



## Employment and Social Services

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July 20, 2023



Honorable Corie J. Caraway, Judge of the Superior Court  
c/o Administrative Services  
Butte County Superior Court  
1 Court Street  
Oroville, CA 95965

Re: Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) Director Response to the  
2022-2023 Grand Jury Final Report

Dear Judge Caraway:

Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05 provides that the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the designated judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body. The Board of Supervisors, as the governing body of the County of Butte, will provide its response to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury Report by the statutory deadline.

### County Office of Emergency Management-Dept. of Employment and Social Services (DESS)

#### Grand Jury Findings

**F5:** Emergency preparedness is spread among multiple departments each with different priorities.

**The respondent agrees with the finding.**

#### Grand Jury Recommendations

**R5:** The Board of Supervisors consolidate all emergency preparedness and response into a single office or agency within the county by June 30, 2024.

**The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.** The role and function of the Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) is multi-pronged within every large emergency response inside of Butte County. As the largest department, employing nearly 700 employees who also serve as Disaster Service Workers in times of need, the department is assigned under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidance the role of Mass Care and Shelter. This role includes opening and managing all County sponsored emergency shelters, evacuation centers and temporary evacuation centers. The services provided to the County residents at local shelters include but are not limited to emergency food, shelter, clothing, ensuring emergency medical care, spiritual and mental health needs are met. If needed, reunification with family members

is facilitated. After the initial evacuation, DESS is responsible for assisting residents in recovering from the disaster. This includes providing and managing key recovery services by opening and managing Local Assistance Centers/Disaster Recovery Centers. At these centers, vital records, information regarding recovery services as well as assistance completing necessary applications for FEMA assistance or even basic welfare programs may be found. This initial support assists the survivor on their road to recovery. Historically, DESS has also take a vital role in ensuring disaster case management services and temporary housing resources are provided to the survivors of incidents within the County.

In addition to providing emergency shelter, food, clothing during evacuations and immediately following an incident, DESS also manages the Special Needs Awareness Program commonly referred to as the SNAP list. This is a registry of residents with access and functional needs who require additional time to evacuate. The SNAP registry provides early notification to residents if they request such support. Historically, this registry includes all residents who receive In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) within the County as well as individuals who request to be included on the registry. Since DESS is the gatekeeper for IHSS services, it is logical that DESS would maintain the SNAP list as well. The Alert FM receivers are also distributed by DESS since the department has capacity to manage the program as well as oversee the application process.

The role of DESS during times of disaster has proven to be efficient and within the service array that the department already provides to the general public in blue skies. For these reasons, the recommendation will not be implemented.

Sincerely,



Shelby Boston, MSW  
Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services

cc: Board of Supervisors  
Andy Pickett, Chief Administrative Officer