



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
DAVID O. LIVINGSTON
SHERIFF - CORONER

June 11, 2019

Richard S. Nakano, Foreperson
2018-2019 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
PO BOX 431
Martinez, CA 94553

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

RE: Response to Grand Jury Report 1908 – Forensic Services Division

Dear Mr. Nakano:

The Office of the Sheriff appreciates the Grand Jury's inquiry into the Forensic Services Division as detailed in "Report No. 1908." Please refer to the responses below as they pertain to the subsequent findings and recommendations the Grand Jury has made in the report. Hopefully you have come to appreciate the high level of commitment and overall efficiency and quality of the services provided by the Crime Lab.

As for the findings:

F1: The 25 agencies that responded to the RFI affirmed their satisfaction with the quality of analysis performed by the Crime Lab.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

F2: The Crime Lab's average analysis turn-around time is 30 days, depending on the test.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

F3: The Crime Lab indicates it can do more crime evidence testing.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

F4: The Crime Lab confirmed it has no strategic plan to address its future needs, including facilities, staffing, and equipment replacement.

The Office of the Sheriff partially disagrees with the finding, as our Accreditation Program does include a Management Review with a future needs assessment. We are also constantly assessing and forecasting staffing and equipment replacement

needs as they relate to the overall workload and requests for service of the Lab. Additionally, the Forensic Services Division is part of the formalized Office of the Sheriff Strategic Plan 2017-2020, which is a ongoing, living document for the agency.

F5: The Crime Lab indicated that having Summit Lab, Muir Lab, and Property and Evidence Services operating in separate locations inhibits cross-training and supervision of staff.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

F6: Even with the Crime Lab's annual updates, not all law enforcement agencies in the County are fully aware of newly acquired equipment, turnaround times, and available capacity for testing.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

F7: The Sheriff's Office and the other 27 County law enforcement agencies use outside labs for GSR testing.

The Office of the Sheriff agrees with the finding.

As for the recommendations:

R1: The Sheriff's Office should consider preparing a five-year strategic plan for the Crime Lab by December 31, 2020.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Forensic Services Division will explore the need for an independent five-year strategic plan, and/or to improve upon the incorporation of its goals into the greater departmental strategic plan already in existence by December 31, 2020.

R2: As part of a five-year strategic plan, the Sheriff's Office should consider evaluating whether to consolidate its Crime Lab facilities, assess staffing needs, and develop an equipment update plan by December 31, 2020.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. An enhanced Forensic Services strategic plan will seek to evaluate the need for enhanced facilities, staffing, and equipment by December 31, 2020.

R3: The Sheriff's Office should consider expanding its outreach to all law enforcement agencies in the County to promote its newly acquired equipment, turnaround times, and available capacity for testing by December 31, 2019.

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The expansion of outreach to all county law enforcement agencies will

continue to be enhanced to better promote newly acquired equipment, updated turnaround times, and available capacity for testing by December 31, 2019.

R4: To eliminate redundancy of effort and seek a competitive rate, the Sheriff's Office should consider studying the possibility of becoming the GSR testing contract organization for all law enforcement agencies in the County by December 31, 2020.

This recommendation requires further analysis and research based on like-sized agencies and needs. Information will be sought and analysis conducted on the fiscal and operational feasibility of becoming a GSR testing contract organization for law enforcement agencies in the County by December 31, 2020.

One correction regarding Rapid DNA should be made in the SUMMARY report on page 3, under the Biology Unit section, which reads, "This unit recently acquired a RapidHIT ID system." Please note that the Biology Unit has recently acquired a *Rapid DNA ANDE 6C System* (not a RapidHIT ID System).

Sincerely,



DAVID O. LIVINGSTON
Sheriff-Coroner

DOL:sl