

**Stanislaus County Community Services Agency**

**Civil Grand Jury Case No. 10-46GJ**

**2009-2010**

**SUMMARY**

The Director and Staff of the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency are providing the best service possible to the community considering the poor economy and budget cuts imposed by the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors and State of California. They have initiated procedural changes regarding the areas of need identified in the 2009-2010 Stanislaus County Single Audit and have actively adjusted programs to meet both fiscal limits and client needs.

**BACKGROUND**

Penal Code Section 925 requires the Civil Grand Jury to review the County's finances.

Members of the Civil Grand Jury of 2009-2010 visited the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency (hereafter "CSA" or "Agency") on June 17, 2010, as a follow-up to the "County Single Audit" published on February 22, 2010, by Brown Armstrong, an independent Certified Public Accountant firm. There was no complaint from the community with regard to the Agency's operation.

The "County Single Audit" report noted four cases in which the Agency committed errors needing resolution, although none of the errors resulted in monetary loss. The three programs involved, which are administered by CSA on behalf of Stanislaus County, were Foster Care, Aid to Adoption Programs, and Medi-Cal. The total number of cases reviewed for the audit was 80: 40 Aid to Adoption cases and 40 Foster Care or Medi-Cal cases. CSA agreed with all of the audit's findings and designed tools to address its error rate. Then, it took immediate action to resolve the errors.

During its visit, the Civil Grand Jury noted that procedures were already in place to correct the errors. The procedures included a Policy Action Memo, along with printed instructions and check lists designed to avoid future errors.

**FINDINGS**

The Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury makes the following findings:

- F1. CSA takes audits seriously and immediately takes action to resolve any problems or errors found in its cases.
- F2. All errors identified in the most recent independent audit have been resolved.
- F3. For each error identified in the most recent audit, the Agency prepared a Policy Action Memo, along with printed instructions and check lists in order to prevent similar errors in the future.

F4. The Director and Staff of CSA appear to be conscientious, caring people who are attempting to serve those in need while being restricted by extreme budget cuts. Every budget season CSA is expected to do more with less.

F5. The various programs CSA administers are delicately balanced to serve the public in the best way possible. Having to cut the budget of one program upsets this balance and causes problems in the other programs. Losing staff because of budget cuts negatively impacts safety nets that are being utilized to keep family units together. This often results in more children being placed in Foster Care, which not only affects the well being of the children specifically, but also their families and communities in general.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Stanislaus County Civil Grand Jury makes the following recommendation:

Continue to strive to offer the community the best service possible under difficult financial circumstances.

## **RESPONSE**

No response is required.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person, or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Civil Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.