A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY
2023-2024

March 27, 2024

FINAL REPORT

NAPA COUNTY'S COMMUNICATION
WITH ITS CITIZENS

SUMMARY

Successful two-way communication with the public is an important component of a well-functioning county government. In this current digitally dependent communication society, there is a growing expectation that local government should quickly and reliably interact with citizen needs and be a trusted source of information.

Ultimately, the long-term success of government and citizen interaction depends on developing and maintaining public participation and trust. For communications to be most successful, efforts should accommodate diverse audiences, various user devices, and update website information regularly. Effective communication with citizens should involve clear messaging that is delivered via accessible and easy to use platforms.

Over the past year there have been significant changes in Napa County's senior communication staff and their interaction with citizens. County staff are implementing measures that are designed to enhance and expand citizen outreach efforts.

The County communications leadership relies upon the Office of Emergency Services (OES) Team and CAL FIRE/Napa County Fire for emergency citizen notification regarding preparedness, response and recovery on county-wide crisis issues such as wildfires, earthquakes, and floods.

The Grand Jury investigated methods by which Napa County is communicating with its citizens. The Jury was encouraged by the County's recent efforts to enhance interaction with citizens using multiple communication venues. The Jury found that Napa County communication personnel, tools, and strategies are improving but are still evolving and would benefit from a formally articulated vision.

The Jury found that there remain important emergency alert communication deficiencies that need to be addressed. The Jury found opportunities for improvement in notifications from the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and in the communication planning function of the Chief Executive Office (CEO).

The Jury made specific recommendations for improving communication with citizens. These recommendations include improvements in the Napa County emergency alert system and the development of an annual strategic plan covering all facets of two-way communication with Napa citizens.

Glossary

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CEO	County Executive Office (CEO)
DPW	County Department of Public Works
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
ICS	Incident Command System
OES	Office of Emergency Services
PIO	Public Information Office(r)

RFP   Request for Proposal

BACKGROUND

Napa County communicates with its citizens in numerous ways including websites, social media, emergency and non-emergency texts/emails, USPS mail, town hall meetings, and through local broadcast and print media. A Napa County Grand Jury Report published in 2016 reviewed the effectiveness of Napa County websites, identified some deficiencies, and made recommendations for improvement. The current Napa County Grand Jury elected to investigate the status of county government communication with citizens via its websites, as well as with two other significant communication modalities - the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and County Public Information Offices (PIO).

Websites

An important method for communication with citizens is the county websites - online platforms created and maintained to provide information, services, and resources to the public. These websites serve as a digital gateway to government services, policies, regulations, and other various forms of engagement.

Ideally, county websites are designed to facilitate transparency, communication, and interaction between the government and the public. They aim to provide easier access to government services, information, and resources, improving citizens' ability to engage with their government.

Some specific areas that Napa County interacts with its citizens through its websites are:

- Information: Government websites provide information on government officials, policies, laws, regulations, and public services. Search features help users find specific information quickly.
- Services: The websites can offer online services such as permit applications and county staff contact information.
- News and Updates: Government websites can include news and press releases to keep the public informed.
- Forms and Documents: Users can download current forms and official documents.

County library websites provide a variety of free digital resources and multiple other community services that enhance communication with local residents. They play a crucial role in promoting literacy, education, and community engagement and can facilitate citizen interaction with other county departments.

The best websites are designed to be accessible to all citizens, including those for whom English is a second language and for those with disabilities or special needs. This means adhering to federal accessibility standards and ADA guidelines. It is important to note that the features and designs of various county department websites may differ in order to address citizen needs in various locations.

County websites can play a significant role in promoting government fiscal transparency by providing access to actions, budgets, spending, and other related information. Websites can

include feedback features, such as contact forms or chat features, to allow citizens to reach out with questions or concerns.

County websites use applications and content management systems in order to create, manage, and update web content. These websites must be updated regularly and also adhere to legal and regulatory requirements related to privacy, accessibility, and other factors. Website security is a priority in order to protect sensitive data and to ensure that user information is safe.

<u>Office of Emergency Services</u>

A second system which Napa County uses to communicate with its citizens is through the Office of Emergency Services (OES) located in the Napa County Sheriff's Office. OES is responsible for coordinating and managing emergency and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts at the local level as well as coordinating efforts with other agencies. This includes county emergency planning and resource management. OES has a mandate to ensure timely and accurate dissemination of urgent information to the public, emergency responders, and other county officials.

<u>Communications Public Information Officers</u>

A third element in Napa County for communication and dissemination of information to the people is through the County Public Information Officers (PIO). PIOs are responsible for ensuring that information, news, and updates from their government agency are communicated to the public and media in a timely and accurate manner. This includes press releases, official statements, and certain other forms of communication. PIOs typically interact with members of the media, including local journalists and reporters. They serve as a point of contact between the government agency and the press, facilitating interviews, providing information, and organizing press conferences.

The county websites, OES and Communications PIO are Napa County's primary methods of keeping the public informed about government activities, policies, public notices and initiatives. They play an important role in maintaining transparency, accountability, and providing effective public communication with the citizenry. The Grand Jury inquired into the county's current efforts to provide information to citizens, as well as citizens' ability to effectively communicate back to the county.

METHODOLOGY

The Jury reviewed county communications documents, multiple Napa County department websites and social media sites, other California county websites, county emergency alert systems, Public Information Office notices, conducted eleven in-person interviews, and attended meetings with other Napa County staff members:

- Napa County Communications Staff Organization Chart
- Review of Napa County internal communications strategic plan
- Napa County Emergency Operations Plan
- Review of national studies on effective government communication with citizens
- Review of the Guide to Citizen Engagement by Public Libraries

- Napa County Annual Report 2022
- Napa County Web data reports
- Napa County Sheriff Department Staff
- Napa Police Department
- Napa County District Attorney Office
- Napa County Board of Supervisors
- Napa County Senior Communications Staff
- Napa County Office of Emergency Services Staff
- Napa County website content staff in several departments
- Napa Valley Register articles on county communication with citizens
- Attended virtual town hall meetings
- Napa County websites
- Other California county websites
- Napa County News Releases
- Napa County Social Media Websites:
  1. Facebook.com/NapaCounty
  2. Nextdoor.com (various county sites)
  3. YouTube.com/@NapaCounty
  4. Twitter.com/CountyofNapa

DISCUSSION

Meaningful two-way contact with citizens is an important component of a well-functioning local government which can lead to increased awareness of local issues, trust in government, citizen engagement, and an overall sense of partnership between citizens and their government. Effective Napa County government communication with its citizens is an ongoing process requiring strategies that continuously adapt to changing technologies and public needs.

Over the past year there have been new developments in planning for county government communications with its citizens through efforts by the Napa County Executive Office Communications Staff. Under the leadership of the new County Executive Officer (CEO), new Deputy CEO – Communications, new Communications Public Information Officer/Legislative and Policy Analyst, the County Webmaster, and the website content and information services staff embedded in various county departments, the county is attempting to enhance capabilities and outreach efforts.

In addition to standard website maintenance and updating, the county undertook initiatives to improve distribution of essential information. The county communications staff has established connections with media, specifically with the editors of the Calistoga Tribune, Yountville Sun, Napa Valley Features, Napa Valley Register, news director of KVON/KVYN Radio, and the newly assigned Napa County reporter for the Santa Rosa Press Democrat. These efforts are designed to strengthen their relationships with local media and expand opportunities for effective communication.

County staff have collaborated to host emergency preparedness resource fairs and have hosted town halls and community events focused on a variety of subjects, including county facilities development, fire/emergency preparedness, storm damage, roads updates, flood control,

underground electric power lines, road pavement projects and transportation. Napa County has commenced the first phase of an extensive facilities planning process, and states it is committed to making this process inclusive and community-driven. In order to be successful, there should be a continuing effort by the County to increase citizen participation by making the events a more family-oriented entertainment venue.

Another method in use by the County is issuing news releases, social media posts, and videos to support various county initiatives, projects, and updates. For example, staff provided information on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Forgivable Loan Program and the approval of Napa Valley Sub-basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

County communication staff also collaborates with the OES team and Cal Fire/Napa County Fire, working on wildfire information outreach and other emergency preparedness. This includes use of both the text messaging app "Alert Napa County" and an outreach campaign through media releases, social media initiatives, and promotional videos to enhance public safety and community preparedness.

Recognizing the diversity of citizens in the community, the county prepared a bi-weekly translation schedule for emergency communications and increased the availability of emergency services translators, assuring that critical information reaches non-English speaking populations promptly.

COUNTY WEBSITES

Local government websites are now typically the first and primary source that citizens access to find information such as county staff contacts, documents, permit applications, and other government related items. Websites should be easy to navigate and search, feature commonly used services, and result in positive online experiences. The most visited websites in Napa County are: Napa County's home page, library, animal shelter, airport, job opportunities, and Department of Corrections.

County websites need to be updated regularly, well organized, content-rich, and highly searchable. Website content should be clear using plain language to improve citizen engagement and understanding. County website design requires awareness of local citizen needs, realizing that residents are a diverse group of users including people of several demographics. The goal of government website design should be to serve all people, including those with special needs and disabilities.

County website managers create and maintain the various websites of the county and its multiple departments. Their responsibilities include:

- Website Development and Design: Designing, developing, and updating the county website to ensure it is user-friendly, accessible, and meets the needs of the community.
- Content Management: Regularly updating and maintaining content on the website, including announcements, news, events, and other relevant information.
- Technical Maintenance: Ensuring the website's technical functionality, such as monitoring and resolving issues, updating software, and implementing security measures to protect against cyber threats.

- User Support: Providing support to website users, addressing inquiries, and ensuring that online services are accessible to the public.
- Integration of Online Services: Collaborating with various county departments to integrate online services and forms, making it easier for residents to access and submit information.
- Social Media Integration: Coordinating the integration of social media channels to keep the community informed and engaged.
- Accessibility Compliance: Ensuring that the website complies with accessibility standards to make it usable for individuals with disabilities.
- Data Management: Managing data on the website, ensuring accuracy, and implementing data protection measures.
- Analytics and Reporting: Monitoring website traffic, analyzing user behavior, and providing reports to improve the site's performance and user experience.
- Collaboration with Departments: Working closely with various county departments to understand their needs and ensuring that the website reflects the county's overall goals and objectives.

Napa County was the recipient of a 2018 National Association of Government Web Professionals Pinnacle Award for website excellence. The Pinnacle Awards are an annual celebration of the best in government web communications, design, development, and innovation. These awards recognize the hard work and dedication of government web professionals who are committed to delivering exceptional digital experiences for their citizens. The Pinnacle Awards showcase excellence in several categories, including website design, mobile app development, and social media integration. Winners are selected by a panel of judges who are experts in government web development and design.

During our review of Napa County websites, the Jury found that the majority of the County's websites are well designed and functional, with notable improvement since the last Grand Jury Report on websites in 2016. The current Jury did come across a few websites with broken links and some cases of outdated information. In one case, an online permit application allowed entry of user data, but when attempting to submit, the website did not save or forward the data. The Jury found a few department websites that do not list staff contact information such as phone number or email address. A helpful feature found on some websites allows the user to contact a webmaster if a link did not work. Some websites contain a chat feature, where clicking on an icon initiates real time contact with county staff. Napa County Library's research librarians are responsible for staffing this chat feature. The Jury found that there is an opportunity to expand this feature into other county department websites.

County website designers must stay aware of how the online experience differs by user device and accommodate various user devices. Currently almost half of all traffic to county websites is on mobile devices (see below) and as more and more citizens demand on-the-go access to government services this number is expected to rise. With this in mind, Napa County needs to assure that access to websites remains mobile friendly and easily readable allowing simple navigation.

Devices Used to Access County Websites (July- Sept 2023):

	Device	Percentage
🖥	Desktop	52.6%
📱	Smartphone	45.6%
📱	Tablet	1.5%

NAPA COUNTY LIBRARY

The Napa Library has one of the most commonly visited websites in the county, with thousands of citizen interactions every month. The library website and its many programs provide a variety of free digital resources and many other services that enhance communication with local residents. It plays an important role in promoting literacy, education, and community engagement and facilitates citizen interaction with other county departments. Some common features and services found in the library by accessing its websites are:

- Book Collections: houses a diverse collection of books, including fiction, non-fiction, reference materials, and more. They often cater to various age groups and interests.
- Digital Resources: offers digital resources such as e-books, audiobooks, and online databases that patrons can access remotely.
- Computer and Internet Access: provides public computers with internet access, allowing patrons to browse the web, work on assignments, or use library-specific resources.
- Educational Programs: organizes educational programs and events, including workshops, lectures, book clubs, and activities for children. These programs foster learning and community engagement.
- Reference Services: Librarians are available to assist patrons with research, reference questions, information inquiries and technical issues.
- Media and Audiovisual Materials: offers a collection of DVDs, CDs, and other audiovisual materials for borrowing.
- Meeting Spaces: has meeting rooms that community groups or individuals can reserve for meetings, workshops, or events.
- Children's Services: has dedicated spaces and programs for children, including story hours, reading programs, and educational events.
- Community Engagement: serves as a community hub, hosting events that bring people together, such as author talks, cultural programs, and local exhibitions.
- Interlibrary Loan Services: if the library doesn't have a particular book or resource, it may be able to obtain it from another library through interlibrary loan services.

Napa County's libraries are community hubs that bring people together and help connect people to essential services and resources. Local governments, libraries and citizens can work together to imagine and implement initiatives in their communities, taking advantage of the library's existing role as a community anchor. Library communication with citizens is important for fostering community engagement, promoting library services, and ensuring that residents are aware of the resources and programs available to them. Free access to library technology and information databases increases digital information access for all citizens and supports the

information and communication needs of an increasingly digitally dependent information society.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

During an emergency, it is important for the government to communicate quickly and effectively with the public. The Napa County Office of Emergency Services (OES), located in the Napa County Sheriff's Department, is the county's primary emergency notification and services leader. OES also manages the county Emergency Operations Center (EOC). This includes responding, directing, and coordinating resources and mutual aid assets across the county to support the communities and citizens. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides OES with guidance on how to communicate during an emergency, including issuing alerts and warnings, evacuation directives, and information about response status, available assistance, and other matters that impact preparedness, response, and recovery.

Napa County recently transferred OES from the County Chief Executive's Office to the Napa County Sheriff's Department. This change was made recognizing that the Sheriff is the longtime county manager of the Emergency Operations Command (EOC) group. OES has appointed a Public Information Officer in the Sheriff's Department who oversees and helps coordinate emergency messaging along with the senior county communications staff and three OES county managers for the areas of preparedness, response, and recovery.

Their mandate includes responding, directing, and coordinating resources and mutual aid assets across the area to support the communities and its citizens:

- Emergency Planning: Developing and maintaining comprehensive emergency and disaster response plans that outline the roles and responsibilities of various agencies, organizations, and stakeholders during emergencies.
- Emergency Response: Coordinating the response efforts during emergencies, including the deployment of first responders, resources, and assets to the affected area. This may involve law enforcement, fire departments, medical services, and other relevant agencies.
- Resource Management: Identifying and managing critical resources, such as equipment, personnel, and supplies, to ensure an effective response to emergencies and disasters.
- Information and Communication: Establishing communication systems that enable timely and accurate dissemination of information to the public, emergency responders, and government officials.
- Public Awareness and Education: Educating the public on emergency preparedness and safety measures and providing guidance on what to do during various types of emergencies.
- Warning Systems: Operating alert and notification systems, including sirens, text alerts, and public announcements, to warn citizens of imminent threats or disasters.
- Coordination and Collaboration: Collaborating with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups, to ensure a coordinated and efficient response to emergencies.
- Training and Exercises: Conducting regular drills, training exercises, and simulations to ensure that emergency responders and agencies are well-prepared for various disaster scenarios.

- Resource Coordination: Managing the allocation of resources and mutual aid agreements, where neighboring jurisdictions support each other during emergencies when additional resources are needed.
- Recovery and Rehabilitation: Assisting in the recovery phase after a disaster, which includes helping communities rebuild, providing financial assistance to individuals and businesses, and offering mental health services to those affected.
- Grant Management: Administering and distributing federal and state grants that support emergency management and preparedness efforts.
- Vulnerability Assessments: Identifying potential hazards and assessing vulnerabilities in the community to inform planning and mitigation efforts.
- Incident Command System (ICS): Implementing the Incident Command System, a standardized management system for emergencies and disasters that facilitates coordination and communication between agencies.

The OES keeps the EOC informed of their operations and status, helping to assist and coordinate large-scale preparedness among county decision makers, first responders, and other county services, employees, and citizens. When the county is experiencing an emergency situation, the EOC may be activated. If an EOC is opened, the latest information on an emergency situation will be posted on county websites and through citizen alerts via social media, texts and emails. OES is typically not involved in low-risk incidents but concentrates on events that impact the whole community that may involve a need for evacuations and/or sheltering.

NIXLE AND EVERBRIDGE

"Alert Napa County" is the county emergency notification system that sends digital messages when there is important safety information to communicate to residents. This includes situations such as severe weather, planned and unexpected road closures, missing persons, evacuations, natural disasters, and public health concerns. In the event of an emergency, public safety agencies such as Napa County Office of Emergency Services (OES), law enforcement agencies, fire agencies, city agencies and Office of Education are able to provide emergency information directly to subscribers. In order to receive these messages, citizens must enroll at the county website *Ready Napa County* (https://readynapacounty.org), where information is available on Everbridge, the county's current alert notification system.

The Jury found that many citizens have found the "Alert Napa County" enrollment process to be cumbersome and confusing. This is limiting the number of citizens receiving important alerts. Additionally, many citizens do not have the ability to customize alerts that are meaningful to them.

In recent years, "Alert Napa County" has notified citizens of imminent threats using the digital alert systems Nixle and Everbridge. Last year, Napa County transitioned from Nixle to Everbridge for its citizen and emergency responder emergency notifications, using mobile phone applications, text messages, emails and social media postings during local emergencies. Fire, law enforcement, and EMS agencies may also utilize Everbridge messaging for less critical events that do not result in a need for mass notification.

Below are agencies across Napa County that have used Nixle and/or Everbridge to provide information to the public:

- Napa County Office of Emergency Services: information about extreme weather (ex: Red Flag Warnings, heat emergencies, Flash Flood Warnings, etc..), emergency events (including evacuation orders and warnings), public health and safety advisories
- Evacuation instructions are currently issued through Everbridge by the Office of Emergency Services located in the Napa County Sheriff's Office.
- Napa County Sheriff's Office: police activity, traffic accidents, road closures, and emergency information as necessary
- Napa County Public Works: utilized to communicate planned and emergency road closures

The Jury's investigation found problems with the transition to and effectiveness of the current Everbridge alert notification system. After a contract was negotiated last year, it quickly became apparent that Everbridge was not fulfilling many of the features in its contract with Napa County, resulting in some Everbridge subscribers not reliably receiving emergency notifications. It is unclear exactly how many Everbridge Emergency Alerts are being reliably received by county residents.

In some instances, unreliable receipt of emergency notices is due to issues with the performance of the Everbridge app. Residents who have signed up for the app have experienced poor performance of the app or have not received a message at all. County OES Staff indicated that the transition last year from Nixle to Everbridge resulted in loss of resident contact information contained in Nixle. According to OES staff, these issues are being addressed with Everbridge staff in an ongoing attempt to improve this emergency notification system.

COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Napa County has a new Communications and Public Information Officer (PIO) who is attempting to work closely with the County Executive Officer, elected officials, department heads and information services staff throughout the county to strategize, develop, and maintain the County's public information, social media and community engagement activities. The county executive office PIO has oversight for a number of county communications functions such as media relations, social marketing, public information activities and websites, emergency response and special events planning.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The County Department of Public Works (DPW) has oversight on multiple county services: maintenance and building of roads, county facilities and property, county airport, animal shelter, storm water and creek cleaning, county waste services, and resorts. DPW relies on the County PIO and OES to distribute information to the public, including planned road maintenance, emergency road closures and other DPW oversight issues that involve residents in the county. These messages are then distributed by the County PIO primarily via social media websites, and in some instances where large numbers of residents may be involved, via text or email alert notifications including Everbridge.

Citizens can communicate their questions or concerns to DPW staff via their website, email or phone calls. Citizen complaints or concerns are then reviewed and prioritized by DPW staff.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

As a result of the Jury's investigations into Napa County's communication efforts, as well as examination of several other county websites and published studies on effective government communication, the Jury has identified a number of key principles and strategies for effective county government communication with citizens:

Clear and Accessible Information:
- Ensure that information is easily accessible through government websites, social media, and other relevant channels.
- Use simple language to make information understandable to a wide audience.

Timely Updates:
- Provide timely updates on government activities, policies, and events.
- Utilize various communication channels, such as websites, email newsletters, press releases, and social media to disseminate important information.

Two-Way Communication:
- Encourage citizen feedback through various means, including digital media, surveys, public forums, and town hall meetings.
- Respond to citizen inquiries and concerns promptly and constructively.

Transparency:
- Keep citizens informed by publishing reports and data on government processes, decision-making, and financial information.

Educational Campaigns:
- Raise awareness about important issues, such as public health or emergency preparedness and implement campaigns to educate citizens about their rights, responsibilities, and the services available to them.

Customize Communication to citizen groups:
- Tailor communication to different demographics and regions to ensure relevance and cultural sensitivity.
- Work with local community leaders and organizations to improve communication at the grassroots level.

Use and Update Technology:
- Leverage digital tools and platforms for online engagement and dissemination of information.
- Implement mobile apps for citizen inquiries and service delivery.

Crisis Communication:
- Have a well-defined crisis communication plan in place for emergencies and crises.
- Provide accurate, timely, and reassuring information to citizens during such situations through multiple communication modalities.

Collaboration with Media:
- Foster effective relationships with the media to ensure accurate and unbiased coverage of government activities.
- Hold regular press conferences and provide press releases to inform the public through the media.

Public Relations and Marketing:
- Develop public relations campaigns to promote government initiatives and successes.
- Use marketing techniques to engage citizens and raise awareness about important issues.

Access to Data:
- Publish current government data in open and understandable formats to encourage innovation and accountability.
- Collaborate with tech communities and organizations to develop useful applications and services.

Accountability and Evaluation:
- Develop metrics that monitor the effectiveness of government communication strategies for feedback and data analysis, making adjustments based on these results of evaluations and citizens' feedback.

Engagement in Social Media:
- Actively engage with citizens on social media platforms, promoting two-way communications with timely response to citizen questions and concerns.

Community Partnerships:
- Collaborate with non-governmental organizations, community groups, and civil society to enhance the reach and credibility of government messages.

Disabilities and Cultural Sensitivity:
- Recognize and respect the diversity of languages and cultures within the population.
- Provide information in multiple languages as needed.
- Provide access for citizens with disabilities and special needs.

In this current digitally dependent communication society, there is a growing expectation that local government should quickly and reliably interact with citizen needs and be a trusted source of information. Effective government communication with citizens should involve clear messaging that is delivered via accessible and easy to use platforms. Ultimately, the long-term success of government and citizen interaction depends on developing and maintaining public participation and trust. For communications to be most successful, efforts should accommodate diverse audiences, various user devices, and update website information regularly.

Napa County websites, the Office of Emergency Services, the Public Information Offices, and our libraries are key citizen communication entities endeavoring to keep the public well-informed about government activities, policies, initiatives, and local issues. The Jury found that these entities are playing an important role in maintaining transparency, accountability, and providing effective non-emergency communication, but there are areas in emergency notice systems that need to be improved. It is important for the County to periodically re-evaluate the effectiveness of their communication efforts and adjust strategies to stay successfully engaged with the citizenry.

FINDINGS

F1. Since the 2016 Napa County Grand Jury report on county websites, the county has increased its senior communication staff, appointed a webmaster, and implemented improved methods of communicating with citizens for routine, non-emergency notifications.

F2. Napa County has made some improvements to provide timely and accurate information to citizens through enhanced website design and performance.

F3. A sizable portion of Napa County website traffic is via mobile devices. Some website content is not optimized for smaller screened mobile devices.

F4. The county has not published to citizens a county strategic plan which outlines how to facilitate the distribution, efficiency, and quality of public information.

F5. Napa County's overall communication efforts, while focused on "telling Napa County's story", is not engaging the community in a two-way conversation which could facilitate citizen engagement.

F6. Napa County lacks a formally articulated plan to continuously re-evaluate and update its communication strategies adapting to changing digital messaging technologies in order to assure that messaging remains timely, effective, and relevant.

F7. The switch from Nixle to Everbridge did not go through an RFP or similar evaluation process which has led to disruptions in citizen alert contacts that have not been satisfactorily resolved.

F8. County emergency notifications using the alert technology Everbridge are not reliably reaching all enrolled citizens, and it is unknown exactly how many residents are receiving messages.

F9. The Everbridge emergency notification mobile app for phones and other mobile digital devices is not performing reliably for citizens.

F10. The enrollment process for Everbridge is cumbersome and not well understood by the citizenry.

F11. Everbridge has not fulfilled all of its contractual obligations with Napa County.

F12. Napa County's staff have improved measures to facilitate communication with citizen's diverse languages and for those having disabilities or special needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county communications staff to annually implement and publish to county residents an updated strategic communication plan that results in timely and efficient two-way messaging with the public through digital, print, and broadcast media.

R2. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county senior communications staff to meet with all county department heads to assess their communication needs so that they can message effectively and consistently with their target audiences.

R3. By September 30, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county department communications staff to create a monthly review of county social media accounts, websites, and other digital communication channels to assure that information stays current.

R4. By September 30, 2024, the Napa County Sheriff direct their communication staff to create a monthly review of their social media accounts, websites, and other digital communication channels to assure that information stays current.

R5. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors require all county and department websites to offer a live chat feature on each county department website to help citizens get quick answers to their questions and facilitate timely assistance.

R6. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors direct county communications staff to develop and make public the metrics and analytics which monitor county efforts to evaluate effective two-way communication strategies with citizens.

R7. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors have county communications staff ensure that county initiatives and programs are available to all of our citizens, including those who speak languages other than English and those with special needs or disabilities.

R8. By December 31, 2024, the Board of Supervisors establish a Napa County Communications Citizen Advisory Board with the goal of providing community input into Napa County communication priorities.

R9. By December 31, 2024, the Sheriff's Department OES prepare and execute updated plans to fix deficiencies in alert notification measures ensuring that accurate and timely emergency information is disseminated to the public and media when needed. This may require assessing alternative emergency notification system providers to resolve ongoing Everbridge deficiencies.

R10. By September 30, 2024, the Sheriff's Department OES collaborate with Napa County communication staff to address problems with the "Alert Napa County" citizen enrollment process including increased awareness of how to enroll, streamline the enrollment process, and improve citizen's ability to manage their own alert notification preferences.

Request for Responses

Board of Supervisors: R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8

Napa County Sheriff: R4, R9, R10

Invited Responses

County Executive Officer: R1, R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R8

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.