

KINGS COUNTY GOVERNMENT TELEPHONES

SYNOPSIS

The Kings County telephone service is outdated and lacks direct dial numbers to most departments. Costs to update and maintain at this time are higher than services offered by several commercial providers.

WHY THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATED

The Grand Jury received a complaint stating that when using the Kings County central telephone number (559) 582-3211, and when using the menu, some county offices are difficult or impossible to reach.

AUTHORITY

Penal Code Section 925

The Grand Jury shall investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of the officers, departments or functions of the county.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The Grand Jury interviewed the Chief Information Officer of Kings County Information Technology (IT) department regarding the current and projected County telephone systems.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

The switch used in the County telephone system was installed in 1991 and serves 1300 telephones. 650 telephones have since been replaced and these newer telephones are unable to use the new features, such as caller ID and other advanced features, because of the obsolete system in place and are not fully usable by the Kings County system at this time. The cost of replacing the switch and upgrading the remainder of the telephones exceeds the cost of using the latest technology available from commercial telephone services.

Commercial providers have the ability to install and maintain the County system with better service to all Kings County offices including Fire Departments, Sheriff, Jail, and all department offices in Kings County.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1

The Kings County telephone system is deficient in many respects. The three tier menu operation is outdated and time consuming for users. The main switch cannot handle the capabilities of the new telephones. Although some updates have been made in the past, it remains 10 years behind current standards.

Recommendation 1

The Grand Jury recommends that the telephone system be updated.

Finding 2

The IT Department is researching options and has requested quotes from several commercial companies to upgrade and maintain the current telephone system.

Recommendation 2

The Chief Information Officer and the IT department should continue researching options with the goal of choosing and installing an appropriate and cost effective system.

COMMENTS

By upgrading the system, less County labor will be required to operate and maintain the telephone services.

RESPONSE REQUIREMENT

Penal Code 933(c) No later than 90 days after the Grand Jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court on the findings and recommendations.