

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
RESPONSE TO THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
GRAND JURY 2013-2014 REPORT
"INMATES RELEASED DURING LATE NIGHT HOURS –
WHAT ARE THEIR OPTIONS?"

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding #1: *There is no specific document which both the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office and a released inmate must sign to indicate that he/she has been offered a bus or taxi voucher, the use of a telephone, or the opportunity to wait in the lobby until dawn.*

Response to Finding #1: **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**

Recommendation #1: *That the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office establish a written policy requiring a form to be signed during the release process indicating that the inmate has been offered a bus or taxi voucher, the use of a telephone, or the opportunity to wait in the lobby for a ride until dawn.*

Response to Recommendation #1: **The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable.**

This recommendation would require significant additional work and supervision by limited staff. Policies for the underlying issues are already in place. Reasonable efforts are made to communicate with inmates about their options. For example, notices have been posted, in both English and Spanish, in the release holding cells that advise indigent inmates that they are eligible to receive a bus or taxi voucher and that they can request a voucher upon release. In addition, telephones are mounted in the release holding cells. These telephones are accessible and available to all inmates being released to make free local area calls to arrange for transportation. Lastly, the Inmate Reception Center lobby is a public facility, with seating and restroom access. This area is open 24-hours a day, 7 days a week to the general public. Inmates about to be released who do not have transportation are advised they are welcome to stay there until daylight if they are released after hours.

Finding #2: *The Grand Jury learned that continued private funding for the taxi service is in doubt.*

Response to Finding #2: **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**

Funding for privately funded services and programs is always uncertain. The funding of such services relies on the generosity and contributions of private donors. As a result of the Sheriff's Office screening inmates to determine if they are eligible (i.e., in possession of \$30 or less), program costs have been reduced by 50%.

Recommendation #2: *That Santa Barbara County encourages the establishment of a community-based program similar to "Lights On" in Orange County, California.*

Response to Recommendation #2: **The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in July 2014.**

The Sheriff's Office is actively working on an agreement with faith-based and non-profit organizations in Santa Barbara to provide services comparable to the Orange County, California "Lights On" program. The Sheriff's Office hopes to have a finalized agreement approved and a program implemented within the next several months.

Finding #3: *Orange County, California has a faith-based program named "Lights On," that offers newly released inmates coffee, snacks, bus schedules, Alcoholics Anonymous fliers, and free use of a cell phone.*

Response to Finding #3: **The Sheriff's Office agrees with the finding.**