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**Finding 3.4:** Parents assume that DCSS and the court will handle their paperwork safely and with dispatch.

**Finding 3.5:** Members of this committee, sitting in on several procedures in the courtroom, observed that paper work was lost by DCSS or the court.

**Finding 3.6:** DCSS should make every effort to reconcile cross complaints by both parents and eliminate the need for a court appearance.

***Recommendation 3a: Use a Full-Time Phone Team to Answer Calls***

SFDCSS should plan for installation of a full-time phone team trained to deal with ordinary questions and problems of clients. CGJ recommends that it be patterned after that of the Contra Costa County DCSS. Otherwise, teams and the ombudsperson should make every effort to follow DCSS policy and answer phones in person as often as possible.

***Responses***

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**July 23, 2004**

Disagree: The Department believes that does, in fact, have staff operating as a Phone Call Center. As stated in our overview presentation to the CGJ in November 2003, the Department has six (6) Operational Teams that handle a caseload of approximately 27,000 cases. On each business day, each Operational Team assigns two (2) Child Support Officers (CSO's) to answer phone calls from the public.

This means that on every business day, there is twelve (12) CSO's assigned to answer phones. This compares more favorably than the Phone Team that the CGJ viewed in Contra Costa County. According to the CGJ finding, the eight (8) people Phone Team in Contra Costa County answers all phone calls. It should be noted that Contra Costa County DCSS has a caseload of approximately 42,000 cases or 5,250 cases per operator. Department allocates twelve (12) CSO's to answer all phone calls for a caseload of approximately 27,000 cases or 2,250 cases per CSO.

On a daily basis, Department assigns twelve (12) fully trained and experienced CSO's to answer phones. It should be noted that some counties use clerical staff or lower classifications to answer phone calls. This results in information being forwarded to another staff person, usually an experienced CSO for follow-up action adding to delayed responses.

Department assigned to answer phone calls are fully trained and experienced CSO's who can handle the call when taken. There are no referrals to other staff or units for follow-up. Whoever answers the phone that day is assigned the task/problem presented by that phone call. This results in quicker and more efficient activity.

In the last Fiscal Year, Department staff logged in 61,234 phone calls. This translates to an average of 5,103 phone calls per month; an average of 306 calls per business day.

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**June 27, 2005**

Agree/Partially Implemented: It is the intention of the California Department of Child Support Services to implement a statewide call-center beginning the fall of 2006. This system will have regionalized offices that provide initial customer call responses for all 58 counties. The counties have been advised by the state and are preparing integrate its current services into the new system.

In the meantime, the Department does have staff operating as a Phone Call Center. The Department currently has full time case workers responding to and resolving customer complaints and concerns every business day between the hours of 8:00am and 5:00pm. The Department has five (5) Operational Teams that handle a caseload of approximately 27,000 cases. On each business day, each Operational Team assigns two (2) Child Support Officers (CSO's) to answer phone calls from the public.

In the last Fiscal Year, Department staff logged in 61,234 phone calls. This translates to an average of 5,103 phone calls per month; an average of 306 calls per business day.

According to the CGJ finding, the eight (8) people Phone Team in Contra Costa County answers all phone calls for a caseload of approximately 42,000 cases. That means the San Francisco has more staff dedicated to phone support than Contra Costa and that the support provided is by professional Child Support Officers that can respond immediately to concerns and avoid unnecessary delays for our clients.

This means that on every business day, there are ten (10) CSO's assigned to answer phones. This compares more favorably than the Phone Team that the CGJ viewed in Contra Costa County.

It should be noted that Contra Costa County DCSS operates as the emergency response unit for the County. The funding required to develop and implement Contra Costa's call center was provided by the County directly and had an estimated cost of approximately \$1.0 million and includes hardware, software, plasma screens, staffing, etc.

The Department is working to develop a cost-effective version of the Contra Costa center by centralizing the existing staff and providing additional training to Child Support Officers' to improve their customer service performance.

It should be noted that some counties use clerical staff or lower classifications to answer phone calls. This results in information being forwarded to another staff person, usually an experienced CSO for follow-up action adding to delayed responses.

***Recommendation 3b: Parents Keep Copies of all Paperwork and Back-up Its Information on Computers***

CSOs and/or attorneys should advise parents to keep back-up copies of all paperwork and bring it with them to court. The committee recommends that DCSS arrange to store all back-up information on computer so that information will not be lost.

## **Responses**

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**July 23, 2004**

Agree: The Department has an existing regulation that requires Department staff to remind all parties to a case that they are advised to keep back-up copies of all relevant documents and bring them to court. On all cases that go to court hearing, the assigned Department attorney is responsible for maintaining a hardcopy litigation file folder that contains all the required documents/information. In addition, each party submits all documents required by the Court to the Court file.

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**June 27, 2005**

Agree/Implemented: The Department has an existing regulation that requires Department staff to remind all parties to a case that they are advised to keep back-up copies of all relevant documents and bring them to court. On all cases that go to court hearing, the assigned Department attorney is responsible for maintaining a hardcopy litigation file folder that contains all the required documents/information. In addition, each party submits all documents required by the Court to the Court file.

### ***Recommendation 3c: Reconcile Cross-Complaints by Parents and Eliminate Costly Court Appearances***

DCSS should make every effort to reconcile cross-complaints by both parents and eliminate the need for a costly court appearance. However, when the court procedure is necessary, each parent should be given formal and timely notice.

## **Responses**

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**July 23, 2004**

Agree: The Department recognizes the cost benefits of settling cases before and/or without going to court. This is stressed in our training and procedures. At every step in the process, the other party is offered the option of agreeing or stipulating to a settlement without going to court. However, it is not possible to settle all issues without going to court. For example, disputes between the parties as to actual income, actual childcare costs, actual hours of custody/visitation, etc. are issues that can only be decided by the Court.

It is the practice of our Court and our legal staff that prior to every court calendar session, CSO's assigned to assist our attorneys will meet with all appearing parties to review the issues and to see if any agreement or stipulation is possible before the matter is called before the Court. Any such settlements/agreements reduce the time and demand of the Court and our attorneys.

**Karen M. Roye**  
**Director**  
**Department of Child Support Services**  
**June 27, 2005**

Agree/Implemented: The Department recognizes the cost benefits of settling cases before and/or without going to court. This is stressed in our training and procedures. At every step in the process, the other party is offered the option of agreeing or stipulating to a settlement without going to court. However, it is not possible to settle all issues without going to court. For example, disputes between the parties as to actual income, actual childcare costs, actual hours of custody/visitation, etc. are issues that can only be decided by the Court.

It is the practice of our Court and our legal staff that prior to every court calendar session, CSO's assigned to assist our attorneys will meet with all appearing parties to review the issues and to see if any agreement or stipulation is possible before the matter is called before the Court. Any such settlements/agreements reduce the time and demand of the Court and our attorneys.

In addition, the Department has implemented its Enhanced Parental Involvement Collaborative in order to increase participation of non-custodial parents (NCP) and reduce the number of default orders that adversely impact the NCP. This program includes higher levels of customer service and outreach, bilingual support, case management by specific case workers, and increased initiation of communication by caseworkers. The results have been better than anticipated with 95% participation by NCPs in the process of stipulations rather than default orders.

## **General Responses**

**Gavin Newsom  
Mayor  
Office of the Mayor  
September 7, 2004**

I am pleased to present my response to the 2003-2004 Civil Grand Jury report on the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS). This letter underscores my continued commitment to work with DCSS to facilitate and implement changes that will help the Department better serve the citizens of San Francisco.

I have carefully considered the findings and recommendations of the Civil Grand Jury, as well as the Department's response. The Department has demonstrated thoughtful analysis and a strong commitment to implement the necessary changes. Thus, it is with full confidence that I concur with the Department's response to the Civil Grand Jury report.

I submit the following responses to the specific Civil Grand Jury recommendations:

### **I. IN-TAKE PROCESS**

I commend the steps that DCSS has already taken to help facilitate the in-take process for parents in need of free services, especially with regard to cultural sensitivity. In order to make the in-take process more transparent, DCSS has done the following:

- Begun to develop a flow chart, in multiple languages, that outlines the entire process,
- Increased the number of outreach materials,
- Produced posters, flyers and videos that will be available at libraries, hospitals, and community agencies,
- Initiated development of a website where customers can access case status,
- Collaborated with the Family Law Facilitator to develop a pamphlet to be distributed at all branch offices.

### **II. PRINTED INFORMATION**

I commend the Department's efforts to quickly implement change in regards to the Civil Grand Jury recommendations on printed materials. The Department has done the following in order to provide a more accessible and welcoming office environment:

- Purchased and installed display racks for increased accessibility to printed information,
- Will provide printed material for the law facilitator's offices and courts,
- Begun work with Department of Public Works to renovate the office and create a more welcoming environment.

### **III. CASE MANAGEMENT**

I am pleased that DCSS has taken a proactive response to the issue of back-up materials and reconciling cross-complaints by parents, thereby eliminating the need for costly court appearances. DCSS has made it clear that they advise parents on both issues, in order to best serve their customers.

In conclusion, I offer my thanks to the 2003-2004 Civil Grand Jury for their service to the City and County of San Francisco, and applaud their commitment to improving the effectiveness of City government.

**Adele Destro**  
**Assistant Clerk of the Board**  
**Board of Supervisors**  
**September 24, 2004**

The following is a response to the 2003-2004 Civil Grand Jury Report, San Francisco Department of Child Support Services: Putting the Children First, in accordance with Penal Code Section 933 and Administrative Code Section 2.10.

The Board of Supervisors' City Services Committee held a hearing on Thursday, September 23, 2004 on the Civil Grand Jury Report. Representatives from both the Civil Grand Jury and the Department of Child Support Services were present at the hearing. Child Support Services agreed to all but 1 of 9 recommendations by the Civil Grand Jury and may be willing to revisit this recommendation providing funding is available. Some of the recommendations have also been implemented. The City Services Committee has filed the matter.

The Board of Supervisors' City Services Committee held a hearing on September 23, 2004. Child Support Services agreed to all but 1 of 9 recommendations by the Civil Grand Jury and may be willing to revisit this recommendation providing funding is available. Some of the recommendations have also been implemented. The City Services Committee has filed the matter.

**Adele Destro**  
**Assistant Clerk of the Board**  
**Board of Supervisors**  
**June 29, 2005**

The Board of Supervisors' City Services Committee held a hearing on September 23, 2004. Child Support Services agreed to all but 1 of 9 recommendations by the Civil Grand Jury and may be willing to revisit this recommendation providing funding is available. Some of the recommendations have also been implemented. The City Services Committee has filed the matter.

**TERMS**

DCSS -Department of Child Support Services (county, state, federal)

CGJ- Civil Grand Jury

CSO -Child Support Officer

CALWORKS -California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids

MEDICAID -Source of government funding for medical- and health-related services for people with limited income.

FOSTER CARE -Social Services Department's paid placement of a child with foster caregivers instead of with birth family.

WICSEC -Western Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council

SACSS -State Automated Child Support System

<b>Civil Grand Jury Recommendations and Department Responses</b>		Department of Child Support Services
1a	Written materials (in translation when appropriate) to be presented and explained at in-take should include a flow chart outlining the process to be undertaken from start to finish. Specifics should describe all of the players in the process and their roles-especially including DCSS, their computer and phone systems, and all its divisions: in-take, DSOs, attorneys and the ombudsperson.	Agree/ Implemented
1b	The role of the court and the Family Law Facilitator and how they can be accessed should be explained-especially if it appears that the parents will be unwilling or unable to stipulate a plan for child support.	Agree/ Implemented
1c	Packet information should be reinforced by the use and distribution of posters, flyers and videos made available in libraries, churches, shops, hospitals and community agencies.	Agree/ Implemented
1d	SFDCSS should add to its long-range plan the production of multilingual educational videos and television and radio advertisements. By collaborating with other agencies and by accessing volunteer time, talent and dollars, DCSS can expand its services to clientele.	
2a	In an attractive and efficient manner. DCSS should set up, monitor and stock regularly display racks of written materials and handouts at all DCSS offices, law facilitators offices and courtrooms.	Agree/ Implemented
2b	Re-arrange the main-office entry so that DCSS looks more like a sanctuary than a jail. {Pattern reception area after that of the Contra Costa County DCSS.}	Agree/ Implemented
3a	SFDCSS should plan for installation of a full-time phone team trained to deal with ordinary questions and problems of clients. CGJ recommends that it be patterned after that of the Contra Costa County DCSS. Otherwise, teams and the ombudsperson should make every effort to follow DCSS policy and answer phones in person as often as possible.	Agree/ Partially Implemented
3b	CSOs and/or attorneys should advise parents to keep back-up copies of all paperwork and bring it with them to court. The committee recommends that DCSS arrange to store all back-up information on computer so that information will not be lost.	Agree/ Implemented
3c	DCSS should make every effort to reconcile cross-complaints by both parents and eliminate the need for a costly court appearance. However, when the court procedure is necessary, each parent should be given formal and timely notice.	Agree/ Implemented

*For each recommendation, the Civil Grand Jury did not require responses from all departments. The table only identifies those departments that responded to specific recommendations.*

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## **CHAPTER 8 CONTINUITY REPORT**

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### **BACKGROUND**

The 2003-04 Civil Grand Jury noted that each year the Civil Grand Jury selects various entities of city or county government that it chooses to investigate. Additionally, the Civil Grand Jury determines whether to pursue any issues raised or recommended by previous juries. The 2003-04 identified several issues for the 2004-05 to pursue.

### **THE STATE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S EMERGENCY PLANNING**

The 2002-2003 Grand Jury was highly-critical of the state of emergency planning for San Francisco, and it recommended that the Office of Emergency Services address the inadequacy of its emergency resources in areas of communication and technology.

Additionally, it recommended that the City should improve its methods of budgeting for emergency response. The Jury report elicited a scathing rebuttal by the then Mayor Willie Brown, who denied that there were any deficiencies in the City's emergency planning and subsequently demanded that the Grand Jury be abolished. Despite the Mayor's public histrionics, the Jury stood by the integrity of its report.

On his first full day as Mayor, Gavin Newsom convened the San Francisco Disaster Council and directed municipal departments to update their preparedness plans for earthquakes, terrorist acts and other emergencies. He gave departments until the end of March to update their response plans and ordered the Department of Emergency Services to create a new citywide operations plan by the end of June. Within the same week, the Director of Emergency Services resigned. The position has since been filled.

Presently, the Office of Emergency Services is located in the northeast quadrant of San Francisco and operates from the Emergency Operations Center which handles 911 calls for police, fire and medical emergency dispatching. The Center is undergoing a transition which will civilianize practically all its staff. Additionally, there is an on-going review of its triage protocols which are used to assess incoming emergency calls and to dispatch first responders.

Because of the vital nature of both the Office of Emergency Services and the Emergency Operations Center, it is suggested that their activities be considered as a matter of interest for the 2004-2005 Grand Jury.

## **FIRE SAFETY IN LOCAL DETENTION FACILITIES**

The Jury recommended that the San Francisco Police Department discontinue use of detention cells at Northern, Richmond and Ingleside district stations because the cells do not comply with state and local fire codes. However, detention cells in those stations continue to be used notwithstanding safety and fire deficiencies noted by the State Board of Corrections and the lack of clearance from the San Francisco Fire Department.

Each year since 1997, the Police Department has made requests for funds to bring the holding cells into compliance with state and local fire codes in its capital improvements budget. However, the City's Capital Improvement Assessment Committee and the Mayor's Budget Office have denied funding because refitting the stations to meet safety and fire standards was not considered high priority.

Since October 1997, the station commanders have been under orders to implement an alternate means of protection -a fire watch-in the cell area every 30 minutes to check on the safety of any prisoner incarcerated there. Inspectors from the San Francisco Fire Department's Fire Prevention and Inspection Division do not consider the fire watch to be a permanent or satisfactory remedy; it was allowed only as a temporary measure, in 1997, in anticipation of refitting the stations within a reasonable time. As a result, the inspection service will not issue a fire clearance pending correction of physical safety and fire deficiencies which have existed for seven years.

The 2003-2004 Civil Grand Jury suggests that the 2004-2005 Civil Grand Jury consider whether funding is again allocated for the correction office and safety deficiencies at the three stations or whether the Police Department discontinues use of the facilities.

## **THE LACK OF COOPERATION BY THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT WITH THE OFFICE OF CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS**

During its inquiry into how the San Francisco Police Department related with the OCC (Office of Civilian Complaints ), the Jury noted a distinct and palpable lack of cooperation and coordination between the two entities. The disunity between the two departments has caused the dismissal of many meritorious citizen complaints which affected the due process of the citizens complaining and of the officers being investigated. Record keeping of complaints and investigative files were slipshod; necessary documents were not shared in a timely way, and the Police Commission omitted the necessary management oversight to keep the complaint investigative process operating effectively and efficiently. The Jury's report called attention to the obvious lack of cooperation between the Police Department and the OCC and offered several remedial recommendations to the two departments.

During the past few months, a number of remedies to the complaint investigative process have been implemented. New leadership, which bodes well, was instituted: a new head of the OCC was hired; a new police chief was appointed and a new Police Commission was sworn in. Additionally, an ordinance was enacted (Chapter 96 of the San Francisco Administrative Code) which codified responsibilities and duties of the Police Department, the Police Commission and the OCC in the timely handling and reporting by citizens of police misconduct. The ordinance requires that the status and disposition of sustained complaints be made public and that instruction on the OCC's processes and procedures for investigating citizen complaints be required for officers and police commissioners.

Because the new leadership has been in office for a short time, it is suggested that the 2004-2005 Civil Grand Jury, midway through their term of office, consider, as a matter of interest, how the revised process for handling citizen's complaints against police is working.

## **THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION**

In its inquiry into the management of the Department of Building Inspection, the Jury found that preferential treatment was being afforded to certain Department of Building Inspection (DBI) customers. It recommended quality control procedures in both the Plan Check and Inspection Services divisions. Additionally, it recommended that DBI comply with state law by determining the actual costs of providing services. Lastly, there is a need to improve management and leadership skills of those in DBI positions of responsibility. The report of the Jury's inquiry and its recommendations brought public condemnation of the Jury by certain members of the Department who demanded that the names of the persons who cooperated with the Jury be revealed. The Jury refused to identify the individuals interviewed, pursuant to California Penal Code Section 929, and it stood behind the allegations made in its report.

In March 2004, Mayor Gavin Newsom appointed Rudy Nothenberg, retired former Chief Administrative Officer of San Francisco, as an "unpaid advisor" to the Mayor. Nothenberg's charge was to investigate whether there is preferential treatment of certain DBI customers, as alleged in the Jury's report. Additionally, the Board of Supervisors has proposed an application-tracking process to reveal any evidence of favorable treatment by DBI employees.

Nothenberg estimated that the report of his inquiry would probably be concluded in three months and then presented to the Mayor. Since the inquiry was commissioned by the Mayor, the Mayor would determine its acceptance and manner of distribution. Nothenberg's conclusions would be a choice matter of interest for the 2004-2005 Grand Jury.

## **TRUANCY IN THE SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Even though State law specifies the content, manner of delivery and time at which truancy notices are given to the student and to the student's parent, District schools do not follow a uniform truancy notice procedure. The 2002-2003 Grand Jury concluded that promptly-sent notices would reduce the District's truancy rate. Since the School District is entitled to State reimbursement for every first and third truancy notice it sends, the District annually collects less State monies than it could.

According to the District's Pupil Services Department, a process will be implemented shortly to ensure that the District will mail its truancy notices on time and thereby reduce its truancy rate and promptly capture the State funding to which it is entitled. Since the 2003-2004 Grand Jury did not have the opportunity to view the truancy abatement process, it is suggested that the 2004-2005 Grand Jury consider it an area of interest.

## **THE CONDUCT OF THE NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2002 ELECTIONS**

Currently, the Department of Elections operates in and from six major facilities during an election period—a condition which can easily endanger the integrity of the election process. Therefore, the Grand Jury made a strong recommendation that the City consolidate all operations of the Department of Elections into one site. The recommendation received concurrence by management of the Department. However, to date, an appropriate site has not been located, nor have any City funds been set aside for such a consolidation.

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## APPENDIX

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### MEMBERS OF THE 2003-2004 SAN FRANCISCO CIVIL GRAND JURY

John S. Calder

Robyn Chan

Michael Creedon

Dustin L. Daza

Clement D. DeAmicis

Debra J. Hitti

Carolyn Koster

Walter Krumm

Samuel Macy

Jack L. McNulty, Foreperson

Susan B. Miller

Melinda Mills

Mary Mullen

Harriet Ross

Eugene S. Salazar

Cornelia B. Sapiro, Secretary

Nancy K. Winchell

Peg Winston

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cc: Mayor  
Board of Supervisors  
Civil Grand Jury  
Budget Analyst  
Public Library