing a detailed tour.

Before the tour began, you and Public Information Lieutenant Robert Clifton presented an overall view including printed documents, and discussion of prison operations as affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lt. Clifton also conducted the entire tour.

On the tour, the Grand Jury visited areas including a housing unit, administrative security unit, dining hall, medical treatment unit, armed control booth, central control, the prison entrance, and vehicle sally port. The Grand Jury was impressed with the knowledge of correctional staff as they explained their areas of expertise.

The Grand Jury thanks you and your staff for their time and commitment for the safety of the community and services provided.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

November 04, 2020

Kevin McAlister, P.E., Director  
Kings County Department of Public Works  
1400 W. Lacey Blvd.  
Hanford CA 93230-9983

Dear Mr. McAlister:

On behalf of the 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury, we thank you and your staff for meeting with us on September 28, 2020. The Grand Jury members were extremely impressed with the detailed presentation provided concerning the issue of road maintenance within Kings County. It was especially interesting to hear how complex the funding process is for your department and how you prioritize the essential work that needs to be completed.

The Grand Jury appreciates your department's efforts in assuring our county roads are safe and well maintained. Your leadership and contributions have led the department to a well managed agency.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury

cc: Dominic Tyburski, P.E. Chief Engineer  
Duane Cooper, Road Superintendent





**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

April 6, 2021

Kelly Zuniga, Chief Probation Officer  
Kings County Probation Department  
1424 Forum Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

The 2020-2021 Kings County Grand Jury appreciates your presentation on April 6, 2021. The information you, Deputy Chief Probation Officer Dan Luttrell, and Correctional Officer Manager Adrian Reed shared was most educational.

It was important for the Grand Jury to hear the current status as well as the future building expansion plans for the juvenile center. We look forward to the Grand Jury's visit to see first hand the workings of staff and programs.

It is apparent you and your staff are dedicated to improving the lives of those served. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury



**County of Kings  
Grand Jury  
P. O. Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232  
Jury Room: 449 C Street  
Lemoore, CA 93245  
[Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us](mailto:Grand.jury@co.kings.ca.us)  
(559) 852-2892**

November 18, 2020

Ms. Julia Patino  
Program Coordinator  
Kings County Victim Witness Assistance Program  
1400 W Lacey Blvd  
Hanford, CA 93230

Dear Ms. Patino:

Thank you for your presentation and information provided regarding the Kings County Victim Witness Assistance Program on October 13, 2020. The presentation was comprehensive and filled with information appropriate for the grand jury. Your knowledge and leadership was very apparent. The grand jury appreciated the handouts as jurors would like to learn more about the program.

Your outreach programs to the community are commendable. Please keep the grand jury informed regarding future presentations. Again, thank you for your presentation to the grand jury and we appreciate you even more for your dedication to the community.

Sincerely,

Thomas Arlitz, Foreperson  
Kings County Grand Jury

Cc: Mr. Keith Fagundes, District Attorney  
Ms. Lisa Simmons, Victim Advocate

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# RESPONSES TO 2019-2020

## FINAL REPORT

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**DIVISION OF ADULT INSTITUTIONS**  
CALIFORNIA SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT FACILITY AND  
STATE PRISON AT CORCORAN  
900 Quebec Avenue  
PO Box 7100  
Corcoran, CA 93212



August 19, 2020

Honorable Donna Tarter  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings County Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

**RECEIVED**  
AUG 28 2020

Dear Judge Tarter,

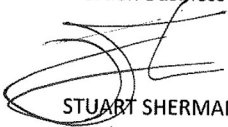
In response to the findings of conditions and management for the California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran (CSATF), the following information has been provided:

*Finding 1 – The Grand Jury found that CSATF failed to effectively address tripping hazards along main, heavily traveled foot traffic areas that have not been maintained in a manner conducive to staff and public safety. The Grand Jury recommends that CSATF continue repairs and safety marking of all walkways with raised asphalt causing a tripping hazard. The CSATF Plant Operations department has begun the process of excavation for the identified areas. These areas are being leveled out and will be resurfaced with concrete to restore a flat surface with no tripping hazards in order to restore compliance with the American Disabilities Act standards.*

*Finding 2 – The Grand Jury found that the CSATF Plant Operations department does not provide a line-item budget for walkway maintenance and repair. The Grand Jury recommended the Plant Operations department should include line-items in their budget for walkway maintenance and repair. Walkway maintenance and repair have been added to the Plant Operations budget under commitment line item #9032335706, "Facility Ops Maintenance Supplies".*

*Finding 3 – The Grand Jury found that CSATF failed to complete the location of injury on required Form 3066 and follow-up to ensure the cause of the issue is corrected. The Grand Jury recommended CSATF conduct training for the employees on how to properly fill out Form 3066 regarding the work area, including the specific location and alert the Plant Operations department per policy and procedures. Training regarding the proper filling out of Form 3066 is currently administered during New Employee Orientation via the Learning Management System (LMS), an online training resource used by the California Department of Corrections (CDCR). New employees are provided the training via a training module entitled, "Workers' Compensation". Training has been provided to Return-to-Work staff to notify the Plant Operations department when a Form 3066 is received which indicates the injury was caused by a structural deficiency.*

Should you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Jason Collins, Associate Warden Business Services at (559) 992-7155.

  
STUART SHERMAN  
Warden

California Substance Abuse Treatment Facility and State Prison at Corcoran

RECEIVED  
SEP 01 2020



711 W. Cinnamon Drive • Lemoore, California 93245 • (559) 924-6744 • Fax (559) 924-6708  
Office of the City Manager

August 27, 2020

Honorable Donna Tarter, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

RECEIVED  
SEP 08 2020  
NEW

Re: City of Lemoore's Response to Grand Jury Report Dated May 28, 2019

Dear Judge Tarter:

The City of Lemoore has received the Grand Jury Report dated June 22, 2020, and entitled "Lemoore Finance Department." As requested, we are providing the following comments to the recommendations contained in the report. The City understands the important Grand Jury function to investigate and issue findings and recommendations on local public agency operations. We also believe it important that the Grand Jury maintain a process clear of any individual bias or undue conflict. The City is disappointed at what appears to be a biased 6+ month long process focusing on unfounded allegations made by a former employee to a former grand jury member who also served as the employee's personal representative. With the above-noted concerns in mind the City generally agrees that updated Standard Operating Procedures ("SOP"), training and oversight are essential functions of good government. The City balances those concerns with the reality of a very constrained revenue base further impaired by the COVID-19 emergency. We have adopted a budget that maintains essential services but has little resource for training and administrative updates/enhancements. We will continue to provide updated SOP's, and as much training and oversight as reasonably possible within our budget parameters.

**Finding 1**

Lack of updated policies and procedures. Although policy and procedure manuals were available to the Grand Jury, most are outdated and require management updates. The procedural manual, Cash Handling Procedures, dated April 2018, was unavailable. After investigating, it appeared to not have been a requirement for account clerks to familiarize themselves with the manual.

**Recommendation 1**

The recommendation is that all outdated policies and procedures manuals should be updated by January 15th, 2021. Review policies and procedures manual annually or when significant changes are mandated.

*"In God We Trust"*

RECEIVED  
SEP 01 2020

RECEIVED  
SEP 02 2020

MEW

**City Response:**

The City disagrees with Finding 1. The City has explained that we are in the midst of a financial software upgrade to better serve our residents and so the City will be relying on the procedure manuals produced by the developer rather than spending staff and consultant time and money drafting new Standard Operating Procedures that the City would only have in place for the next 12-18 months. Once the software upgrade is completed the City can focus on updated SOPs consistent with our new system and budgetary constraints.

**Finding 2**

Lack of internal and external training. The Grand Jury found that there was no documented formal internal or external training available to newly hired employees or management.

**Recommendation 2**

The recommendation is although it is noted that the Finance Department does conduct initial on-the-job training, it is recommended that the finance manager and director create a new employee training manual. Create internal training that covers departmental updates as needed as well as internal cross training. Make external training available, if feasible, within departmental annual budget constraints.

**City Response:**

As noted in the introductory response, while the City generally agrees with the importance of updated SOPs, training and oversight, it disagrees with Finding 2. This finding provides no specific facts or circumstances as a basis for the opinion provided. Even though no specific basis exists, the City responds as follows:

The Grand Jury's recommendation, if accepted as written, could require the City to expend public funds it does not currently have. The City may not be in a position financially to expend the funds for trainings especially if the trainings require travel or payment to attend. Therefore, the City cannot agree with the recommendation. While the City disagrees with the Grand Jury Finding 2, the City will continue to provide opportunities for training as required by law and as allowed by the City budget.

**Finding 3**

Inconsistent employee use of operational procedures. It was evident that not all employees had a concise understanding of cash handling procedures. Furthermore, account clerks' knowledge of how and why certain transactions were processed varied based on longevity and experience in that position.

**Recommendation 3**

The Grand Jury recommends that the City require all employees to sign a certificate of training for cash handling procedures and other training as provided. During annual performance reviews address any updates to policies and procedures.

*"In God We Trust"*



**City Response:**

The City disagrees with Finding 3, in part. The City does factor the employee knowledge and practice of their job functions into their regular performance evaluations. The City believes that any employee's time in service would generally produce more skill and knowledge of the job to which they are assigned. The City, subject to appropriate meet and confer requirements, will require employees to sign off on future training as appropriate.

The City Staff have all addressed the issues as they have arisen and will continue to do so in a professional, legal and fair manner.

Sincerely,



Nathan Olson, City Manager  
On Behalf of City Council  
For City of Lemoore

cc: Kings County Grand Jury  
Post Office Box 1562  
Hanford, CA 93232

*"In God We Trust"*

RESPONSES TO 2020-2021

FINAL REPORT

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Lemoore Cemetery District  
PO Box 244, Lemoore, California, 93245  
Tel: (559) 924-3439 E-mail: office@lemoorecem.com

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Shane Burns, Presiding Judge  
Kings County Superior Court  
1640 Kings Court Drive  
Hanford, CA 93230

Dear Honorable Judge Burns:

We would like to thank the Kings County Grand Jury for their time and effort for the assessment of the Lemoore Cemetery District. The Lemoore Cemetery District Board of Trustees has read the report and agree with the findings.

There are no recommendations to be implemented.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank the Grand Jury for their interest in the Lemoore Cemetery District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eugene Ornellas', is written over a printed name.

Eugene Ornellas  
Lemoore Cemetery District President

Cc: Kings County Grand Jury

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