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.



THE AGING WAIT FOR ELDERLY HOUSING

BACKGROUND:

The 2010 United States Census documented a population of 442,179 in Tulare County. The census also reported that 9.4% of the population in the county were 65 years of age and older. In addition, the 2014 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates were that 28.1 % of the population was living in poverty. Available housing was estimated to increase in 2014 by 0.9%; however, the population was estimated to increase by 3.6%. The lack of available housing is an increasing issue within Tulare County. Currently there are more than 14,000 applications for low cost housing according to the Housing Authority of the County of Tulare. With only 6,980 low cost housing units available, this puts the impoverished, disabled and elderly on a waiting list that moves very slowly.

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION:

The Tulare County Grand Jury initiated an investigation on October 17, 2015, into the availability of low cost housing for the elderly in Tulare County. The goal was to identify what housing programs were available; the process for applying; and, how long it takes an elderly individual to be housed.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION:

The Tulare County Grand Jury reviewed documents relative to available low-cost housing in Tulare County. Staff from the Housing Authority of the County of Tulare (HACT) was interviewed. Statistical information was provided by the HACT regarding available housing; the number of individuals on the waiting list; and, future plans for additional housing units.

FACTS:

1. Immediate housing through Tulare County services for the elderly does not exist.

2. The elderly are included in the 14,000 pending applications for housing with the Housing Authority of the County of Tulare.

3. No special consideration is given to the homeless elderly individuals on the wait list.

4. The elderly have the longest wait time as they seldom vacate their assigned housing.

5. The income for the elderly generally doesn't fluctuate; therefore, they remain in their housing long term.

6. The Housing Authority of the County of Tulare routinely updates the housing wait list.

7. A five-year plan for housing availability has been developed by the Housing Authority of the County of Tulare.

FINDINGS:

F1. Due to increased longevity of the elderly, the chronic lack of housing for the elderly is only expected to rise.

F2. The current policy for the wait list does not prioritize the need of housing for the elderly.

F3. As life spans continue to increase, there will be a greater need for additional housing for the elderly.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

R1. Reconsider current policy criteria to give priority to meeting the needs of elderly in crisis.

R2. The HACT advise the public of the current housing shortage and lack of availability for the elderly.

R3. The HACT develop a recruitment process with property owners to secure additional elderly housing.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

1. Housing Authority of the County of Tulare

Disclaimer

Grand Jury reports are based on documentary evidence and the testimony of sworn or admonished witnesses, not on conjecture or opinion. However, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing such evidence except upon specific approval of the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court, or another judge appointed by the Presiding Judge (Penal Code Section 911, 924.1 (a) and 929). Similarly, the Grand Jury is precluded by law from disclosing the identity of witnesses except upon an order of the court for narrowly defined purposes (Penal Code Section 924.2 and 929).