

OFFICE OF THE  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR



Matthew H. Hymel  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Daniel Eilerman  
ASSISTANT COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATOR

Angela Nicholson  
ASSISTANT COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATOR

Marin County Civic Center  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
Suite 325  
San Rafael, CA 94903  
415 473 6358 T  
415 473 4104 F  
CRS Dial 711  
www.marincounty.org/cao

August 23, 2022

Marin County Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, California 94903

**SUBJECT: Response to 2021-22 Grand Jury Report "COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps" (May 25, 2022)**

Dear Board Members:

**RECOMMENDATION:** Concur in and adopt the attached proposed response to the FY 2021-22 Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report regarding the County's COVID-19 pandemic emergency response and authorize the Board President to forward the response to the Presiding Judge of the Marin County Superior Court.

**SUMMARY:** The 2021-22 Civil Grand Jury Report published a report entitled "COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps" (May 25, 2022). The report included a request for response from your Board. Attached for your consideration, in accordance with §933 of the California Penal Code, is a proposed response. A copy of the Grand Jury report is also attached for your information.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ALTERNATIVE:** The Board may amend any suggested response.

**REVIEWED BY:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dept. of Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Respectfully Submitted,

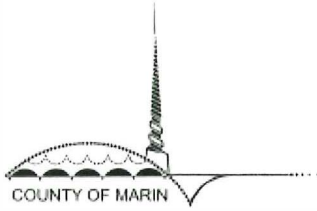
Reviewed By,

Hy Hinojosa  
Deputy County Administrator

Matthew Hymel  
County Administrator

Attachments: Report

CC: Benita McLarin, Director, Health and Human Services (HHS)  
Dr. Matt Willis, Public Health Officer (HHS)  
Dr. Lisa Santora, Deputy Public Health Officer (HHS)  
Jason Weber, Fire Chief  
Woody Baker-Cohn, Sheriff-Emergency Services Coordinator



## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**REPORT TITLE:** "COVID-19 RESPONSE IN MARIN COUNTY: SUCCESSES AND NEXT STEPS"  
**REPORT DATE:** May 25, 2022  
**RESPONSE BY:** County of Marin Board of Supervisors

### GRAND JURY FINDINGS

- We agree with the finding(s) numbered: **F1-F4, and F6**
- We disagree wholly or partially with the finding(s) numbered: **F5**

### GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation(s) numbered **R1-R2** have been implemented.

Date: August 23, 2022 Signed:   
President, Board of Supervisors

8  
8/23/22



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations  
"COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps"  
(May 25, 2022)

## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY FINDINGS

**F1.** The COVID-19 pandemic response by Marin County's public agencies and their employees was for the most part excellent, resulting in fewer hospitalizations and deaths than other similar counties, and a vaccination rate that is among the highest in the nation.

**Response: Agree.**

Recognizing that a successful response is a shared credit to the community as a whole, we believe our rapid, data-driven, and comprehensive approach inspired trust and significantly mitigated the harm of the pandemic.

**F2.** Marin's broad emergency response showed that the county's health and human services, law enforcement, fire protection, public schools, and other public agencies coordinated and responded to multiple emergencies and inevitable surprises very effectively.

**Response: Agree.**

The deep partnership and collaboration across multiple agencies in each element of the response was the most critical element of success.

**F3.** The county and community-based organizations overcame initial communications, operational, and logistical challenges, and these collaborations were key to serving the public health needs of Marin's communities.

**Response: Agree.**

The lack of experience dealing with such an all-encompassing event led to initial communications challenges. However, these challenges were quickly identified, confronted, and resolved.

**F4.** Marin County's Public Health Department did an admirable job addressing an avoidable San Quentin COVID-19 outbreak, which resulted in a strain on Marin's health facilities and resources.

**Response: Agree.**

Due to many factors, there was a large outbreak at the State Prison in Marin. Although not part of the County of Marin's jurisdiction, upon learning of the problem the County Public Health Officer took immediate action and provided much needed expertise to mitigate the outbreak and promote institutional change to prevent future outbreaks.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations  
“COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps”  
(May 25, 2022)

**F5.** Marin County did not always adequately engage and coordinate with the county’s municipalities and communities regarding implementation of health and safety protocols. Although progress has been made in more effective communications, there sometimes continues to be inadequate notice regarding logistical implementation of health and safety protocols in impacted communities, municipalities, and schools.

**Response: Partially disagree.**

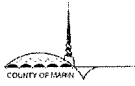
Although we agree that there was not always adequate engagement and coordination with our cities and towns, there were often challenging state and federal mandates that were driving implementation of health and safety protocols that made engagement a real challenge.

The County often received notification of changes in state or federal protocols at the same time as the public. We tried to improve communication based on feedback from the cities and towns with weekly updates regarding pandemic developments. To date, Drs. Willis and Santora have directly participated in over 400 regularly scheduled meetings with impacted communities, municipalities, and schools regarding COVID-19 measures.

**F6.** A review of the reporting structure for the Marin County Office of Emergency Services would be appropriate in view of its broad scope of responsibilities including public health.

**Response: Agree.**

This review has already taken place and a decision has been made to reorganize and restructure this agency.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations  
"COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps"  
(May 25, 2022)

## **RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends the following:

**R1.** By October 31, 2022, the Marin County Board of Supervisors should initiate a comprehensive review of the countywide COVID-19 pandemic response, with the involvement of municipalities, schools, community-based organizations, and businesses.

**This recommendation has been implemented.**

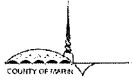
The Board of Supervisors approved a contract with Tamarack Consulting April 19, 2022 to conduct a thorough After-Action Review (AAR), which was completed in June. The AAR covers the County pandemic response from early 2020 through December 2021 and incorporates 12 group interviews with 78 participants, as well as an extensive online survey. Interview and survey participants include stakeholders from the County, municipalities, schools, CBO's, businesses, and the community. The results from the AAR will be presented to the Board and the community by Fall of 2022.

**R2.** By October 31, 2022, the Marin County Board of Supervisors should conduct a formal review to determine and establish the optimal reporting relationship for the Marin County Office of Emergency Services.

**This recommendation has been implemented.**

The County of Marin contracted with Matrix Consulting on September 14, 2021 and conducted a formal review to determine and establish the optimal reporting relationship for the Marin County Office of Emergency Services. Recommendations were presented to the Board of Supervisors June 22 as part of the County's Annual Budget hearings. Principal recommendations included the following:

- 1) Modernize the County code which establishes the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and rebrand it as the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to reflect the current mission, goals, and strategic direction for the new organization.
- 2) Move the Office of Emergency Management to the Marin County Fire Department and staff the OEM with dedicated positions to focus on planning, training and exercise, public outreach, grants, and mitigation and recovery.
- 3) Streamline the OEM reporting structure, communication channels, and workflow chains to a consolidated structure within the Fire Department. The reorganization creates an opportunity to consolidate efforts in public education and outreach. The Sheriff's office will remain actively involved in emergencies focusing on operational lead roles.
- 4) Update the existing Emergency Operations plan, Operational Area Emergency Recovery Plan, and Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and implement a schedule for subsequent updates every 3-5 years.



County of Marin Response to Grand Jury Report Findings and Recommendations  
"COVID-19 Response in Marin County: Successes and Next Steps"  
(May 25, 2022)

The Board approved \$1 million on an ongoing basis to reorganize the Office of Emergency Services to the Fire Department and add staffing to support needed services such as public information, grant writing, and planning. On July 19, 2022, the BOS approved a classification for the Director of Emergency Management to lead the new organization. The goal is to transition the OEM to the Marin County Fire Department by January 2023.