



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OC Sheriff Public Affairs, 714-904-7042

Orange County Sheriff's Department Announces Closure of DOJ Informant Investigation

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Jan. 17, 2025): The Orange County Sheriff's Department is pleased to announce the closure of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation into the use of custodial informants, which began in December of 2016. The Sheriff's Department also entered into an "Agreement for the Sustainability of Custodial Informant Reforms" with the DOJ.

In October of 2022, the DOJ released its report documenting findings from their investigation into the use of custodial informants by the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the Orange County District Attorney's Office from 2007-2016. After the release of the DOJ report, the Sheriff's Department voluntarily provided the DOJ with materials reflecting the changes and safeguards the Department implemented. The DOJ reviewed the Orange County Sheriff's Department's current policies and procedures and confirmed them to be constitutional. These proactive reforms have cemented constitutional protections for the use of custodial informants inside Orange County jail facilities.

"Since 2016, we have worked diligently to implement comprehensive reforms regarding custodial informants. This Agreement provides a framework for the DOJ to validate those efforts and establish our policies and practices to be among the best in the nation," said Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. Under the Agreement, the matter will close after the DOJ validates the Department's practices have been sustained for six months.

By addressing past issues and implementing reforms, the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the DOJ have collaborated to assure public confidence in the use of informants in the Orange County criminal justice system. This Agreement is an opportunity for the DOJ to publicly validate that the Sheriff's Department is sustaining its constitutional policies and procedures. "We took the initiative to immediately begin setting up systems to uphold inmates' constitutional rights while ensuring effective investigations inside a correctional facility. The Orange County Sheriff's Department's steadfast dedication to address constitutional issues in the jails before an Agreement with the DOJ fosters trust, accountability, and integrity in our criminal justice system," said Sheriff Barnes.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department provided the DOJ full access to all documents, facilities and personnel during the DOJ's investigation. The joint effort by the Sheriff's Department and the DOJ in reaching the Agreement, highlights the culmination of years of hard work and dedication by the men and women of the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

"It is encouraging to receive unprecedented DOJ recognition for the landmark improvements and reforms OC Sheriff has established," said Mary Izadi, Orange County Sheriff's Department's Constitutional Policing Advisor. "The Agreement does not require any changes or enhancements to our existing internal processes. We anticipate the validation by DOJ to conclude by midyear," said Izadi, who has also been identified as the Validation Coordinator.



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

The Orange County Sheriff's Department demonstrates its dedication to continuously protecting the constitutional rights of those within the Orange County criminal justice system by committing to ongoing training, auditing, and transparency measures.

"We are proud to set a standard for law enforcement agencies nationwide regarding the use of custodial informants. Our extensive safeguards go above and beyond constitutional requirements and even exceed those found in the Federal Bureau of Prisons," said Sheriff Barnes.

For more information on the Orange County Sheriff's Department's custodial informant reforms, please visit our website at www.ocsheriff.gov.

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