



September 1, 2026

Honorable Michael Markman, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of Alameda County
1225 Fallon Street, Department 1
Oakland, CA 94612

Alameda County Grand Jury
c/o Casey Bates, Deputy District Attorney
1401 Lakeside Drive, Suite 1104
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: RESPONSE TO THE 2025-26 ALAMEDA COUNTY GRAND JURY REPORT

Honorable Judge Markman and Members of the Grand Jury,

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 933.05, I am submitting the City of Alameda's response to the 2025–2026 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury Report, dated June 15, 2026. The report addresses issues related to the City's emergency preparedness and is titled, *A Call for Readiness: Improving the City of Alameda's Emergency Preparedness*.

This letter provides the City's response to the findings and recommendations contained in that report.

Finding 26-43: The city of Alameda has an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) intended to be flexible enough for use in all emergencies.

Response to Finding 26-43:

The City of Alameda agrees with this finding.

Finding 26-44: An update to the EOP was approved by the city council in April 2026. This is the first update in seven years. Best practice for updating EOPs is every five years.

Response to Finding 26-44:

The City of Alameda agrees with this finding.

Finding 26-45: The city of Alameda has failed to conduct any in-person disaster preparedness training since 2019.

Response to Finding 26-45:

The City of Alameda partially disagrees with this finding. Over the past year, Emergency Management staff and Alameda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers have actively engaged the community through a variety of outreach and preparedness events, including the Alameda Art & Wine Faire, school presentations, the Alameda Spring Festival, the Alameda Hospital Health Fair, and programs at the Alameda Senior Center.

The City recognizes that there is always room to expand in-person disaster preparedness education and community outreach. To that end, Emergency Management staff is currently developing a program to offer a personal emergency preparedness course, providing residents with additional opportunities to prepare for disasters.

Expanding community preparedness programming is a priority and implementation will require careful planning to fully develop and launch, given existing resource constraints.

To that end, the City is exploring a partnership with the AmeriCorps Neighbor-to-Neighbor Service Corps or similar program, to add two full-time fellows in 2027. These fellows would support both Emergency Management and the City's Sustainability and Resilience Manager with community outreach efforts, including disaster preparedness education, resilience initiatives, and public engagement.

Finding 26-46: The city of Alameda maintains a voluntary database of residents in need of additional help during a large-scale emergency. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services advises against such databases because they can create a false sense of security.

Response to Finding 26-46:

The City of Alameda partially disagrees with the finding. The City of Alameda recognizes the challenges associated with maintaining a voluntary disaster registry for community members with access and functional needs. However, the City believes such a registry can provide significant value during the post-disaster response and recovery phase by helping prioritize welfare checks and allocate available resources to registered community members. These efforts may be carried out by City staff, trained volunteers, or mutual aid personnel as resources become available.

It should also be noted that the City's existing voluntary disaster registry includes a disclaimer consistent with Cal OES guidance. Individuals registering are required to acknowledge that they have read and understand the disclaimer before submitting their information. This disclaimer reads as follows:

Required Acknowledgment: Before continuing, participants must check the following box: I have read and understand this information. I understand that completing this questionnaire does not guarantee emergency assistance. I am responsible for preparing an emergency plan and supplies.

Finding 26-47: The 2026 EOP recommends that the city create partnerships with community groups that represent individuals with disabilities in order to ensure an effective response to an emergency.

Response to Finding 26-47:

The City agrees with this finding and is committed to implementing the recommendations contained in the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Emergency Management will coordinate with the City's ADA Coordinator and the Commission on Persons with Disabilities to identify the community groups best suited to collaborate on ongoing disaster preparedness, response planning, and recovery efforts. This collaboration will help ensure that the access and functional needs of community members are incorporated into the City's emergency management planning, training opportunities, and response activities.

Finding 26-48: Unlike neighboring cities, Alameda does not have a siren system to warn residents of disasters.

Response to Finding 26-48:

The City of Alameda agrees with this finding. At one time, the City maintained an outdoor warning siren system; however, it was decommissioned due to ongoing costs associated with its maintenance and operation. At that time, the City elected to align with the recommendations of the 2012 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury report, *Local Emergency Notification System*, which concluded:

“The Grand Jury believes that a countywide emergency notification system utilizing federal IPAWS protocols would best serve the citizens of Alameda County. It would allow the region to participate in the innovative Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) program. The patchwork of systems currently being used within the county invites inconsistent messaging during emergencies.”

The City of Alameda remains aligned with the 2012 Grand Jury recommendation to participate in a single countywide emergency notification system. That system, known as AC Alert, is managed by the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services and utilizes the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), including Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), to notify the public of emergencies. The system was successfully utilized during both the 2024 tsunami warning and the 2025 tsunami advisory to provide emergency notifications to Alameda residents.

While the City supports the current countywide notification strategy, it is not opposed to evaluating whether an outdoor warning siren system could provide an additional layer of public notification. Outdoor warning sirens have both advantages and limitations and could be viewed as one component of a comprehensive, multi-layered public warning strategy rather than a standalone solution. Any future consideration of a siren system would need to include an evaluation of installation costs, long-term maintenance requirements, lifecycle replacement costs, and the identification of a sustainable funding source to ensure the system remains operational and reliable when needed.

Finding 26-49: The city of Alameda has the ability to send emergency alerts to residents via cell phone, land line, email, and text, and to post more detailed information on social media and city websites.

Response to Finding 26-49:

The City of Alameda agrees with this finding and will continue aligning with the recommendations of the 2012 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury report, *Local Emergency Notification System*. The City will continue utilizing the countywide AC Alert emergency notification system, including the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), as its primary mass notification platform.

In addition, the City will continue using its official website, social media platforms, and other available communication channels to provide timely and accurate information before, during, and after emergencies. The City remains committed to a multi-layered public information strategy that leverages multiple communication methods to reach as many community members as possible during emergency incidents.

Finding 26-50: During tsunami warnings in 2024 and 2025, the city of Alameda's social media sites contained little, no, and at times inconsistent messages.**Response to Finding 26-50:**

The City agrees with the finding.

As part of developing the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), special emphasis was placed on enhancing the City's emergency communications and public information strategies to bolster its messaging. The City has developed incident-specific pre-scripted messages that can be rapidly shared with the community during the initial stages of an emergency to provide timely and consistent information.

Additionally, the City Manager's Office is currently recruiting for a Communications Manager who will be responsible for developing a comprehensive emergency communications plan to ensure consistent messaging across all City departments during emergencies. This position will also support the development of an Emergency Public Information Team to provide depth, redundancy, and consistency in public messaging during Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations.

The Grand Jury's finding also omits the fact that preceding and during tsunami warnings, the City must wait for guidance from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), the National Tsunami Warning Center, and other appropriate authorities. Further guidance from these other state and federal agencies may be delayed while the agencies wait for tsunami waves to pass one or more offshore monitoring buoys. These buoys—which are owned, managed, and monitored by these other agencies, **not** the City—allow the agencies to collect and analyze real-time data, which is then used to determine the most appropriate guidance for affected communities.

To address this challenge, the City has developed pre-scripted messaging that explains why specific evacuation or protective action guidance may not yet be available, while reinforcing that the incident is being actively monitored and that additional instructions will be provided as soon as reliable information becomes available.

Finding 26-51: The 2026 EOP includes emergency messaging templates for use across all communication platforms.

Response to Finding 26-51:

The City agrees with this finding. These message templates are included in the Emergency Public Information Annex (Annex B).

Finding 26-52: Over the past several years, the city of Alameda failed to conduct discussion-based and operations-based exercises to test its emergency plans, as required by its EOP.

Response to Finding 26-52:

The City of Alameda partially agrees with this finding. Emergency Management staff have regularly participated in regional and statewide exercises to strengthen coordination, planning, and response capabilities. City personnel assigned to the EOC roster last participated in discussion-based and operations-based exercises specific to the City in June 2024.

The EOC roster is a roster of City staff that has been pre-determined by the Executive Management Team who will be re-assigned to the EOC in the event of an activation to fill a pre-determined role within the EOC as determined by the EOP. As part of the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) update, the City incorporated four four-hour training sessions for EOC roster personnel. These facilitated, scenario-based workshops are designed to familiarize staff with the updated EOP and provide practical experience applying the plan during simulated emergency scenarios. These training sessions were planned before the 2026 Civil Grand Jury findings were released and will be commencing in the fall of 2026.

The City is also exploring expanding its existing agreement with the consultant hired to assist with preparing the EOP to provide additional, position-specific training for EOC personnel. Furthermore, the City has engaged with other emergency management training providers to identify opportunities for a comprehensive EOC training program that supports employees with varying levels of experience—from those new to the EOC environment to seasoned personnel serving in leadership positions.

Finding 26-53: The city of Alameda has failed to prepare written after-action reports after informal testing of its emergency response plans or after actual emergencies, missing opportunities to evaluate and improve its response.

Response to Finding 26-53:

The City of Alameda partially disagrees with this finding. After-action reports were completed following the City's multi-year Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation for the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as following the EOC activation associated with the 2024 tsunami warning. These reports documented lessons learned and identified opportunities to improve the City's emergency management capabilities.

The Grand Jury also requested information related to the City's response to the gas leak that occurred on January 14th, 2026. The City provided a summary of the Fire Department's response to this incident. From the City's perspective, this incident did not meet the threshold for a disaster or major emergency requiring activation of the Emergency Operations Center or a citywide after-action report. Rather, it was managed as a routine emergency response.

As a precaution, several nearby buildings were evacuated while the utility company worked to isolate and cap the leak, which had been caused by a construction crew. The incident was mitigated in less than one hour, the EOC was not activated, and the response remained within the scope of normal Fire Department operations. Responding personnel completed all required incident documentation and conducted a post-incident debrief, which is consistent with standard operating procedures for incidents of this nature. The City would not typically generate a formal after-action report for an isolated emergency response that does not involve a significant multi-agency coordination effort, prolonged operations, or activation of the City's emergency management structure.

The City does acknowledge that there have been additional opportunities to formally document lessons learned from emergency incidents, EOC activations, exercises, and informal testing of emergency response plans that could further strengthen future preparedness and response efforts.

Going forward, Emergency Management staff will work closely with the City Manager's Office to establish a more consistent after-action review process. This process will ensure that significant incidents, exercises, EOC activations, and other emergency management activities are evaluated, lessons learned are documented, and identified improvements are tracked through a formal corrective action process to enhance the City's preparedness and response capabilities.

Finding 26-54: The 2026 EOP requires after-action reports for test exercises, but not for responses to actual emergencies.

Response to Finding 26-54:

The City of Alameda disagrees with this finding. Section 8.4 of the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), titled "After-Action Review and Reporting," clearly establishes the City's requirement to complete an After-Action Report (AAR), in direct contradiction to this finding. Specifically, the Plan states:

"SEMS regulations require jurisdictions to complete an After-Action Report (AAR) within 120 days of each emergency proclamation."

The 2026 EOP further outlines the City's process for conducting after-action reviews, documenting lessons learned, identifying corrective actions, and tracking improvements to strengthen future emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Accordingly, the requirements for after-action reporting are clearly defined within the adopted Emergency Operations Plan and are consistent with the California Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) regulations.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 26-22: The city of Alameda should update its EOP at least every five years.

Response to Recommendation 26-22:

The recommendation has been implemented. The City initiated the most recent EOP update process with a consultant in May 2025, two months prior to the 2025-26 Grand Jury convening. The next review and update should be completed by April 2031.

Recommendation 26-23: The city of Alameda must conduct in-person emergency preparedness training and take steps to begin the process within 90 days of receipt of the Grand Jury report.

Response to Recommendation 26-23:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. It is expected that staff training will commence in October of 2026, if not sooner. As part of the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) update, the City incorporated four four-hour training sessions for EOC roster personnel. These facilitated, scenario-based workshops are designed to familiarize staff with the updated EOP and provide practical experience applying the plan during simulated emergency scenarios. These training sessions were planned before the 2026 Civil Grand Jury findings were released.

The City is also exploring expanding its existing agreement with the consultant hired to assist with preparing the EOP to provide additional, position-specific training for EOC personnel. Furthermore, the City has engaged with other emergency management training providers to identify opportunities for a comprehensive EOC training program that supports employees with varying levels of experience—from those new to the EOC environment to seasoned personnel serving in leadership positions.

The City's long-term objective is to establish a sustainable emergency management training and exercise program that includes position-specific instruction, functional training, and two EOC tabletop exercises per year.

Recommendation 26-24: The city of Alameda must expand the reach of emergency preparedness information by, for example, mailing a postcard to all residents, distributing door hangers, and providing inserts in all of the city's electric bills within 90 days of receipt of the Grand Jury report.

Response to Recommendation 26-24:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future – The City has begun working with a design firm to develop a community mailer focused on general emergency preparedness information and guidance for residents. During the planning process, City staff determined that distributing the information as a utility bill insert was not the most effective approach. The size limitations of utility bill inserts would significantly restrict the amount of preparedness information that could be provided, and not all Alameda residents receive utility bills directly. In many rental properties,

utility bills are sent to property owners or landlords who may not reside in Alameda, limiting the effectiveness of this distribution method.

Once the mailer is finalized, the City intends to print and distribute it using the United States Postal Service's Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) program. This distribution method will ensure that every residential mailing address in Alameda receives the emergency preparedness information directly.

Implementation of this recommendation is anticipated to be completed by October 2026.

Recommendation 26-25: Rather than maintain a registry of at-risk residents, the city of Alameda must create partnerships with community groups that represent these individuals to ensure an effective response to an emergency.

Response to Recommendation 26-25:

The recommendation will not be implemented, because it is not warranted and is not reasonable. The City of Alameda disagrees that a voluntary disaster registry should not be maintained. While the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) identifies the challenges associated with maintaining voluntary registries for individuals with access and functional needs, it does not prohibit their use. Instead, Cal OES has developed *Voluntary Disaster Registry Planning Guidance* that outlines best practices for jurisdictions that choose to maintain such a registry.

The City of Alameda recognizes the challenges associated with maintaining a voluntary disaster registry for community members with access and functional needs. However, the City believes such a registry can provide significant value during the post-disaster response and recovery phase by helping prioritize welfare checks and allocate available resources to registered community members. These efforts may be carried out by City staff, trained volunteers, or mutual aid personnel as resources become available.

The use of voluntary registries has proven beneficial during statewide Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events and in the aftermath of hurricanes and other large-scale disasters across the country. The City will review the Cal OES *Voluntary Disaster Registry Planning Guidance* and continue evaluating opportunities to strengthen the existing registry by incorporating applicable best practices. At this time, the City intends to continue maintaining the registry and believes it provides an additional tool to support post-disaster response and recovery efforts.

The City is also committed to strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations, disability advocacy groups, and emergency response partners, including Alameda Municipal Power, to enhance preparedness and ensure the needs of individuals with access and functional needs are considered throughout all phases of emergency management. The registry is intended to complement—not replace—these partnerships. The City's use of the registry should be viewed as one component of a broader strategy to support vulnerable populations before, during, and after disasters. The City plans to continue to bolster partnerships with community groups that represent at-risk residents.

Recommendation 26-26: The city of Alameda must improve inter-department coordination and public notices on all social media platforms during emergencies to ensure consistent and live updates.

Response to Recommendation 26-26:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The City Manager's Office is in the process of recruiting for a Communications Manager who will, in part, be responsible for developing a comprehensive emergency communications plan to ensure consistent messaging across all City departments during emergencies. This position will also support the development of an Emergency Public Information Team to provide depth, redundancy, and consistency in public messaging during Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations.

In addition, the City intends to implement a coordinated social media strategy in which official emergency messaging released through the City's primary communication channels will be shared without alteration and amplified by other City departments on their respective social media platforms. Implementation will occur within 6 months of the publication of the Grand Jury Report.

Recommendation 26-27: The city of Alameda must use the emergency messaging templates available in the 2026 EOP to provide consistent, reliable information during an emergency.

Response to Recommendation 26-27:

The recommendation has been implemented - The City plans to utilize the emergency messaging templates contained in the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), as appropriate, to ensure timely, accurate, and consistent public communications during emergencies

Recommendation 26-28: The city of Alameda should further explore the implementation of an emergency siren system for disaster alerts, similar to the systems that nearby cities use.

Response to Recommendation 26-28:

The recommendation requires further analysis - while the City supports the current county-wide notification strategy based on the findings from the 2012 Alameda County Civil Grand Jury, the City is not opposed to evaluating whether an outdoor warning siren system could provide an additional layer of public notification. The City will assign staff to study and analyze the feasibility and effectiveness of an outdoor warning siren system. Staff will prepare an analysis for review by the City Manager within six months from the date of the Grand Jury report's publication.

Recommendation 26-29: In order to identify vulnerabilities and opportunities for improvement, the city of Alameda must conduct, and then document with a formal after-action report, exercises to test its emergency plans, in accordance with its EOP requirements.

Response to Recommendation 26-29:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. As part of the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) update, the City incorporated four four-hour training sessions for EOC roster personnel. These facilitated, scenario-based workshops are designed to

familiarize staff with the updated EOP and provide practical experience applying the plan during simulated emergency scenarios. These training sessions were already planned before the 2026 Civil Grand Jury findings were released and are anticipated to be completed in Fall 2026.

The City is also exploring expanding its existing agreement with the EOP consultant to provide additional, position-specific training for EOC personnel.

The City has also engaged with other emergency management training providers to identify opportunities for a comprehensive EOC training program that supports employees with varying levels of experience—from those new to the EOC environment to seasoned personnel serving in leadership positions.

The City's long-term objective is to establish a sustainable emergency management training and exercise program that includes position-specific instruction, functional training, and two EOC tabletop exercises per year. These efforts will help ensure the Emergency Operations Center remains operationally ready and that personnel assigned to the EOC are trained, confident, and capable of effectively fulfilling their assigned responsibilities during emergencies.

Recommendation 26-30: The city of Alameda must establish a requirement for its public safety agencies to prepare after-action reports within 90 days for events requiring activation of the Emergency Operations Center.

Response to Recommendation 26-30:

The recommendation has been implemented. The City plans to adhere to Section 8.4 of the 2026 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), titled “After-Action Review and Reporting.” Section 8.4 establishes the City's process for conducting after-action reviews, documenting lessons learned, identifying corrective actions, and tracking improvements following qualifying emergency incidents.

Specifically, Section 8.4 states:

“SEMS regulations require jurisdictions to complete an After-Action Report (AAR) within 120 days of each emergency proclamation. The SEMS regulations under Title 19, Division 2, Chapter 1, Section 2450(a), require any federal, state, or local jurisdiction proclaiming or responding to a Local Emergency for which the Governor has declared a state of emergency or state of war emergency shall complete and transmit an After-Action Report (AAR) to Cal OES within 90 days of the close of the emergency period.”

* * *

The City of Alameda appreciates the time, effort, and thoughtful analysis undertaken by the Alameda County Civil Grand Jury in evaluating the City's emergency preparedness program. The report's findings and recommendations have provided a valuable opportunity to assess current practices, identify areas for improvement, and reaffirm the City's commitment to strengthening its emergency management capabilities. While the City respectfully disagrees with certain findings and recommendations, it remains

committed to continuous improvement and to enhancing preparedness, response, recovery, and community resilience. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with community partners, regional agencies, and residents to ensure Alameda remains a safe and resilient community.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerry Beaudin". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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Gerry Beaudin
City Manager