

This document is an extract of a larger publication.

civilgrandjury.org is a project of UnGovr.org, a US-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to government transparency and public accountability.





**California Department of Corrections' and
Rehabilitation Facilities**

**Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report 1920-01
December 21, 2020**

SUMMARY

As mandated by California Penal Code §919(b), the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) is charged with inquiring into the condition and management of detention facilities within the County. Sections 919 (a), 925, and 925(a) authorize the Grand Jury to investigate County and City jails and other detention facilities. Such investigations highlight efficiencies and ensure that those incarcerated are treated in a humane manner.

GLOSSARY

- ACE - Adverse Childhood Experience Overcomers
- ASE - Automotive Service Excellence
- CALPIA - The California Prison Industry Authority ¹
- CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates
- CCP – Community Corrections Partnership
- CCTP - Correctional Community Transitional Program
- CDCR - California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- CCWF - Central California Women’s Facility
- DCHCS - Division of Correctional Health Care Services
- GED - The General Educational Development (GED)²
- GRID - GRID Alternatives (GRID)³
- I-CAR - Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repairs
- LAO - Legislative Analyst Office
- LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ⁴
- MCGJ – Madera County Grand Jury
- MCJDC - Madera County Juvenile Detention Center
- SERI - Sierra Education and Research Institute
- VSP – Valley State Prison
- Wellpath - Health care provider ⁵

¹ CALPIA manages over 100 manufacturing, service, and consumable industries within the 35 California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) institutions. It is overseen by the 11-member Prison Industry Board, which is chaired by the CDCR Secretary. CALPIA has more than 8,000 offender assignments in career technical education programs, manufacturing, agricultural, consumable, and service enterprises.

² GED The General Educational Development (GED) tests are a group of four subject tests which, when passed, provide certification that the test taker has United States high school -level academic skills

³ GRID – Is provides an inmate training program and provides low cost solar solutions. Grid is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

⁴ LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is the most widely used green building **rating system** in the world. Available for virtually all building types, **LEED** provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green buildings.

⁵ Wellpath employs 1,600 healthcare professionals in its State and Federal behavioral and correctional division and provides healthcare to inmates.

BACKGROUND

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) is authorized to visit and inquire into the conditions of any public prison within the County, including County jails. Inspecting safety and security in jails are priorities along with ensuring inmates are treated in a safe and humane manner. This report is about the MCGJ inspections of the Madera Department of Corrections, Madera County Juvenile Detention Center, and two California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation facilities.

METHODOLOGY

The Madera County Grand Jury toured and inspected the Penal Institutions of Madera County:

- Madera County Department of Corrections/Jail facilities.
- Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility (MCJDC)
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), Valley State Prison (VSP)
- Madera County Central California Women’s Facility (CCWF)

The Madera County Grand Jury utilized the following documentation:

- Jail Inspection Handbook for Grand Jurors provided by the California Board of Community and State Corrections (BSCC).
- Completed Detention Inspection Form from the Jail Inspection Handbook for Grand Jurors
- Previous Grand Jury Detention Facility reports
- Documentation that was provided by the Juvenile Detention Staff
 - Madera County Comprehensive Multi-Agency Juvenile Justice Plan 2019
 - Juvenile Detention Facility Unit Program Schedule 2019
 - Madera County Probation Parent Handbook
 - Madera County Probation Department Juvenile Services and Institutions Annual Report 2018-2019

DISCUSSION

MADERA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (COUNTY JAIL)

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) toured the Madera County Department of Corrections Facility also known as “The Jail” on September 23, 2019.

Overview

The Madera County Department of Corrections was established in 1978 after separating from the Sheriff’s Office. The department is one of the few jails in the state of California that is not operated by the Sheriff’s Department. The Madera County Department of Corrections is governed by Madera County in California.

The Jail was originally designed to house 415 inmates. In 2013, AB900 Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007 authorized CDCR to design, construct, or renovate prison and jail facilities to help reduce overcrowding. Three bond measures funded the expansion and renovation of The Jail. Madera County was first in line to apply for the funding and was awarded \$30 million for Project 1. This was the first project completed in the state using state

issued revenue bonds. The first expansion added two new units to the jail, increasing inmate housing by 144 beds, and bringing the capacity of the facility to 563 inmates. The second approved project, with an additional award of \$3 million funded through this state revenue bond, added a new kitchen and one new specialty medical use bed.

A third \$20 million revenue state grant fund, provided by SB1022, will add two stories to the existing inmate Modules L and M. The new and renovated areas will provide 20 single-occupancy, high security beds to accommodate inmates with mental health, acute substance abuse, or other health concerns. The project will also construct dayrooms, safety cells, two outdoor recreation yards, classrooms, and exam rooms. New video visitation areas, support spaces, and necessary upgrades for systems to accommodate the new construction are included. This construction is expected to be completed in 2023.

Visitation/Observation

The MCGJ inspected the Jail using the Detention Facility Inspection Form developed for prison inspections by the California Board of Community and State Corrections (BSCC). The MCGJ also submitted questions which were addressed or answered by Jail staff.

The Jail staff informed MCGJ that, with the passage of AB109, Non-Sexual, Non-Violent, Non-Serious crime-inmates will stay in the County Jail until release instead of being moved to a Prison Facility. Because of the increased length of stay, the administration has and are continuing to add inmate programs to reduce recidivism.

MCGJ visited many of the inmate modules. Although the facility was on lock down during the tour, MCGJ was given the opportunity to speak with inmates in several modules. MCGJ toured the laundry and kitchen facilities where inmates are assigned laundry and kitchen duties. The kitchen was especially clean, and MCGJ observed inmates preparing lunch under the supervision of Aramark staff, who is contracted with the Jail for food services. Over 550 meals are served three times per day. There are constant food inspections. Inmates working in the kitchen pass health checks to ensure there are no airborne food illness occurrences. Lunch was provided to the MCGJ; the quality was good and ample.

On-site medical services are provided by *Wellpath* for both medical and dental needs. Overall, the facility is orderly and clean. The guards work within each module in an open desk set-up so that they are accessible to the inmates and are able to observe inmate activity.

Staffing

At the time of the MCGJ inspection, there were 114 CDCR staff at this facility with eight unfunded vacancies. The staff was accommodating and invited the MCGJ to observe any area in the Jail facility. The inmates were also respectful and responded to any questions asked by the MCGJ. The overall morale of the staff and inmates in this facility appeared to be positive.

Capacity

The Jail inmate capacity is 563. At the time of the MCGJ inspection, the population was 517 with 75 female and 442 male inmates. Average detainment is 34-36 days and common detainment is for driving under the influence (DUI). The longest time an inmate detained was in 2018 for 1,854 days.

Housing and Wellness

Each cell holds between two to four inmates. Inmates are separated by ethnic and prior gang affiliations in order to suspend gang activity within the facility. All medical care is provided onsite. *Wellpath* provides full time, mid-level medical, dental, and optical services. *Wellpath* is on call 24 hours a day and a medical director comes onsite weekly. Any emergency complaints are assessed and dealt with as needed. If required, an ill inmate is taken to a local emergency room or to Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC).

The booking and inmate intake area is cramped. No protective area is provided for the booking officer to safely complete needed intake paperwork. The area forces inmates and officers to shift from one side of the pathway to another in order to move through the required processing.

Education, Training, and Behavioral Health

The Correctional Community Transitional Program (CCTP), assists Madera County inmates and Madera County probationers in successfully reentering society. To accomplish this, the department provides numerous rehabilitative programs, vocational programs, and services to County inmates to obtain job or career skills, education, life skills, and confidence so inmates can succeed in the future despite past obstacles.

A synopsis of curriculum programs was provided by the Jail staff:

Adverse Childhood Experience Overcomers (ACE)

ACE Overcomers curriculum are being used in several California county jails, treatment programs, and rescue missions nationwide. The ACE Overcomers curriculum remediates the effects of adverse childhood experiences, which are prevalent among incarcerated and previously incarcerated populations. Participants learn the science of trauma, steps to retrain the brain and reset the nervous system, and keys to self-awareness and self-regulation. This course improves the mental, emotional, and physical health of the participants, and prepares them for success.

GED

Prep Courses can be used to take the GED test outside of the facility. In 2019 there were 113 inmates enrolled to take the GED test, with nine inmates successfully earning a GED. Computer tablets are available for daily checkout in each module by inmates who demonstrate good behavior. The tablets are used by the inmates for earning certifications in various areas including childcare, GED prep, and religious instruction.

GRID Alternatives Program

The challenge of how to prepare inmates for successful job reentry has been a focus of GRID Central Valley's training program for the past five years. Through GRID's solar installation training, individuals, having been previously incarcerated, are gaining hands-on experience, empowering them to take initiative, enhancing their quality of life. GRID's solar training is an introductory course consisting of classroom instruction with onsite, hands-on training labs. Each forty-hour class trains up to ten participants, running two hours per day, five days a week.

Sierra Education and Research Institute (SERI)

SERI provides a 10-week psychoeducational classes for inmates in the Madera County Jail. The program focuses on topics such as communication, family systems, setting healthy boundaries, cognitive distortions, drug/alcohol addiction, and parenting. In addition, the instructors provide individual therapy to inmates who desire a higher level of treatment. The MCGJ observed the class being conducted and was attended by approximately 25 male inmates.

Substance Abuse Counseling Program

The Substance Abuse Counseling Program provides substance abuse services/counseling to inmates. Inmates follow a curriculum that includes education and counseling for substance abuse, domestic violence, anger management, conflict resolution, and co-dependency. This program also includes re-entry planning.

Physical and Mental Health

An indoor basketball court area is available for physical exercise. There are limited mental health facilities available for mental health challenges in Madera County. Those with perceived mental health issues are arrested and incarcerated at the County Jail. In severe cases, inmates may be taken to a local ER or Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Fresno. The staff works very closely with a clinical social worker liaison to obtain court orders to provide appropriate medication in the course of a mental health crisis.

Visitation Program

All visits are “no contact” only. There is a video conference visitation area for inmates to visit with family and friends. Video visitation via the *Home Wav* platform is the only method of visitation allowed.

Visitation at the Madera County Detention Center takes place every day of the week. In order to visit an inmate, visitor’s names must appear on the inmate’s visiting list.

Each jail visit is up to 30 minutes long, and inmates are allowed two visits per week. A maximum of two people, including children, can visit at one time. Minors under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

There are three sessions, with visiting hours as follows:

Session 1 –registration begins at 8:00 AM, with visits from 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM

Session 2 -- registration begins at 12:30 PM, with visits from 1:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Session 3 – registration begins at 2:30 PM, with visits from 3:30 PM to 4:00 PM

Preparation for Release

Workforce, which is a community economic connection, has an embedded career specialist in the Department of Corrections facility to work with both pre-release and post-release offenders. The staff and the partner programs work to prepare inmates for release. The recidivism for this facility is 13 percent.

FINDINGS - MADERA COUNTY JAIL

- F1.** The MCGJ finds there are unfilled and unfunded Correctional Officer positions.
- F2.** The MCGJ finds that the booking and intake area is small.
- F3.** The MCGJ finds a lack of mental health treatment options available in Madera County.
- F4.** The MCGJ finds there is a limited conduit for released inmates to find employment.
- F5.** The MCGJ finds MCDC works well with individual inmates with limited financial support.
- F6.** The MCGJ finds that the MCDC was very accommodating and open to taking questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS – MADERA COUNTY JAIL

- R1.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of the fiscal year 21-22, the Department of Corrections secure funding to fill vacant positions.
- R2.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of the fiscal year 21-22, the MCDC redesign the workflow of the booking/intake area.
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of the fiscal year 21-22, Madera County Probation and Department of Corrections investigate an outsourcing option for mental health services.
- R4.** The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22 MCDC and Madera County Probation work cooperatively to seek employment opportunities in the local area.
- R5.** The MCGJ recommends that the MCDC continue to work cooperatively with inmates to provide work opportunities to increase a financial support system for released inmates.
- R6.** The MCGJ recommends that the MCDC continue their work in providing open communication to the MCGJ.

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

Madera County Grand Jury visited the Madera County Juvenile Detention Center (MCJDC) on October 2, 2019. The visit included observing the interior and exterior of the facility. Access was provided to all requested locations.

Overview

This facility is for juvenile residents. The Madera County Juvenile Hall is a medium to low-security detention center that is operated locally by the Juvenile Justice Department and holds youth awaiting the determination of punishment for the crimes of which they are accused. Most of the adolescents are detained for less than two years. The Probation Department is also responsible for operation and administration of the Juvenile Hall. Juvenile Hall is a place of detention for juvenile offenders taken into custody within the provisions of Section 602 of the Juvenile Court Law. These young people are detained for their protection or the protection of the community pending and/or serving final disposition of their cases. Programs include temporary

detention pending court disposition, holding for other agencies, and varying lengths of residential care. Treatment programs include full-time school within the Juvenile Hall for continuation of education.

Staffing

During the MCGJ visit, all staff members, as well as the Cadets, were accessible and extremely polite and engaged with the MCGJ. The MCGJ was provided with a very thorough tour of the MCJDC. The MCGJ met many staff members during the tour all of whom were transparent and accommodating, offering to show the MCGJ the facilities and answering questions. It is clear to the MCGJ that the staff of the MCJDC are very proud of the responsibilities they have taken on.

Capacity

MCJDC has a total capacity of 74 detainees. At the time of the MCGJ visit, there were 22 male and 10 female youth. Several Cadets were graduating on the day of the visit, which MCGJ attended.

The average length of detainment is 35 days with the longest detainment time of over three years. The most frequent reasons for detainment are probation violations, crimes against another person, property crimes, and, according to the youth themselves, “poor environment.”

Housing

The MCGJ found the MCJDC exceptionally clean thanks to the Cadets in charge of housekeeping. The Cadets themselves exhibit pride in maintaining their bunks and living areas clean and orderly.

Education, Training, and Behavioral Health

Programs offered to youths include computer tablets for cognitive programs, alcohol and drug counseling, and Youth for Christ. Classroom participation is encouraged and recognized. The youth are encouraged to read, write, and express themselves through drawing and writing. Full time teachers are onsite and teach youth in a classroom environment. The youth were engaged and appeared to be proud of what they were accomplishing. The MCGJ was especially impressed with the education program available to the youth.

Correctional Academy Program History

In 1997, the Madera County Juvenile Correctional Camp, with the support of the Board of Supervisors, began providing service to delinquent youth. In 2010, the initial program was closed and moved into the Juvenile Detention Facility. In 2015, the Correctional Camp program was restructured and formally changed to the Correctional Academy Camp. The Correctional Academy Camp was built as an alternative to California Youth Authority. The Correctional Camp allows the County of Madera to provide local control of youth and provide safety to the community, while holding the youth accountable for their unlawful behavior through a rigid, structured program.

Correctional Academy Program (CAP)

To be eligible for the Correctional Academy, the Juvenile Court must order a ward committed to the program under Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The program is a collaborative effort between the Madera County Probation Department, Madera County Office of

Education, Madera County Behavioral Health Services, and volunteers. The program is typically a twelve, eighteen-month, or twenty-four month commitment that includes detention and aftercare phases. The program was developed from a correctional model for defiant youth based in part on military protocol. Once a youth has made the commitment to the camp, the detainees are referred to as "Cadets."

The Academy uses a combination of structure, discipline, physical conditioning, and self-accountability. The approach is considered nurturing in order to emphasize self-control and self-esteem. There are three stages to the custody phase in which the Cadets wear colored shirts according to their rank, from lowest to highest, green, brown, and black. As the Cadets progress through the ranks, detainees receive additional privileges and the shirt color changes. After successful completion of the in-custody phase, Cadets graduate to the aftercare component, and are returned home whenever possible. Graduation exercises for the Cadets feature a presentation by the Academy Color Guard, a prepared speech from each graduating Cadet, and a visual presentation. Graduation exercises attendees include Academy participants, family members, staff, teachers, elected officials, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Grand Jury members. When returning to home is not possible, Cadets are placed in an alternative living arrangement. Cadets and their families receive counseling services as determined by mental health screening.

Madera County Office of Education provides educational services to both Madera County Juvenile Detention Center and Correctional Academy. Title 15 and State of California Department of Education standards are followed. Positive youth development occurs through the following programs:

- Alternative Education

- Career and Alternative Education Services (CAES)

- Live Well Madera

- Additional funding from the Governor, Supplemental and Concentration funds; \$3,000 per year for student attendance. Categories include English Learners, Low income, and Foster Youth.

Wards also participate in organized youth sports tournaments including volleyball and soccer. They participate in community events including Wreaths Across America (placing wreaths on veteran's gravesites), presentation of colors at events, and Cadet Graduations. These activities encourage positive re-enforcement and structure in their daily lives and develop desirable habits as citizens.

Physical and Mental Health

Madera County contracts with *Wellpath* for medical services which are provided 12 hours a day, seven days a week. A Registered Nurse is on duty eight hours a day and the remainder of the shift is covered by a Licensed Vocational Nurse. Wards are initially screened by a physician within 96 hours of admission. A mental health clinician is available on site between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. All services provided in the facility meet or exceed the standards required by California Code of Regulations, Title-15.

Visitation Program

Visitors to the Madera County Juvenile Detention Center must be on the approved visitor list. Visitors must confirm with the facility's authorities before coming for a visit.

Visiting hours are 7:30 AM to 9 PM on weekdays and 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM on weekends.

The basic visitation rules require that:

- Visitor must not be a prior felon.
- Must have a valid government ID.
- Children visiting below 16 years of age must be accompanied by a legal guardian.

Preparation for Release

Conditions for release are primarily dependent upon the youth adhering to and participating in programs available to them. Most go back to the unstable environment from which they came. Some wards go to group homes, Salvation Army, and some enlist in the military.

The limited choices after release appear to be the biggest handicap the wards face. The rate of recidivism is 25 percent.

FINDINGS - MADERA COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (MCJDC)

F1. The MCGJ finds the Correctional Academy Program to be successful for the positive development of the youth who take part in the Academy.

F2. The MCGJ finds the staff and teachers within the Program at MCJDC highly capable, dedicated, and compassionate.

F3. The MCGJ finds that a delay of a 96-hour physical screening endangers the health of other residents and staff.

F4. The MCGJ finds the wards face a lack of choices after release.

RECOMMENDATIONS - MADERA COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (MCJDC)

R1. The MCGJ commends CAP as a successful program and recommends that the MCJDC continue to provide this highly structured program thus enabling youth to recognize their personal potential.

R2. The MCGJ commends the staff and teachers within the Program for their attention to the mental, physical, and educational needs of the youth and encourage providers to continue in their positive responsiveness.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that immediately upon admission wards shall be screened for any communicable diseases.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that, by the beginning of fiscal year 21-22, the MCJDC connect wards with meaningful community service organizations.

VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

The Madera County Grand Jury visited the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), located in Chowchilla, California on December 6, 2019. The MCGJ toured the prison facility and was provided guided access to many areas.

Overview

The VSP is operated by the CDCR. The prison opened in April 1995 as a women-only prison, and the prison began receiving inmates immediately thereafter. The CDCR began converting the prison into a facility for low-risk male inmates in 2012. The conversion was completed in January 2013 with the last female inmates in the facility transferred to the nearby Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) in Chowchilla and California Institution for Women in Chino, California. Some inmates nearing the end of their sentence were transferred to various county jails.

The MCGJ inspected the prison using a checklist developed for grand jury prison inspections by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. Additional information was requested by the MCGJ prior to making the inspection. The check list included the general safety and security of the facility, food services, medical services, job training, and educational programs for inmates, and a housing unit.

Staffing and Capacity

There are 1,100 CDCR staff members at this facility and, at the time of the MCGJ inspections, the inmate population was 3,517. The prison was originally designed to house 1,980 and has held more than double that amount in previous years with over 5,100 inmates. The state mandated maximum allowed occupancy is 2,722. The current inmate population is well over the maximum of 137.5 percent allowed by the State.

Housing and Wellness

Valley State Prison is a Level II, medium security prison, although the facility does have inmates who are sentenced to life. Higher risk inmates are moved to more secure facilities. Inmates are housed in pods which accommodate 256 inmates. MCGJ observed one individual cell that held seven inmates. Each cell has its own toilet and shower area. The inmates are allowed to shower anytime between 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM unsupervised. Living areas were orderly with lockers provided for each inmate. Inmates are allowed to have "clear" monitors to watch secure programs provided by the prison. There is no access to outside televised services or internet.

Education, Training, and Behavioral Health

The VSP Education Department currently offers educational services to the inmate population via two service delivery streams; the Academic and Vocational Program and a Substance Abuse Counseling Program.

Academic programs offer Adult Education programs and General Education Development (GED). The facility provides access for the inmates to earn a college degree offered through Merced Community College. A variety of educational programs are accessed on individual electronic tablets via the *intranet*. *Intranet* is a closed system within the prison, which prevents inmate access to internet material. Inmates also have access to a physical library.

Vocational training is also available to inmates including welding, cosmetology, masonry, auto mechanics, bicycle reconditioning, therapy dog training, veteran-service dog training, carpentry, plumbing, house painting, computer literacy, food service/kitchen help, and landscaping. The California Prison Industry (CALPIA) employs approximately 215 inmates in three separate

operations: farm operation, eyewear manufacturing, and laundry. Prison inmates work 400 acres of almond orchards and work to landscape and keep the prison grounds manicured.

In the Substance Abuse Counseling Programs inmates follow a curriculum that includes education and counseling for substance abuse, domestic violence, anger management, conflict resolution, and co-dependency. This program also includes planning for re-entry into the community following release.

Physical and Mental Health

The Division of Correctional Health Care Services (DCHCS) at VSP consists of three departments: medical, mental health, and dental. VSP provides a range of treatment and rehabilitative services to assist men with emergent issues, alcohol and drug recovery, chronic care issues, preventative services, patient education, health care support, mental health, and dental services. The facility includes a hospital with 20 beds. The staff all work for CDCR and include one Doctor, one Registered Nurse, one Licensed Vocational Nurse, and one Certified Nursing Assistant. Inmates with severe injuries and in need of surgical procedures are transported to Madera Community Hospital via a correctional officer escort.

Visitation Program

Visiting at VSP is held on Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 AM -3:00 PM. Those arriving after 2:00 PM will not be admitted for visitation. Inmates, who were not fully processed or under administrative segregation, may only have visits on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 AM.- 12PM. The facility includes three housing units for pre-arranged family overnight visits for married inmates. For overnight visits inmates must apply and be approved by Prison Administration, and inmates must have a “good” behavior status.

Preparation for Release

The available vocational training prepares inmates for reentry to society. Under Proposition 57, CDCR incentivizes inmates to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation with credit-earning opportunities for good behavior, as well as prison programs and activity participation. Proposition 57 also moves up parole consideration of non-violent offenders who have served the full-term of the sentence for the primary offense, and who demonstrate that their release would not pose an unreasonable risk of violence to the community.

FINDINGS - VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

F1. The MCGJ finds that the inmate population exceeds state mandates.

F2. The MCGJ finds there are adequate educational and vocational opportunity programs for inmates.

F3. The MCGJ finds there is a lack of mental health treatment options available for inmates.

F4. The MCGJ finds that the inmates were well behaved, polite, proud of their accomplishments, and willing to answer questions.

RECOMMENDATIONS - VALLEY STATE PRISON (VSP)

- R1.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue to work at the state level, specifically the California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), to assist in resolving overcrowding issues.
- R2.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue providing well-rounded offerings of educational and vocational training with post release employment opportunities.
- R3.** The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR investigate an outsourcing option for mental health services or jointly utilize the mental health services available at the Central California Women's Facility.
- R4.** The MCGJ commends the CDCR staff for maintaining a positive and supportive environment.

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S FACILITY (CCWF)

The Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), in Chowchilla, California, is part of the California State Prison system. A mandated responsibility of the MCGJ is to inspect the condition of all facilities within the County of Madera. The MCGJ toured this facility on January 9, 2020 after experiencing delayed, and limited scope access.

Overview

The Madera County Board of Supervisors gave the prison its current name in 1989, prior to opening in October 1990 at a cost of \$141 million to construct.

The MCGJ inspected the prison using a checklist developed for grand jury prison inspections by the California Board of State and Community Corrections. The check list included the general safety and security of the facility, food services, medical services, job training, and educational programs for inmates, and a housing unit. The MCGJ toured the prison facilities pre-determined by the CCWF staff. The MCGJ were are not permitted access to many areas requiring inspection.

Staffing and Capacity

Currently CCWF is staffed by 1,200 individuals, in law enforcement and administrative positions. This is a maximum-security prison with approximately 22 inmates on death row. This is the largest woman's detention facility and the only California woman's facility with death row inmates. As of the date of the MCGJ visit, the inmate population was 2,778. This exceeds capacity by over 700 inmates. State law prohibits exceeding 137.5 percent of capacity. State capacity mandates a maximum occupancy of 2,755.

Housing and Wellness

MCGJ was provided access to the inmates but not to inmate living quarters. MCGJ was informed each room can house up to eight inmates within dormitories that house a total of 256 inmates.

Education, Training, and Behavioral Health

The prison works with California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA) which offers many of the vocational programs.

Academic Programs

The facility offers vocational and educational classes. Adult Basic Education, High School/GED, Pre-Release, literacy, and college degree programs are provided by Feather River Community College.

Vocational Programs include, service dog training, auto body shop, dental, substance abuse counseling certifications, basic construction, electronics, farming, carpentry, and firefighting. In the auto body course, inmates can earn Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) and Inter-Industry Conference on Auto Collision Repair (I-CAR) certifications with a 90 percent passing grade on the certification tests. These certifications can increase employment opportunities upon release. CALPIA provides training in dental laboratory, fabric products, farming, garment making, and silk screening. Joint Venture Electronics, a public-private partnership, employs approximately 45 inmates in an electronics manufacturing program. The inmates are paid based on their job. Deductions are taken for room and board, crime victim compensation, prisoner family support, and mandatory savings for release. The service dog program handles and trains seven to eight dogs for an 18-month period. The inmates who train the dogs have completed a dog training course.

Firehouse 5

Firehouse 5 is the only fulltime, fully functioning fire house in the County of Madera with 8-10 inmate trained firefighters. The firehouse inmates are supervised by a chief and two captains. Inmates participating in this program are screened in an interview during a selection process prior to joining the firehouse crew. Physical conditioning is a part of the daily routine. Inmate firefighters respond to over 1200 calls per year within a 200-mile radius in a mutual-aid agreement with Madera County. These firefighters respond to calls ranging from wildland fires, structure fires, auto accidents, and medical emergencies. The firehouse and the engines are kept in pristine condition by the inmate firefighters. Upon release the supervising personnel provides a letter of recommendation for firefighters. The inmate firefighters are currently compensated \$.18 per hour. These firefighters are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The MCGJ commends the Fire Chief and inmate firefighters for critical services provided to the community. The efforts of the Fire Chief and inmate firefighters should be recognized.

Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program

Inmates who enter the facility experiencing substance abuse issues are mandated to enter a detox program. The program is monitored and strives to ensure dopamine levels for inmates are sufficient to make detox possible. This program is successful and has demonstrated a very low rate of recidivism.

Physical and Mental Health

Medical services are available 24 hours a day. There is a small clinic staffed by a Registered Nurse and a pharmacy onsite. Inmates who request to be seen by a physician are taken on an as-needed basis. In emergency situations, inmates are transported to Madera County Hospital or to Community Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Fresno. Fulltime mental health services are available.

In 2015, the CDCR dedicated a state-of-the-art building at the CCWF, largely constructed by the female inmates trained in the construction training program. The \$5.1 million 7,133 sq. ft. facility incorporates many features to conserve water and reduce greenhouse gases. This building provides space for group and individual therapy sessions for up to 64 inmates at a time in addition to offices for administrative staff and clinicians. The building, which received a Cal Green Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, features low-flow toilets and other water-saving plumbing, and highly efficient, roof-mounted heating and air conditioning systems, and skylights that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide more natural light that is beneficial to mental health treatment. A large outside walking track and basketball courts are provided for aerobic types of exercise.

Visitation Program

To accommodate visitors, CCWF includes a large visiting area that can seat at least 150 people. Each inmate is allowed to have five visitors at a time. In addition, there are five isolated booths for those inmates who are not allowed contact visitation. There are private rooms and specific dates for attorney-client consultations. CCWF also includes four apartments that can be reserved for family visits over a two-day period. Inmates apply for family visitations through Prison Administration and must be on good behavior status. Those visitation opportunities are paid for with funds earned by inmate work performed in the institution. Job pay ranges from \$1.49 per hour for dental construction to \$.18 per hour for firefighters. Earned funds cover the cost of food for visitors during the visit.

Preparation for Release

Many courses and programs are offered prior to pre-release. The inmates can take courses on how to create a resume, how to fill out a job application, and how to apply for a driver's license. CDCR provides an on-site case manager. A family reunification liaison assists inmates and family members with inmate pre-release preparation, and conducts Parenting and Creative Conflict Resolution classes.

Prison Administration attends job fairs throughout the year on behalf of the inmates.

The available vocational training helps inmates prepare for reentry to society. Under Proposition 57, CDCR incentivizes inmates to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation with credit-earning opportunities for good behavior, as well as prison programs and activities participation. Proposition 57 also moves up parole consideration of non-violent offenders who have served the full-term of the sentence for their primary offense, and who demonstrate that their release to the community would not pose an unreasonable risk of violence to the community.

FINDINGS - CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S FACILITY (CCWF)

F1. The MCGJ finds that access was severely limited during the tour.

F2. The MCGJ finds that the inmate population exceeds State mandates.

F3. The MCGJ finds Firehouse 5 to be a valuable opportunity for inmates to learn marketable post incarceration skills and to serve the public while incarcerated.

F4. The MCGJ finds administrators attending job fairs on behalf of inmates is a questionable practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS - CENTRAL CALIFORNIA WOMEN’S FACILITY (CCWF)

R1. The MCGJ recommends that, during the fiscal year 21-22, the CCWF provide the Grand Jury with access to all areas on the checklist and those frequented by inmates.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that, beginning immediately, the CDCR continue working at the state level, specifically the California State Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) to assist in resolving overcrowding issues. Ref; <https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4186>

R3. The MCGJ recommends that, immediately, CCWF administrative personnel provide equitable compensation for on-call services provided by firefighter inmates working from Firehouse 5.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that, immediately, the CCWF provide onsite job fairs for inmates nearing parole, enabling the inmate to personally participate and interact with potential employers.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the grand jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

Warden Michael Pallares
Central California Women’s Facility
23370 Road 22
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Warden Ray Fisher
Valley State Prison
21633 Avenue 24
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Chief Manuel Perez
Madera County Department of Corrections
14191 Road 28
Madera, CA 93638

Mr. Chris Childers
Madera County Chief Probation Officer
200 Yosemite Avenue
Madera, CA 93637

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

www.cdcr.ca.gov/proposition57

www.bscc.ca.gov

<https://www.maderacounty.com/government/corrections/correctional-community-transitional-program>

<https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/facility-locator/adult-institutions/>

<https://lao.ca.gov/Publications/Report/4186>