



Madera County Court House Park

Madera County Civil Grand Jury Report

2025 - 2026

Madera County Grand Jury

2025-2026 Final Report

Table of Contents

Final Report Approval and Acceptance.....	3
Grand Jury Supervising Judge's Letter.....	4
Foreperson's Letter	6
Acknowledgments	8
Grand Jury Photo Page	9
Duties, Purpose, and Powers of the Grand Jury.....	10

Final Reports

Madera County Jail 2526-01	11
Valley State Prison 2526-02.....	21
Central California Women's Facility 2526-03.....	32
Change Is In Their Hands 2526-04.....	55
Taking Action: Steps to Publicly Communicate Homelessness Metrics 2526-05	66

Responses to 2025-2026 Final Report	75
--	-----------

Madera County Grand Jury

2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury Final Report

With signatures below this document becomes:

The Final Report of the
2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury
July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Approved by the Grand Jury:



Rebecca Lastreto, Foreperson
2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury

Accepted for Filing



Honorable Michael J. Jurkovich
Supervising Judge of the Grand Jury, Madera Superior Court



SUPERIOR COURT

COUNTY OF MADERA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

DALE BLEA
PRESIDING JUDGE

SOSI VOGT
ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGE

ADRIENNE CALIP
COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICER

200 SOUTH "G" STREET
MADERA, CA 93637
(559) 416-5599
FAX (559) 675-6565

June 03, 2026

Re: 2025-2026 Grand Jury

To the Citizens of Madera County:

As the supervising judge of your Madera County Civil Grand Jury, it is my privilege to report to you at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 grand jury term. Your grand jury is a part of the judicial branch of government. However, neither I nor the court provide direction to the grand jury on what matters or agencies should be investigated. As such, your grand jury is truly independent.

The grand jury is comprised of citizens of Madera County. Each grand jury term is for one year (the beginning of July to the end of June, each year).

The grand jury exists to serve as an independent examining and investigative body charged with monitoring the operation of local government. These investigations assist your elected officials and public employees in operating more effectively and efficiently. We all benefit from their work. Grand jurors do not perform this service for public acclaim. Quite to the contrary, their work often places them at odds with elected officials, public employees, as well as other members of the community.

Prior to their selection, all prospective grand jury members are interviewed. I can assure you each is motivated by one reason - community service. The grand jury members are a diverse group, with diverse backgrounds. It is this diversity which makes for such an effective body. This diversity is also why no grand jury is quite the same. This is also a benefit to the citizens of Madera County.

Each juror who served on the grand jury during the 2025-2026 term did so without complaint and with the diligence required to perform their job as representatives of the residents of Madera County. The grand jury has produced detailed reports. These reports also contain recommendations. We all benefit from the work of the grand jury.

In conclusion, I wanted to personally thank each member of the 2025-2026 grand jury for selflessly giving to your community so much of your personal time during this grand jury term. I also

wanted to specifically thank this year's foreperson, Ms. Rebecca Lastreto, for her guidance to the grand jury this term.

Respectfully yours,



Michael J. Jurkovich
Supervising Judge
2025-2026 Madera County Civil Grand Jury





June 30, 2026

Honorable Michael J. Jurkovich
Supervising Judge of the Civil Grand Jury of Madera County
Madera Superior Court

Your Honor:

On behalf of the 2025-2026 Madera County Civil Grand Jury, I respectfully present our Final Consolidated Report. This report is a consolidation of all reports completed during the term July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. It represents hours of research, investigations, tours, report preparation and review by the members of the Grand Jury.

The purpose of this report is to examine some of the government agencies of Madera County while acting as the public's "watchdog" and maintaining an independent voice that helps assure that local governments effectively and efficiently serve the Citizens of Madera County. The Grand Jury Panel has completed the task we were charged with in a collegial and professional manner and believe issues presented will have relevant and pertinent interest to the citizens of Madera County. We encourage the residents of Madera County to read the report, review the findings and implement the recommendations where appropriate.

The 2025-2026 Grand Jury Panel consists of Madera County citizens from Chowchilla, the mountain communities of North Fork, Coarsegold, Oakhurst as well as citizens within the City of Madera and rural Madera. We strongly encourage the citizens within the County of Madera to consider serving on the Grand Jury and support its operations.

The Grand Jury would like to extend its heartfelt appreciation to the Office of the Jury Commissioner, Jury Division Supervisor, Erin Kinney; Office of Madera County Administration, Administrative Analyst II, Jessica Leon; Deputy Clerk to the Board of Supervisors II, Tatiana Echevarria and numerous Madera County employees that provided assistance to the Grand Jury with professionalism throughout my term. The Grand Jury would also like to thank the California Grand Jury Association; your Honor and legal advisor, Wiley Driskill for their guidance and support this year.

I want to express my gratitude to my predecessor, Kenneth Bowman, for the patience

and guidance he gave me as I navigated this new team of Panel members through the privilege of serving on the Grand Jury. This Panel was smaller in size than previous years and was largely first year “Newbies” with few “returnees” who worked together overcoming obstacles to complete assigned tasks and produce a quality report. Great job everyone!

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Lastreto, Foreperson
2025-2026 Madera County Civil Grand Jury

**The 2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury wished to acknowledge
and thank the following:**

The Honorable Michael Jurkovich Supervising
Judge of the Grand Jury

Ms. Erin Kinney
Superior Court Jury Division Supervisor

Ms. Regina Garza
Madera County Counsel

Mr. Wiley Driskill
Madera County Deputy County Counsel

Ms. Jessica Leon and
Madera County Administration Staff
&
The Madera County IT Staff



The Madera County Civil Grand Jury 2025 - 2026



Front Row: Judi Alexander, Cana Marks, Sally Bompreszi, Shannon Bowman
Row 2: Rebecca Lastreto, Imogene Ollison, Joyce Inderbitzin, Jolene Brown
Row 3: Joyce Jensen, Lori Davis
Back Row: Steve Allen, Rodney Hughes, Steven VonFlue
Not Pictured: Heather Carter, Jeanne James

Duties, Purpose, and Powers of the Grand Jury

In California today, the grand jury is required by provisions of the Penal Code to:

- (1) Make an annual examination of the operations, accounts, and records of the officers, departments, or functions of the county, including any special district for which officers of the county are serving as ex-officio officers of the district; and
- (2) Inquire into the condition and management of prisons within the county.

The grand jury may investigate or inquire into county matters of civil concern, such as the needs of county officers, including the abolition or creation of offices and the equipment for, or the method or system of performing the duties of the several offices. Other powers permitted to the grand jury include:

- (1) Free access, at reasonable times, to public prisons;
- (2) The right to examine all public records within the county;
- (3) The right to examine books and records of
 - (a) Any incorporated city or joint powers agency located in the county;
 - (b) Certain redevelopment agencies and housing authorities;
 - (c) Special purpose assessing or taxing districts wholly or partly within the county; and
 - (d) Nonprofit corporations established by or operated on behalf of a public entity;
- (4) The authority to investigate and report on operations and methods of performing duties of any such city or joint powers agency and to make recommendations as deemed proper;
- (5) The ability, with permission to the Superior Court, to hire such experts as auditors and accountants; and
- (6) The right to inquire into the sale, transfer, and ownership of lands, which might or should escheat to the state.
- (7) The grand jury is also likely to receive a number of citizen complaints, many of which involve operations of county, city, or special districts. Whether the complaint is civil or criminal, rules of secrecy apply, and the grand jury may not divulge the subject of methods of inquiry.

Marianne Jameson. Ph.D



MADERA COUNTY GRAND JURY

P.O. Box 534, Madera, CA 93639



Madera County Jail

Final Report 2526-01

Released: 4/06/2026

Prepared by the 2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

The Madera County Grand Jury conducted a tour of the Madera County Jail (Jail) on December 18, 2025. During the tour, members of the Grand Jury met with Jail officials and incarcerated individuals and received several presentations from supervising staff members.

A prior Grand Jury determined that the transition of Jail operations from the Madera County Department of Corrections to the Madera County Sheriff's Office was highly successful. That conclusion remains valid.

The current Sheriff and Jail management staff are performing at a high level. Deputy morale is strong, and staff retention rates are good. Overall, Jail operations appear to be well-managed and professionally run.

GLOSSARY

BSCC: Board of State and Community Corrections

CCR Title 15: California Code of Regulations Title 15

CCTP: Correctional Community Transitional Program

GED - General Education Development

IP: Incarcerated Persons

Jail: Madera County Jail

MCGJ: Madera County Grand Jury

SERI: Sierra Education & Research Institute

BACKGROUND

The Madera County Jail is located at 14191 Road 28 in Madera, and has been in operation at this location since 1988. The Jail is managed by the Madera County Sheriff's Office.

Each year, pursuant to California Penal Code §919 (a)(b), the California Grand Juries are mandated to inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons, jails and juvenile detention facilities within the county and to report on their findings. The average daily incarcerated population of the facility at the time of the MCGJ inspection was 443 incarcerated persons (IP) and has not exceeded the capacity of 563 beds in the last year. The MCGJ did not see any signs of overcrowding. The Jail is currently building two additional cell blocks to accommodate an additional 40 IPs with mental health issues.

The Jail was very clean and well-organized. Great efforts have been taken to remove old tiles from the floors, giving the facility a much cleaner appearance. MCGJ observed new paint in more appealing tones and colors.

All cells have working toilets, sinks and lights meeting or exceeding CCR Title 15 standards. IPs are supplied with cleaning supplies which are issued daily. Facility temperatures are maintained by County Maintenance and are at comfortable levels. Showers with hot water are available to the IPs on a regular basis. Bedding and clothing are provided and laundered weekly. The MCGJ did not witness any signs of pests, bugs or rodents. The Jail utilizes a monthly pest control service.

Cell checks and safety cell checks are being performed and documented properly. Safety checks are completed every 60 minutes. Safety cell checks occur twice every 30 minutes, with no more than a 15-minute lapse between checks. Sobering cell checks are conducted at irregular intervals, at least every 30 minutes. The Jail has adopted the Guardian Software platform to enhance their ability to meet cell check requirements from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC).

The BSCC latest report on the Jail found that the facility did not have any noncompliance issues. This is meeting all CCR Title 15 requirements.

The Jail has a well staffed Medical Department: two Registered Nurses, three Licensed Vocational Nurses, one Certified Nursing Assistant, two Mental Health Clinicians, one Health Services Administrator, one Family Nurse Practitioner, one Medical Director, and one Psychiatrist.

IPs are seen within 24 hours per their request. Serious medical issues are addressed immediately. Wellpath is the current medical provider that responds to all medical emergencies.

Wellpath serves the Madera County Department of Corrections & Juvenile Detention Facilities as the provider of medical and mental healthcare services. Services include 24/7 onsite nursing staff, 24/7 on-call providers, 24/7 emergency services, mental health services, crisis intervention, pharmaceutical services and dental care. Wellpath also collaborates with many community partners and offsite providers for patients who need additional assistance or services outside of the facilities.

All IPs are screened for mental health issues upon intake by both facility staff and Wellpath staff. IPs are screened for suicide risk, drug addiction, and withdrawal issues. The Jail has recently entered into an agreement with Madera County Behavioral Health Services to provide a Mental Health Clinician and a Substance Abuse Counselor assigned to the Jail.

Meals are prepared at the Jail by an outside contractor. The Jail has a clean, well-organized kitchen. The menu is determined by nutritionists from the State and meets or exceeds CCR Title 15 requirements. All food temperatures are monitored while cooking and maintained for serving. Meals are prepared to meet basic nutritional, caloric, medical, and religious dietary needs.

IPs receive a minimum of seven hours out of their cell per week, three hours outdoors of fresh air per week.

The Correctional Community Transitional Program (CCTP) is a re-entry and rehabilitative service offered through the Madera County Department of Corrections and related county programs. CCTP's purpose is to help people transition from incarceration back into the community through education, life skills, job training, and other support.

IPs have access to educational, rehabilitative, and religious programs. Some of the current programs include:

GRID Alternatives - Their mission is to make renewable energy technology and training available to underserved communities. GRID recognizes that successful offender re-entry depends on access to services that address underlying social problems contributing to criminal behavior. The challenge of how to prepare returning citizens for successful re-entry 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 to enhance their quality of life. GRID's solar training is an introductory course consisting of classroom instruction with hands-on onsite training labs. Each forty-hour class trains up to ten participants, running two hours per day, five days a week. Participants install solar system components on mock rooftops, learn techniques of installing different types of inverters, both micro and centralized, and gain a firm understanding of wire code and required techniques. Upon successful completion of the hands-on training program, participants will be prepared with the necessary knowledge to install photovoltaic systems, adhering to all safety requirements.

Trainees looking to continue their instruction to become Entry Level Solar Installers are offered the opportunity to join GRID Alternatives industry. Their recognized five-week "Installation Basics Training course" helps to ensure positive employment outcomes for entry-level solar installers. Graduates have successfully grown their technical skill sets, to "speak louder than their backgrounds," increasing their quality of living by obtaining gainful living wage employment in the solar industry.

Workforce - Workforce's vision is to establish innovative collaborations that inspire success and support an environment conducive to economic development while providing opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth. In partnering with the Madera County Department of Corrections, a workshop curriculum taught by a career specialist, is offered to qualifying participants as part of a second chance and a better choice. The topics range from transition planning, career research, labor market information, job search and resource planning, building networks and effective interviewing. By the end of the class the participants compile an employment portfolio that they may use to gain employment. Periodically an in-house job and resource fair is offered to the IPs that are near to their release date. If further employment and or job searches are required, individuals may stop by the Madera County Workforce to receive additional assistance.

IN2WORK- The IN2WORK Program is designed to provide IPs with food service training and practical work experience. Teaching them the necessary tools will help better their everyday life.

The program includes formal vocational training in both the classroom and the kitchen, to include hands-on work experience. Participants have the ability to earn the ServSafe certification that is valid for three years. Progress checks and tests measure their comprehension and help track the program's successes.

SERI- SIERRA EDUCATION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SERI)

SERI is a non-profit agency that provides psychological services to IPs. SERI provides 10-week psychoeducational classes for IPs. SERI provides psychoeducation focusing 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 IPs who desire a higher level of treatment. These individual therapy sessions allow IPs to have one-on-one treatment with a trained clinician. These sessions reinforce the skills learned in the psychoeducational classes. The goals of these classes and individual therapy sessions are to teach IPs positive coping skills so they can improve their lives and to reduce recidivism.

Probation- The mission of the Madera County Probation Department is to encourage positive change in the lives of IPs through collaborative partnerships, evidence based practices, and corrective services. Partnering with the Madera County Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, each IP is provided with a fair and equal opportunity of restoration towards health and a normal life through rehabilitation, educational programs, training and therapy. This program is designed to assist IPs with a successful transition from jail back into their communities. The program achieves this by encompassing a range of evidence based cognitive behavior classes and resources, which include parenting, anger management, personal skills development (Life Skills) education, substance use disorders, life and work instruction, and work-related programs. These programs aid IPs in the preparation for community reintegration by providing them with knowledge, self-confidence, self-worth and community resources.

ACE Overcomers- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Overcomers curricula are being used in several county jails throughout California, treatment programs, and rescue missions nationwide.

The ACE Overcomers curriculum addresses the effects of adverse childhood experiences. IPs 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 is designed to improve the mental, emotional and physical health of the IPs, and prepares them for success.

Tablets, Edovo Program- Edovo utilizes secure tablet technology to deliver free access to educational programming at the Madera County Department of Corrections. Edovo provides a comprehensive suite of digital education, helping meet the range of needs of the IPs education, language, and literacy levels. Edovo provides over 20,000 hours of material, including a differentiated literacy platform, thousands of hours of books and videos, general education development(GED) prep courses, and much more.

Preparation for re-entry: Edovo offers a wide range of vocational preparation to help prepare for a successful re-entry. This includes career exploration, job skill training, vocational certifications, resume building, and interview preparation.

Opportunities for Self-Improvement: The platform helps provide opportunities for personal development through video-based life skills and treatment courses. Edovo provides IPs with access to programming in a variety of areas, including substance abuse treatment, health literacy, anger management, cognitive behavioral therapy, parenting while incarcerated, meditation, and emotional development. MCGJ also learned that IPs may access the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) program on their tablets. The exam covers five subject areas.

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies

Passing the HiSET course will give an IP a high school diploma.

METHODOLOGY

- Conducted an in-person tour of the Madera County Jail facility
- Interviewed Madera County Jail administration, staff, and IPs
- Reviewed the Madera County Jail website
- Reviewed the most recent BSCC inspection reports
- Reviewed prior MCGJ reports
- Reviewed submitted Citizen Complaint Forms relating to the Madera County Jail
- Reviewed CCR: California Code of Regulations Title 15

DISCUSSION

The MCGJ did an extensive tour of the Jail facility and found that the Staff operating the Jail were well organized and well trained to perform their duties. The Sheriff and Under Sheriff are primarily responsible for this result.

There is a major construction project underway at the facility to build two units to house 40 additional beds for IPs needing behavioral health care. The MCGJ believes this will promote an even greater success for the Jail in the future.

FINDINGS

F1. The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) finds that the Madera County Jail (Jail) is being operated efficiently and productively.

F2. The Jail building is adding two additional units to the facility to house Incarcerated Persons (IPs) with behavioral health concerns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) recommends that the Sheriff continue with the current policies.

R2. The MCGJ recommends the Sheriff continue with renovation and building plans.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows: From the following elected officials within 90 days:

Office of the Madera County Sheriff
2725 Falcon Drive
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Board of Supervisors

200 West Fourth Street

Madera, CA 93637

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Correctional Community Transitional Programs: Madera County website

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

Reports issued by the Civil 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 Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.



MADERA COUNTY GRAND JURY

P.O. Box 534, Madera, CA 93639



Valley State Prison

Final Report 2526-02

Released: 04/06/2026

Prepared by the 2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) conducted an inspection of Valley State Prison (VSP) during the 2025–2026 term, in accordance with state mandate to inquire into public institutions, i.e., prisons and jails. The inspection included interviews with staff, Incarcerated Persons (IPs), and a review of data and records from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services (CCHCS).

VSP, originally designed to house 1,961 IPs, now operates well above its design capacity with a population of 3,057. The prison did not add to the initial structure; they added more beds in each cell. Although the institution has not exceeded its maximum capacity of 3,801, the strain on manpower remains evident. Staffing shortages and reliance on mandatory overtime continue to challenge operational effectiveness. Recurring concerns related to services, accommodations, family visiting and administrative actions result in a high amount of grievances. VSP maintains medical and mental health services and provides a wide range of educational and vocational programs, and facilitates access to rehabilitation and re-entry support. Programs such as the Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP), and partnerships with higher institutions demonstrate a commitment to IP reform and reintegration. The MCGJ commends the CDCR staff for maintaining a positive and supportive environment under these conditions.

GLOSSARY

AOD - Alcohol and Other Drugs

BSCC - Board of State and Community Corrections

CBI - Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

CCHCS - California Correctional Health Care Services

CDCR - California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

CPP - Community Partnership Program

DAI - Division of Adult Institutions

EOP - Enhanced Outpatient Program
GED - General Education Development
IP - Incarcerated Persons
ISUDT - Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment
MCGJ - Madera County Grand Jury
OMCP - Offender Mentor Certification Program
SUD - Substance-Use-Disorder
TRP - Tattoo Removal Program
VSP - Valley State Prison

BACKGROUND

All California civil grand juries are mandated to inspect the condition and management of the public prisons. The MCGJ conducted an inspection of the VSP facility on November 25, 2025. During the inspection, the MCGJ had the opportunity to speak with VSP staff and IPs. Additional requested information, such as current population and staffing numbers, details about grievances, and an overview of services and programs, was also requested and received.

VSP, a men's facility located at 21633 Avenue 24 in Chowchilla, CA, was constructed in 1995. Originally housing multi-level incarcerated females, the prison served as the state's only Secure Housing Unit for incarcerated females. After the passage of Assembly Bill 109 in 2011, which resulted in a decrease in the incarcerated female population, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) converted the prison to an all-male institution in 2013. VSP currently operates as a Level II facility, which the CDCR defines as a facility with open dormitories and a secure perimeter that may include armed coverage. IPs with a placement score of 19-35, determined by a review of case factors including: age, crime committed, prior incarcerations, gang involvement, etc., can be assigned to this facility.

METHODOLOGY

- Conducted an in-person inspection of the facility
- Interviewed VSP staff and IPs.
- Reviewed past MCGJ reports.
- Reviewed the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation website (VSP facility landing page and statistical reports: SB 601 Dashboard data)
- Reviewed the California Correctional Health Care Services website (IP's death reporting)
- Reviewed Men's Advisory Council Meeting Minutes.

DISCUSSION

The IP Population during the 2025-2026 MCGJ investigation was 3,057, with a maximum capacity of 3,801. It remains well over the design capacity of 1,961. The CDCR manages the state's prison population through its Division of Adult Institutions (DAI) <https://cdcr.ca.gov/adult-operations>, which oversees secure housing, rehabilitation, and support. DAI is organized regionally to improve efficiency. The CDCR also operates CCHCS <https://cchcs.ca.gov> for medical, dental, and mental health services.

At the time of the inspection in the fall of 2025 there were 1,113 staff members employed, and 115 vacant positions. According to data published on the CDCR website, in the fiscal year 2024-2025, an average of 133,130 hours of overtime were used by custody, dental and mental health, and non-custody staff. Such conditions can cause staff to become fatigued and overburdened, which may result in grievances.

Evidence of a well-groomed landscape was observed at VSP. The entrance to the facility and the surrounding areas of the administration building were observed to be well taken care of. The landscaping around the housing units was well-maintained. A portion of the maintenance of the landscape is being done by IPs. Renovations in the Administration building have been done. New paint and flooring were noticed in the building.

VSP utilizes an open dormitory-style housing layout rather than the traditional small pods, designed to hold a large number of IPs per unit. The MCGJ observed a cell in facility C. Each cell has four bunk beds, two sinks with mirrors, a toilet, and a shower. Correctional Officers conduct daily random searches of various rooms in the housing unit.

Nursing and primary care provider staff are available to IPs to manage routine and urgent care needs. Clinical nursing staff are on-site 24/7, and primary care providers are on-site during normal business hours and on-call for the remainder of the week.

Operational Procedure M0411 for Medication Administration is followed to ensure the safe administration of medication by licensed healthcare staff. Licensed health care staff issues, administers, monitors, and documents administration or delivery of all medication ordered by authorized prescribers within their scope of licensure under California law.

The Associate Warden of Housing and healthcare staff ensures that patients prescribed insulin receive their insulin prior to meals to minimize the potential for hyperglycemic reaction. IPs are allowed priority release by housing units for medication administration due to medical necessity and operational need.

Integrated Substance Use Disorder Treatment (ISUDT) - ISUDT is a comprehensive and evidence-based cross-divisional Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI) program to identify IPs at risk for substance-use disorder (SUD) related harms and provide treatment that reduces the risk of overdose and other complications associated with SUD.

The program's general objectives are to:

- Increase each IP's level of knowledge and skills associated with their SUD and issues contributing to their addiction.
- Increase each IP's level of knowledge and skills associated with their criminal behavior.
- Improve the IPs' relapse and recidivism prevention strategies and skills.

- Addresses criminal and distorted thinking in order to eliminate anti-social thinking.
- Addresses issues that contribute to the IP's SUD and criminal behavior, including: trauma, coping skills, relationship skills, emotion management, and expression of emotions.

Offender Mentor Certification Program (OMCP) - OMCP is a voluntary program for long-term and life without the possibility of parole IPs, which provides them with the training, education, and an opportunity to become an Offender Mentor Certified Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Counselor. Upon graduating from the OMCP, the Offender Mentors are assigned as co-facilitators, working alongside AOD-certified contracted counselors.

The VSP Education Department offers educational services to the IP population via two service delivery streams: the Academic Program and the Career Technical Education Program. As of December 2025, approximately 2,600 of the IPs are in programs offered by the Education Department. Education is currently operating under a “six-year accreditation without a review” issued by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

There are 14 classes in Adult Basic Education levels I, II, and III; General Education Development (GED); Transitions; and High School. VSP also offers AA Degree programs through Feather River Community College, Coastline Community College, and Merced Community College, as well as a BA Degree program through California State University, Fresno. In 2024-2025, 55 IPs received their GED Certificates; nine received their High School Diplomas; four received their Associates Degrees, and two received their Bachelors Degrees.

Vocational Programs - Automotive Mechanics, Building Maintenance, Cosmetology, Computer and Related Technology, Small Engine Repair, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Welding, Electrical Works, Carpentry, Plumbing, and Masonry.

During the MCGJ tour, the MCGJ observed tiny houses that were currently being built by students in the Carpentry Program.



Photo Courtesy of VSP Public Information Officer

The MCGJ also toured the First-Ever Barber School within a California Prison. With the help of a famous viral content creator and entrepreneur, the school opened its doors in August of 2025. The program offers IPs hands-on barbering education, allowing them to earn a license and re-entry with a career path, linking education to re-entry success.



Photo Courtesy of VSP Public Information Officer

Community Resources Department - The Community Resource Department identifies, develops, and manages community-related areas, resources to meet VSP and IP programs' needs by planning, organizing, and directing the Community Partnership Program (CPP) between the VSP community, stakeholders and special interest groups. The Community Resources Department oversees CPP development by planning, organizing, and directing programs to develop, allocate, and coordinate community resources. They provide decisions in the design and implementation of new and innovative programs to benefit IPs and the institution.

Statewide Tattoo Removal Program Resumption - The DAI has resumed the Tattoo Removal Program (TRP). The program is a voluntary service which IPs may participate in, based on criteria and disciplinary history. The tattoo removal services are provided by a contracted vendor within a self-contained mobile unit.

The following criteria determine which IPs may participate in the TRP:

- IPs who have highly visible tattoos on the face, neck, hands, and wrists. Additional locations such as the head, forearm, and collarbone may be approved on a case-by-case basis and require final approval by DAI.
- IPs who are within two years of release.

- IPs who are disassociating from gang activity by actively participating or having completed the debriefing process.

Freedom Canine Project - The Freedom Canine Project pairs rescued dogs with IPs for obedience and service training which leads to American Kennel Club certification. It utilizes a new on-site dog park, focusing on rehabilitation by teaching IPs responsibility and empathy, with many dogs going on to serve as service dogs for veterans and community members. This program has been successful in changing the lives of both the trainers and the rescued dogs.

Food Services Department - The MCGJ had the opportunity to tour the central kitchen at VSP, which includes a kosher kitchen. The regular heart-healthy diet is the “core” diet at VSP. Menus are based on a “Healthy U.S. Style Eating Pattern” as recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The diet is based on principles found in the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the Choose My Plate food guidance system, and the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine and National Academies.

Each IP is provided a wholesome, nutritionally balanced diet. Nutritional levels shall meet the Recommended Dietary Allowances and Dietary Reference Intakes established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. IPs are provided three meals daily, two of which shall be served hot. Variations to the two hot meals per day requirement may be allowed to accommodate religious observance, religious programs, and institutional emergencies. The breakfast meal is served no more than 14 hours after the previous day’s meal.

The IPs meals are pork-free. No pork or pork derivatives are to be served. All menu items besides the meats are collagen-free, i.e., soup base and gelatin.

The central kitchen was observed to be sanitary and well-organized. IPs working in the kitchens are required to be cleared by medical services and complete a 52-week food service training program, which qualifies them in food preparation and food handling.

FINDINGS

F1.The MCGJ finds there are adequate educational and vocational opportunity programs for IPs.

F2.The MCGJ finds that the Freedom Canine Project provides inmates with the opportunity to develop compassion, confidence, and responsibility.

F3.The MCGJ finds that the new Barber School provides opportunities for IPs to be able to get their State Barber License and provides a path toward a long-term career that is available to them upon release from prison.

F4.The MCGJ finds that family visiting has been impacted by the renovations of the family units to make them American Disabilities Act compliant. According to the Warden, they are awaiting final approval from the State fire marshal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1.The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue providing well-rounded offerings of educational and vocational training with post-release employment opportunities.

R2.The MCGJ recommends that the Freedom Canine Project continue.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that the Barber School continue to provide opportunities for IPs.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that the CDCR continue to work at the state level to get the inspections completed on the family visiting unit to allow the IP's family to continue with family visitation.

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses within 60 days from the following:

Warden Valley State Prison
21633 Avenue 24
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Public Information Officer - VSP
21633 Avenue 24
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95841

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 Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929, prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.



Central California Women's Facility

Released: May 18, 2026

Preliminary Report 2526-03

Prepared by the

2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

The Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) is a state prison located in Chowchilla, California, and is managed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Opened in October 1990 it is the largest female correctional facility in California. CCWF houses incarcerated persons (IP) at all security levels, from Level 1 (minimum) to Level IV (maximum). The primary mission of CCWF is to rehabilitate and incarcerate offenders in a safe and ethical setting, with a focus on successful reintegration into society. This is an ongoing process through education programs, work programs, vocational training, treatment, mentorship, and peer support. The California Code of Regulations, Title 15 outlines the rules and standardized guidelines for IP rehabilitation, treatment, and disciplinary process to correct behavior, while under the custodial care of the CDCR.

GLOSSARY

CALPIA - California Prison Industry Authority

CA Model - California Model

CCHCS - California Correctional Health Care Services

CCWF - Central California Women's Facility

CDCR - California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

DOM - Department Operations Manual

IP - Incarcerated Person(s)

LASD - Little Angel's Service Dogs Program

MCGJ - Madera County Grand Jury

OMCP - Occupational Mentor Certification Program

OTC - Over the Counter

PC - Penal Code

PSS - Peer Support Specialist

PUPS - Puppies Uplifting Prisoners' Spirits

RC - Reception Center

R&R - Receiving and Release

RVR - Rules Violation Report

METHODOLOGY

- MCGJ conducted the CCWF site inspection
- Reviewed The California Model
- Reviewed the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) website
- Reviewed the Department Operations Manual (DOM)
- Reviewed CCWF DOM Supplements
- Reviewed CCWF website
- Reviewed CCWF *Paper Trail* website
- Reviewed previous MCGJ final reports

BACKGROUND

CCWF is the largest female facility in California, housing all security levels. CCWF has a current population of 2,096 incarcerated persons (IPs). Approximately 1,500 are housed in three general population yards that have four single-story, four-wing housing units with 32 rooms each. The balance is housed in the reception center yard, which has two single-story, four-wing housing units and two two-tier buildings. Current housing levels are in line with capacity without overcrowding. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) establishes staffing standards to ensure safe and effective operation of correctional facilities. These standardized staffing packages allow for variable staffing levels based on institutional design, special programming needs, custody levels, and population totals. Additional staffing changes are also made to accommodate the various healthcare needs and/or requirements of the current population.

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) conducted the annual detention facility inspection at Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. CCWF is located at 23370 Rd. 22, Chowchilla, CA. The MCGJ met briefly with the Warden. The Warden responded to this year's budget, stating that it has been difficult in the economic environment that California has experienced in recent years. CCWF has requested funding to repair and/or replace roofing throughout the facility due to leaks during rainy weather. This facility is now 35 years old. They are in the process of doing roof repairs and/or replacements, which is an ongoing project as funding is approved and allocated.

The MCGJ met with the Administrative Assistant Public Information Officer, who would escort our site observation to the firehouse, visiting areas, yards, housing units, school-vocational programs, as well as the support services areas of clothing, canteen, central kitchen, and warehouse. The MCGJ was shown a video highlighting their programming and activities throughout the facility. Videos are available to the public on the CDCR website www.cdcr.ca.gov, under the facility locator CCWF.

MCGJ was issued a copy of the CCWF *Paper Trail*. This is a new publication established in 2024, patterned after the *San Quentin News*. This news publication is available online to the public at www.ccwfpapertrail.org with articles written and published by the population, custody, and noncustody staff, volunteers, and others outside the Institution. The *Paper Trail* covers many social and political topics of the day, has articles involved with incarceration and its many aspects, including those of CCWF and of individuals incarcerated there. The *Paper Trail* also engages with the community in an effort to open up awareness and communication to both the incarcerated population and the public. The CCWF *Paper Trail* was recently recognized as noted:

CCWF *Paper Trail* wins multiple awards in the 2025 American Penal Press Contest,
[January 5, 2026 Mallisa James](#)



Pollen Initiative Editorial Director Kate McQueen announces that CCWF *Paper Trail*'s Diana Lovejoy won first place for Best Opinion in the 2025 American Penal Press Contest. (Photo by Marcus Casillas, SQNews)

On Sept. 19, 2025, CCWF *Paper Trail*, the monthly newspaper produced by residents in CCWF, emerged as victors in the American Penal Press Contest (APPC). This competition honors journalism in newspapers, magazines, and newsletters of the prison press.



CCWF *Paper Trail* staff participating remotely in the APPC awards ceremony via livestream. (Photo by CCWF *Paper Trail*).

The energy in the CCWF *Paper Trail* newsroom was anticipatory and hopeful as the participating prison newsrooms awaited the announcements.

CCWF is also the Reception Center (RC) where the IP receives orientation and goes through the intake process on Facility A. This includes the process of an evaluation for every person entering the state prison system. During this process, the healthcare needs of the IP population are addressed within seven days of arrival and a follow-up in 14 to 30 days if needed. The individual's classification or security level is determined for housing suitability, identifying any medical, mental health, and educational needs before they are moved into long-term housing in a general population yard. Medical screening is conducted for services needed that are determined and are provided by Licensed Medical and Mental Health Care Professionals, Correctional Counselors, and Classification Committees. Due to information being gathered during the RC process, this yard has more restrictions than a general population yard. There is minimal access to jobs, education, and vocational training. There are fewer privileges, and they are not allowed to mix with the general population for safety concerns. This process typically takes from 60 to 90 days to complete while testing is being done to determine reading and math levels, social and criminal history, and any court-ordered sentencing guidelines. CDCR uses a classification scoring point system to determine security level. A Classification Committee will be held, in which an assigned Correctional Counselor will make recommendations based on scores and needs. The IP can then be placed on recommended lists for school, work, and program assignments. Furthermore, the RC population is clothed in orange two-piece suits (pants and shirt) to be easily identified as an additional layer of security.

CCWF has implemented the California Model (CA Model) and continues to work with staff, the population, and community stakeholders through rehabilitation and positive programming to strive for a more positive outcome. The CA Model is a system-wide change within CDCR and California Corrections and Health Care Services (CCHCS). It calls on national and international best practices to change culture within our prisons and improve the correctional environment through staff training, utilization of resources, and practices that promote the health and well-being of those who work and live in

them. The goal is to change the culture from a housing and release model to a progression model for rehabilitation, learning, and growth with mentors, self-awareness with accountability, peer support, and preparation to support eventual release into the community.

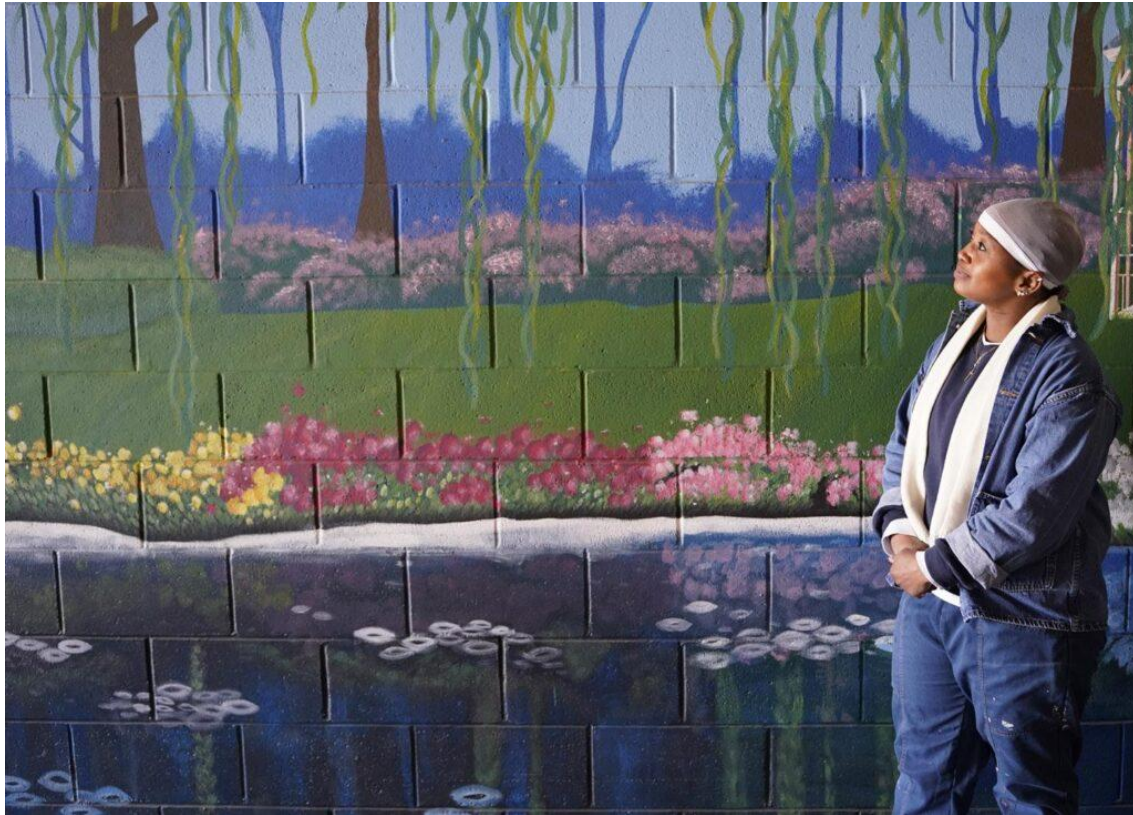
The California Model:

The CA Model is built on four foundational pillars:

- Dynamic Security
- Normalization
- Peer Support
- Trauma-Informed Organization

Providing a safer environment where staff want to go to work and add value will reduce the trauma and stress experienced daily. The CA Model Staff wellness area was pointed out after entry through the pedestrian sallyport along the path to the visiting buildings. CA Model funding secured was utilized to build a park-like area, with two gazebos, trees, plants, and shrubs, with seating to sit prior to or following a work shift. This area has been used for some employee events, staff appreciation, and promotion ceremonies. The area is located inside the electrified fence, which is also a key security factor, as well as overhead security cameras that are installed both outside and inside throughout the facility. Multiple custody counts are conducted throughout the State over a 24-hour period for accountability as established by CDCR policy.

Normalization aims to bring life in prison as close as possible to life outside of prison, so that the IPs can more easily transition to life in the community upon release. Facility programming for work, school, and support group activities function on a scheduled routine throughout the day and evening. Beautification with murals, and inspirational statements within the institution at CCWF was seen throughout the facility. The CA Model also aims to help prepare the incarcerated to become better persons, and neighbors when they return to their communities.



CCWF Muralist Vegas Bray poses in front of a mural she completed in the hallway leading to A yard. (Photo by CCWF Paper Trail)

Peer support seeks to train IPs to use their lived experiences to provide recovery and rehabilitative support to their peers. A Peer Support Specialist (PSS) certification validates lived experience in mental health/substance abuse recovery, requiring approved training, passing an exam, and adhering to a code of ethics. The Peer Support Specialist Program offers participants the opportunity to obtain certification, providing employment and career opportunities upon their release from incarceration. While incarcerated, PSS can assist their peers with navigating CDCR/CCHCS programs, processes, and resources, provide emotional support, promote self-care management, teach their peers how to advocate for themselves, and support the path towards rehabilitation. CCWF has a Peer Support Specialist Program that provides training for 30 full-time positions to the population to become a PSS under the new Medi-Cal program. When PSS return to the community, they can use this experience to earn a livable wage.

OMCP graduates celebrate with families and peers:



September 8, 2025 OMCP Graduating Class of 2025. (Photo by CCWF TV Specialist R. Quinlan)

Substance use disorder and addiction affect countless people across the globe. But 16 CCWF residents are hoping to change that by becoming certified Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) counselors. As of July 17, 2025 they celebrated the first part of that journey — the completion of a six-month educational study through the Occupational Mentor Certification Program (OMCP). Rehabilitative Program Housing Units have been developed in the yards using motivational incentives at different levels of progression, including no disciplinary or behavioral issues for periods of time in order to qualify to reside in the unit. Staff receive special training in communication, psychology, and being trauma-informed to work with the IP, which can be beneficial to both. Following the CA Model of rehabilitation through mentoring, positive programming, improving self-esteem, and creating self-awareness changes the mindset of just a housing and release facility.

Honor Dorms have been in existence before the CA Model on all General Population Facilities. IPs must be discipline-free for a two year criteria to enter and remain in the housing unit. The Little Angel's Service Dog (LASD) program is in Facility B, building

506 Honor Dorm. The LASD organization's goal is to assist individuals with disabilities by partnering with CCWF. The IP must meet program criteria requirements and agree to program policies. LASD provides ongoing training to those assigned to the Puppies Uplifting Prisoners Spirits (PUPS) Program in Facility B Honor Dorm.



Photo by CCWF Paper Trail

MCGJ went to view the PUPS program in Building 506. The IP assigned to this program becomes a full-time handler/trainer that lives and works with the puppies to care for, socialize, crate and obedience train. They demonstrated different levels of obedience training and commands to the dogs with pride, further stating that it has taught them patience and responsibility. Also demonstrated was the dog door pull, pulling a special knotted rope to open the door on command, as could be needed for a handicapped or disabled person. The program for each dog can range from 8 to 18 months, depending on the age and readiness of the animal. Numerous dogs have become full-service dogs and have been placed with approved disabled recipients. The IP trainers showed great pride in telling the MCGJ the stories of these families, and showing the bulletin board full of pictures received from them regarding the dogs that they worked with during their formative training. The staff, administration, and IP population all support this program with enthusiasm, pride, and joy.

CCWF has many building programs, peer support, self-help, and IP activity groups, including but not limited to the following:

- Roadmaps
- Beyond Violence
- Healing Trauma
- Purpose
- God Deliver Me From Me
- The Middle
- Prescription for Change
- Face-It
- Right Person, Right Prison
- Life Planning
- Reclaiming Yourself
- Felons Against Distracted and Drunk Driving (FADDD)
- Break Through Parenting
- Oprah Book Club
- Mother-Daughter Book Club
- Staff & Incarcerated Persons Book Club
- Girl Scouts Beyond Bars
- Grandma's Hands
- Youth Offender Mentorship Program (For Lifers & LWOPs)
- Healing Trauma RHU
- Anti-Recidivism Coalition - Board of Parole Hearing Preparation
- Anti-Recidivism Coalition - Criminal and Gangs Anonymous
- Anti-Recidivism Coalition - Emotional Intelligence
- Little Angel's Service Dog Program

CDCR/CCHCS has been evaluating individual CA Model efforts as they are being implemented, because they want to see which initiatives are getting the best results. As a model, they build on those best practices to more quickly change our system.

Resource teams have already shown progress in reducing the use of force, violence, and rule violations.

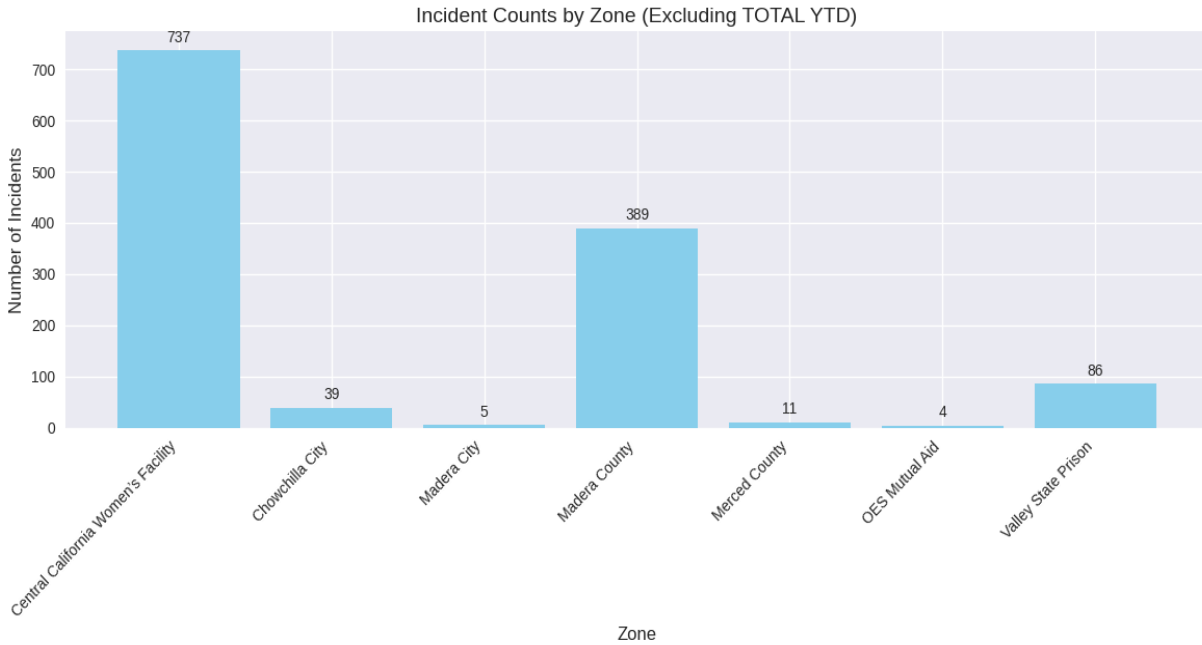
Fire House:

The Fire House Department consists of the following positions:

- Fire Chief - one position
- Fire Captains - five positions
- Associate Hazardous Materials Specialist - one position
- IP Firefighters - ten positions

The assigned IP Firefighters reside and train at the CCWF Fire House, which is outside of the electric fence perimeter. This makes the criteria for qualification to be assigned to one of the IP Firefighter positions much more restrictive, needing a lower security level classification. Once the IP meets the criteria and the vetting process is complete, the assigned IP firefighter is moved out of the general population where they will reside, prepare meals, eat, sleep, and train to respond to calls for the CCWF Fire House. The firefighter positions will receive special work assignment clothing. The firefighters shall be required to wear a blue chambray uniform shirt with a CCWF Fire logo, blue jeans, a blue belt, and black work boots. During colder weather, the firefighters shall also have a blue sweatshirt and blue jacket with the CCWF Fire logo. During physical fitness training, before and after normal business hours, the firefighters shall be required to wear a red sweatshirt or red tee shirt (with the CCWF Fire logo), and red sweatpants and/or red shorts.

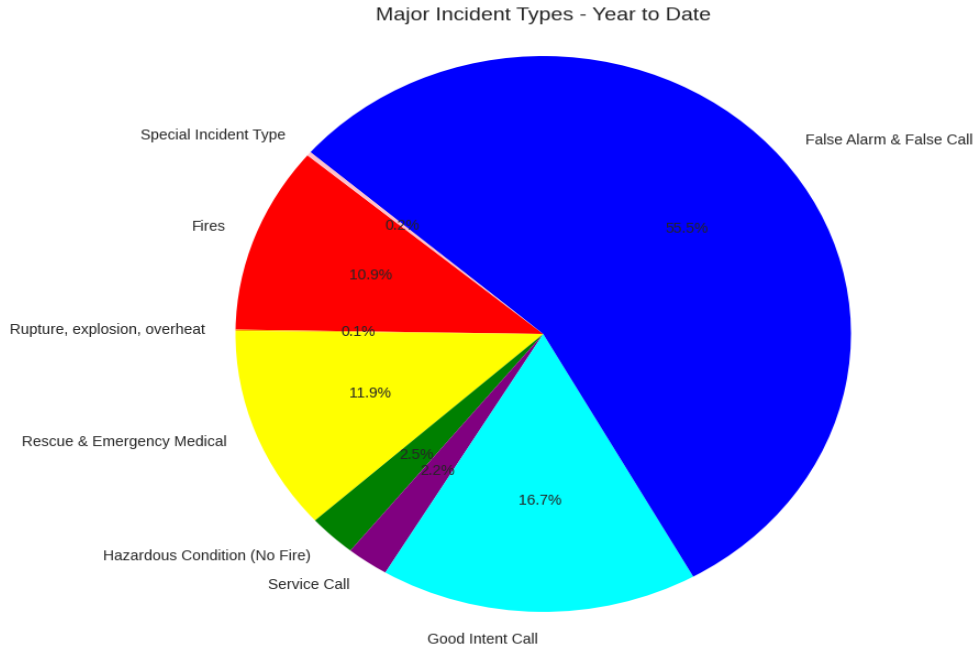
CCWF Fire Department provided statistical data for the year to date (January 1, 2025 - November 17, 2025). The information provided shows their responses by major incident type, number of incidents, and total overall percentages for all zones:



TOTAL YTD

1271 calls

CCWF Fire House has the responsibility of providing fire protection to both CCWF and Valley State Prison (VSP). They also respond to other designated zones as documented:



Local Safety Inspections:

A required *CCWF Weekly/Monthly Buildings/Grounds/ Hazard/Fire & Safety Inspection Checklist* is completed and electronically submitted to the fire captains for review. The staff must inspect and report any issues/deficiencies in their work areas. The areas of inspection include outside areas (e.g., building/grounds clean, emergency exits posted and without obstruction), policy & procedures (e.g., employees wearing personal alarm, job descriptions and training, documented and up to date), hazardous waste (e.g., safety data sheets with proper chemical storage), deficiencies, and corrective actions taken. Form CCWF/VSP 565 (01/23) must be completed by checking specific items as inspected, and listing any deficiencies that need attention. The form is submitted to the area supervisor for signature and submitted to the Fire Department. Fire inspections conducted at the institution were up to date at the time of the MCGJ inspection. A sample of the required checklist was collected for Building/Area 701 C Yard Canteen in the month of October 2025.

Family Visiting:

Weekly visits for IPs are held in one of two large visiting rooms in the institution. Each room contains fixed seating with tables. There is also a book library and play area for children. Visits with family are up to six hours in length. All visitors must be pre-approved and screened before entering the institution. Family visits that have been pre-approved are held in the family visiting units, which are a two-bedroom unit, with an apartment-size living, dining, and kitchenette area. Each unit also has a fenced-in front yard grass area for outside enjoyment with children.

Housing:

Facility B, Building 505 is the Transitional Care Unit (TCU). The TCU provides more assisted living care for an aging population, or for those who may be mildly to moderately cognitively impaired, medically vulnerable, or who may be unable to perform some activities of daily living. Facility B is also the only yard that currently houses designated wheelchair occupants. The MCGJ observed numerous wheelchairs exiting Building 505, during a scheduled unlock on our visit. MCGJ also noticed vests being worn to notify others of identified impairments, i.e., mobility impaired, and hearing impaired.

Honor Dorm Units are located in each yard. Facility B, Building 506, Facility C, Building 512, and Facility D, Building 516. The IPs are housed at a maximum of eight persons per cell. Each cell contains four bunk beds with drawers, eight lockers, two sinks with nonbreakable mirrors, one toilet, and one shower. The Honor Dorm units are often awarded the privilege of being the first building called to shop at the Canteen.

Canteen:

Canteens for IPs shall be established in all institutions and camps of the Department pursuant to California Penal Code (PC) Section 5005. All commodities sold in the canteens are approved items for that purpose. The Canteen Draw Schedule under

DOM 54070.5 requires that three draws be established based on the last two digits of the departmental identification number:

- First Draw Week CDCR Numbers: 00-33
- Second Draw Week CDCR Numbers: 34-66
- Third Draw Week CDCR Numbers: 67-99

Each IP may withdraw funds from their trust account for canteen purchase no less than once per month in accordance with the posted schedule.

The current maximum amount authorized to be withdrawn from an IP trust account for the purpose of canteen purchases is \$300.

The maximum amount an IP may withdraw for canteen purposes is in accordance with their privilege group.

- Privilege Group A - Maximum amount authorized by the Secretary (\$300)
- Privilege Group B - One-half the maximum amount authorized (\$150)
- Privilege Group C - One fourth the maximum amount authorized(\$75)
- Privilege Group D - One fourth the maximum amount authorized (\$75)
- Privilege Group U - One-half the maximum privilege (\$150)

Canteen eligibility shall be determined by the automatic refresh in the Trust, Restitution, Accounting, and Canteen System (TRACS), starting the first Monday of each month.

Money must be available and appear at the time of the refresh to qualify for the shopping cycle. This refresh resets the maximum amount an IP can spend at the Canteen according to their privilege group.

- Refreshed the first Monday of the month - CDCR Numbers 00-33
- Refreshed the second Monday of the month - CDCR Numbers 34-66
- Refreshed the third Monday of the month - CDCR Numbers 67-99

On Monday of each shopping week, the Canteen staff shall export the *Incarcerated Persons Canteen Available Balance Report* from TRACS to create the *Canteen List of*

Approved Shoppers. This list will be prepared by the housing unit building number, then supplied to the Sergeant, Lieutenant, and Custody staff via electronic mail.

CCWF currently has the following Canteen Price Lists:

- Restricted Housing Unit
- Accountability Change Transformation
- Reception Center
- General Population

IPs confined to the Restricted Housing Unit, privilege group D, shall submit their canteen lists to the unit staff. Those assigned to this unit shall draw according to the last two digits of their identification numbers, the same as the general population. There is a specific *Restricted Housing Unit Canteen Price* list, with reduced items for purchase, and a maximum of \$75 total. Orders placed by the IPs in this unit shall be delivered by the custody staff. The IPs shall not be permitted to go to the canteen. The Accountability Change and Transformation Unit must use their canteen price list when shopping, with an amount in accordance with their privilege group. The Reception Center population on Facility A must shop from the *Reception Center Canteen Price List*. This list is also reduced by the quantity of items available for purchase, and a maximum spending limit of \$150. The *General Population (GP) Canteen Price Lists* are distributed to the general population yards for canteen shopping with the maximum amount of \$300. The *GP Canteen Price List* has about 180 different items available for purchase. The list is divided into multiple categories with multiple items under each category:

- Stamps & Stationery
- Hygiene & Body Products
- Hair Care Products
- Health Care Products
- Laundry Products
- Miscellaneous Products
- Beauty Products
- Soup Products

- Coffee & Drinks
- Meat Products
- Cheese Bars
- Pasta & Rice Products (dehydrated products, ie; beans, potatoes, mac & cheese)
- Ice Cream
- Water & Soda Drinks
- Spices & Condiments
- Cookies & Snacks
- Last Chance/Limited Time Items

MCGJ viewed Facility B Canteen. The store shelves were stocked with individual products from the list. Case quantities stored in the back room on rack shelving and pallets are used to restock the front shelves. The IP crew explained to the MCGJ how they fill an order by pulling the selected item from the shelf, placing it in a tray until the list is completed. The order is scanned by bar code into the TRACS computer system operated by the staff and issued to the individual shopping at the window. Upon completion, a receipt is printed which must be signed and thumbprinted acknowledging receipt of the goods purchased, and authorizing the removal of funds from their trust account for payment of said goods.

The overall canteen sales reported on the CCWF *Monthly Canteen Sales Report* for the month of October 2025 was \$243,622.95. The total cost of sales (items purchased for resale) was \$179,449.26. The inventory value on hand from the *Consolidated Inventory Report* for October 2025 was \$381,301.11

Free Health Care Items:

Another aspect of healthcare provided to the population is the Over-The-Counter (OTC) medication distributed through the canteens, free of charge. On the back of the Canteen Lists are the approved items purchased by CCHCS. During each IP's shopping draw week, they may choose three OTC items from the following categories, with no more than two of the same item:

- Antacid/Heartburn
- Allergy (e.g., cetirizine, loradine, nasal spray, eye drops)
- Pain Relief (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen, acetaminophen)
- Dental (denture adhesive)
- Topical (e.g., antifungal, hydrocortisone, lotion, sun block)
- Glasses (one pair of reading glasses and one pair of sunglasses per 12 months)

Clothing:

CCWF Reception Center shall be clothed in orange two piece clothing upon arrival, along with a bedroll by Receiving and Release (R & R), and Facility A Clothing Room.

- Three orange shirts
- Three pairs of orange pants
- One orange sweatshirt
- One pair of tennis shoes
- One pair of shower shoes
- Three bras issued every six months
- Eight pairs of panties and/or boxer-style undershorts (in any combination, white only issued every six months.
- Six pairs of socks
- One blue nylon jacket
- One nightgown
- One bedroll (consisting of two blankets, two sheets, one pillowcase, two towels, and one washcloth)

After the RC process has been completed, and the IP is moved to a general population yard, they are then issued state blue clothing.

CCWF standard clothing issue for female IPs:

- Four blue shirts
- One chambray snap shirt

- One baseball shirt
- Three pairs of jeans
- One nightgown
- Six pairs of socks
- One long-sleeve sweatshirt
- Eight panties and/or boxer-style undershorts (any combination, white only, issued every six months)
- Three bras (issued every six months)
- One blue jacket
- Two sheets
- Two towels
- One pillowcase
- One washcloth
- Two acrylic blankets
- One pair of tennis shoes (issued annually)
- One watchcap (beanie)
- One pair of shower shoes
- One pair of boots (as designated by work assignment)

Clothing and linen exchange is provided for the population once per week. The schedule may vary by building, and/or by yard. Each person will submit their soiled laundry with a completed laundry exchange slip of all the items they wish to exchange. Personal clothing (bras and underwear) is kept by each person and is washed in the housing unit laundry room. Housing unit laundry sign-up sheets for the washer and dryer are maintained and conducted by the housing unit staff.

Personal Appearance and Attitude Of IP:

Throughout the institution, IPs were properly dressed and well-groomed. The MCGJ interviewed several IPs, including the elected Advisory Council, who spoke highly of the efforts taken by the staff and administration to implement and sustain all the various programs for their rehabilitation.

Educational Programs:

CCWF operates a fully accredited Sierra Adult School for the educational benefit of the population. The academic classes support the students assigned to the programs in the Adult Basic Education (ABE I, II & III), to further their education and offer the opportunity to earn a high school diploma or general educational development (GED). Sierra Vista Adult School also offers college courses through junior colleges in order to obtain an Associate's Degree (AA). One California State University partners with CCWF to offer a program to earn a Bachelor's Degree. There are technical education programs offered of which approved certifications can be attained for future employment opportunities.

Rehabilitation and Employment:

CCWF provides employment opportunities with training and apprenticeships through the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA). This includes both dental and eyeglass manufacturing.

Dental Manufacturing:

The dental manufacturing area was observed as the MCGJ was taken to each station and given a brief overview of the manufacturing process at each station. There are over 70 IPs working in the department to manufacture full and/or partial dentures, make denture repairs, and make night guards and/or blocks for those incarcerated throughout the state. They also have contracts that provide services for Veterans and State Hospitals.



calpia.ca.gov/services/dental photo

Eyeglass Manufacturing:

The eyeglass manufacturing has modern and technical equipment for the lens-making process. They manufacture plastic and polycarbonate, single and bifocal eyeglasses, which include contracts for Medi-Cal patients. There are over 70 IPs assigned to the program. There is also a controlled inventory process for all the stock needed and glasses frames on hand.

FINDINGS

F1. At the time of the MCGJ inspection, only five of the ten IP firefighter positions were filled, leaving a 50% vacancy. Vacancies for the Fire Department appear to be an ongoing concern.

F2. The MCGJ found that the *The Paper Trail* paper is a new avenue to communicate events and awareness to the public.

F3. The MCGJ found that the CA Model and the multiple programs offered at CCWF provide the opportunity for improvement to all IPs to transition to life in the community upon release.

F4. The MCGJ finds that the PUPS program continues to be a beneficial program that helps the IPs and benefits persons with special needs and disabilities in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that the Administration continue to pursue ways of keeping the firefighter positions filled.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that *The Paper Trail* continue its publications to keep the community informed.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that CCWF continue to maintain and implement proven educational, vocational training, and self-help programs to provide the IP the ability to integrate back into society.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that CCWF continue with the PUPS program.

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.5, the Grand Jury invites responses as follows within 60 days:

Warden CCWF
Central California Women's Facility
23370 Road 22
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Public Information Officer - CCWF
23370 Road 22
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95841

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 Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.



Change Is In Their Hands

Release Date: May 18, 2026

Final Report 2526-04

Prepared by the

2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury



Hand-painted mural located at MCJDF

SUMMARY

The Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility (MCJDF) is a state and federally funded rehabilitation facility charged with housing juvenile detainees 12-25 years of age. It is located at 28219 Ave 14, Madera, CA 93638. Detainment of juveniles at the detention facility occurs through criminal arrests, adjudication hearings, and Child Protective Services or other informal dispositions. Although crimes of juvenile detainees vary in degree, juvenile offenders are detained at MCJDF under Proposition 57 (Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016). The MCJDF is premised on a rehabilitative versus punishment-based criminal justice system. Participation in rehabilitation programs offered through MCJDF may result in 15% or more sentencing reductions. Restorative justice programs between the victim and offender are currently not incorporated into MCJDF's rehabilitation system.

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) found that the MCJDF education programs were well organized. The MCJDF has advanced its programs to include online studies at Madera Community College and Fresno State University.

The MCGJ also found that the rehabilitation welding tradesmen courses have not been implemented, and the woodshop and on-grounds horticulture program was at limited functionality.

Overall, the collaborative effort to operate and oversee the juvenile facility creates a clear and reasonable expectation within the community that public safety will be upheld at every stage of detention, rehabilitation, and release.

GLOSSARY

BSCC - Board of State and Community Corrections

JDPS - Juvenile Detention Profile Survey

MCGJ - Madera County Grand Jury

MCJDF - Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility

PROP 57 - Proposition 57 (Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016)

YCO - Youth Correctional Officer

BACKGROUND

Each year, pursuant to California Penal Code §919 (a)(b), the California Grand Juries are mandated to inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons, jails, and juvenile detention facilities within the county and to report on their findings.

The 2025-2026 MCGJ conducted the annually mandated inspection of the MCJDF on December 9, 2025. This report focuses on the management, overall funding, and rehabilitation function of the MCJDF.

The original facility in the 1940's was on Lewis Street. It was completed in 1962 for \$323,151. The original design of the facility was to house up to 21 juvenile detainees.

The MCJDF is managed and operated by the Madera County Probation Department. Juvenile sentencing and rehabilitation recommendations, as well as motions to transfer cases to adult court, are also managed and processed through the probation

department. For more information concerning management of the MCJDF, please visit: [JSD](#).

The MCJDF operates independently and in conjunction with other entities within Madera County, including the Correctional Academy Program and Secure Track. The Madera Superior Court Juvenile Division is also part of Madera County's juvenile justice system, responsible for overseeing delinquency and dependency case proceedings.

Although this report does not focus on specifics of sentencing and detainment of juveniles, a general overview is necessary in order to place into context the MCJDF rehabilitation function as it correlates to their funding sources, budget, facility agendas, and more to their rehabilitative partnerships. Some of the legislative elements include:

PROP 57 was a ballot initiative passed in support of criminal justice reform. Summarily, PROP 57 offered two distinct legislative provisions, as follows:

- allows defendants to be tried in juvenile court rather than adult court.
- allows juveniles 15% or more credit sentence reduction by way of participation in rehabilitation programs and opportunities.

Specific information on PROP 57 may be located at:

<https://vig.cdn.sos.ca.gov/2016/general/en/pdf/text-proposed-laws.pdf#prop57>

DISCUSSION

MCGJ were welcomed by the facility's Lieutenant and Commander and were accommodated with a full-access inspection of the detention facility. On-site areas toured by the MCGJ included: the detained youth-family visiting center (including the additional attorney-client chambers), sallyport and exterior prison transport area, intake scanning, search and dress area, the medical clinic, riot gear room, canteen, video surveillance and monitoring room, behavioral health clinician's office, exercise room, two of the five housing units, classrooms and laundromat. The inspection also included two concrete recreation areas, the outdoor garden, and the workshop. The MCGJ interviewed the Lieutenant and Corporal, as well as two of the on-site educators.

Jurors also had the opportunity to meet with the MCJDF nurse practitioner and behavioral health clinician, as well as some of the detained juveniles. Upon arrival, jurors received for review a copy of the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) Comprehensive Inspection report dated August 1, 2025. Also received were written responses to commonly asked questions submitted on behalf of the MCGJ. At the end of the inspection, jurors had an additional question and answer segment with the Lieutenant.

The MCGJ finds that from 2023-2025, the MCJDF added three new employment positions while simultaneously eliminating or reducing funding for contracted services, re-entry services, infrastructure improvement and equipment, and operating expenses.

METHODOLOGY

- On-Site inspection of the MCJDF
- Review of the MCGJ report dated April 9, 2025
- Reviewed MCJDF written personnel responses
- Review of BSCC Comprehensive Inspection report dated August 1, 2025
- Review of the Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act of 2016

- PROP 57 Official Voter Information Guide from the California Secretary of State
- Review of PROP 57 Analysis by the Legislative Analyst
- Review of the 2023-2025 Madera County Juvenile Justice Realignment Block Grant Annual Plan
- Review of California Rules of Court Rule 5.806
- Review of the relevant Welfare and Institutions Code
- PROP 57 Sentencing Matrix 707(b)

MCJDF offers an extensive variety of educational endeavours with four full-time on-site teachers as well as teacher's assistants. They offer an individually customized curriculum to suit each juvenile's learning needs. There is also one special needs educator who offers educational instruction to juveniles with Individualized Education Program and 405 education plans. Educational instruction is offered year-round for juveniles 12-25 years of age. MCJDF works closely with the Madera Workforce Development Center to provide training and job readiness. The Leaders are Readers rehabilitation program also helps to encourage juveniles in practicing their journaling and improving their reading and writing skills.

Individualized support for vocational skills and counseling services is also offered through MCJDF. Educational opportunities at the juvenile facility now include online classes at Madera Community College and Fresno State University.

MCJDF employs approximately 40 personnel, including 28 line staff, six Corporals, four Sergeants, one Lieutenant, and one Commander. Staffing also includes one full-time nurse practitioner, behavioral health and mental health employees, five educators, as well as teacher's assistants. There is one Youth Correctional Officer (YCO) assigned for every ten juvenile detainees during the day and one YCO assigned for every 30 juvenile detainees during the night. The MCJDF works in conjunction with one delegated juvenile court judge and one juvenile court parole officer.

Employees at MCJDF are required to complete 24 hours of training each year, including trauma-informed care, suicide prevention and mental health awareness, Prison Rape Elimination Act, arrest and control, range firearms and baton training for Transport Officers, as well as basic training for the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System. The MCJDF offers competitive pay and benefit incentives and is home to third-generation career employees. MCJDF experiences very little employment turnover.

The MCJDF functions on a \$9,644,500 yearly operating budget, including a \$1,000,000 federally approved spending grant. The MCGJ finds that from 2023-2025, the MCJDF added three new employment positions, including one Lieutenant and two YCOs. The MCJDF reduced funding for contracting services and eliminated funding for infrastructure, equipment, and operating expenses. For more information on the funding and rehabilitation function of MCJDF, please visit:

[oocr//.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34https6/2024/05/Madera-2023-JJRBG-County-Plan_Redacted.pdf](https://oocr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/34https6/2024/05/Madera-2023-JJRBG-County-Plan_Redacted.pdf)

Budget Variations

2023-2024 vs. 2024-2025

Category	2023–2024	2024–2025	\$ Change	% Change
YCO II	\$121,388	\$372,000	+\$250,612	+206.4%
Lieutenant	—	\$162,000	+\$162,000	—
Probation Program Specialist	\$92,341	\$100,000	+\$7,659	+8.3%
Contracted Services	\$75,553	\$73,000	–\$2,553	–3.4%

Re-Entry Services	\$50,553	\$0	-\$50,553	-100%
Infrastructure & Equipment	\$10,165	—	-\$10,165	—
Operating Expenses	\$180,755	—	-\$180,755	—

The MCJDF has a maximum capacity of 70 juvenile detainees. During the MCGJ tour, there were 37 juvenile detainees, with the youngest detainee being 14 years of age. The MCGJ inspected two of the five housing quarters and found they were combined with both male and female juvenile detainees. Integrated housing units share a common communal social space and classroom, with personal cells . Units were tidy and organized. Hygiene items, upgraded shower shoes, and clothing items were available to juvenile detainees through the canteen. The most severe offenders were housed in a separate housing unit. Juvenile detainees displayed polite etiquette and were focused on their coursework, reading, and poetry. There were no reported incidents during the MCGJ inspection. Listed below are the variations of juvenile detainment the MCGJ observed:

- Detainment of disabled youth
- Detainment of juvenile(s) at risk for human trafficking
- Co-ed juvenile detainment



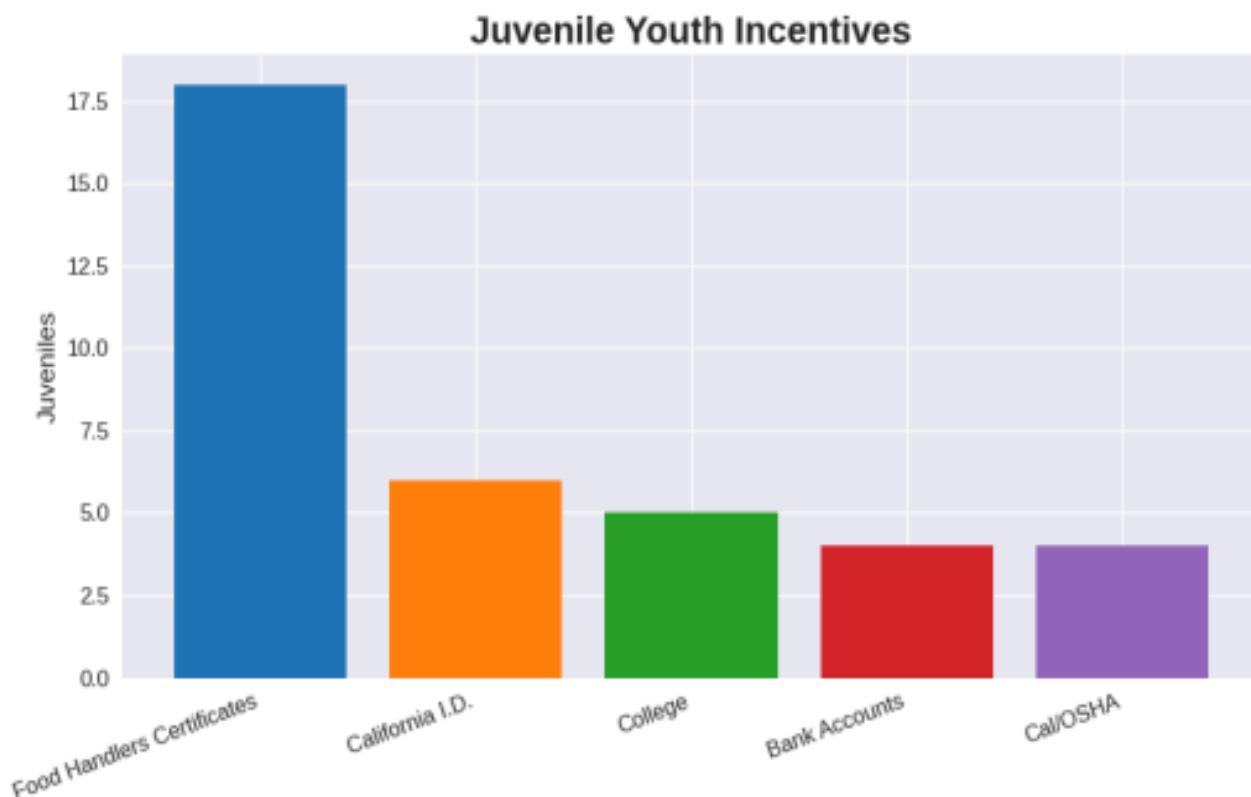
Rehabilitation project crafted by juvenile detainees

The MCJDF offers a variety of other evidence-based rehabilitation treatment programs for juveniles. Juvenile rehabilitation is closely monitored through the Secure Track System. Juveniles participate in religious programs, Madera County Workforce Development Center, and advanced educational programs. Participation in rehabilitation programs allow juveniles to earn credit sentence reductions. Rehabilitation programs consist of Master Gardeners where juvenile detainees learn horticulture processes through Madera Community College and Three Sisters Gardens. The MCGJ found there were raised garden beds as part of MCJDF's horticultural program.

The MCGJ also visited the woodworking shop. It was well organized and the quality woodwork, such as a handcrafted Star of David wood sculpture, demonstrated great craftsmanship potential. The MCGJ found that plans to incorporate welding trade courses have not yet been implemented, and the woodworking shop appears not to be in regular or ongoing trade use.

Other rehabilitative programs available to juvenile detainees include access to the Leaders Program, Edovo tablets, meet and greets, and youth of the month rehabilitative programs. Juvenile detainees are offered opportunities for California Occupational

Safety and Health Administration training, food handlers safety certificates, college education, and California drivers licenses. Juvenile detainees are also granted access to privately held bank accounts.



FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ finds that the MCJDF education programs were well organized.

F2. MCGJ finds that plans to incorporate welding tradesmen courses have not been implemented, and only a fraction of the detention facilities' yard space was being utilized for agricultural or other vocational functions. The MCGJ also finds the woodworking shop was not in ongoing trade use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. MCGJ recommends that MCJDF continue with their educational programs with local colleges.

R2. MCGJ recommends improved utilization of the agricultural, welding, and woodworking rehabilitation functions.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

The following response is required pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 within 90 days from the following:

Board of Supervisors
200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows within 60 days:

Madera County Chief Probation Officer
300 South G Street, Suite 100
Madera, CA 93637

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833

Madera County Juvenile Justice Commission
300 South G Street, Suite 100
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 Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 939 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.



MADERA COUNTY GRAND JURY

P.O. Box 534, Madera, CA 93639



Madera County Behavioral Health • Madera County Social Services • Madera County Public Health



Taking Action: Steps to Publicly Communicate Homelessness Metrics

Released: 05/29/26

Final Report 2526-05

Prepared by the

2025-2026 Madera County Grand Jury

SUMMARY

Madera County is remiss in effectively communicating the actions and results aligned with the 2023 Madera County Strategic Plan, Taking Action: Steps to Prevent & End Homelessness in Madera County.

The Strategic Plan (SP) states that strategy and actions specific to public education are as follows:

- Strategy E.3: Deepen Public Understanding of Homelessness and Its Solutions.
 - Action Step E.2.b: Create a Madera County website with a publicly facing dashboard that shows progress toward identified goals (i.e., services offered, people assisted, or people placed into housing), up-to-date data, and information regarding success stories, challenges, key policy decisions, funding allocations, available resources, housing opportunities, etc.
 - Action Step E.3.b: Establish a year-round communication strategy to educate the public about homelessness and the local homelessness response, addressing common myths and celebrating progress in strategic plan implementation. Highlight programs and services, data-driven best practices, opportunities for community members to get involved, and examples of impact and success.

The MCGJ research identified that in the 34 months since the publication of the SP, the aforementioned goals have not been met.

The issue is the lack of a strategy and action to communicate effectively. This is not to say that great work is not being done, as many positives should be celebrated. The MCGJ is pointing out that the progress, challenges, timeline, and results are not being publicly shared through the Madera County website.

MADERA COUNTY GOALS AND STRATEGIES

	Goal A: Stop Homelessness Before It Begins ✓ <u>Strategy A.1:</u> Increase prevention & diversion services ✓ <u>Strategy A.2:</u> Improve coordination to ensure people are not discharged into homelessness
	Goal B: Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services ✓ <u>Strategy B.1:</u> Expand access to safe, low-barrier temporary housing options ✓ <u>Strategy B.2:</u> Coordinate countywide street outreach and street medicine programs ✓ <u>Strategy B.3:</u> Expand services to support and maintain exits from homelessness
	GOAL C: Expand Safe, Affordable Housing ✓ <u>Strategy C.1:</u> Assess and use available and appropriate public land for permanent housing ✓ <u>Strategy C.2:</u> Protect and expand affordable housing through local policy ✓ <u>Strategy C.3:</u> Expand access to the housing market
	GOAL D: Improve Quality of Data about Homelessness ✓ <u>Strategy D.1:</u> Establish a data quality subcommittee for Madera County and the FMCoC ✓ <u>Strategy D.2:</u> Improve Madera County partner participation in HMIS ✓ <u>Strategy D.3:</u> Establish Protocols to Track System Performance and Address Disparities in Madera County ✓ <u>Strategy D.4:</u> Collect aggregate data about Madera County homelessness to be made publicly available
	GOAL E: Collaborate & Communicate Effectively across the Region ✓ <u>Strategy E.1:</u> Strengthen the Madera County homeless response system infrastructure ✓ <u>Strategy E.2:</u> Improve communication, coordination, and collective action ✓ <u>Strategy E.3:</u> Deepen public understanding of homelessness and its solutions

The MCGJ recommends that the Madera County Board of Supervisors (BOS) take ownership of ensuring that these goals to inform the public are achieved by communicating regularly on the Madera County website.

The MCGJ also found that there is no substance abuse rehabilitation facility available in Madera County, and individuals needing care must travel out of the county for treatment. There is a plan to build a sobering center. The following anticipated timeline was presented to the MCGJ by the BOS:

- Design Phase: Current – March 2026
- Permitting: March 2026 – May 2026
- Construction (Demo): February – March 2026
- Construction (Building): June 2026 – July 2027

GLOSSARY

BOS - Madera County Board of Supervisors

MCGJ - Madera County Grand Jury

SP - 2023 Madera County Strategic Plan, Taking Action: Steps to Prevent & End Homelessness in Madera County

BACKGROUND

Homelessness in Madera County negatively affects the community and available statistics reveal it is escalating. The MCGJ investigation was initiated due to the lack of performance metrics on the Madera County website against the SP. Homebase, a non-profit with expertise in building community capacity to prevent and end homelessness, was hired by Madera County. \$50,000 was awarded by the Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care to conduct the gap analysis on homelessness, design a strategic plan, and initiate the implementation across the many entities involved.

These entities include, but are not limited to: Community Action Partnership of Madera County (CAPMC); Homeless Engagement for Living Program (HELP Center), Madera County Behavioral Health, Madera County Social Services, Madera County Public Health, Homeless Engagement and Assistance Response Team (H.E.A.R.T.), Madera Rescue Mission, Madera County Sheriff's Office, City of Madera Police Department, Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care, and Housing Authority of the City of Madera.

The 2024-2025 MCGJ published a report, "Leadership Gaps Amid A Homeless Crisis," in May of 2025. The 2025-2026 MCGJ also identified the gap in permanently filling the leadership role that ensures collaboration of all entities:

- Strategy Goal E: collaborate & communicate effectively across the entire region.
Action Step: E.1.a: Fund a full-time staff county leadership position to support community-wide implementation of strategies, including coordination of implementation bodies, the outreach campaign, and execution of various initiatives and action steps.

It is the understanding of the MCGJ that the timeline for this position to be fully onboard was 23 months from the launch of the May 2023 SP.

- In June 2024, the position of Supervising Staff Services Analyst assigned to lead the SP was filled.
- In April 2025, the plan responsibility was formally transferred from Homebase (the consulting non-profit that created the SP) to the Supervising Staff Services Analyst assigned to lead the SP.

METHODOLOGY

The MCGJ conducted interviews under admonition to ensure discussions and disclosures remain confidential. The MCGJ met with the following entities to learn about their role in the plans and actions identified in the SP:

- Board of Supervisors
- City of Madera Housing Authority
- Community Action Partnership of Madera County

- Department of Behavioral Health
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Social Services
- Madera City Police Department
- Madera County Sheriff's Department
- Madera Rescue Mission

The MCGJ conducted extensive online research to obtain data and performance metrics relative to the SP. The overall findings are that data and reports are not current, and are spread across web pages for Madera County and websites for the other involved entities. See Bibliography.

DISCUSSION

Madera City and County have multiple agencies and departments addressing homelessness. The majority of individuals interviewed by the MCGJ reported a lack of coordination among the agencies.

Performance metrics regarding the homeless population and actions on the SP are not being shared on the Madera County website.

In conducting the research, the MCGJ found that many entities are working with the homeless population in Madera County. The MCGJ would like to recognize the efforts of the following entities that assist the homeless population in housing, access to services, and outreach.

- H.E.A.R.T: Established July 2025 to provide outreach “Foundational Purpose and Overview” June 2025 (see Appendix A)
- Madera Rescue Mission has recently incorporated a less restrictive entrance policy for the unhoused and provided the MCGJ with an update on services (see Appendix B)

FINDINGS

F1. The Madera County Board of Supervisors has not taken accountability for ensuring the implementation of Strategy E3 and Action Step E.3.b of the Madera County 2023 Strategic Plan for the Prevention and End of Homelessness.

F2. The information on plans and actions of the many agencies involved in the implementation of the strategic plan is scattered across multiple websites.

F3. A sobering center for Madera County is scheduled to be completed in July 2027.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Madera County Board of Supervisors ensure the strategic plan is updated and published on the Madera County website no later than August 1, 2026.

R2. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Madera County Board of Supervisors ensure the performance metrics dashboard on homelessness is published and maintained on the Madera County website no later than August 1, 2026.

R3. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Madera County Board of Supervisors monitor the sobering center project to ensure Madera County residents have rehabilitation resources within the county by the target date of July 2027.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the MCGJ requests a response as follows from the elected county officials within 90 days:

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CAPMC Strategic Plan (HELP Center) 2024
<https://capmc-staging.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2024-Strategic-Plan-Performance-Report.pdf>
- Homeless Engagement and Assistance Response Program (H.E.A.R.T) July 2025 <https://www.facebook.com/MaderaSheriff/posts/1164021822435129/>
- Madera County Informational Workshops (October 2023)
<https://www.maderacounty.com/services/housing-and-homelessness-services/informational-workshops>
- Fresno-Madera Continuum of Care 2023 Point-In-Time-Count 2023 Executive Summary <https://fresnomaderahomeless.org/point-in-time>
- Madera County Homeless Health Assessment: Access and Barriers to Care A Countywide Needs Assessment Presented by the Madera County Department of Public Health and Partners to the Local Indigent Care Needs (LICN) Grant Program (May 10, 2021)
<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/26738/637565159646500000>
- Madera County Interim Housing and Street Outreach Project (HHAP5) January 2025
<https://www.maderacounty.com/services/homeless-resource-webpage/homelessness-madera-county#ad-image-3>
- Madera County Strategic Plan (Homebase) May 2023 & Madera County Homeless Gaps Analysis (Homebase) May 2023
<https://www.maderacounty.com/government/administrative-management/madera-county-strategic-plan-to-address-homelessness>
- Madera Rescue Mission Tour <https://www.maderarescuemission.org/>
- Madera Rescue Mission Annual Report - see Appendix
- Homelessness Task Force Report (Institute for Local Government 2018)
https://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/main/files/htf_homeless_3.8.18.pdf
- State of California Accountability (no updates since 2023)
<https://www.accountability.ca.gov/county/madera/homelessness/>

- Madera County Homelessness Data Hub (2023)
<https://www.maderacounty.com/services/housing-and-homelessness-services/datahub>
- Point-In-Time 2026 Count Article
<https://www.yourcentralvalley.com/news/local-news/2026-homeless-count-fresno-madera/>
- Housing Authority of the City of Madera Board Agenda Packets
<https://maderaha.org/about-us/board-agenda/2025-board-agenda-archive/>
- Madera County Behavioral Health Resources
<https://www.maderacounty.com/government/behavioral-health-services/resources>

APPENDIX

A. H.E.A.R.T. Foundational Purpose and Overview (July 10, 2025)

B. Madera Rescue Mission Report on Services (February 24, 2026)

Reports issued by the Civil MCGJ do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the MCGJ not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929, prohibiting disclosure of witness identity, to encourage full candor in testimony in MCGJ Investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any MCGJ investigation.

Summary of Responses to 2024-2025 Reports

Responses to the Final Reports, filed by the 2024-2025 Madera County Grand Jury, are mandated by the California Penal Code. Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05 and requests that a response to the report be filed. This section includes a summary and overview of each report introducing the MCGJ's Findings and Recommendations. The entire Final Report including archived responses are available on the website, Madera County Grand Jury Reports 2024-2025.

Governing boards and elected officials are required to respond to the report findings and recommendations within the timeline prescribed in Penal Code section 933(c)-60 days for elected officials and 90 days for governing bodies. The additional time for governing boards affords them adequate time to conduct a public meeting on the topic of the report. The Grand Jury may also invite responses from elected officials or an appointed official or a local governmental agency to which findings and/or recommendations are directed. Penal Code 933.05 specifies the mandated wording and content of the response.

For each relevant finding in the report, PC 933.059(a) requires the responding governing board or elected official to give one of the possible responses:

1. Agrees with the finding or
2. Disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, with an explanation of the reasons for the disagreement.

For each relevant recommendation, the board or elected official is required to give one of the following complete responses (PC 933(b)):

1. The recommendation has been implemented with a summary of the action taken.
2. The recommendation will be implemented with a timeframe for implementation.
3. The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope for the analysis and a timeframe for further discussion up to six months from the release of the report.
4. The recommendation will not be implemented because the recommendation is not warranted or it is not reasonable. In either of these situations, an explanation is required.

Madera County Jail 2425-01

SUMMARY

The management of the Madera County Jail changed from the Department of Corrections to the Sheriff's Office in 2021. The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) aimed to determine the progress and success of this reunification. The MCGJ conducted a tour of the Madera County Jail on October 24, 2024 and spoke to a wide range of Jail staff. The Jury found that recent changes made by the Sheriff's Office have fostered a more conducive environment, increased satisfaction in the workforce, and created a safer and more secure facility for staff and inmates. The MCGJ recommends that the Jail conduct a staffing analysis as well as develop a plan to rehabilitate an out-of-compliance module, to be able to continue in their path of growth and success.

F1. The MCGJ finds that the transition of leadership from the Department of Corrections to the Sheriff's Office has been positive for both staff and inmates at the Madera County Jail.

F2. The MCGJ finds that despite legislative changes and the County's population growth, the staffing levels at the Jail have remained the same.

F3. The MCGJ finds that building renovations can help support the potential future growth of the Jail population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that the Sheriff's Office continue to develop innovative ways to maintain employee morale and the high level of safety and security of the Jail. The Sheriff's Office should continue to provide regular updates to the Board of Supervisors regarding innovative developments within the Jail beginning 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that the Sheriff's Office work with the Board of Supervisors to conduct a staffing analysis now that the Jail is fully staffed and there are correctional officers available to join at any time. The staffing analysis should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that the Sheriff's Office develop a plan to rehabilitate Module B, which should be completed and presented to the Board of Supervisors 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following elected officials within 90 days:

Office of the Madera County Sheriff
2725 Falcon Drive
Madera, CA 93637

Response located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47721/639116954485430000>

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637

2023 Employee Survey Responses Demand Action 2425-02

SUMMARY

Frustrations expressed by Madera County's employees in the 2023 Employee Satisfaction Survey, prompted the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) to examine departmental responses that revealed troubling issues related to workplace culture, leadership practices, and operational effectiveness. The MCGJ finds that while the results of the survey bring to light significant concerns regarding employee dissatisfaction and leadership issues, the feedback is outdated and has not been effectively utilized to drive improvements. The MCGJ recommends the Madera County Human Resources Department conduct a new employee satisfaction survey with improved data and publicize the results for greater transparency. The report also underscores the need for enhanced leadership accountability. The Grand Jury stresses the urgency of these reforms to rebuild trust, improve employee morale, and ensure a more effective county government.

FINDINGS

F1: The MCGJ finds the EHD lacks effective management oversight, including a disregard for inspection productivity and efficiency.

F2: The MCGJ finds that the EHD is inadequately staffed to complete all inspections under their current purview, specifically those in programs without state regulation.

F3: The MCGJ finds that current funding limitations constrain hiring, inspection frequency, and program effectiveness.

F4: The MCGJ finds that employee absenteeism compounds productivity issues.

F5: The MCGJ finds that the EHD lacks public transparency and community education efforts.

F6: The MCGJ finds that the EHD does not prioritize housing and homeless encampment complaints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: The MCGJ recommends that the Community and Economic Development Department monitor data tracking and productivity reports. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting and reviewed quarterly.

R2: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD work in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Department and the Madera County Human Resources Department to explore alternative staffing models, such as reassessing the need to classify all employees as EHS or REHS for all inspections. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R3: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD work in conjunction with the Madera County Board of Supervisors to request General Fund allocations and explore grant opportunities to support staffing needs. This plan should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R4: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD develop a plan to be presented to the Board of Supervisors detailing action to reduce the excessive sick time usage. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R5: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD develop an outreach program in charge of regular public education events as well as updates to the EHD website including food inspection reports and fillable vendor forms. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R6: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD join the established Madera Housing Our Homeless task force and collaborate with other county departments to address the recurring housing and homelessness issues. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following governing body within 90 days:

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637

Response located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47723/639116954491870000>

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following governing body within 60 days:

Madera County Environmental Health Division
200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Human Resources Department
200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Community and Economic Development Department
200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637

Food, Medical Waste, and Substandard Housing “Not a Priority” for Madera County Environmental Health Division 2425-03

SUMMARY

Madera County residents rely on the Environmental Health Division (EHD) to ensure their food, water, and surroundings are safe. The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) investigated the EHD due to complaints of unsanitary conditions in homeless encampments, which led to a broader evaluation of the EHD’s operations, staffing, and efficiency. The investigation revealed that the EHD, who is responsible for enforcing critical health and safety regulations across nine programs, faces significant staffing shortages, operational inefficiencies, and challenges in meeting inspection requirements particularly in non-state-regulated programs. A lack of funding from the General Fund, coupled with an overreliance on temporary employees subject to strict certification deadlines, has contributed to high turnover and inconsistent leave enforcement. Additionally, data management deficiencies, a failure to implement a long-promised food inspection reporting system, and minimal public outreach efforts have further hindered the EHD’s effectiveness. The MCGJ recommends that Madera County reassess its hiring requirements, improve inspection tracking and transparency, and ensure that environmental health enforcement is adequately staffed and prioritized to safeguard public health.

FINDINGS

F1: The MCGJ finds the EHD lacks effective management oversight, including a disregard for inspection productivity and efficiency.

F2: The MCGJ finds that the EHD is inadequately staffed to complete all inspections under their current purview, specifically those in programs without state regulation.

F3: The MCGJ finds that current funding limitations constrain hiring, inspection frequency, and program effectiveness.

F4: The MCGJ finds that employee absenteeism compounds productivity issues.

F5: The MCGJ finds that the EHD lacks public transparency and community education efforts.

F6: The MCGJ finds that the EHD does not prioritize housing and homeless encampment complaints.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: The MCGJ recommends that the Community and Economic Development Department monitor data tracking and productivity reports. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting and reviewed quarterly.

R2: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD work in conjunction with the Community and Economic Development Department and the Madera County Human Resources Department to explore alternative staffing models, such as reassessing the need to classify all employees as EHS or REHS for all inspections. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R3: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD work in conjunction with the Madera County Board of Supervisors to request General Fund allocations and explore grant opportunities to support staffing needs. This plan should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R4: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD develop a plan to be presented to the Board of Supervisors detailing action to reduce the excessive sick time usage. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R5: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD develop an outreach program in charge of regular public education events as well as updates to the EHD website including food inspection reports and fillable vendor forms. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

R6: The MCGJ recommends that the EHD join the established Madera Housing Our Homeless task force and collaborate with other county departments to address the recurring housing and homelessness issues. This should be completed by 90 days after the MCGJ report posting.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following governing body within 90 days:

Madera County Board of Supervisors

200 W. 4th St.
Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47729/639116954505800000>

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following governing body within 60 days:

Madera County Environmental Health Division

200 W. 4th St.

Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

Madera County Human Resources Department

200 W. 4th St.

Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47727/639116954500730000>

Madera County Community and Economic Development Department

200 W. 4th St.

Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47725/639116954496700000>

Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility

2425-04

SUMMARY

The Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility Each year, the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) inspects the Juvenile Detention Facility, focusing on its programs, safety records, educational services, and overall environment for the detained youth. The assessment is based on an inspection conducted on September 18, 2024, located at 28219 Avenue 14, Madera. The MCGJ was welcomed by the facility's accommodating staff and granted full access to inspect various locations throughout the juvenile facility. During the inspection, MCGJ focused on the classroom training and learning environments, observed youth engaged in their studies, participating actively in lessons, and interacting with their instructors. The classrooms were well-structured, fostering a positive learning atmosphere. The youth demonstrated attentiveness and respect while answering our questions, highlighting the facility's commitment to education and personal development.

SUMMARY

The Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility (MCJDF) operates under the jurisdiction of the Madera County Probation Department (MCPD) and has a supportive network for detained youth aimed towards positive reinforcement of programs and resources. MCJDF is a model facility providing short-term residential placement with essential services. High School and College educational programs, mental health services, substance abuse programs, and a strong support system for youth and their families. Former detained youth are encouraged to practice the "Open Door" policy by 55 the MCJDF staff for continued support throughout their lives. As a testament to the dedication and commitment of staff, many youth who are now adults continue to remain in contact with staff.

FINDINGS

F1. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the facility is well-maintained and clean, with juveniles participating in janitorial duties under staff supervision.

F2. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that routine inspections have been conducted and successfully passed by multiple regulatory bodies, including Fire, Medical/Mental

Health, Environmental Health, Nutritional Health, the California Board Of Community and State Corrections (BSCC).

F3. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the facility has a dedicated educational staff, including four full-time teachers, one full-time instructional aide, and one special aide teacher.

F4. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the MCJDF staff actively promotes responsibility, discipline, and self-improvement among detainees through structured educational programs, counseling services, and life skills training.

F5. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that a high level of professionalism, dedication, and compassion exists from the MCJDF staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Madera County Grand Jury commends the Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility staff for the continual support and impact made on the detained youth.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following elected officials within 90 days:

Board of Supervisors
200 West Fourth Street
Madera, CA 93637

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the following governing body within 60 days:

Madera County Chief Probation Officer
300 South G Street Suite 100
Madera CA 93637

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA. 95833

Central California Women's Facility

2425-05

SUMMARY

Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) conducted an annual Detention Facility inspection at the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) located at 23370 Road 22 in Chowchilla, CA on September 10, 2024. The MCGJ met with Command staff and inspected the condition of the prison grounds, buildings, and facilities. After the inspection, the MCGJ met with the Warden who answered questions and provided an overview of the facility and programs. The CCWF is a level one through level four facility, which is a minimum to maximum security women's facility. The prison no longer has inmates on death row. The California Senate bill (SB960) effectively ended the segregation of death row inmates. Therefore, Death row inmates were transitioned to the general population. The capacity of the facility is 2,756 inmates, and the population on September 10, 2024, was 2,107 which is within California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) guidelines.

FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ finds that the housing units at CCWF had missing ceiling tiles, water-stained and moldy vents.

F2. The MCGJ finds that the CCWF has implemented progressive rehabilitation programs for inmates.

F3. The MCGJ finds that the PUPS program is a benefit for trainers/handlers, staff, administration and the community.

F4. The MCGJ finds that staff in the mail room at the CCWF failed to use appropriate personal protective equipment when handling incoming mail. This lapse in safety practices potentially exposes both staff and inmates to harmful substances or contaminants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that maintenance be conducted to replace and fix the missing and water stained ceiling tiles and vents in CCWF.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that the warden continue to research and implement innovative and progressive rehabilitative programs for the inmates within CCWF.

R3. The MCGJ recommends CCWF continue to offer and expand the PUPS program for the benefit of trainers/handlers, staff, administration and the community.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that CCWF establish and enforce stricter safety protocols in the mail room, including mandatory personal protective equipment usage, regular training on handling potentially hazardous materials and routine audits to ensure compliance.

INVITED RESPONSES

Invited Respondents: Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury invites responses as follows: From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

Warden
Central California Women's Facility
23370 Road 22
Chowchilla Ca. 93610

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95841

BSCC
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833

Valley State Prison 2425-06

SUMMARY

The Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) conducted two inspections of Valley State Prison (VSP) during the 2024–2025 term, in accordance with state mandate to inquire into public institutions, ie, prisons and jails. The inspections included interviews with staff, inmates and a review of data and records from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and California Correctional Health Care Services.

Valley State Prison, originally designed to house 1,961 inmates, now operates well above its design capacity with a population of 3,332 inmates. The prison did not add to the initial structure, they added more beds in each cell. Although the institution has not exceeded its maximum capacity of 3,801, the strain on manpower remains evident. Staffing shortages and reliance on mandatory overtime continue to challenge operational effectiveness. Recurring concerns related to services, accommodations, and administrative actions result in a high amount of grievances. With these challenges, VSP maintains medical and mental health services and provides a wide range of educational and vocational programs, and facilitates access to rehabilitation and reentry support. Programs such as the Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP), and partnerships with higher education institutions demonstrate a commitment to inmate reform and reintegration.

FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ finds that Valley State Prison (VSP) remains significantly over its original design capacity, housing 3,332 inmates compared to the original design capacity of 1,961, despite not exceeding its current operational capacity of 3,801. This persistent overcrowding may contribute to operational strain and impact the quality of services.

F2. The MCGJ finds that VSP is experiencing a high number of staffing vacancies and that mandatory overtime is widely used across multiple departments, including custody, nursing, and culinary staff. This reliance on overtime may lead to staff fatigue and reduced efficiency.

F3. The MCGJ finds that VSP provides significant medical and mental health services, including 24/7 nursing, primary care, mental health therapy, and outpatient care, as well

as access to dental and specialty services, reflecting a commitment to inmate well-being.

F4. The MCGJ finds that the prison's Enhanced Outpatient Program (EOP) and other therapy options offer substantial mental health support for inmates, which is critical given the incidents of attempted suicides.

F5. The MCGJ finds that rehabilitation and educational programs at VSP are available. The partnership with multiple colleges and the availability of digital learning tools enhance access to learning.

F6. The MCGJ finds vocational programs offered to inmates, such as welding, cosmetology, and electrical work, help aid in reentry preparation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that VSP continue working with the CDCR Population Management Unit to adjust inmate placement and reduce inmate population by advocating for accelerated transfers or conversions of other facilities to Level II.

R2. The MCGJ recommends that CDCR strengthen its recruitment and retention strategies at VSP to address ongoing staffing shortages, especially in the custody and medical departments. Consideration should also be given to offering incentives—such as signing bonuses, retention pay, or additional compensation for bilingual staff—to help alleviate the need for mandatory overtime.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that VSP continue to maintain and invest in its medical services.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that mental health programs such as the EOP be continued, with adequate staffing and resources to meet the need for mental health services and support.

R5. The MCGJ recommends that VSP expand educational offerings and ensure continued access to state-issued laptops and college programming, with an emphasis on increasing outreach to inmates not currently enrolled in academic programs.

R6. The MCGJ recommends that vocational training programs be regularly reviewed and updated to match current labor market demands, and that participation in

pre-release work programs through Male Community Reentry Program be expanded where possible.

INVITED RESPONSE

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows; from the following governing body within 60 days:

Warden
Valley State Prison
21633 Avenue 24
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95841

Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)
2590 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95833

Leadership Gaps Amid A Homelessness Crisis

2425-07

SUMMARY

This report highlights the homelessness situation and the absence of a unified leadership in Madera County's role to drive solutions within various departments currently operating independently. While the Sheriff's Department and Madera City Police Department receive praise for their partnerships, overall collaboration is insufficient. There are transparency issues, restricted access to services, and community complaints about the Board of Supervisors' (BOS) conduct and the reluctance to see the situation first hand.

Despite \$35 million in grants, hundreds remain unsheltered due to housing limitations, ineffective ordinance enforcement, and poor outreach strategies. Homelessness is complicated by mental health challenges, drug addiction, and the unannounced relocation of individuals from other areas.

The Grand Jury recommends creating a centralized leadership role, such as a 'Director of Human Rights Assessment and Strategy,' and establishing an accountable, coordinated Navigator Program Team. This team would provide outreach and engagement by proactively connecting with homeless individuals in various living conditions to offer support and resources. The report emphasizes the need for decisive action from the BOS to improve oversight, accountability, and public trust.

Key findings include a lack of centralized leadership, grant administration gaps, homelessness and social responsibility concerns, and community and employee concerns. The report provides commendations for the Madera County Sheriff's Department and Madera City Police Department.

The document concludes with recommendations for a suggested Director of Human Rights Assessment and Strategy Services and requests responses from the Madera County Board of Supervisors.

FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ acknowledges and commends the exceptional dedication and efforts of the Sheriff's Office, the Madera Police Department and many employees within Behavioral Health, the Department of Social Services, county employees, and private

citizens who have demonstrated humanity and professionalism in serving the community.

Despite these commendable efforts, leadership gaps are evident in the findings detailed below. (a) Lack of Centralized Leadership:

Interviews conducted with various departments and stakeholders—including Behavioral Health (BH), the Chief Administrative Office (CAO), CAPMC, the Sheriff's Office, 97 Madera Police Department, Environmental Health (EH), Human Resources (HR), the Housing Authority, county grant writers, citizens and homeless clients—consistently revealed a critical gap: Madera County lacks a centralized lead agency responsible for overseeing continuity of care for individuals in crisis or experiencing homelessness.

This absence includes a failure of leadership to validate the use of public funding and grant allocations. To address this gap, the establishment of a stand-alone lead agency, such as a Director of Human Rights Assessment and Strategy, is strongly recommended. This position could be tasked with:

- Analyzing homelessness and crisis-related issues within the county
- Evaluating effective models from other counties and adapting best practices
- Publishing evidence-based recommendations
- Reporting regularly on outcomes, progress, and areas of concern
- Eliminating redundant efforts and clarifying responsibilities
- Enhancing continuity of care for unhoused individuals
- Serving as a single point of contact for coordination and accountability

Public data estimates that over 800 individuals in Madera County are currently unhoused. In light of these findings, the MCGJ invites the BOS and office of the CAO to formally respond to this recommendation.

(b) Key Challenges:

1. Limited Inter-Departmental Communication: Departments often operate in isolation—completing tasks and passing them along without follow-up or verification. This creates a disjointed system with unclear outcomes and accountability.
2. Lack of Coordination: Overlapping responsibilities and insufficient communication among agencies lead to leadership voids, confusion, and mission drift.
3. High Staff Turnover: The 2023 Employee Survey cited inefficiencies and frustration as major contributors to employee attrition, calling for improved communication, accountability, and leadership.

(c) Organizational Silos:

Interviews revealed several systemic issues commonly described as "organizational" or "management silos." These include:

- **Span of Control Issues:** Too many managerial layers hinder top leadership's ability to stay informed and engaged with frontline operations.
- **Information Asymmetry:** Critical information is not shared effectively across departments or levels.
- **Fragmented Management Structure:** Dispersed decision-making leads to confusion and lack of direction.
- **Buffered Hierarchy:** Current structures shield leadership from day-to-day realities, further compounding inefficiencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. MCGJ recommends the placement of a, e.g. - Director of Human Rights Assessment and Strategy Services:

The MCGJ recommends the establishment of a dedicated local lead agency, such as a Director of Human Rights Assessment and Strategy at the top hierarchy level within the office of the Chief Administrator (CAO), to address homelessness with better operational and grant expenditure, in coordination with strategic oversight. Currently, homelessness response efforts are fragmented across multiple entities—counties, cities, and Fresno-Madera Continuums of Care—with varying roles and responsibilities. This lack of coordination creates confusion and limits the effectiveness of initiatives.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05: Section 933: This section empowers grand juries to investigate and report on the operations of local government entities. By granting this authority, the section promotes 99 oversight, helping to uncover inefficiencies, misconduct, or areas needing improvement. It ensures that public officials and agencies are subject to scrutiny, fostering better governance.

Section 933.05: This section mandates formal responses to grand jury findings and recommendations. By requiring clear and detailed replies, it ensures that public agencies engage with the grand jury's work meaningfully. This back-and-forth exchange fosters accountability, as agencies must explain their actions or justify inaction regarding

the jury's recommendations. Required governing body responses within 90 days of this publication:

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W 4th Street Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Invited responses within 60 days of this publication:

CAPMC
1225 Gill Ave
Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47731/639116954509700000>

Madera County Behavioral Health
209 East 7th Street
Madera, CA 93637

The Madera County Chief Administrative Office
200 W 4th Street Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Needed: Stronger Protections Against Property and Title Fraud 2425-08

SUMMARY

Vulnerabilities are evident throughout California and serious land and property title fraud is the result. The process of recordings of property titles and the effectiveness of safeguards are key actions to protect property rights. Fraudulent practices, including forged deeds, fake liens, and falsified loan clearances, pose a significant threat to property ownership and can lead to costly legal troubles for unsuspecting owners.

As of January 2025, Madera County did not have an electronic and/or written notifications process to notify property owners leaving property owners in potential danger regarding property ownership. Many property owners are unaware that their rights could be at risk without a local security alert system or processes in place. Imagine discovering that your property is jeopardized by administrative oversights, unclear regulations, or fraudulent activities. Without an immediate notification process, legal and rightful owners could be devastated by loss of property, costly legal battles, or financial instability.

FINDINGS

F1. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the Madera County Recorder's office lacks notification procedures protecting against property fraud, leaving property owners at risk as discovered in the below links:

- County Recorder Annual Statistical Property Report Calendar Year: 2023 - 638400447691530000
- Madera County Clerk-Recorder - <https://maderacountyca-web.tylerhost.net/web/>
- Madera County Fraud Tips - <https://www.maderacounty.com/Home/Components/News/News/159/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Clerk-Recorder's Office, within an established timeline - develop, test, and implement an electronic and written notification system to alert property owners of any documents submitted, recorded, or filed against their property.

Additionally, in alignment with practices adopted by other California counties mentioned in the above discussion section, the Clerk-Recorder's Office should:

- Offer alerts for property and identity protection
- Conduct regular reviews of property records
- Require valid identification for all document recordings

Examples of Issues Needing Addressed:

Forged Deeds & Unauthorized Transfers: Implement stricter verification protocols for deed and title transfers to prevent unauthorized actions by individuals using falsified identification, notary stamps, or forged signatures.

Illegitimate Liens: Establish rigorous lien verification procedures to prevent fraudulent liens with no legal basis, protecting property owners from costly legal disputes.

Fraudulent Loan Clearances (Mortgage Re-conveyance Fraud): Implement safeguards to prevent manipulation of loan records that falsely show debts as paid, which can enable unauthorized individuals to secure additional loans against a property.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

The following responses are required pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05:

Section 933: This section empowers grand juries to investigate and report on the operations of local government entities. By granting this authority, the section promotes oversight, helping to uncover inefficiencies, misconduct, or areas needing improvement. It ensures that public officials and agencies are subject to scrutiny, fostering better governance.

Section 933.05: This section mandates formal responses to grand jury findings and recommendations. By requiring clear and detailed replies, it ensures that public agencies engage with the grand jury's work meaningfully. This back-and-forth exchange fosters accountability, as agencies must explain their actions or justify inaction regarding the jury's recommendations.

To address the absence of a fraud alert program for county residents, the Madera County Grand Jury requests a comprehensive response within 90 days of this report publication.

Required responses within 90 days of this publication:

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W 4th St Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Madera County Clerk-Recorder
200 W 4th St Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47733/639116954517830000>

Responses to the Grand Jury: Buried in the Consent Calendar 2425-09

SUMMARY

On February 5, 2025, the Madera County Board of Supervisors (BOS) proclaimed February Civil Grand Jury Month. Following the presentation and a photograph, two members of the BOS called Grand Jury service “a labor of love” referring to the time and dedication and said, “you are taking your free time to step up to serve the residents of Madera County”.

However, February 5, 2025 the proclamation and past actions have not aligned with efforts to provide the residents of Madera County with transparent access, with an audible verbalization of the Board’s response to any report, on-the-record, of the recommendations. The Grand Jury’s job is to make recommendations to increase efficiencies of governmental operations and to point out any discrepancies. The Grand Jury’s responsibility, as stated in the Proclamation, is to:

“ensure government efficiency, accountability in taxpayer expenditures, and the integrity of public office holders and entities”.

FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ finds that the responses were received within the 90-day period as required by Penal Code 933.05.

F2. The MCGJ finds that the responses were properly sent to the appropriate recipients, including the Presiding Judge and the Madera County Grand Jury.

F3. The MCGJ finds that the responses to the Madera County Grand Jury reports for the year 2023-24 were made in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Penal Code 933.05.

F4. The MCGJ finds that the review, approval, and signing of the Board of Supervisors’ responses to the MCGJ’s final report is systemically hidden in the consent calendar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends that all future responses be submitted within the 90-day period required by Penal Code 933.05 to ensure continued compliance and accountability.

R2. The MCGJ encourages that responses continue to be addressed and delivered promptly to both the Presiding Judge and the Madera County Grand Jury, maintaining the integrity of the reporting process.

R3. The MCGJ recommends that future responses clearly and thoroughly address each finding and recommendation, in accordance with Penal Code 933.05, to avoid any ambiguity and to strengthen the response process.

R4. The MCGJ recommends that the review, approval, and signing of the Board of Supervisors' responses to the MCGJ's final report be placed on the agenda outside of the consent calendar as a separate item and moved to the beginning of any scheduled public meeting concerning the report, in order to promote transparency, reinforce public trust, and demonstrate a strong commitment to open government principles.

REQUIRED RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933 and 933.5, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the elected County elected officials within 90 days:

Madera County Board of Supervisors
200 W 4th St Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/48501/639160121203200000>

INVITED RESPONDENTS

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury invites responses as follows: From the following governing bodies within 60 days:

Madera County Chief Administrative Officer
200 W 4th St Ste 4
Madera, CA 93637

Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department 2425-10

SUMMARY

Since 1923, the City of Chowchilla and its residents have been served by a volunteer fire department. The Chowchilla Volunteer Firefighters have been an integral part of the community for over a century.

As of April 2025, the City of Chowchilla had a population of 19,669 residents, yet the City of Chowchilla continues to operate with a volunteer fire department. Similar-sized towns in California, such as Soledad and the City of Selma, have transitioned to full-time or combination fire departments (a mix of career and volunteer firefighters) to address emergency response needs better. With Chowchilla's rapid growth in residential housing and commercial developments, the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) recommends that the current volunteer fire department transition to a full-time state-certified fire department to meet the community's growth.

FINDINGS

F1. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department Association has devoted numerous hours to protecting persons and property in the City of Chowchilla since 1923.

F2. The Madera County Grand Jury finds that the City of Chowchilla has grown substantially and the volunteers may no longer be adequate to provide the services needed by the community's residents.

F3. The Madera County Grand Jury finds no available training records upon request.

F4. The Madera County Grand Jury has found that volunteer training is provided by in-house trainers and that the in-house evaluation process lacks external oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Chowchilla City Council develop a plan to hire a full-time paid fire department crew to begin the 2026-27 fiscal year.

R2. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that select Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department Association members assist the City of Chowchilla develop a transition plan to a California state-certified full-time fire department.

R3. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Chowchilla Fire Department maintain and make all training records available for firefighting personnel.

R4. The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the City of Chowchilla requests the Office of the State Fire Marshall (OSFM) conduct a current Chowchilla Volunteer Fire Department assessment. The evaluation and the results will be submitted to the Court and the Grand Jury within 90 days of publication of this report.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.5, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the elected County elected officials within 90 days:

Chowchilla City Council
130 S. 2nd Street
Chowchilla, CA 93610

City of Chowchilla Mayor 1
30 S. Second St.
Chowchilla, CA 93610

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.5, the Madera County Grand Jury requests responses as follows from the elected County elected officials within 60 days:

City of Chowchilla Fire Chief
240 North First Street
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/48503/639160121208170000>

Chowchilla City Administrator
130 S. Second St.
Chowchilla, CA 93610

City “Bogeys” Grand Jury’s Report 2425-11

SUMMARY

This report by the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) reveals systemic dysfunction, concealment, and a troubling lack of oversight within the City of Madera’s (City) government, particularly regarding the operations and management of the Madera Municipal Golf Course (Course). It outlines a pattern of administrative failures, noncompliance with municipal code, and efforts by senior officials to obscure the truth from the Madera City Council (Council) and the public. Although the City established the Course in 1991, it has never operated it. The City has leased out the management and maintenance of the Course to at least nine different private concerns since the opening. The current operator, since 2009, is SGM, Inc., dba Sierra Golf Management, Inc. (Sierra). Sierra has sublet the restaurant, bar and banquet businesses to SPS Madera Group, LLC dba SPS at the Muni (GROUP). The MCGJ investigation revealed that a City administrator coached a bar operator on how to circumvent the business licensing process, allowing the operator to operate without a formal application.

The 2324-06 Response Team (Team), comprised of the City Manager and City Attorney, collaborated in drafting the City’s replies to MCGJ Report 2324-06, which is titled "The City of Madera Fails to Enforce Golf Course Contract Requirements, Revisited" (2324-06). The City refused to investigate those MCGJ findings while denying the existence of any irregular licensing issues at the Course. These Responses were dated August 23, 2024, and adopted by the Madera City Council. On that same day, the Finance Department issued a third business license to the MMGC bar operator within 24 hours. This time it was issued to the GROUP. Thus, the GROUP operated from March 2023 to August 2024 without applying for and obtaining a city business license. Neither the City Administration nor the City Finance Department could explain how this last license was issued without any application; the City Clerk’s office provided emails that detail how this license to GROUP was issued.

- The MCGJ’s accurate findings are detailed in this report and, contrary to the Team response in Report 2324-06, is incorporated by reference and linked here: <https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/42997/6387806499957700\00>
- The City’s official response, drafted by the Team, is incorporated by reference and linked here:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47735/639116954524470000>

Despite this City's response to 2324-06, denying that GROUP was the bar operator, the MCGJ found that many of the original concerns at the Course remain unaddressed, warranting a third consecutive year of review.

Ongoing Irregularities and Deficiencies

1. Business License Discrepancies and Madera City Code of Ordinances (CODE) Violations

After the publication of 2324-06, the City Finance Department (Finance) issued and altered three business licenses at the request of the Course bar operator via email without receiving the required applications or any supporting documentation. Potential violations of the Code have been ignored and these issues have not been disclosed to the Council. See Title VI. of the Code with misdemeanor penalties and fines up to \$500.00 a day. The Code, 6-1.90, requires the Finance Department to report to the Council, which has never been done. This suggests that the Council is insulated from the information that city staff should be reporting to the Council.

2. Lack of Oversight and Transparency

The Council has been insulated from the Advisory Committee meetings and the resulting lack of timely reporting. A representative from Parks and Community Services (Park) and a Council member both sit on the Advisory Committee. The Team stated in a response that although the Advisory Committee meets monthly, it is only required to report to the Council on an annual basis. The MCGJ could not locate any information supporting the restriction to report annually and not monthly. Restricting the Advisory to annual reporting, with no monthly updates, frustrates the Advisory Committees purpose to update the Council promptly about conditions at the Course.

3. Concealment of Critical Reports

The annual United States Golf Association (USGA) report, available since November 2024, has never been placed on the Council's agenda for comment. Although reviewed by the Advisory Committee and the City Parks, it was neither shared with the Council nor posted on the City's website—raising concerns of intentional suppression. The 2024 USGA report reiterated most of the same problems identified in the previous year's report. It noted that the sand in the 11 bunkers is so hard that "rototilling" might be

required to loosen it. This is unacceptable for any golf course and loudly highlights the lack of maintenance and the City's oversight of Sierra's management.

4. Inadequate Tracking of Capital Improvements and Financial Accountability

The City has failed to track capital improvements at Course and has forgiven Sierra's payments owed for maintenance without question and sufficient documentation or justification. This undermines both the terms of the contract and fiscal stewardship of public assets. Cleaning solar panels was written off five times as a capital improvement (Capital). Equipment used to maintain the Course has been credited as Capital as if it became City property.

Lease Section 16.-16.4 spells out in precise detail Sierra's mandatory maintenance responsibilities:

“16. Equipment and Materials. Sierra shall, at its own cost and expense, furnish, maintain, and repair all necessary equipment, supplies, and materials of good quality and in the amounts necessary to comply with this Agreement. These equipment, supplies, and materials shall include, but not be limited to:

16.1. All equipment necessary or appropriate for the performance of services under this Agreement, together with all necessary gas, oil, and spare parts for all equipment used and maintained by Sierra”;

[This section is consistent with Agreement Section 7.1 (Exhibit B), which explains that Sierra may use the City owned equipment on the 2009 Lease, so long as Sierra maintains and repairs the listed equipment.]

“16.2. All necessary top dressing, seed, fertilizers, fungicides, insecticides, irrigation materials and supplies and herbicides;

16.3. Bunker rakes, trash receptacles, and other similar golf course equipment, which shall be maintained and/or replaced as needed, as outlined in the Technical Maintenance Specifications; and

16.4. Sand for bunkers to maintain an appropriate sand depth.”

5. Confusion about Personal Property shows a lack of understanding of the Lease

The City's response to 2324-06 claimed that all personal property was sold in 2009 and offered Exhibit B, the Equipment Inventory list (List), as evidence. This listed 3 utility vehicles and dozens of other items. However, the referenced Section 7.1 of the lease states that this was to be used by, not sold to Sierra and Sierra was to pay for the repairs and maintenance. The City has no records regarding the repairs and maintenance that have been done or for the personal property that still exists, as the City Team incorrectly claimed that this property was sold in 2009.

The MCGJ 2324-06 report states:

“F2: The MCGJ finds there is no current Inventory list of City-owned personal property and fixtures located at the MMGC.

Response 2: The City agrees with this finding. However, there is no list of personal property as all City-owned property not part of the physical structures was sold when SGM began leasing the facility (i.e., the inventory does not belong to the City). Additionally, a list is not needed for insurance, as it is not required to ensure content values. The property was appraised for the City's insurance program in 2023 and the appraisal determined scheduled values for real property and personal property, as defined by the policy documents. It should be noted that as part of Amendment 1 to the agreement between City and SGM, the City agreed to sell equipment to SGM (see Exhibit A).”

The last statement of the response is in direct conflict with Section 7.1 of the Agreement cited as authority by the Team.

6. Subtenant Identity and Oversight Gaps

There is continuing confusion regarding the identity of subtenants operating the Course kitchen and bar. The City claims that the Lease does not permit inquiries into subtenant identities. This is incorrect. The Code imposes duties on the City to conduct such oversight—yet it has failed to do so. The City emails provided to the MCGJ in four Public Records Act (PRA) requests revealed that the City Manager advised the MMGC subtenant business owner to change the city business license name to match the name "GROUP" on its liquor license. The Team response denied any duty to identify Sierra's subtenants, except for Smokehouse on Cleveland Avenue. However, Smokehouse # 1(1) ceased doing business and sold its liquor license to the Mountain Oaks Cafe in Oakhurst. The other Smokehouse # 2 (2) allegedly operating at the Course, is an

unregistered DBA of SPS Madera Group, LLC (GROUP), and GROUP never did any business on Cleveland Avenue. Smokehouse # 2 obtained its first City business license on February 29, 2024, one year after operating businesses at the Course.

7. Misleading Team Responses to the 2324-06 as Adopted by the Council

The City's responses (3) to Report 2324-06 were crafted in a way that either downplayed or entirely ignored the findings and evidence presented by the MCGJ. The City's narrative conflicts with the documented facts uncovered during this investigation, raising serious concerns about the credibility of the City's leadership.

“Rec. 9: The MCGJ recommends that the City seek the maximum fines and penalties against GROUP within seven days of publication of this report”.

“Response 9: The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or unreasonable. The facilities operated with both a valid ABC License and a business license”

MCGJ Findings and Recommendations

City Administrator's Involvement:

A City Administrator instructed Smokehouse to contact a Financial Officer, regarding how to correct the business license to reflect GROUP's name. The Finance Officer issued three different business licenses within 24 hours. This action contradicts the City's denial of last year's jury report that Smokehouse [# 1 or # 2] had been operating the golf course bar with a current business license. The ABC liquor license at the Course is issued to SPS Madera Group, LLC dba SPS at the Muni. The word 'Smokehouse' is not on the said ABC license. The GROUP was only formed on November 11, 2022, and it never did business at 1830 W. Cleveland Avenue, Madera.

1. GROUP Business License: The GROUP business license was initiated by a City Administrator. Email records from the city confirm that this was done outside of the ordinances, without planning department approval and without any application being filed by GROUP.

Business License Discrepancies:

The City Manager instructed Smokehouse to contact a Financial Officer to correct the business license to reflect GROUP's name. This action contradicts the City Manager's denial in last year's jury report that GROUP Smokehouse operated the golf course bar.

Email records from the City Clerk's office confirm that this name correction was done without providing any documents or application by GROUP

FINDINGS

F1. The MCGJ finds that a City Administrator instructed Smokehouse to contact a Financial Officer, regarding how to change the business license to reflect GROUP's name.

F2. The MCGJ finds The GROUP business license was initiated by a City Administrator. Email records from the city confirm that this was done without any application filed by GROUP.

F3. The MCGJ finds Lack of Documentation: There is a lack of proper documentation and transparency in the process of issuing and modifying business licenses.

F4. The MCGJ finds Non-compliance with Ordinances: The issuance of the business license to GROUP did not comply with the Madera Code of Ordinances (MCO) Title VI, Chapter 1.

F5. The MCGJ finds Potential Conflict of Interest: A City Manager's involvement in the business license issuance process raises concerns about conflicts of interest, especially in light of the Team Responses.

F6. The MCGJ finds Public Scrutiny: The actions taken by city officials in issuing and modifying business licenses should be documented and made available for public scrutiny.

F7. The MCGJ finds impact on public trust: The irregularities in the business license issuance process harm public trust in city officials and the administration.

F8. The MCGJ finds the Council does not read the findings, recommendations, and City responses to MCGJ reports.

F9. The MCGJ finds the equipment inventory, Exhibit B, is outdated.

F10. The MCGJ finds the cleaning of the solar panels has been paid by SGM from the Capital Improvement fund and not the maintenance costs.

F11. The MCGJ finds that the Advisory Committee monthly meeting reports are not made available to the Council.

F12. The MCGJ finds insufficient training regarding business license applications and issuance requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The MCGJ recommends Transparency and Accountability: The City should ensure transparency and accountability in the issuance and modification of business licenses. All actions taken by city officials should be documented and made available for public scrutiny within 60 days of this report being published.

R2. The MCGJ recommends the city administration hire an independent agency to conduct a thorough review and audit of the business license issuance process to identify any irregularities and ensure compliance with city ordinances within 90 days of receiving this report.

R3. The MCGJ recommends improving communication between city departments and the City Council to ensure that all relevant information is shared, discussed and documented within 30 days. This recommendation should be implemented within 30 days of receiving this report.

R4. The MCGJ recommends enforcement of ordinances: Enforce the Madera Code of Ordinances Title VI, Chapter 1, to ensure that all businesses operating in the city have the necessary licenses and comply with city regulations within 30 days of receiving this report.

R5. The MCGJ recommends implementing a conflict of interest policy to ensure that city officials do not have any personal or financial interests in the businesses they regulate within 30 days of receiving this report.

R6. The MCGJ recommends launching a public awareness campaign to inform residents and business owners about the importance of compliance with city ordinances and the procedures for obtaining business licenses within 30 days of receiving this report.

R7. The MCGJ recommends that the entire MCGJ report be read to the Council members in an open public meeting within 30 days of receiving this report.

R8. The MCGJ recommends hiring an outside expert to check the City's property and equipment records and also to do regular checks within the City. The list of items the City owns (Exhibit B) needs to be brought up-to-date within 90 days.

R9. The MCGJ recommends conducting regular audits of SGM's business expenses in regards to capital improvements vs maintenance obligations. Within 90 days of receiving this report.

R10. The MCGJ recommends improving the documentation process for issuing and modifying business licenses to ensure that all actions are properly recorded and transparent. Within 90 days of receiving this report.

R11. The MCGJ recommends engaging with stakeholders, including business owners and residents, to gather feedback and improve the business license issuance process within 90 days of receiving this report.

R12. The MCGJ recommends that the Advisory Committee reports be agendaized monthly and read to the Council in an open meeting within 90 days of this report.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requires responses from the following: within 60 days:

Mayor of the City of Madera
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury requires responses from the following: within 90 days:

Madera City Council
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

INVITED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Madera County Grand Jury invites responses from the following within 60 days:

City of Madera City Manager
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

Responses located at the following link:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/home/showpublisheddocument/47735/639116954524470000>

City of Madera Director of Parks and Community Services
John W. Wells Youth Center
701 East 5th Street
Madera, CA 93638

City of Madera Finance Department
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

City of Madera Planning Department
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, Ca 93637

City of Madera Code Enforcement
330 C Street
Madera, CA 93637

City of Madera Golf Course Advisory Committee
Madera City Hall
205 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

Responses to 2024-2025 Final Report

To reduce expenses, paper waste and keep information as up-to-date as possible, the Madera County Grand Jury has moved the formal responses to last term's recommendations online. By moving these documents to our website, we can ensure the public has immediate, transparent access to the latest updates and agency follow-ups without the high printing costs.

The full responses are available from county officials, department heads, and local agencies on the Madera County Grand Jury Reports Archive:

<https://www.maderacounty.com/grand-jury/grand-jury-reports-archive/-folder-3885>