



SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY
GRAND JURY

[scgj] Arukah Project Responses to the Report on Human Trafficking In Santa Cruz County

1 message

Loreal Weitzel <loreal.weitzel@arukahproject.org>
To: Santa Cruz Grand Jury <grandjury@scgrandjury.org>

Mon, Aug 18, 2025 at 3:13 PM

Good afternoon Foreperson,

Attached below you will find my responses to the Findings and Recommendations pertaining to the 2024-2025 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury report, ***Human Trafficking in Santa Cruz County, Voices Unheard, Signs Unseen.***

I want to once again sincerely thank you and the Santa Cruz Civil Grand Jury for your hard work in bringing awareness to a serious problem in our community.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Loreal Weitzel

Executive Director

Arukah Project

☎ 831-419-2964

✉ loreal.weitzel@arukahproject.org

🌐 www.arukahproject.org



If you are experiencing an emergency, please call 911 or the Santa Cruz County Crisis Line at (800) 952-2335 or go to the closest emergency room.

DISCLAIMER: This communication and any files or attachments transmitted with it may contain information that is copyrighted or confidential and exempt from disclosure under the applicable law. It is intended solely for the use of the individual or the entity to which it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any use, dissemination, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us at once so we may take the appropriate action. Thank you for your cooperation.



2025-5II Trafficking Arukah Response Request.docx

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The 2024-2025 Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury
Invites the

Director, Arukah Project

to Respond by August 29, 2025

**to the Findings and Recommendations listed below
which were assigned to them in the report titled**

Human Trafficking in Santa Cruz County

Voices Unheard, Signs Unseen

Required Responses apply to elected officials, elected agencies or department heads, elected boards, councils, and committees. The respondent is **required** to respond and to make the response available to the public under California Penal Code [\(PC\) §933\(c\)](#). A required response will be considered **compliant** under [PC §933.05](#) if it contains an appropriate comment on **all** findings and recommendations **which were assigned to you** in this report.

Invited Responses are encouraged but are not required by the California Penal Code.

Please follow the instructions below when preparing your response.

Instructions for Respondents

Your assigned [Findings](#) and [Recommendations](#) are listed on the following pages with check boxes and an expandable space for summaries, timeframes, and explanations. Please follow these instructions, which paraphrase [PC §933.05](#):

- 1. For the Findings, mark one of the following responses with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **AGREE** with the Finding, or
 - b. **PARTIALLY DISAGREE with the Finding** – specify the portion of the Finding that is disputed and include an explanation of the reasons why, or
 - c. **DISAGREE with the Finding** – provide an explanation of the reasons why.
- 2. For the Recommendations, mark one of the following actions with an “X” and provide the required additional information:**
 - a. **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – provide a summary of the action taken, or
 - b. **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – provide a timeframe or expected date for completion, or
 - c. **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – provide an explanation, scope, and parameters of an analysis to be completed within six months, or
 - d. **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – provide an explanation of why it is not warranted or not reasonable.
- 3. Please attach a PDF version of your completed responses to an email sent to:**

The Honorable Judge: Katherine Hansen Katherine.Hansen@santacruzcourt.org
and

The Santa Cruz County Grand Jury: grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

If you have questions about this response form, please contact the Grand Jury by calling (831) 454-2099 or by sending an email to grandjury@scgrandjury.org.

Findings

F10 . Calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline on existing signs have unacceptably long wait times and can result in a lost opportunity to assist human trafficking victims.

☒

AGREE

☐

PARTIALLY DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

N/A

F11 . Local nonprofit organizations have 24/7 hotline numbers that are staffed, and calls can be answered immediately or within minutes, greatly increasing the likelihood of contacting victims and providing assistance in real time.

☒ **AGREE**

☐ **PARTIALLY DISAGREE**

☐ **DISAGREE**

Response explanation (required for a response other than **Agree**):

N/A

Recommendations

- R7 .** Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors should require that county-specific human trafficking awareness and support signs include at least one 24/7 local hotline number, and staff should collaborate with local non-profits providing support to human trafficking victims to develop an effective sign for countywide posting and distribution. This should be completed by June 30, 2026. (F10, F11)

- ☐ **HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED** – summarize what has been done
- ☒ **HAS NOT YET BEEN IMPLEMENTED BUT WILL BE IN THE FUTURE** – summarize what will be done and the timeframe
- ☐ **REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS** – explain the scope and timeframe (not to exceed six months)
- ☐ **WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED** – explain why

Required response explanation, summary, and timeframe:

While it is recognized that Arukah Project is the sole survivor-led sex trafficking organization in the region and possesses unparalleled expertise in trauma recovery, it is essential that Santa Cruz County provide support through both funding and housing resources. If both local government and the broader community agree that Arukah Project is best equipped to lead these efforts, it is imperative that appropriate financial support be allocated. Currently, the organization is operating at full capacity, and with the countywide distribution of our Hotline Flyers, the demand on our services will inevitably increase. Proactive preparation by the community is necessary to address this anticipated need.

At present, Arukah Project receives on average 5 -7 calls per week from survivors seeking assistance. This does not include surrounding organizations and agencies who need our assistance with their survivors. The public dissemination of the Hotline Flyer is expected to substantially increase this volume, which will, in turn, significantly elevate our financial requirements. Without increased financial support, we cannot answer every call, nor provide the refuge and healing these survivors so deeply deserve.

Arukah Project has prepared Hotline flyers featuring our local hotline number, which are ready for countywide distribution. These flyers are available upon request to community members and local businesses, or at the initiative of Santa Cruz County. While we are prepared to begin dissemination promptly, we recognize the county's proposed completion date of June 30, 2026, and will align our efforts accordingly.