

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS RESPONSE TO
GRAND JURY REPORT NO. 1008:
County Elder Services Facing Life Support**

The Grand Jury report includes a table in the Background section. For information purposes, the table below makes several corrections to some of the information included in that table. The revised information is shown in **bold** type.

Service	Staff 2008	Staff 2009	Response Time 2008	Response Time 2009	Comments
Adult Protective Services	17	7	Less than 5 days	Ten days	Seven social workers; reduction in face-to-face contact
Area Agency on Aging	6	4	N/A	N/A	County's overmatch funding was removed
Information and Assistance	6	3	Usually immediate response	Not immediate	Caller often leaves a phone message. Call typically returned within one business day

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Information and Assistance staff reductions have caused delays in elders receiving immediate responses to their concerns.

Response: The respondent partially disagrees with the finding.

While it is true I&A Program staff reductions have caused delays in elders receiving immediate responses to their concerns, the Program by design is not an "immediate/emergency service."

If I&A staff are logged onto the automated telephone system and are all on active calls, the new caller is advised via a recording that all staff are busy with other calls and they have the option of continuing to wait or they may leave a message. Because of the complex nature of the calls, it is not unusual for workers to take up to thirty minutes per call. The longest someone will wait for a call back is typically one business day.

2. Staffing cuts to any one adult services program ultimately result in reduced services throughout the Aging and Adult Services Bureau.

Response: The respondent partially disagrees with the finding.

It is true there is a natural cause and effect that results when staffing cuts to any one of the adult service programs occurs, however, it is not universal. For example, reductions to Adult Protective Services (APS) would not affect the Area Agency on Aging services due to the categorical funding streams for both programs. In contrast, reductions to the Area Agency on Aging services could have a direct negative impact on the I&A Program and vice versa.

The cause and effect of funding reductions usually depends on the origins of the categories and allocations of the funding.

3. Adult Protective Service staff reductions have eliminated face-to-face case work assessments. Case assessments and reassessments are now handled by phone.

Response to Finding: The respondent partially disagrees with the finding.

Staff reductions have reduced face-to-face assessments but not eliminated them. Self-neglect, non-perpetrator referrals are evaluated to see if they can be handled as a non face-to-face response. If so, they are assigned accordingly. Many self-neglect referrals, however, are assigned to a worker due to the need to properly assess for and intervene regarding safety and well-being. Most referrals that come in are assigned and, when appropriate, assignments are given to APS staff for face-to-face assessments.

Employment and Human Services Department and Aging and Adult Services take seriously the responsibility of investigating referrals for APS. If the referral (allegation) involves an alleged abuser/perpetrator, generally a face to face assessment is the foremost consideration and is paramount to client safety. Currently, non face to face investigations are a smaller percent of the referrals investigated. In the month of July 2010, 25 non face to face investigations have been assigned compared to approximately 85 face to face investigations.

Recommendation:

The County shall initiate a volunteer program to supplement staffing. Volunteers shall be recruited immediately for Information and Assistance and for Adult Protective Services.

Response to Recommendation: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. Aging & Adult Services is planning for the utilization of volunteers in the I&A Program by January 2011.

The recommendation will not be implemented for Adult Protective Services because it is not reasonable. Per Welfare and Institution Code 15766, investigation of allegations of elder and dependent adult abuse “shall be performed by county merit systems civil service employees.” Therefore, it would be unlawful to use volunteers to provide these services.

4. In-Home Supportive Services is a “train wreck” waiting to happen if the State eliminates it’s funding.

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

Recommendation:

The County shall develop a contingency plan for funding the IHSS program.

Response to Recommendation: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable.

The County already provides over \$20 million in discretionary revenue to fund a share of the In-Homes Supportive Services Program. Without State funding the cost to the County for the current program would increase in the neighborhood of 250% requiring the elimination of many other necessary programs and services. The Board of Supervisors will continue to review funding needs on a regular basis for the IHSS program in conjunction with the funding needs of other County funded programs.