

## RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

**Report Title:** Aging in Marin: What's the Plan?  
**Report Date:** June 13, 2014  
**Response by:** Marin County Board of Supervisors

### FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: F1, F3, F5, F6, F7, F8
- We disagree partially with the findings numbered: F2, F4

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R1, R2 have been implemented.
- Recommendation numbered R3 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendation numbered R4 will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.

Date: August 19, 2014      Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pages attached: 5

**Marin County Board of Supervisors**  
Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report  
“Aging in Marin: What’s the Plan?”

**FINDINGS**

- F1. Marin County senior population will grow significantly over the next ten years.**

Response: Agree.

Marin County’s population over the age of 60 is currently 27% of the total population and is expected to peak at 33% by the year 2030.

- F2. Marin County does not have a comprehensive, long-term, strategic and financial plan to accommodate the inevitable growth in the number of low-income seniors.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

Every four years under requirements of the federal Older Americans Act, the Marin County Aging and Adult Services’ Area Agency on Aging completes a plan that reflects strategies and activities to best serve the needs of older adults and family caregivers in Marin. The current 2012-2016 plan is updated on an annual basis and informs funders, service providers and members of the community about needs and opportunities to improve the quality of life and sustain the independence of older adults.

In addition, in 2013 the Board of Supervisors identified the increasing needs of Marin’s growing senior population and set aside funding for community-wide action to address the future demands on the aging services network. In March of 2014, Marin County Aging and Adult Services announced a plan, called the Aging Action Initiative, which will address the most pressing needs of older constituents through a process of shared commitment and action.

Previous reports, studies, and current stakeholder input have noted the issues demanding the most immediate attention: 1) older mental health and well-being; 2) dementia; 3) food and nutrition; 4) care coordination; and 5) economic disparity of those who are ineligible for government services but lack sufficient resources to meet needs independently. Over

the upcoming fiscal year, work teams, facilitated by Aging and Adult Services, will develop specific recommendations and a shared commitment to act on those recommendations.

The long-term plan for the Aging Action Initiative is to create an aging services network designed to better support our growing aging population.

**F3. There are a growing number of Marin seniors without adequate financial resources to meet their basic needs.**

Response: Agree.

Approximately 25% of seniors over the age of 65 falls below the Elder Economic Security Index (EESI), which measures the amount of income a senior requires in order to fully cover basic needs. While this is similar to the percentage that existed in 2001, the number of seniors falling below the EESI has increased as the overall senior population has increased.

**F4. There is a lack of recognized leadership in addressing senior needs in Marin County.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

Different organizations within the community have unique missions and leadership roles and responsibilities in educating and advocating, in forming policy, and in delivering and funding services. The collaboration and shared leadership among these organizations creates a stronger aging services system.

**F5. County programs are largely in existence because of the availability of federal and state sources. These funds were drastically reduced during the recent recession and as a result of the federal government's sequestration.**

Response: Agree.

There was approximately a 7% reduction in Older Americans Act programs in fiscal year 2013-14. Given the importance of these programs to our community, the Board of Supervisors backfilled this reduction with

local general funds to maintain our service levels. As of FY 2014-15, most of the sequestration reductions have been restored.

- F6. Many services for seniors are provided by nonprofit agencies, often using volunteers. These agencies are not fully funded by the county and must use donations and fees to cover costs.**

Response: Agree.

Marin enjoys a robust and active network of volunteers who give their time and energy in support of various causes in their communities. Nonprofit agencies are not fully funded by the County, nor would it be the role of the County to provide full funding to a nonprofit agency.

- F7. Information for senior services is inconsistent and often difficult to access.**

Response: Agree.

Given the number of potential entry points, experiences may vary among persons seeking information.

- F8. Services provided to seniors in Marin are inconsistent geographically.**

Response: Agree.

While County Aging and Adult Services programs, such as In-Home Supportive Services and home delivered meals, are available throughout the county, there are senior services which may be unique to an organization's particular mission, its physical location and its target population. In general, residents living in the more populated areas of the county may have access to a greater number of service organizations and/or programs.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The 2013-2014 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:**

- R1. The County take on the leadership role by developing a long-term strategic plan that will address needs of the senior population and identify potential funding sources. This would include an assessment of currently unmet needs of low-income seniors in all areas of the county and work to provide services to address them.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

In FY 2013-14, the Board of Supervisors identified the increasing needs of Marin's growing senior population and set aside \$100,000 for community-wide action to address the future demands on the aging services network. In March of 2014, Marin County Aging and Adult Services launched the Aging Action Initiative, which will address the most pressing needs of older constituents through a process of shared commitment and action. The long-term plan for the Aging Action Initiative is to create an aging services network designed to better support our growing aging population and will include potential initiatives and additional funding requirements.

- R2. The County work with federal and state governments and nonprofits to provide adequate funding for mandated services, such as the Meals on Wheels program, to insure that there are no wait lists for eligible Marin seniors.**

Response: This recommendation has been implemented.

The County will continue to work with elected officials, nonprofit partners and with professional associations in advocating for adequate funding for senior services.

- R3. The County work to improve access to services by:**

- a. Improving information and referral phone lines to make them more user-specific, friendly and immediate.**
- b. Providing training to organizations that offer information on senior programs to insure complete and uniform referrals to appropriate services.**

- c. Working with existing nonprofit agencies, encouraging development and staffing of a navigator program to be available to all senior citizens needing help finding adequate supports.**
- d. Working with nonprofits and other entities in establishing an aggressive outreach and/or advertising program to educate Marin County residents about services for seniors.**

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

In February of 2014, Health and Human Services began exploring options to restructure the Information, Assistance and Intake unit. The goal is to provide a more immediate response by staff who are cross-trained to perform a number of functions, including one-on-one options counseling for seniors, persons with disabilities and their families. It is anticipated that this staffing restructure will be in place by the late fall.

The unit will offer enhanced information and assistance as well as intake for a number of Aging and Adult Services programs. In addition, there will be an outreach plan to both consumers as well as agencies working with consumers. A goal will be to develop a coalition of agencies that provide information and assistance so that seniors, persons with disabilities and others can more easily navigate the system and receive the information they seek, even if coming from different entry points.

**R4. The County develop a contingency plan for funding services when state and federal funding sources are unavailable or reduced.**

Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted.

Given that 36% of County revenues are from state and federal sources it would be difficult to develop a contingency plan for every state or federally funded program. We continually monitor the state and federal budget for any potential impact to the county. In addition, we have a \$4.8 million contingency reserve to allow us to address state and federal cuts in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. For example, this reserve was used to

maintain and backfill federal sequestration cuts to aging programs last year.