

Salinas Valley State Prison



Summary:

Section 919 of the California Penal Code mandates that “each Monterey County Civil Grand Jury (MCCGJ) inspect all public institutions of incarceration in Monterey County”. In this capacity, the MCCGJ toured the Salinas Valley State Prison – Soledad (SVSP) in December 2016. The mission of the SVSP is to provide long-term housing and services for minimum and maximum custody male inmates. SVSP offers educational, religious and self-help programming in the

ongoing effort to help alleviate adverse behavior and reduce recidivism within the prison system.

The MCCGJ found the management and operations of SVSP to be adequate.

Background:

SVSP, established in 1996, is a 300-acre California state prison located 5 miles (8 km) North of Soledad, in Monterey County adjacent to Correctional Training Facility, (CTF). The prison consists of five facilities: A, B, C, D, and M. Of the five, Facility A houses Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) inmates. The surrounding housing units hold level III and level IV inmates, the two highest security risk rankings. M yard is a level I yard which houses approximately 200 low risk inmates.

Investigative Methodology:

The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury, after touring the Salinas Valley State Prison decided to conduct an inquiry into the operations of the facility¹. The inquiry consisted of; A site visit, by members of the Civil Grand Jury (CGJ), interviews with staff and written documentation were used in the evaluation. After the conclusion of its inquiry the MCCGJ (although not required to do so) decided to report on the result of its inquiry.

Facts:

1. SVSP has been designated to house Level I, III, and IV inmates. The housing of these inmates is accomplished in a Minimum Support Facility (MSF), with two 270 cell design, two 180 cell design and a 100-cell standalone Administrative Segregation Unit (ASU).
2. SVSP contains a division of the Department of State Hospitals (DSH) on the grounds within the secured perimeter that has two separate facilities, DSH - Salinas Valley is an intermediate care inpatient psychiatric hospital. It primarily services Level IV high security inmates who have major mental health disorders that have diminished their ability to

¹ California Grand Jury Association, "The California Grand Jury System", pg. 35

function within the general prison environment. DSH Salinas Valley has two stand-alone treatment centers and two retrofitted 180 housing units totaling 242 beds.

3. SVSP has a Correctional Treatment Center (CTC) where inmates receive professionally supervised health care in an inpatient setting. SVSP provides Correctional Clinical Case Management System (CCCMS), and an Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP)
4. SVSP also houses inmates who meet the criteria of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Disability Placement Program.
5. SVSP was constructed to meet the access requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
6. SVSP offers Inmate Educational Programs consisting of both General Population (GP) and Voluntary Education Programs (VEP):
 - GP programs offer Adult Basic Education (ABE) I, II, & III level classes to assigned inmate students.
 - The VEP programs offer Adult Basic Education coursework.
 - VEP teachers also help coordinate and serve as proctors for students enrolled in college courses. These programs are available to inmates in all the facilities.
 - SVSP offers a Career Technical Education Computer Literacy program. This program allows students to earn certifications in basic computer programs and provides them with the skills necessary for entry level positions requiring the use of computers.
 - Inmates are offered lower level assistance and tutoring with the Pro-Literacy program in the VEP classes and with the Scottish Rites Program over the institution's closed circuit television system.

- Higher level inmate students have opportunities to get a General Education Certificate (GED). GED instruction is offered on the institution's closed circuit television system as well as in the classroom setting.
 - A High School Diploma program is also available to inmate students who have a minimum amount of credits to earn.
 - The prison does not offer college level classes.
7. SVSP also offers education services to inmates in the Developmental Disability Program (DDP), with a credentialed special education teacher and a teaching assistant, to meet the needs of the DDP population.
 8. An Isolation Population program is offered to meet the needs of the Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP) students.
 9. SVSP offers multiple self-help and volunteer programs:
 - Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) -Volunteer facilitators teach a 12- step recovery program where inmates learn to acknowledge alcohol addiction and the need to live a sober life.
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - Volunteer facilitators teach a 12- step recovery program where inmates learn to acknowledge narcotic addiction and the need to live a sober life.
 - Veterans Group - Self Help sponsors provide aid and support to inmates who are Veterans dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse. These two AA and NA programs are specifically tailored to US Veterans.
 - Breaking Barriers - Self Help sponsors follow an established curriculum with the specific purpose of breaking an inhibiting cycle of conditioned habits. They help inmates become more productive and fulfilled human beings while learning about the body of knowledge found in cognitive psychology.

- Alternatives to Violence (AVP) - Volunteer facilitators teach how to deal with anger in a positive manner.
- Inside Men's Foundation Support Group - Volunteer facilitators follow an established curriculum which creates an environment that inmates can work toward exploring the issues that have prevented them from reaching to their full potential.
- Ojai Council² Leadership Collaborative - The OCLC volunteers provides training and support in practicing and facilitating the Council, to create a heightened sense of common purpose and positive community at SVSP OCLC.
- Lifer Support Group - The group's purpose is to raise self-awareness and improve attitudes while helping Life Term prisoners develop a more focused, disciplined and structured life.
- Anger Management - Self Help sponsors follow an established curriculum with the purpose of managing anger, developing emotional intelligence, and expanding empathy awareness.
- Writer's Workshop - Volunteers provide an opportunity for Enhanced Outpatient Inmates to develop their ability to express ideas and experiences in writing.

10. Religious Programs include:

- The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) - Volunteers educate inmates to become pastors and church leaders, both on the "inside" for lifers, as well as for those who return to their urban communities.

² Ojai is the California and Southern Coastal Region first settled by the Chumash Indians.

- Bridging Program - Faith based (Christian) program primarily to help individuals break their addictions, helping them to change their thinking and feelings and, in turn, promote change of their behaviors.
- Prayer and Share - Volunteers apply God's Word to the wounds that one may encounter as a Christian so that healing and restoration may begin.

11. SVSP offers the following Religious Services:

- Protestant Services - Bible study, Choir and Left Hand Path
- Catholic Services
- Jewish Services
- Native American Services - Sweat Lodge & Talking Circle
- Muslim - Islamic Jumaa Services and Talim Program
- House of Yahweh³
- Neterian Services⁴
- Wiccan Services⁵
- Odinist Services⁶
- Buddhist Services
- Mormon Services
- Jehovah Witness
- Siddha Yoga

³ The Name given to the National God of the Iron Age Kingdoms of Israel.

⁴ In one of the ancient African Languages, NETER means the power that made the earth, heavens, the sea, the sky or the universe, animals, birds, insects, man and all that is and all that shall be. Neterian Worship, therefore, means the worship of that Creator Being.

⁵ Wicca (English pronunciation: also termed Pagan Witchcraft, is a contemporary Pagan new religious movement.

⁶ The original, indigenous form of heathen religion practiced by our forefathers, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, and by the related Teutonic peoples of the Continent.

- Christian Science
- Latter Day Saints

Findings:

- F 1. The Grand Jury found the Department of State Hospital – Salinas Valley to be extremely well run both administratively and operationally.
- F 2. The jury noted what seemed to be a degree of tension between the Correctional Officers and the Inmates incarcerated at SVSP that wasn't apparent at the CTF (this could be attributed to the security level of the inmates held at SVSP).
- F 3. The Department of State Hospital, in response to court mandated rulings,⁷ appears to be a step ahead of other facilities of incarceration within Monterey County.

Recommendations:

None.

Invited Response:

The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury invites a response to all Findings from Salinas Valley State Prison Warden.

⁷ Judge Karlton 1995 California Supreme Court, Sacramento Class action suit

