



# **YUBA COUNTY 2024 - 2025 GRAND JURY REPORT**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Yuba County Civil Grand Jury ..... iv

History of the Grand Jury..... v

REPORTS ..... 1

Forgotten In Death: The Decaying State of Yuba County’s Public Cemeteries.....2

Is Mental Illness a Crime? Law Enforcement and Behavioral Health Response in Yuba County...25

What Does Marijuana Money Do For Marysville?.....33

Seeking Improvements In Policy and Management of MJUSD.....42

Yuba County 2023-2024 Grand Jury Previous Investigations Grid..... 53

The Honorable Stephen Berrier  
Supervising Judge of the Grand Jury  
Superior Court of the State of California  
County of Yuba  
215 Fifth Street Marysville, CA 95901

Dear Judge Berrier

On behalf of the entire 2024-2025 Yuba County Grand Jury and in accordance with the provision of Penal Code 933(a), I respectfully submit our Final Report compiled through this year of our service.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Yuba County Grand Jury. All jurors of this Grand Jury have toiled countless hours in the production of this report.

All Grand Jury complaints received were given thorough attention and, when necessary, investigated in a professional manner. This Grand Jury consisted of 17 members from various backgrounds and locations within Yuba County, who performed their tasks with professionalism and diligence. The jurors were divided into six committees. These committees were; County and Special District, Health and Human Services, Schools, Court and Law, Cities and Editorial. All jurors served on multiple committees.

The Grand Jury would like to extend our personal thanks to Ms. Mary Pasillas, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and staff, as well as Ms. Robyn Hauck, Jury Commissioner. Their assistance, advice and expertise were instrumental. We would also like to thank Ms. Tahmina Morrow, County Counsel, for her support.

I would like to thank the members of the Grand Jury for their commitment and dedication. Additionally, the Grand Jury would like to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude for your unwavering support of Yuba County Grand Juries.

Lastly, the Grand Jury, as a whole, would like to express our sincere appreciation to the officials and staff of the numerous Cities, County and Agencies offices for their cooperation.

Thanks again for your support and faith in the 2024-2025 Grand Jury members and myself as its Foreperson.

Sincerely,



Wesley Adams  
Foreman, 2024-2025 Yuba County Grand Jury

**2024 – 2025**  
**Yuba County Civil Grand Jury**

Wesley Adams, Foreman	Oregon House
Christine Beermann, ProTem	Browns Valley
Jenny Chakonova, Secretary	Plumas Lake
Rebecca Kyler, Treasurer	Marysville
Devin Lafayette, Librarian	Forbestown
Christopher Poole, Sergeant-at-Arms	Olivehurst
Paula Blackwell	Plumas Lake
Michael Scully-Linder	Olivehurst
Ronald Robinson	Linda
Lance Christensen	Wheatland
Richard Langille	Browns Valley
Debra Brinkley:	Loma Rica
Lynne Pugh	Brownsville
Kuldip Atwal	Olivehurst
Shannon Nichols	Plumas Lake
John Mark	Olivehurst
Lutricia Hall	Plumas Lake

We thank those members who were part of the process but were unable to complete their year of service.

**2024-2025 Yuba County Grand  
Jury**

**History of the Grand Jury**

### **Before American Development**

Some historians believe that the earliest versions of the grand jury existed in Athens, where the Greeks used citizen groups to develop accusations. Others find traces of the concept in all the Teutonic peoples, including early Anglo-Saxons. For example, the concept was employed in the early Scandinavian countries. Evidence also exists that the early French developed the "King's Audit" involving citizens who were sworn and required to provide fiscal information related to the operation of the kingdom.

However, most commentators believe that the grand jury arose as an institution in England. In the first millennium, English individuals prosecuted criminals, with the king personally involved in the system. Under the Doom Law of Anglo-Saxon King Aethelred (AD 980-1016), a dozen landowners were appointed to investigate alleged crimes. In 1166, King Henry II established a system of local "informers" (twelve men from every one hundred) to identify those who were "suspected of" various crimes. If the suspects survived their "trials by ordeal," they paid fines to the King. However, the informers were fined if they failed to indict any suspect, or even enough suspects. After 1188, they became tax collectors as well, and after the reign of Henry III, they were charged with "looking into the condition and maintenance of public works".

The Magna Carta, signed by King John in 1215, did not mention the grand jury specifically, but did establish various procedures to ensure fairness in the dispensation of justice. Thereafter, until the mid-1300s, the 12-men juries served both to present indictments and to rule on the validity of charges. During Edward III's reign, from 1312- 1377, the 12 individuals were replaced by 24 knights, called "le grande inquest," and the 12 became a "petit jury" responsible only for declaring innocent or guilty verdicts.

Ultimately, in the 1600s, the English grand jury developed as a process to determine whether there was probable cause to believe that an accused individual was guilty of a crime. Grand juries reached their English pinnacle of citizen protectors in 1681, when they refused to indict enemies of King Charles II for alleged crimes. English laws establishing grand juries were repealed in 1933.

### **Early American Development**

The use of juries was limited in early colonial history. In the New Haven colony religious beliefs resulted in the residents eliminating trial by jury because there was no reference to juries in the laws of Moses. However, procedures similar to grand juries were used to hear criminal charges of larceny (Boston, 1644), holding a disorderly meeting (Plymouth, 1651), and witchcraft (Pennsylvania, 1683.) In the early 1600s, colonial representatives of the English monarchs made laws and prosecuted violators. The first grand juries recommended civil charges against those crown agents, thus establishing themselves as representatives of the governed, similar to grand juries today.

The first grand juries also investigated government misconduct or neglect. For example, the first colonial grand jury, established in Massachusetts in 1635, "presented" town officials for neglecting to repair stocks, and considered cases of murder, robbery and spousal abuse.

Other early grand juries performed a variety of administrative functions, including audits of county funds (New Jersey), inspections of public buildings (Carolinas), and review of taxes and public works (Virginia). Virginia grand juries also investigated whether each family planted two acres

of corn per person. In the Colonies, grand juries were considering criminal accusations and investigating government officials and activities, but with a populist view. Grand jurors included popular leaders such as Paul Revere and John Hancock's brother. These grand juries played a critical role in the pre- Revolutionary period. Three grand juries refused to indict John Peter Zenger, whose newspaper criticized the royal governor's actions in New York (he ultimately was prosecuted by the provincial attorney, defended by Alexander Hamilton, and acquitted). Grand juries also denounced arbitrary royal intrusions on citizens' rights, refused to indict the leaders against the Stamp Act of 1765, and refused to bring libel charges against the editors of the Boston Gazette in 1766.

After the Revolutionary War ended, the new federal constitution did not include a grand jury. Early American leaders such as John Hancock and James Madison objected. Thereafter, the grand jury was included in the Bill of Rights, as part of the Fifth Amendment, which states, "No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger..."

From then until today, the federal grand jury remains an integral part of the justice system, used by federal prosecutors for a variety of potential crimes. In 1801, a federal grand jury indicted Colonel Aaron Burr for treason. Most recently, federal grand juries considered allegations related to the Oklahoma City and New York Trade Center bombings, President Clinton's conduct both before and during his term of office, and the claims of wrongdoing by former California Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush and some associates.

### **Adaptation by the States**

As the various states were admitted to the Union and adopted their legal and operating procedures, almost all initially included some reliance on grand juries for review of criminal indictments and/or inquiries into government activities. Some states' grand juries were very active in administrative affairs, even recommending new laws. Others carried out investigations of government officials; one Tennessee grand jury indicted the entire state court of appeals and another opposed a judge's reappointment on the grounds of "mental imbecility."

Throughout this state-by-state development, the underlying concept remained the same: ordinary citizens, neighbors, and others on grand juries were a necessary part of government to ensure that public prosecutors were not swayed by personal or political prejudices, and that government officials efficiently and effectively performed their jobs.

Since the mid-1800s, a number of reformers criticized grand juries as ineffective or out-of-date because they were slow, lacked expertise, and on other grounds. Others criticized the "star chamber" atmosphere of secret hearings without customary due process rights. However, these complaints were offset by effective grand jury investigations, including those of the Boss Tweed ring in New York City (1871) and racketeering charges brought by a grand jury assisted by Thomas Dewey in the 1930s. Since the nineteenth century, various minor and major changes have been made in grand jury selection, procedures, and qualifications, often resulting in fairer and more efficient jury operations.

Today, all states except Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, may use grand juries to indict and begin criminal trials. 23 states and the District of Columbia require that grand jury indictments be used for certain more serious crimes. California and 24 other states make use

of grand jury indictments optional. All states and the District of Columbia use grand juries for investigative purposes.

## **CALIFORNIA**

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

(1) to 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;

(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; & (d) non-profit 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 any such city or joint powers agency and to make recommendations as deemed proper;

(5) the ability, with permission of the Superior Court, to hire such experts as auditors and accountants;

(6) the right to inquire into the sale, transfer and ownership of lands which might or should escheat to the state.

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 or methods of inquiry.

With so many possible investigations and a term limited to a single year, it is necessary for each grand jury to make hard decisions as to what it wishes to undertake during the term. Except for mandated duties to report on the financial condition of the county and on the conditions of county jails, the grand jury has great discretion in determining its agenda.

Most grand juries divide into committees for conducting investigations and for writing reports, but there seems to be a wide variation between counties as to the number and structure of committees; it is up to each grand jury to determine its own method of operation.

Law requires that each grand jury submit to the presiding judge of the Superior Court a final report of its findings and recommendations. In addition to the mandated reports on financial audits and the condition of adult and juvenile detention facilities, recent Contra Costa County Grand Jury Reports have covered such topics as the deterioration of county roads, reserves amassed by special districts, hazardous waste disposal, misuse of funds in a water district, redevelopment agencies and the selection of sites for a sanitary landfill in the county.

A report, like an accusation or an indictment, must be approved by at least 12 of the 19 grand jurors (15 if it is a 23 member jury).

While surrounded by secrecy before publication, grand jury reports become public documents when signed by the grand jury foreman and the Superior Court judge. Copies are sent: to all targeted government agencies, to interested officials, to public and private groups and individuals and to the press. At the end of the year, bound or loose-leaf copies of all reports are placed in all public libraries. In Contra Costa County, individuals may request copies from the Secretary of the Superior Court in Martinez.

Government agencies that are the subject of reports are required by law to respond to specific grand jury recommendations. However, the grand jury has no enforcement power, and the agencies are under no legal obligation to carry out the recommendations. While many recommendations are ignored, others are followed, particularly those that suggest greater efficiency for operations and that do not require the expenditure of large sums of money. Grand jury criticisms of public officials and agencies frequently attract press attention, bringing greater community awareness of what is happening in the public sector. Many grand jurors believe that public officials tend to be more accountable when they know an impartial, outside body is looking over their collective shoulders.

The California Grand Jurors Association (CGJA), a statewide organization of former grand jurors has begun a program of identifying and indexing grand jury reports in each county with the hope of establishing a state archives of annual reports. The Association also monitors and occasionally proposes or endorses legislation to conserve and improve the grand jury as an important institution of local government. They offer services to those grand juries that may request advice and help in preparing informational manuals and in providing orientation for incoming jurors. For a number of years, The American Grand Jury Foundation, a nonprofit corporation, held seminars allowing current grand jurors from over the state to exchange ideas

and experiences to enable them to be more responsible and effective in their jobs. Some members of the CGJA now provide orientation programs for those counties that request this service.

Many California counties have local organizations of ex grand jurors that are active in civic affairs, including educating the public about the functions of grand juries and monitoring compliance with grand jury recommendations. Citizens who are interested in learning about the grand jury are especially encouraged to contact the local association of grand jury alumni.

## **THE WATCHDOG FUNCTION OF GRAND JURIES**

While the primary function of the inquest in early England was as a means of apprehending and punishing criminals, records from the early days of the grand inquest indicate that

“The inquest was required to present those whose duty it was to keep in repair bridges, causeways and highways, for neglect of duty; to inquire into defects of gaols and the nature thereof, who ought to repair them and who was responsible for any escapes which had occurred; if any sheriff had kept in gaol those whom he should have brought before the justices. . .”

In some states, early grand juries developed quasi-legislative functions. In New York, the grand jury assumed direct ordinance-making powers. In the Carolinas in 1862, legislation was promptly considered if it was suggested by a majority of county grand juries.

Early in this century, statutes of many states required grand jurors to examine the condition of jails, asylums and other public institutions; to examine the books and accounts of the various public officials in the county, to fix the tax rate and to have general supervision over public improvements. “A town could be prosecuted on a presentment, and matters that were complained of, such as failure to repair streets and roads, were sometimes corrected after a grand jury report.”

A Pennsylvania statute of the late 1890’s provided that no public buildings and no bridges could be built within the county unless approved by two successive grand juries. Similar statutes of the period required Georgia grand juries to act as boards of revision of taxes and to fix tax rates. Mississippi grand juries were required to examine tax collectors’ accounts. Alabama and Tennessee grand juries were charged with investigating the sufficiency of the bonds of all county officers. Vermont grand juries had the responsibility of arresting persons having liquor for sale contrary to law.

In 1890, San Francisco grand jurors issued a report denouncing extravagance and fraud in municipal government, calling attention to personal profits made by city officials on railway

franchises, graft in street widening projects, padding payrolls and exorbitant prices paid for land to be used for public buildings.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, the watchdog function of grand juries of most states have been weakened or discontinued. A 1974 review of the California system found that “. . .only seven other states provide for any investigation of county government by ay grand jury beyond cases alleging willful misconduct by public officials . . .and only California and Nevada mandate that grand juries be impaneled annually to specifically function as a ‘watchdog’ over county government. . .”.

## **EVALUATION OF THE GRAND JURY AS AN INSTITUTION**

In the early days of the republic, the grand jury was much prized as the protector of the individual and as the conscience of the community. During the twentieth century, it has been criticized as archaic, inefficient, cumbersome, irresponsible and costly. In 1933, the grand jury was abolished in England. In most states, it has been severely weakened.

Some of the major criticisms of the grand jury are:

1. Unrepresentativeness. In California, as in most states, methods used for grand jury selection do not provide for a cross section of the community. Those chosen tend to be older, better educated and more affluent than the community at large. Women and minorities tend to be underrepresented which may pose legal problems in criminal indictments. However, for criminal indictments, some California counties (including Contra Costa) select special grand juries from the regular, petit jury rolls.

Some counties, such as Contra Costa, make efforts to recruit broadly and seek applications from all segments of the community; however, the number of hours of service required coupled with only token pay make it unlikely that the grand jury can be truly representative.

2. Reflective of a Community Bias. While grand juries may seek to be impartial, they are made up of people chosen from the local community who share the prejudices and bias of their neighbors.

3. Irresponsibility. In arguing for the abolition of the grand jury, C. E. Chipperfield writing early in the century said about the juror, “He is a law unto himself; no power can regulate him and no power can control him. He can be called before no earthly tribunal, except his own conscience, to account for his action. He can pursue an enemy for personal motives of revenge; he can favor a friend or political associate...” The requirement for concurrence of 12 of the 19 members helps control the irresponsible actions of the few, but is not a guarantee against a run-away grand jury. But each jury lasts for only one year, and members, individually and collectively, are subject

to laws of libel and slander. Additional protection is provided by the county counsel who offers comments and criticisms on all reports and by the grand jury judge who must sign them.

4. Secrecy. Many observers are concerned that the requirement of secrecy shields the grand jury from public scrutiny and independent review. Among the reforms that have been suggested are a right to counsel for those appearing before the grand jury and a requirement for recording grand jury proceedings.

Secrecy can also be a problem for grand jurors who, after issuing well researched reports, are unable to respond to charges of not doing their homework; but these frustrations must be balanced against the need to protect those who are being investigated.

5. Tool of the Prosecuting Attorney. In criminal investigations, grand juries almost always follow the lead of the district attorney. This may be a valid criticism in states that require grand jury indictments but does not seem especially relevant in California where the district attorney may proceed by information.

Overall, it is possible to balance these criticisms with the argument that California Grand juries, especially in the watchdog role, offer an important service by involving local citizen volunteers in the oversight of local public affairs, shedding the light of publicity on the operation of government in areas that otherwise would tend to be ignored by the media and overlooked by regular political processes.

## **REPORTS**

- 1. Forgotten In Death: The Decaying State of Yuba County's Public Cemeteries.**
- 2. Is Mental Illness a Crime? Law Enforcement and Behavioral Health Response in Yuba County**
- 3. What Does Marijuana Money Do For Marysville?**
- 4. Seeking Improvements In Policy and Management of MJUSD**

# **FORGOTTEN IN DEATH: THE DECAYING STATE OF YUBA COUNTY'S PUBLIC CEMETERIES**



Smartsville Cemetery, photo taken by a member of the Yuba County Grand Jury, March 2025

# A REPORT ON YUBA COUNTY'S COMMUNITY CEMETERY DISTRICTS

*The mouldering heaps where sleep the dead,*

*By careless heirs unvisited,*

*With rank weeds choked, in silence lie,*

*Beneath the cold, unheeding sky.*

— Thomas Campbell, *Lines on Visiting a Scene in Argyleshire (circa 1800)*

## SUMMARY

Yuba County is home to 10 Community Cemetery Districts (CCDs), some of which have existed since the 1850s. Except for Marysville Cemetery District, which is maintained by the City of Marysville, and Upham Cemetery District, originating under Butte County's jurisdiction, each of these CCDs are divided up among the balance of the County as independent special districts with board members appointed by the Yuba County Board of Supervisors (BOS). These CCDs, permissible under state law,<sup>1</sup> have been formally organized under the County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)<sup>2</sup> and are independent special districts with autonomous decision-making bodies guided by their district bylaws. CCDs are meant to facilitate the final resting place of residents of Yuba County who choose to be buried at one of the County properties.

These CCDs are not given any state funds and receive a small portion of the County property tax revenue and proceeds from plot acquisitions and burial expenses. Most maintain endowments to cover residual maintenance costs. For many of these districts, the annual revenues barely cover basic services, and the boards of these districts struggle to maintain adequate membership to govern these districts. Since they are independent, the County has no authority over these boards after they appoint members, except to maintain bank accounts, receive funds, and pay bills through the offices of the Yuba County Treasurer and the Yuba County Auditor-Controller. In rare cases,

---

<sup>1</sup> Division 8, Part 4 of the California Health and Safety Code, §§ 9000-9321 outlines the rules and procedures of a public cemetery district, such as Formation, Board of Trustees, Powers, Finances, and Zones.

<sup>2</sup> According to the State Assembly Local Government Committee, "The Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 establishes procedures for local government changes of organization, including city incorporations, annexations to a city or special district, and city and special district consolidations. Local agency formation commissions (LAFCo) have numerous powers under the Act, but those of primary concern are the power to act on local agency boundary changes and to adopt spheres of influence for local agencies. Among the purposes of LAFCos are the discouragement of urban sprawl and the encouragement of the orderly formation and development of official agencies. Staff to the Assembly Local Government Committee regularly updates the *Guide to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000*. This version reflects the 2014 legislative changes to the Act." Assembly Committee on Local Government, "Guide to the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000" (2014). *California Assembly*. 537. [https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/caldocs\\_assembly/537](https://digitalcommons.law.ggu.edu/caldocs_assembly/537) (retrieved on February 15, 2025)

when the CCD board is no longer functional, the County will act as a pro forma CCD board until new CCD board members can be appointed.

Noticing a degradation of a few of the County public cemeteries, the Yuba County Grand Jury (GJ) had a concern about the condition of these CCDs and sought to investigate a way to ensure that these public cemeteries are managed well, and that there is a continuity of service and system of redundancies should the board be impacted in any measure (i.e. resignation, inability to fill trustee role, death of a board member, resignation, etc.). We sought to learn if Yuba County has a role in providing resources or acting as a redundant platform for finances and records. While County officials are sympathetic to the needs of these CCDs, their legal obligations and responsibilities do not allow them to spend more time and resources on CCDs themselves.

This report aims to address the sustainability, management practices, and potential areas for improvement of these public entities. Key issues include financial stability, governance, record management, and the need for more robust support structures from both County and state levels. Our findings suggest that while these districts operate autonomously under state mandate, there is significant room for improvement in accountability, funding, and board functionality. The reader can find a glossary further along in this report.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1909, the legislature adopted the “Public Cemetery District Law” in Senate Bill 524 authored by Senator Louis H. Roseberry (Santa Barbara). The statute provided powers to local authorities to create and maintain public cemeteries to best honor our dead. The statutes have been amended numerous times over the years, including in 1921 through Senate Bill 155 authored by Senator Claude F. Purkitt (Willows). In 1939, the law was put into the California Health and Safety Code (CHSC) in Senate Bill 657 by Senators Frank W. Mixter (Tulare County) and John D. Foley (Santa Clara). In 2003, all major cemetery stakeholders created a working group to further refine and update the statute in Senate Bill 341 shepherded by the Committee on Local Government.<sup>3</sup>

Public CCDs in Yuba County serve as burial grounds mandated by state law to provide final resting places for residents. Each CCD, except for Marysville Cemetery District and Upham Cemetery District, operate as an independent special district with board members appointed by the Yuba BOS. Funding for the CCDs primarily comes from plot sales, endowments, and a minor share of property taxes, with no direct state funding allocated. This financial model often results in tight budgets, affecting maintenance and operational capabilities.

Yuba County’s 10 CCDs cover a majority – but not all – of the County. Some of these CCDs have been in existence since the 1850s. In alphabetical order, they are:

- Browns Valley Cemetery District;

---

<sup>3</sup> “For Years to Come: A Legislative History of SB 341 and the ‘Public Cemetery District Law.’” Senate Local Government Committee, August 2004.  
<https://sgf.senate.ca.gov/sites/sgf.senate.ca.gov/files/YEARSTOCOME.PUBLICATION.pdf> (retrieved on February 15, 2025)

- Brownsville Cemetery District;
- Camptonville Cemetery District;<sup>4</sup>
- Keystone Cemetery District;
- Marysville Cemetery District;
- Peoria Cemetery District;
- Smartsville Cemetery District;
- Strawberry Valley Cemetery District;
- Upham Cemetery District;<sup>5</sup> and
- Wheatland Cemetery District.
- 

In contrast, Sutter County Special District has a countywide cemetery district that centralizes and coordinates service to their cemeteries.<sup>6</sup>

There are also several other non-public cemeteries scattered throughout the County, including pioneer cemeteries like the one on Johnson Ranch property in Wheatland, housing the remains of some of the Donner Party.<sup>7</sup> There are several private cemeteries, such as Sierra View Mortuary and Memorial Park<sup>8</sup> in Olivehurst which have been in operation since 1986, the Jewish Cemetery within the Marysville Cemetery fences, and the Catholic Immaculate Conception Cemetery in Smartsville.

There are a few associations that assist with issues surrounding CCDs, including:

- California Association of Public Cemeteries, which promote cooperation and share best practices for public cemetery districts.<sup>9</sup>
- Golden State Risk Management Authority, a risk-sharing pool covering the exposures of 330-member public entities throughout the State of California like cemetery districts.<sup>10</sup>
- Public Cemetery Alliance, “an association of California public cemetery districts, as well as several public cemeteries owned and operated by counties and cities.”<sup>11</sup>
- California Special Districts Association, a not-for-profit association “to promote good governance and improved core local services through professional development, advocacy, and other services for all types of independent special districts.”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Camptonville Community Services District Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2021*, page 12, the Camptonville Community Services District formed in 1987 to provide fire and water service and began managing the Camptonville Cemetery—owned by the Camptonville Cemetery District—in 1993 but are legally separate entities.

<sup>5</sup> Upham Cemetery District is primarily located in Butte County, but also shares boundaries inside Yuba County.

<sup>6</sup> Sutter Cemetery District website. <https://suttercemetery.specialdistrict.org/> (retrieved February 15, 2025)

<sup>7</sup> “A private Calif. ranch holds important state history — and it might be in danger.” By Erika Mailman, SF Gate, April 20, 2024. <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/johnsons-ranch-historic-stop-california-trail-19267765.php> (retrieved February 15, 2025)

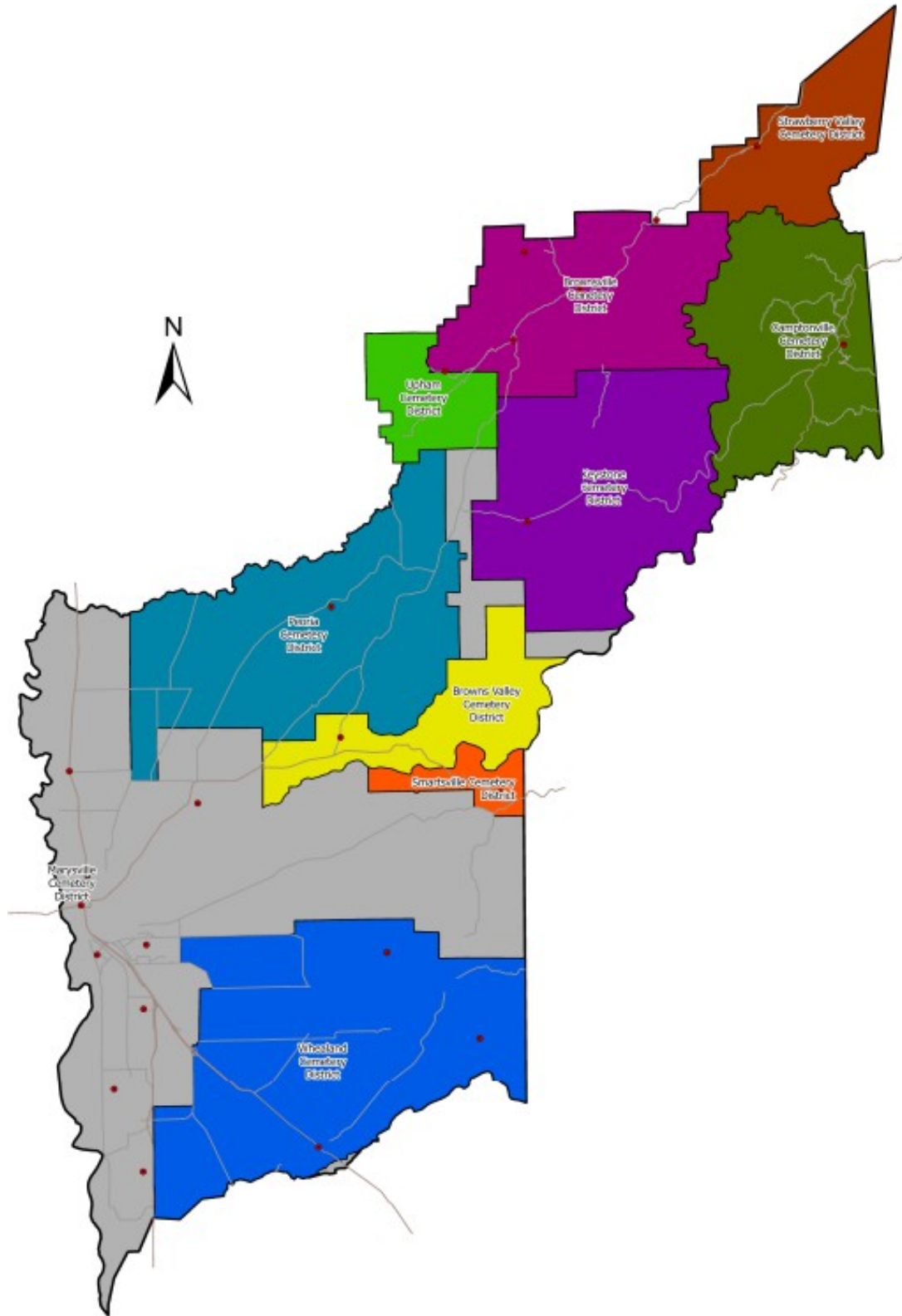
<sup>8</sup> Sierra View Mortuary & Memorial Park website. <https://sierraviewfh.com/> (retrieved February 15, 2025)

<sup>9</sup> California Association of Public Cemeteries website. [https://www.capc.info/about\\_CAPC.html](https://www.capc.info/about_CAPC.html) (retrieved February 15, 2025)

<sup>10</sup> Golden State Risk Management Authority website. <https://gsrma.org/about-us/> (retrieved February 15, 2025)

<sup>11</sup> Public Cemetery Alliance website. <https://www.calpca.org/about-pca> (retrieved February 15, 2025)

<sup>12</sup> California Special Districts Association website. <https://www.csdanet.net/about-csda/who-we-are> (retrieved February 15, 2025)



*CCDs in Yuba County. The gray-shaded areas in the above map of CCDs in Yuba County are parts of the County not represented by a CCD. The red dots represent both public and private cemetery properties.*

Each of these groups have spent years mentoring CCDs, promoting best practices among various agencies, and providing advocacy before the legislature on crucial policy issues. Several of these associations continue to advocate for laws to improve public cemeteries without negatively impacting private cemeteries. While the GJ recognizes that there are legitimate legislative opportunities that would vastly improve CCDs in Yuba County, that is outside the immediate scope of this report. We do hope that locally elected officials will take an interest in this issue and consider discussions with stakeholders on the best way to improve the current policies.

Throughout the years, the GJ has conducted multiple investigations into our cemetery districts, including reports from 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2019-20, and 2021-22. These reports are summarized below.

#### 2001-2002 – Yuba County Grand Jury Report: Cemetery Districts<sup>13</sup>

Findings in the report indicate the last time LAFCo updated the cemetery district charters was in 1986, that Keystone district pays operating expenses with interest on its general fund, and three districts were investigated and found to be well-run, inviting public participation and volunteers. The report discussed concerns around the accuracy of the list of district officers and contact information, and the lack of LAFCo's compliance with Government Code Section 56425(f) requiring a five-year review. It noted district funding sources and the monitoring of funds to be sufficient.

#### 2002-03 – Peoria Cemetery<sup>14</sup>

Based on a complaint made to the GJ, the GJ determined the Peoria Cemetery had only been having one meeting per year, when four were required by the district's bylaws. The GJ made a determination that the district's bylaws were inadequate and that its grounds were not well maintained.

#### 2003-04 – City of Wheatland<sup>15</sup>

Wheatland Cemetery was part of the entire City of Wheatland investigation. They had one full-time employee and one part-time employee. Lofton Cemetery in Wheatland was merged with Wheatland Cemetery.

#### 2019-20 & 2021-22 – Marysville Cemetery (both)<sup>16 17</sup>

The two reports are very similar and both recommend the City make a way for people to donate money online to help with costs of the Marysville Cemetery. While the City of Marysville's

---

<sup>13</sup> "Yuba County 2001/02 Grand Jury Report: Cemetery Districts." <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba County/Grand Jury/Grand Jury Reports/GJR2001.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2025)

<sup>14</sup> "Yuba County 2002/03 Grand Jury Final Report." <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba County/Grand Jury/Grand Jury Reports/GJR2002.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2025)

<sup>15</sup> "Yuba County Grand Jury Final Report, 2003—04." <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba County/Grand Jury/Grand Jury Reports/GJR2003.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2025)

<sup>16</sup> "Yuba County 2019/20 Grand Jury Report." <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba County/Grand Jury/Grand Jury Reports/2019-2020 Grand Jury Final Report.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2025)

<sup>17</sup> "Yuba County 2021/22 Grand Jury Report." <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Yuba County/Grand Jury/Grand Jury Reports/2021-2022 Yuba County Grand Jury Final Report.pdf> (retrieved January 30, 2025)

website had a link for volunteer applications, the only way to make a monetary donation for the cemetery was by check mailed to the City.<sup>18</sup>

## **Funding for Public Cemeteries**

Public cemeteries in California are funded through a combination of local revenue sources—including a portion of property taxes—and a number of fees. Government Code sections 61106 and 61014 allow special districts to provide cemetery services and to levy taxes to support operations. CHSC sections 9061, 9065, and 9068 outline cemetery district powers, including the authority to set fees, to establish endowment care funds for long-term maintenance, and to assess property taxes for operational costs. Additional funding may come from plot fees, grants, state and federal funds, and other special funds designated for cemetery maintenance or improvements, often available to enterprising trustees. This diversified funding model is intended to help CCDs maintain services and meet their perpetual care obligations to those interred in their cemeteries.

Browns Valley Cemetery District is a model for transparency with their website. Below is a screenshot of their schedule of fees, which allows their constituents to make more informed decisions while choosing their final resting place at the appropriate time.

The administration and budgetary oversight of public cemeteries in California are governed by several legal frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, and proper financial management. Key points include:

**Governance and Authority**—Government Code section 61106 empowers special districts to manage public cemeteries, including budget creation, financial oversight, and reporting responsibilities. These districts must follow public meeting laws (e.g., the Brown Act) to ensure transparency. CHSC section 9041 outlines the powers of cemetery districts, such as establishing rules for cemetery operations, setting fees, and managing property. CHSC section 9065 allows districts to levy property taxes to fund maintenance, improvements, and services. CHSC section 9079 requires districts to maintain proper financial records, submit regular reports, and adhere to state-mandated auditing practices.

**Financial Oversight**—Public cemetery districts must develop annual budgets, which are subject to review and approval by their governing board. Endowment care funds are legally required to ensure perpetual maintenance, with investment rules designed to preserve principal and generate sustainable income. Revenue sources, including plot fees, property tax assessments, and grants, must be properly allocated for operations, maintenance, and improvements. The County oversees funding and expenditures; however, it does not bear direct fiduciary responsibility for the CCDs.

---

<sup>18</sup> City of Marysville Cemetery Commission website, <https://www.marysville.ca.us/city-cemetery> (retrieved April 14, 2025)

SERVICE	FEE
BURIAL PLOT	\$350
CREMAINS BURIAL	\$250
CREMAINS EXCAVATION	\$200
ENDOWMENT FEE	\$250
NON-RESIDENT FEE	\$250
TRANSFER FEE	\$50
DISINTERMENT FEE	\$250
HOLIDAY/SATURDAY BURIAL EXTRA CHARGE	\$150
TEMPORARY MARKER	\$50*

*Browns Valley Cemetery District schedule of fees*

**Role of LAFCo**—LAFCo may establish or modify district boundaries and evaluate the financial viability of cemetery districts as part of their Municipal Service Review (MSR) process. Any covenants, ordinances, or agreements tied to cemetery properties may impose additional financial or operational obligations.

**Public Accountability**—Public Cemetery Districts must comply with California's transparency laws, such as the Public Records Act, ensuring that financial documents, budgets, and meeting minutes are accessible to the public. The BOS appoints CCD board members, ensuring the public some amount of oversight and accountability. This framework is designed to safeguard both the financial stability of public cemeteries and the respectful care of those interred within them.

## METHODOLOGY

Yuba County Grand Jury members:

- Visited multiple cemeteries and interviewed CCD board members;

- Met with Yuba County officials in possession of CCD information regarding their formation, finances, and challenges;
- Researched state and local laws and policies related to cemetery districts;
- Reviewed past GJ reports in Yuba County and other counties regarding cemetery districts; and
- Researched the best practices of other California counties.

## DISCUSSION

During hundreds of hours of research and communication within the GJ’s investigation into the CCDs, it appears Yuba County residents know very little about the existence and purpose of public CCDs. While the GJ focused most of its research on the rural CCDs in the foothills, the GJ discovered information that revealed a pressing need for a comprehensive review of the County’s approach to these independent special districts. While County LAFCo should do these kinds of reviews every five years, each political entity within the jurisdiction of the County needs to offer feedback on how to better utilize these independent special districts.

Some might question the necessity of public cemetery districts when private alternatives are available. Enabling legislation in the early 1900s recognized the need to care for many properties that were spread in rural areas or which housed indigent bodies. There needed to be a process and mechanism to deal with the cemeteries that would have otherwise been abandoned. Plus, the cost of a private cemetery provides for better upkeep of the property in perpetuity, but can often be out of reach for many families. Public cemeteries may not always be the gold standard, but they are an economical option for others with fewer means.

There are trade-offs for families who choose to bury their deceased in a public cemetery. A Yolo County Grand Jury report on cemeteries in 2022-23 noted, “[a]lthough the state law does not include any maintenance standards for public cemeteries, there are standards for other cemeteries which could provide guidance. Private cemeteries in California are licensed and regulated by the California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau” and are “required to have minimum maintenance standards for cemetery property.” These requirements include several maintenance, access, and development issues.<sup>19</sup>

Yuba County LAFCo can create, dissolve, or compel the merging of CCDs, as well as determine the boundaries of CCDs. They are also required by law to perform an MSR every 5 years starting in 2008. Several of the notes from Yuba County LAFCo’s inaugural MSR in 2008 are still relevant today. These observations include the following:<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> “Yolo County Public Cemeteries: With Great Autonomy Comes Great Responsibility.”

A Report by the 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury, June 1, 2023.

<https://www.yolocounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77269/638236308535700000> (retrieved March 26, 2025)

<sup>20</sup> Yuba Local Agency Formation Commission: Municipal Service Review Findings, Final Adopted July 24, 2008.

[https://www.yubalafco.org/files/719974cab/final\\_countywide\\_yuba\\_msr\\_findings.pdf](https://www.yubalafco.org/files/719974cab/final_countywide_yuba_msr_findings.pdf) (retrieved March 26, 2025)

- “Public cemetery providers have sufficient capacity at present and room for expansion, but do have capital needs. Six of the ten cemetery districts provide year-round maintenance, while four provide maintenance only one to three times per year. In several cases, cemetery districts are not compliant with legal requirements relating to fees and constraints on burials of non-residents. Camptonville Community Services District is not legally authorized to provide cemetery service, and needs to petition LAFCo for approval so that the inactive Camptonville Cemetery District may be dissolved. Governance options include adjusting Brownsville, Strawberry Valley and Upham Cemetery Districts’ boundaries to ensure that residents of the Clippermills and Rackerby communities have legal access to the cemetery preferred by the majority in these communities.” (page 6)
- “Interest in governing body membership is relatively low among many of the special districts serving the MSR area, and uncontested elections are common. Cemetery and most irrigation district board members are appointed, which limits accountability. Accountability is constrained by limited interest among citizens in serving on the governing bodies.” (pages 9-10)
- “Formation of a new community services district responsible for water, wastewater, fire and possibly cemetery services in the [Smartsville] community is an option. There are service and accountability deficiencies at [River Highlands Community Services District in the Smartsville area] and [Smartsville] Cemetery District (SCD). It would be desirable for the successor agency to monitor NID activities in [Smartsville] for compliance with the Railroad Commission Order, and explore assuming water service directly. Including fire service within the new district’s scope would help ensure good governance and accountability.” (page 14)
- “All cemetery providers have infrastructure needs.” (page 35)
- Most of the CCDs “provide cemetery maintenance services on a year-round basis...Districts that provide services on a year-round basis tend to be those with larger populations and property tax bases, whereas those that provide minimal maintenance tend to be those with smaller populations and less property tax revenue.” (page 35-36)
- A few CCDs are not compliant in certain aspects of operation authorization and lack proper or consistent fee structures. (page 36)
- Some CCDs “have severely limited financial resources to improve existing infrastructure, as a result of a small service area. Insufficient financing has lead (sic) to deficient reserves for significant repairs, as well as inadequate equipment and staff to ensure ongoing maintenance. All three districts rely primarily on community volunteers to provide services.” (page 36)
- “For the City of Marysville, the only available financing source to address cemetery needs is the general fund, and additional financing is needed. The City’s public works staff mows

and weeds the cemetery and provides irrigation and lighting maintenance as needed; however, the cemetery has suffered from high water and vandalism and is in need of significant maintenance.” (page 36)

- “Securing an affordable accountant for the auditing of financial statements is a major difficulty, and many agencies have not had their financial statements audited in a number of years as a result.” (page 37)
- “No cemetery districts reported engaging in facility sharing, and no facility sharing opportunities were identified.” (page 37)
- “Cemetery service providers lack accountability in that governing bodies are appointed, voters do not have opportunities to choose among candidates for their governing body members, and most providers do not conduct constituent outreach. However, most of the providers disclose information to the public.” (page 37)

While some of these issues have been addressed from the 2008 MSR, many of the issues and challenges remain. CCDs are autonomous, independently elected trustees who have responsibility for the public cemeteries in their jurisdictions. When these boards are defunct, the County steps in as a de facto receiver of last resort. For a short time, Yuba County took over the board of the Smartsville Cemetery District in 2019<sup>21</sup> due to a lack of board members. Their direct stewardship concluded on March 26, 2019, when the County voted to divest its authority over the board, and appointed enough members to cover the quorum.<sup>22</sup>

The CHSC section 9026 provides a process for the BOS in the principal County to appoint itself as the board of trustees for a CCD, as well as the authority to relinquish this authority. This all must happen through publicly noticed hearings and official resolutions from the BOS. At public hearings, the BOS considers public comments and evaluates written protests, but can override protests and appoint the BOS as trustees of the CCD if deemed necessary for public health, safety, and welfare.

Pursuant to CHSC section 9027, LAFCo can recommend the adjustment to the number of trustees in a consolidated or reorganized district, ensuring an odd number of at least five members. The BOS holds the power and authority to change governance structures and manage trustee numbers in public CCDs. They balance supervisory authority with public input and make structural

---

<sup>21</sup> Agenda for Smartsville Cemetery District, Yuba County Board of Supervisors, March 26, 2019. <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Board of Supervisors/Misc Forms/03 26 2019 Special Meeting Smartsville Cemetery District Agenda.pdf> (retrieved December 10, 2025)

<sup>22</sup> Yuba County Board of Supervisors Resolution 2019-32 regarding the divestment of Smartsville Cemetery District, March 26, 2019. <https://cms7files.revize.com/yubaca/Resolution No. 2019-032.pdf> (retrieved March 26, 2025)

adjustments during consolidations or reorganizations. More legal review by County Counsel over these options may be appropriate.

There is additional confusion over the jurisdiction of a few of the CCDs. The Institute for Local Government notes that while “...cities must be located in one county, and city boundaries may not cross county lines. On the other hand, special districts may cross city and county boundaries.”<sup>23</sup> Butte County has responsibility over Upham Cemetery District while sharing property with Yuba County. Marysville Cemetery District is the cemetery itself and does not actually cover the City boundaries. It also has no living constituency. There are also vast tracts of land not within the jurisdiction of a CCD in Yuba County, including the entire city of Marysville.

When vacancies occur, it takes a while for some districts to attract even a single willing candidate to be on the CCD board. There are several reasons for this. The Clerk of the BOS lists these vacancies on the County website<sup>24</sup> but there seems to be no other effort to share these vacancies more broadly, through social media platforms or other coordinated announcements.

## **Governance and Transparency Requirements**

California CCDs—as public entities governed under the CHSC—are subject to transparency requirements similar to other public agencies in the state, like the California Public Records Act (CPRA)<sup>25</sup> and the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act)<sup>26</sup> for open meeting requirements, which indirectly affects document disclosure.

Below is a summary of the types of documents California CCDs are generally required to make public, based on these laws and the operational nature of such districts:

- Documents under the CPRA, unless they fall under specific exemptions (e.g., privacy, security, or ongoing investigations). For CCDs, this typically includes:
  - Financial records like budgets, expenditure reports, audits, and financial statements.
  - Contracts and agreements with vendors, service providers (e.g., landscapers, funeral homes), or other governmental entities.
  - Board of trustee’s records, like resolutions, policies, and official actions taken by the board of trustees.

---

<sup>23</sup> Institute for Local Government. “About Special Districts.” Sacramento, CA. <http://www.ca-ilg.org/post/about-special-districts>. (retrieved March 26, 2025) 18, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Yuba County Clerk of the Board, Boards and Commissions website. [https://www.yuba.org/departments/clerk\\_of\\_the\\_board\\_of\\_supervisors/boards\\_and\\_commissions.php](https://www.yuba.org/departments/clerk_of_the_board_of_supervisors/boards_and_commissions.php) (retrieved March 25, 2025)

<sup>25</sup> Government Code section 7920.000 et seq.

<sup>26</sup> Government Code section 54950 et seq.

- Operational records related to cemetery maintenance, plot sales, interment records (though personal identifying information may be redacted for privacy), and district rules or regulations.
  - Correspondence and official communications related to district business, unless exempt (e.g., attorney-client privileged documents).
  - Permits and compliance documents or records showing compliance with state health, safety, and environmental regulations.
- Documents related to the Brown Act “open meetings” law, such as:
    - Meeting agendas must be posted at least 72 hours in advance for regular meetings (24 hours for special meetings) in a publicly accessible location and often online if the district maintains a website.
    - Approved minutes of board meetings, summarizing discussions and actions taken, must be available to the public.
    - Supporting materials, like reports, studies, or other documents distributed to the board for decision-making must be made available to the public upon request, typically at the same time they are provided to the board (Government Code section 54957.5).
- Given their purpose, CCDs may also need to disclose documents related to their core functions, subject to privacy protections:
    - Plot records or general records of plot ownership, availability, and pricing (though personal details of decedents or families may be withheld under privacy exemptions).
    - Interment policies and rules governing burials, cremations, and memorial installations.
    - Publicly available lists and schedule of fees for services like plot sales, burials, or maintenance.

There are a few annual or periodic financial reports and audits that need to be submitted to the County or state (e.g., to the State Controller’s Office under Government Code section 53891), which are public records.

There are a few exemptions from disclosure, and certain documents may not be public if they fall under CPRA exemptions, such as:

- Personal information about employees or plot owners (e.g., Social Security numbers, medical records).
- Preliminary drafts or notes not retained in the ordinary course of business.
- Documents related to litigation or privileged legal advice.
- Security-related records (e.g., plans to protect cemetery grounds from vandalism).

There is concern about how the public can access these records without having to submit a CPRA request and endure a potential 10-day wait period for a response—if one is provided at all. Some proactive CCDs may choose to make agendas, minutes, and policies readily available by posting them on a website, if they have one. However, smaller districts might depend on maintaining physical records at their office for public access.

In short, the following are some of the broad challenges facing CCDs:

- **Financial Constraints**—Limited revenue streams lead to maintenance issues and potential neglect of facilities. The reliance on limited local revenue sources means that most CCDs cannot only afford sporadic maintenance, but audits are difficult to complete when they are estimated to cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year. Board members often volunteer their time and may not be compensated per diem for meetings, travel expenses related to cemetery business, or other laborious tasks.
- **Governance**—Difficulty in attracting and retaining active and effective board members, leading to governance gaps. Current oversight mechanisms are weak, with the County having limited control once board members are appointed.
- **Record Keeping**—There is a significant vulnerability in how records are kept within the CCDs, with no systematic backup or archival strategy at the County level. Few of the CCDs have consistent record management practices, and most lack redundancies or a centralized archival system which can easily be accessed in the event of a board member’s incapacitation or death. The effects of time, water damage by exposure or catastrophic events can also have a degrading impact upon older, hardcopy records.
- **Legal Compliance**—Public cemetery rules are complex and some districts struggle with compliance with state laws regarding fees, non-resident burials, and other regulations. Meetings are often canceled, ignored, or are irregular enough that they are poorly attended. Aside from very basic bulletins on the County’s website, most notices for board meetings are “as needed” instead of regular meeting times throughout the year. Some meeting notices are undecipherable. According to information provided by Yuba County officials, Peoria Cemetery District meets on the “2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the second month of the year quarterly at 7:00 p.m. at the Loma Rica Lions Club.” Despite multiple attempts at phone calls and emails, the GJ was only able to connect with a few CCDs or attend their public meetings.
- **Public Information**—Finding information about the CCDs is challenging even though state laws—such as the CPRA and Brown Act—require records like board agendas,

minutes, and audits to be readily available to the public. Except for Browns Valley Cemetery District's easily accessible website,<sup>27</sup> it is unclear how other CCDs in Yuba County post district records that should be readily accessible to the public.

- **Operational Support**—There seems to be a need for more structured support from the County, particularly in terms of administrative and financial oversight.

Understanding that resources are limited and few people are aware of the plight of a CCD or the often thankless work that trustees put into these public cemeteries, there must be a better way that we can honor and dignify our dead. As Yuba County citizens consider the final resting place of neighbors and loved ones, public cemeteries should honor those who have passed. While funding resources are scarce, County leaders may consider how to improve the condition of Cemetery Districts so our deceased may rest in peace, in perpetuity.

## FINDINGS

F1. Despite the CCDs being independent special districts, they often operate without a consistent or reliable authority structure or support from the County. Yet, the BOS may have options under CHSC sections 9026 and 9027 to reconstitute cemetery boards of trustees.

F2. Communication between the various jurisdictions, including state, County, LAFCo Board, and independent CCDs, is rare and CCDs are often concerned about reliable funding to perform their duties.

F3. Controls over data on cemetery records are virtually non-existent and aside from paper records housed in board members' homes (or garages or barns), there is no redundancy in record keeping that would allow for continuity of services under catastrophic conditions.

F4. Very few people know that there is a system of independent CCDs, that the public has access to these cemeteries, or that they are paying into the system.

F5. The County's website and social media platforms lack sufficient information about the Cemetery Districts, including general details, vacancies, service initiatives, accessibility, and burial opportunities. Additionally, the available content is poorly organized and difficult to locate online.

---

<sup>27</sup> Browns Valley Cemetery District website. <https://brownsvalleycemetery.specialdistrict.org/>. (retrieved: March 26, 2025)

F6. Due to the limited visibility of CCD operations, County officials—whether elected or appointed—and the public, have insufficient knowledge of district activities and frequently fail to recognize the challenges they face.

F7. Many districts are not compliant with state law and struggle to hold regular meetings. They are often behind on regular financial audits, if they conduct them at all.

F8. Marysville CCD faces distinct jurisdictional challenges and lacks a dedicated tax base to generate consistent property tax revenues, thereby making it reliant upon the City budget and charitable donations to support its maintenance and operations.

F9. The BOS has not adopted a Sphere of Influence (SOI) resolution since 2010.

F10. There appears to be little desire for reimagining boundaries, consolidations, or annexations; especially with the districts themselves.

F11. Although cemetery boundaries encompass most of the County’s jurisdiction, some CCDs have overlapping SOIs and other territories in the County lack access to a public cemetery district.

F12. Yuba County LAFCo has not performed its regular, mandated MSR for the whole County—which would include a review of the CCDs—since 2008.

F13. Recruiting and maintaining interested, qualified, and active board members for the CCDs is difficult, leaving some boards with gaps in time where there is either no quorum or a tenuous quorum present to hold a meeting.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The BOS should adopt a resolution outlining the County’s roles and responsibilities with appointments, financial processes, or compliance with any other legal mandate in its relationship with CCDs outlining how each county department is required to, can and should support the CCDs as independent special districts without sacrificing the CCD’s autonomy or overburdening the county departments.

R2. The BOS should implement a policy on regular communications between the various jurisdictions, including state, County, LAFCo Board, and independent CCDs to allow for free-flowing information and to prevent catastrophic events without impinging upon the autonomy of the CCD boards.

R3. The BOS should coordinate a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the CCDs to create a set of procedures and controls regarding assorted cemetery data and records. Through collaboration with County officials and the County historical commission, these MOUs could develop a streamlined and secure record storage process—either in the cloud or on a shared server—that minimizes barriers to entry, protects privacy, and offers redundancy to ensure continuity during emergencies.

R4. The BOS is encouraged to draft a resolution acknowledging the existence of CCDs, their purposes, and how the public can better associate and access these special districts on a prominent page on the County’s website and/or a regular feature on the County’s social media platforms.

R5. The County should improve its website and/or social media platforms and provide an easy to find and accessible page dedicated to CCDs.

R6. Although not mandated by law, CCDs may find it beneficial to maintain a basic website to provide relevant and timely information. This could include meeting agendas and minutes, independent audits, and details about the burial process. They may also consider a social media presence to let their constituents and other public officials know what is going on in the district. This can also be achieved by integrating the CCDs' websites with the County websites on the special districts' page. Should an extraordinary event occur, CCDs should send notices to the BOS, Clerk of the Board, and County Administrator so they may be able to take appropriate action, including the appointment of new members to vacant board seats.

R7. For those that have not done so, CCDs may avail themselves of membership in the California Association of Public Cemeteries or California Special Districts Association. Where resources are limited, they may consult with these groups, as well as the Golden State Risk Management Authority for best practices and strategies. The BOS and other elected and appointed officers, other CCD board members, as well as LAFCo, may provide expertise and assistance in the course of their work and/or by offering certain services at a reasonable cost.

R8. Marysville CCD may want to approach the Yuba County LAFCo to address its jurisdictional issues by expanding their boundaries to the whole city to increase their tax base to provide for regular property tax revenues.

R9. The BOS needs to adopt a new SOI resolution and coordinate with LAFCo to conduct a SOI study.

R10. Yuba County LAFCo, in consultation with the BOS, each of the CCD boards, and other County officers, should engage in a public town hall conversation about options for improving

CCD governance, maintenance, and resources. They may consider creating a County Service Area (CSA) to deliver a higher level of service for public cemeteries.

R11. Yuba County LAFCo should promptly engage in another SOI study and consider adjusting the boundaries of all the districts to account for territory not covered under the current boundaries. Yuba County LAFCo may provide a series of proposals for consolidation, annexation or dissolution of the boundaries, providing for fewer districts or centralizing resources, including a singular CCD controlled by a County-wide board that would operate all CCDs in the County.

R12. The Yuba County LAFCo should perform an MSR for the whole County, including a comprehensive review of the CCDs.

R13. The BOS should strengthen recruitment efforts by improving public announcements, collaborating with affinity or service groups, working with the County historical commission and considering training programs or incentives to attract qualified candidates for board service.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

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

- Yuba County BOS
- Yuba County LAFCo
- Board of Trustees of all CCDs located within the County of Yuba
- City of Marysville

From the following elected County officials within 60 days:

- Executive Director of Yuba County LAFCo: R2, R7, R9, R10, R11, R12
- Clerk of the Board: R5, R7, R13
- County Administrator: R5, R7

From the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Yuba County BOS: R1, R2, R3, R4, R7, R9, R10, R13
- Board of Trustees of all CCDs located within the County of Yuba: R2, R3, R6, R7, R9, R10, R11
- City of Marysville: R8

## GLOSSARY

- **Community Cemetery Districts (CCDs):** public cemetery districts.
- **Endowment:** Capital set aside to bear interest from which maintenance of the property can be addressed in perpetuity.
- **Independent Special District:** a local agency with a locally elected or appointed board that has its own fiduciary responsibility and makes decisions independent of a city or county.
- **Municipal Service Review (MSR):** a study that evaluates the adequacy, efficiency, and future needs of public services provided by local agencies under LAFCo's authority. It assesses factors like population growth, infrastructure, finances, shared services, and accountability to guide service improvements and inform SOI updates.
- **Plot:** A space reserved in a cemetery, crypt, vault, or mausoleum for the remains of a deceased person.
- **Sphere of Influence (SOI):** A plan for the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local governmental agency, as determined by a LAFCo, and required to be studied every 5 years under state law, Government Code 56425(g).
- **Yuba County LAFCo:** Local Agency Formation Commission formed under the Cortese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 and establishes procedures for local government changes of organization, including city incorporations, annexations to a city or special district, and city and special district consolidations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

“For Years to Come: A Legislative History of SB 341 and the ‘Public Cemetery District Law.’”  
Senate Local Government Committee, August 2004.  
<https://sgf.senate.ca.gov/sites/sgf.senate.ca.gov/files/YEARSTOCOME.PUBLICATION.pdf>

Little Hoover Commission, “Special Districts: Improving Oversight & Transparency.” Report #239, August 2017. <https://lhc.ca.gov/report/special-districts-improving-oversight-transparency/>

“Yolo County Public Cemeteries: With Great Autonomy Comes Great Responsibility.”  
A Report by the 2022-23 Yolo County Grand Jury, June 1, 2023.  
<https://www.yolocounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/77269/638236308535700000>

## APPENDIX

### Photographs of Yuba County Cemeteries



*Smartsville Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



*Smartsville Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



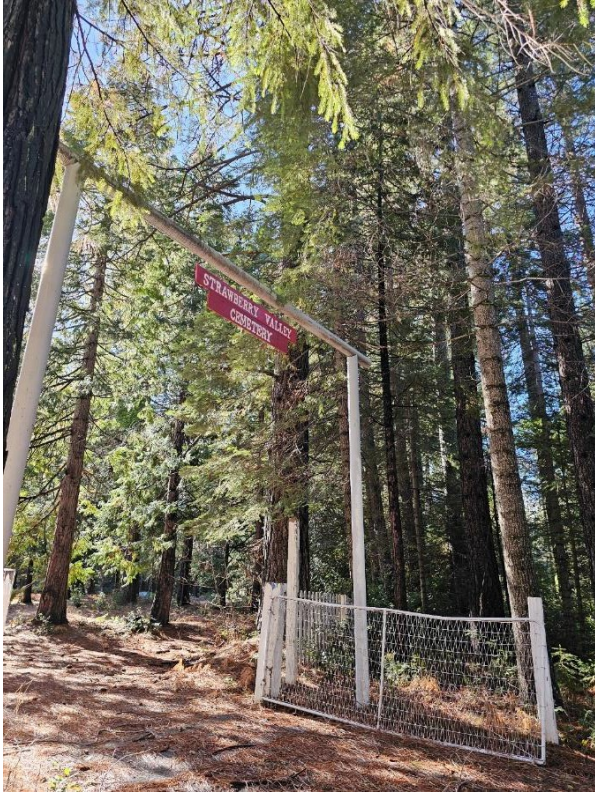
*Smartsville Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



*Smartsville Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



*Smartsville Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



*Strawberry Valley Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*



*Strawberry Valley Cemetery, taken by a member of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury*

# Is Mental Illness a Crime?

Law Enforcement and Behavioral Health Response in Yuba County



## **SUMMARY**

The 2024-2025 Yuba County Civil Grand Jury investigated how law enforcement and behavioral health professionals in Yuba County are partnering to provide services when law enforcement and behavioral health intersect. Members of law enforcement are well-trained in many aspects of the job, but are not behavioral health professionals. As First Responders, they regularly encounter individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. In many cases, these situations are much better addressed by someone who has received extensive behavioral health training.

Although complete data is hard to come by, discussions with Yuba County law enforcement leaders indicated that possibly as many as 50% of law enforcement calls have some element of behavioral health, which includes mental health and substance use disorders. In January 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed upon between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health and the law enforcement agencies in Yuba County. The goals of this collaboration were to be achieved through the implementation of a Mobile Crisis Response program administered by Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health.

Grand Jury research and discussions with law enforcement and behavioral health leaders discovered a deficiency in formal communication and training that should be corrected to ensure the successful implementation and continuation of a Mobile Crisis Response program. In addition, although Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health leadership expected that approximately 50% of the Mobile Crisis Response program funding would be derived from Medi-Cal reimbursement, the remaining funding is not well defined and could result in insufficient program funding in future years.

## **BACKGROUND**

It has long been recognized by Federal and State agencies that the importance of providing access to qualified professionals who can respond in real-time to mental health and substance use disorder crises. On November 13, 1972, Yuba and Sutter Counties established a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement for the operation of a Bi-County Mental Health Department. Today, this department is known as Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health provides services to individuals and families who are experiencing serious or ongoing mental health or substance use disorders in Yuba and Sutter Counties.

In 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act was passed by Congress and changed Federal regulations (42 USC section 1396w-6) to allow for the reimbursement of costs under Medicaid (known as Medi-Cal in California) for qualifying community-based mobile crisis intervention services. Medi-Cal pays for a variety of medical services for children and adults with limited income and resources. Medi-Cal is supported by federal and state taxes.

In September 2024, the Yuba County Board of Supervisors adopted resolution 2024-082 pertaining to the assessment of the existing Bi-County Behavioral Health system to determine options and

recommendations for future behavioral health services within Yuba County. This resolution noted that “the need and demand for behavioral health services ... has significantly increased and evolved since the establishment of the [joint agreement] ... and access to comprehensive behavioral health services ... is limited due to the demand for services outpacing the capacity of the current systems available.” It further noted that “the capacity limitations of the current systems available have created downstream impacts, risks, and pressures on other systems in the [county] including ... the county jail.”

Mental Health America (MHA), a leading national nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of mental health, well-being, and illness prevention, reports that in 2024, 22.19% of California residents experienced a mental illness, and over 5% experienced a severe mental illness. The same data indicates 18% of Californians had a substance use disorder in the past year. Using these percentages would suggest that 19,000 residents of Yuba County experienced a mental illness in 2024, and 4,300 experienced a severe mental illness. For Yuba County, the percentages from the MHA report suggest over 15,000 residents had a substance use disorder in 2024.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Through online data searches and multiple interviews with law enforcement and behavioral health professionals, the Yuba County Civil Grand Jury collected information regarding how behavioral health crises situations are managed in Yuba County. The documents and articles reviewed for this investigation are listed in the Biography section at the end of this report.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Training**

The Grand Jury’s initial investigation was focused on how Yuba County law enforcement responded to calls related to individuals who were experiencing a behavioral health crisis and the training they received. Law enforcement officers are frequently called upon to manage incidents involving people with mental illness in crisis. Specialized training on the topic of mental health helps to prepare peace officers to resolve these incidents safely and effectively. According to Yuba County law enforcement and Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health leadership, there are currently no formal ongoing behavioral health related training programs provided to law enforcement in Yuba County by Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health, the bi-county mental health department established for Yuba and Sutter Counties.

The initial focus determined that law enforcement relied heavily on training provided by the State of California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST). Initial training in the POST Regular Basic Course (RBC) is included in academy training. Before trainees graduate from the RBC, they must complete training on subject matter that covers 42 different law enforcement topics. Each identified topic is called a Learning Domain. One of the topics covered is Learning Domain 37: People with Disabilities. It provides trainees instruction on disability laws,

developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, and mental illness. Continuing Professional Training (CPT) and Perishable Skills/Communications Program (PSP) training updates and refresher courses are required for certain law enforcement officers. The purpose of the CPT and PSP training is to maintain, update, expand, and enhance an individual's knowledge and skills.

CPT exceeds the training requirements for entry-level minimum standards. Every law enforcement officer in Yuba County is required to complete 24 or more hours of POST-qualifying training during every two-year CPT cycle. A portion of the CPT requirement may be satisfied when a law enforcement officer completes a POST-Certified Mental Health training course. PSP training is required of law enforcement officers who are assigned to patrol, traffic, or investigation and routinely effect physical arrest of criminal suspects. PSP training can satisfy a portion of the required hours of CPT. The PSP communication training requirement (two hours every two years) may be satisfied with certain POST-Certified Mental Health training courses.

### **Yuba County Law Enforcement Response to Behavioral Health-Related Calls**

In 2024, Yuba County law enforcement agencies had over 100,000 calls for service. Although a behavioral health crisis is not a criminal incident, law enforcement officers are most often the first responders to situations involving persons experiencing a behavioral health crisis, as the situation might involve some aspects of behavior (e.g., threats of violence) that do require law enforcement response. In interviews with law enforcement leaders in Yuba County, the Grand Jury heard that as many as 50% of law enforcement encounters include some element of behavioral health. The actual law enforcement statistics regarding behavioral health encounters are difficult to determine, as law enforcement encounters are recorded based on the initial call for assistance.

For example, according to statistics provided to the Grand Jury, 436 calls were recorded by the Yuba County Sheriff and Marysville Police Departments in 2024 as 5150. A "5150 hold" refers to a section of California law (Welfare and Institutions Code section 5150) that allows for the involuntary psychiatric detention of individuals who meet certain criteria (e.g., suffering from a mental health condition, a danger to themselves or others). A law enforcement officer or mental health professional can initiate a 5150 hold. A 5150 hold is not a criminal charge. Interviews with law enforcement leaders in Yuba County also noted that other call categories could involve behavioral health issues. One call category specifically noted was domestic violence. Estimates suggest a high percentage of law enforcement calls fall into this category. In addition, the Marysville Police Department recorded close to 2,500 calls for encounters that included welfare checks, unwanted individuals, and suspicious persons. Although these 2,500 calls did not result in a 5150 hold, most are related to some behavioral health issue and may not involve a criminal charge.

### **A New Program: Mobile Crisis Response**

In the course of the investigation, it was learned that a new program, Mobile Crisis Response, was being implemented as part of an expansion of behavioral health services provided by Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health, the bi-county mental health department. According to the California Department of Health Care Services, mobile crisis services are a community-based intervention designed to provide de-escalation and relief to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis wherever

they are, including at home, work, school, or in the community. Services are provided by a multidisciplinary team of trained behavioral health professionals. provides rapid response, individual assessment, and community-based stabilization to individuals who are experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Mobile crisis services are designed to provide relief to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis, including through de-escalation and stabilization techniques; reduce the immediate risk of danger and subsequent harm; and avoid unnecessary emergency department care, psychiatric inpatient hospitalizations, and law enforcement involvement.

In January 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was entered into by Yuba-Sutter Behavioral Health and the law enforcement agencies in Yuba County. The goals of this collaboration are to:

1. Enhance the response to crises by providing community-based services to individuals experiencing a crisis;
2. Improve public safety and reduce the involvement of individuals in crisis with the criminal justice system;
3. Reduce the number of individuals in crisis who over-utilize the local hospital emergency department; and
4. Strengthen coordination and collaboration between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health and law enforcement to effectively manage crises.

In many cases a law enforcement response is not needed and behavioral health professionals may be able to manage the situation without any law enforcement resources. Community-based mobile crisis intervention services are key to providing rapid response, individual assessment, and crisis resolution by trained mental health and substance use treatment professionals and paraprofessionals in situations that are presumed or known to have a mental health condition or substance use disorder.

### **Mobile Crisis Response Program Communication and Training**

In our investigation, the Grand Jury learned from Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health leadership that there was no formal written marketing and communication plan for the implementation of the Mobile Crisis Response. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health's marketing strategy relies on the use of social media and the informal dissemination of materials through various community partners. Ongoing communication and training are critical to the implementation of a new program. The reliance on social media and informal dissemination of communication materials through community partners appears to be unsuccessful as a communications strategy.

A review of Yuba County Health and Human Services, Yuba County Sheriff, and Marysville Police Department websites and Facebook pages in March 2025 provided no evidence of any specific communications regarding the new Mobile Crisis Response Program. A search of the NextDoor social media site also provided no formal communication regarding the Mobile Crisis Response program from any Yuba County community partners.

During interviews with Yuba County law enforcement and Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health leaders, the Grand Jury learned about training and later reviewed certain training and communication materials used as part of the implementation of the Mobile Crisis Response program. It was noted that there was confusion regarding when training was expected, and that an external marketing firm was late on deliverables, which delayed some of the developed pieces for public communication. There does not appear to be any formal training planned by Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health for First Responders hired after the implementation of the program. Although this training may be provided by the various First Respondent agencies.

### **Funding of Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Response Services in Yuba County**

According to the Agreement for Mobile Crisis Response Team Services, executed between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health and the third-party service provider, the staffing and operating costs for the new Mobile Crisis Response program are approximately \$3.2 million annually (not including one-time start-up costs). Per Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health, approximately 50% of the costs of providing Mobile Crisis Response services are expected to be funded through Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid health coverage program. The remaining funding comes from non-guaranteed sources, including state and federal grants and possibly some reimbursement from commercial insurance plans. Yuba County currently does not provide any direct funding for this program.

## **FINDINGS**

F1. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health has not conducted the necessary training to best educate law enforcement and non-law enforcement (e.g., fire, EMT) regarding the availability and value of the new Mobile Crisis Response program.

F2. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health has not conducted the necessary public communications for best informing the community regarding the availability and value of the new Mobile Crisis Response program and how it does not require contacting law enforcement.

F3. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health has not identified an ongoing funding source for the new Mobile Crisis Response services.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health should develop and implement a formal and comprehensive training plan for current and future First Responders regarding the availability and value of the Mobile Crisis Response program.

R2. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health should develop and implement a formal and ongoing community communications plan regarding the availability and value of the Mobile Crisis Response program.

R3. Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health should identify the available funding sources for the ongoing operation of the Mobile Crisis Response program and if insufficient, formally request additional funding from county, state, and/or federal sources to maintain the service.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

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

From the following governing bodies for R1, R2, R3 within 90 days:

- Yuba County Board of Supervisors
- Yuba County Health and Human Services
- Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The documents and articles reviewed for this investigation included:

- Yuba County Sheriff Department Policy Manual
- Marysville Police Department Policy Manual
- Wheatland Police Department Policy Manual
- Memorandum of Understanding Between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health & Sutter and Yuba Counties' Law Enforcement Agencies (entered December 1, 2024)
- Memorandum of Understanding Between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health & Bi-County Ambulance Service, Inc. (entered November 1, 2024)
- Memorandum of Understanding Between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health and WellSpace Health (signed October 2024)
- Agreement for Mobile Crisis Response Team Services (between Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health and Psych Crisis, effective July 1, 2024)
- Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health Mental Health Services Act FY 2021-2024 Program and Expenditure Plan
- Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health Mental Health Services Act FY 23/24 Annual Update
- Sutter-Yuba County Medical Health Services Act FY 25/26 Annual Update
- Sutter-Yuba Mental Health Plan Beneficiary Handbook Specialty Mental Health Services (January 1, 2024)
- Yuba County Health and Human Services Department Strategic Plan 2018-2021
- 2023 Yuba County Community Health Improvement Plan
- Yuba County Resolution Pertaining to the Assessment of the Existing Bi-County

Behavioral Health System to Determine Options for Future Behavioral Health Services within Yuba County Resolution No. 2024-082, passed and adopted September 10, 2024)

- Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Response Services in Medi-Cal
- Sample Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Services Benefit flyer
- County Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Outreach Strategies (Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Training and Technical Assistance Center)
- Mobile Crisis Services Benefit Fact Sheet (California Department of Health Care Services)
- Medi-Cal Mobile Crisis Service Benefit Frequently Asked Questions (California Department of Health Care Services)
- Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health Mobile Crisis Team PerPoint Presentation
- Medicaid Guidance on the Scope of and Payments for Qualifying Community-Based Mobile Crisis Intervention Services
- Behavioral Health Information Notice No. 21-073 (California Department of Health Care Services)
- Behavioral Health Information Notice No. 23-2025 (California Department of Health Care Services)
- Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plan Responsibilities for Non-specialty Mental Health Services (California Department of Health Care Services, All Plan Letter 22-006, April 8, 2022)
- Issues in Law Enforcement Reform: Responding to Mental Health Crises (Congressional Research Service, October 17, 2022)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration – The Sequential Intercept Model
- Rethinking Law Enforcement Approaches to Mental Health Crises (<https://apbweb.com/2024/10/rethinking-law-enforcement-approaches-to-mental-health-crises/>)
- Law and Ethics: Involuntary Treatment and the 5150 Process (PowerPoint, CalMHSA, January 8, 2025)
- In Support of Maximum Diversion of Persons with Serious Mental Illness from the Criminal Justice System (<https://mhanational.org/issues/support-maximum-diversion-persons-serious-mental-illness-criminal-justice-system>)
- Sacramento County deputies no longer responding to mental health emergencies with crime component (<https://www.kcra.com/article/sacramento-county-deputies-mental-health-calls/63669920>)

Web sites reviewed included:

- <https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/health-and-human-services/sutter-yuba-behavioral-health>
- [https://www.yuba.org/departments/health\\_and\\_human\\_services/index.php](https://www.yuba.org/departments/health_and_human_services/index.php)
- <https://camobilecrisis.org>
- <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/2024/mental-health-america-prevalence-data>
- <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/yubacountycalifornia/PST045223f>
- <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/CalAIM-Mobile-Crisis-Services-Initiative.aspx>
- <https://post.ca.gov/Training>

# WHAT DOES MARIJUANA MONEY DO FOR MARYSVILLE?



## SUMMARY

When Marysville voters approved the opening of cannabis dispensaries in their city following California's legalization of recreational marijuana, the decision was met with both optimism and concern. Supporters argued that allowing dispensaries could generate significant tax revenue for the city, which had long struggled with budget constraints and economic challenges. Proponents believed these funds could support essential services such as public safety, infrastructure repairs, and community programs. They also emphasized that a regulated market would help reduce the influence of unlicensed dealers, improving overall safety.

However, opponents voiced concerns about the potential negative social impacts. They feared that increased access to cannabis could contribute to higher rates of substance abuse, particularly among youth. Some worried that dispensaries could attract crime or alter the character of Marysville's historic downtown. Balancing these concerns, city leaders took steps to implement strict zoning regulations, security requirements, and education campaigns to mitigate potential risks. In the end, voter approval recognized that embracing the cannabis industry, while remaining vigilant about public health and safety, could provide Marysville with a valuable economic boost.

## BACKGROUND

The Grand Jury (GJ) has spent numerous hours speaking with city government officials, law enforcement, and the local testing lab, as well as with the management and staff at the two dispensaries, to gain a clear understanding of what went into the decisions to allow dispensaries into our community and how the local cannabis industry is being managed. A primary consideration for the GJ was measuring the potential benefits of cannabis products readily available in the community, juxtaposed with any detrimental impacts and what could be done to mitigate those negatives.

What does marijuana do for you? More importantly, what does marijuana money do for the community of Marysville? California has long been in the cannabis business since becoming the first state to allow for medicinal cannabis in 1996 under the “Compassionate Use Act”. In 2016, voters passed Proposition 64, the “Adult Use of Marijuana Act” into law.<sup>1</sup> Once the Proposition was approved by the voters, the legislature passed a series of laws and required the California Department of Cannabis Control (CDCC) to enact regulations that comply with the ballot initiative and state statute. CDCC’s regulations are meant to make sure

- That businesses operate safely,
- Products are contaminant-free and labeled to inform purchasers, and
- Cannabis is kept away from children.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ballotpedia: California Proposition 64, Marijuana Legalization (2016). [https://ballotpedia.org/California\\_Proposition\\_64,\\_Marijuana\\_Legalization\\_\(2016\)](https://ballotpedia.org/California_Proposition_64,_Marijuana_Legalization_(2016)). (retrieved March 26, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Webpage on laws and regulations for California Department of Cannabis Control, <https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/laws-and-regulations/>. (retrieved March 26, 2025)

In 2014, Marysville worked to position itself as an industry pioneer by entertaining the idea of hosting cannabis dispensaries and sought to model municipalities with optimal rules and systems. Since becoming one of 250 municipalities in California to adopt a cannabis dispensary ordinance, it has established rules permitting access to both medicinal and recreational marijuana for adults aged 21 and older. Despite the widespread adoption of cannabis businesses across California, 54% of cities and counties still prohibit retail cannabis operations.

Statutes, regulations, and ordinances are all types of laws that work together to set rules for businesses and consumers. As stated in the purpose and intent section of the Licensing and Business Regulations for Commercial Cannabis Activity of the Marysville Municipal Code: [I]t is the purpose and intent of this chapter to regulate the cultivation, processing, manufacturing, testing, sale, delivery, distribution, and transportation of cannabis and cannabis products in a responsible manner to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the city of Marysville and to enforce rules and regulations consistent with state law. It is the further purpose and intent of this chapter to require all commercial cannabis operators to obtain and renew annually a permit to operate within the city of Marysville.

In January 2019, two marijuana dispensaries opened their doors, with Perfect Union leading and Wild Seed Wellness soon thereafter. Both promised to be a benefit and a source of income for Marysville without degrading public safety. These two dispensaries obtained the only two permits for retail storefronts being offered, albeit with a strict set of guidelines. Among these were several stringent security measures, such as employing armed guards 24 hours per day, all employees being required to be fingerprinted and undergo background checks, and the businesses agreeing to be involved in the betterment of our community through outreach programs and donations. These two dispensaries provide several full-time positions, at a “living wage”, with benefits and the option to join a union. However, the real benefit comes from the tax revenue and the recurring yearly fees they generate for the city in business taxes, property taxes, and cannabis taxes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The investigation was conducted by no fewer than two (2) members of the Yuba County Grand Jury (GJ) pursuant to California Penal Code section 916. Members of the GJ also attended council meetings and interviewed multiple former and current senior City of Marysville officials and individuals from the two dispensaries. Site visits/tours of the following locations were also completed:

1. California Ag Labs – Cannabis and Hemp Testing
2. Perfect Union Weed Dispensary
3. Wild Seed Wellness

## **DISCUSSION**

The legalization of medical and recreational marijuana in California has paved the way for municipalities like Marysville to establish regulated cannabis programs. The framework of

Marysville’s cannabis program devolves from voter-approved Measure F. For the program to be successful, it requires an intuitive certification process for dispensaries and labs, workable operational regulations, a sound taxation structure, and regular, critical oversight to ensure fiscal responsibility.

In November 2016, Marysville voters approved Measure F, a local ballot measure to amend the Marysville Municipal Code establishing a cannabis business tax to fund city services. This measure introduced a tiered and progressive commercial tax on cannabis businesses, starting at 1% of gross receipts and increasing incrementally to 4% over time. The tax reflects the city’s intent to balance economic growth with revenue generation. While precise voting statistics are not widely published, Measure F passed with significant community support, indicative of a broader acceptance of regulated cannabis commerce following statewide legalization via Proposition 64. Post-election sentiment, though not officially quantified, appears to align with the Measure’s successful implementation and the absence of notable public backlash.

The process to certify a cannabis dispensary in Marysville is rigorous and designed to ensure compliance and public safety. Prospective operators must navigate multiple steps:

1. Live Scan Background Checks: Applicants and employees undergo fingerprinting and extensive background checks to screen for felonies or issues of moral turpitude. The Police Chief holds final authority to approve exceptions, though such waivers are rare.
2. Planning Commission Review: The Planning Commission evaluates proposed locations, enforcing strict zoning rules that exceed state standards, such as maintaining significant distances from residential areas.
3. City Council Approval: Following Commission review, the City Council grants final authorization.
4. Dual Permits: Operators must secure two permits from the city—a standard business license and a cannabis-specific permit, supported by a viable business model.
5. Application Submission: A comprehensive form, available online, must be completed and submitted to the Community Development Department, which retains the records. The City Manager maintains discreet, sensitive documentation separately.
6. Once operational, dispensaries must adhere to stringent security protocols, including 24/7 surveillance. The city caps dispensary permits at two, reflecting a cautious approach to expansion.

Employee hiring is tightly controlled. New hires pay a \$100 application fee, while renewals cost \$50, with funds directed to the city’s General Fund. The fee schedule has evolved to include appeal fees and commercial cannabis application costs. If an employee violates regulations, the police department revokes their badge, and the dispensary must surrender the permit. The Police Chief collaborates closely with cannabis businesses, fostering a cooperative relationship that has minimized issues, though the department lacks a policy barring officers from off-duty security roles at dispensaries—a potential oversight.

Dispensaries remit a 5% tax on gross sales by the 15th of each month, with a 25% penalty for late payments. A Cannabis Review Board, comprised of department heads and City Council members,

provides additional oversight. Delivery is permitted under state law but prohibited on government property. Independent platforms like Weedmaps track local cannabis businesses, enhancing transparency in an unofficial capacity.

Marysville's cannabis program generates significant revenue. In addition to the 5% local gross sales tax and Measure F's progressive tax, the city receives 1% of the state sales tax and an additional 1% from Measure C, a separate local tax measure. Monthly tax revenue averages \$80,000, with the city budgeting approximately \$850,000 annually from cannabis-related sources. These funds bolster public services, underscoring the program's economic impact.

Despite its structured framework, Marysville's cannabis program suffers from a critical deficiency: the absence of revenue audits. Ordinances permit monthly audits of dispensary records, yet none have been conducted since the program's inception. This lapse represents a significant failure of fiduciary responsibility, risking mismanagement or underreported earnings. While the police department reports no criminal incidents at dispensary sites—only minor DUI accidents and false alarms nearby—the lack of financial scrutiny undermines public trust and accountability.

Marysville's cannabis program exemplifies a balanced approach to legalization, with strict regulations, a cooperative police presence, and substantial revenue generation. However, the city's failure to audit cannabis businesses jeopardizes its fiscal integrity. City leaders must prioritize oversight, implementing regular audits to safeguard taxpayer interests and uphold the program's credibility. Enhanced accountability will not only inform the public but also ensure that Marysville's cannabis initiative remains a model of responsible governance.

## FINDINGS

F1. The Marysville City Council has voted for and approved five (5) types of cannabis licenses:

1. Retail – storefront and delivery
2. Cultivation
3. Testing
4. Manufacturing
5. Distribution

However, only two (2) types are currently active:

- Retail storefront (not including delivery), and
- Testing (laboratory).

F2. Combined, the city averages about eight hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$850,000) in sales tax revenue.

F3. The City of Maryville’s ordinances on the permitting of cannabis businesses require regular third-party audits and a regulatory compliance review as determined by the City Manager.

F4. The city requires strict security protocols with 24/7 monitoring and on-site armed security, correlating to a decrease in reported crime near these two (2) facilities, which has benefited the businesses themselves, as well as the surrounding areas and parking lots.

F5. Perfect Union offers a *Compassion Program* for those members of the community who are unable to pay for certain medical marijuana products, provided they meet specified requirements. They also support *Weed for Warriors*, which provides veterans with an alternative to traditional opioids and assists with peer support.

F6. Marysville permits one of only twenty-eight (28) cannabis testing laboratories in California. This state-of-the-art facility offers agricultural testing services, including water, soil, and pesticide analysis, as well as targeted and specified product development, such as custom formulation edibles.

F7. Yuba County Office of Education leverages Proposition 64 grants from revenues derived from state sales tax that are appropriated for public safety and health programs. This grant was offered exclusively to jurisdictions that permit either indoor or outdoor commercial cannabis cultivation or retail sales of cannabis products.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the City of Marysville maintain the highest standard of scrutiny for any and all permit applications that come before the Council before considering any future expansions.

R2. The Grand Jury recommends that the City Council review all cannabis monies to the General Fund that are considered in the context of other taxes and fees to make sure expenses do not exceed the revenues, should something happen with cannabis operations.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that a financial audit be conducted and that a calendar of future financial audits be scheduled to ensure the proper amounts are being reported and that the correct fees are being collected.

R4. The Grand Jury recommends that security protocols remain in place and that cannabis dispensaries do not attract illicit drugs connected with unwanted addictions, gang or criminal activity, or other operations of drug cartels.

R5. The Grand Jury recommends that these "compassion programs" be monitored as legitimate business practices in regular reviews of permits.

R6. The Grand Jury recommends that the city maintain a climate of excellence with these labs so they can achieve the highest standards.

R7. The Grand Jury recommends that the Yuba County Board of Education be careful not to mingle these programs with other educational programs for children.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the GJ requests responses:

From the following elected County officials within 60 days:

- City of Marysville City Council: R1, R2, R3, R5

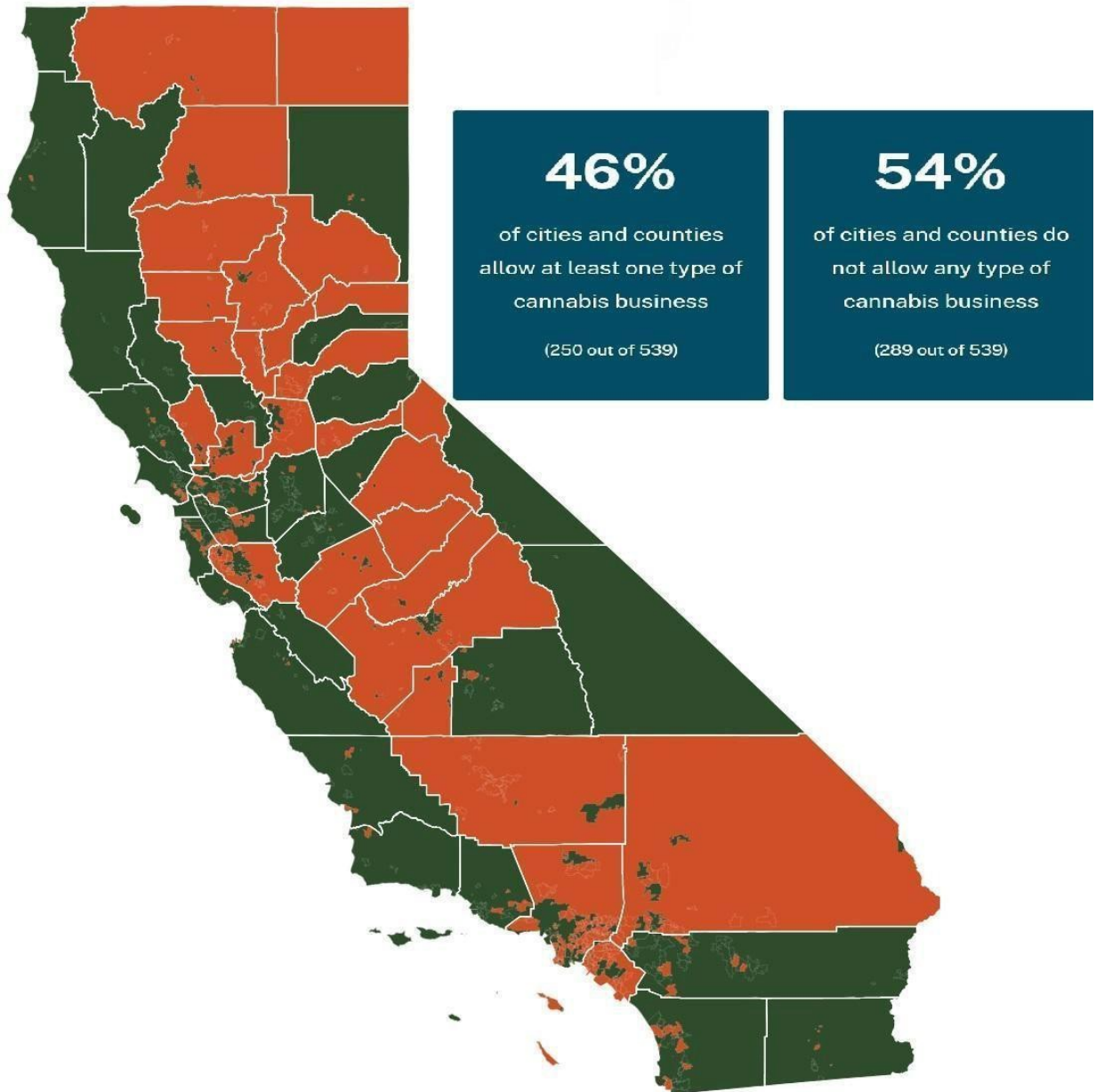
## **INVITED RESPONSES**

From the following elected county officials within 60 days:

- Yuba County Office of Education: R7
- Marysville Police Chief: R4

## APPENDIX

Graphic 1: “Where cannabis businesses are allowed”. Department of Cannabis Control, July 2024 [modified Image]. [https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/where-cannabis-businesses-are-allowed/#state-view=S\\_tatewide](https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/where-cannabis-businesses-are-allowed/#state-view=S_tatewide) (retrieved March 26, 2025)



Graphic 2: “Where cannabis businesses are allowed”. Department of Cannabis Control, July 2024 [modified Image]. <https://cannabis.ca.gov/cannabis-laws/where-cannabis-businesses-are-allowed/#state-view=Statewide> (retrieved March 26, 2025)



Cities and Counties	Retail (storefront)	Retail (delivery)	Distribution	Testing	Manufacturing	Cultivation
Yuba County	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Marysville	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wheatland	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

# Seeking Improvements in Policies and Management of MJUSD



Photograph taken by a member of the Grand Jury

## **SUMMARY**

The objective of the 2024-25 Yuba County Grand Jury was to review the fiscal management, accountability, and improvement of the Marysville Joint Unified School District (MJUSD). The Grand Jury this year examined the School District's budgeting and spending practices to ensure they are efficient, transparent, and aligned with the State of California's educational goals. The Grand Jury has reviewed financial transparency to ensure that financial records and transactions are easily accessible to the public and that the District has followed all relevant laws regarding financial transparency and reporting. Additionally, the Grand Jury examined the District's policies, specifically as it pertains to bullying, and the administration and consistency of the implementation of the bullying policy throughout the entire district.

## **Background**

MJUSD officially unified in 1966 and is headquartered in Marysville, CA. It serves the areas of Yuba County, including Marysville, Linda, Olivehurst, Challenge, Brownsville, Browns Valley, Dobbins, Loma Rica, and a portion of Plumas Lake. Marysville, known as the "gateway to the Gold Fields", boasts a rich and diverse history reflected in our community and student population. The students and staff come from many diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. More than seven languages are spoken amongst the families that are served in the District.

Marysville Joint Unified consists of twenty-four schools with 10,562 students and a teacher-to-student ratio of 22:1<sup>i</sup>. The average daily attendance is 8,985, which is 85% of the total enrollment of 10,562 students. MJUSD serves its diverse community through multiple programs, supportive environments, and innovative opportunities for student learning. According to state test scores, despite spending \$17, 957 per student in 2022-2023<sup>ii</sup>, MJUSD reports that 18% of students are at least proficient in math and 32% in reading<sup>iii</sup>.

## **Methodology**

The investigation was conducted by at least two members of the Yuba County Grand Jury in accordance with California Penal Code section 916. Interviews took place in the Grand Jury's Office and during site visits to the Marysville Joint Unified District Office. Members also participated in or observed School Board and Town Hall meetings through personal attendance or online platforms. MJUSD School Board members, Directors, Principals, Vice Principals, and Teachers' representatives from the School District and other connected organizations were interviewed.

## **Discussion**

The Grand Jury investigated the District's policies as they pertained to bullying, finances, safety, and general management to ensure teachers and students are in a safe and well-managed environment.

### ***Bullying:***

The Grand Jury researched the California Education Code to determine the definition of bullying and the policies the District is required to have regarding bullying. In its inquiry, the Grand Jury reviewed the California Education Code to identify the legal definition of bullying and the necessary policies the District must implement.

California Education Code section 48900, describing the grounds for suspension or expulsion of students, defines "bullying" as:

Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils as defined in Section 48900.2 (sexual harassment), 48900.3 (hate violence for students in grades 4-12), or 48900.4 (intentional engagement in harassment, threats, or intimidation directed against school district personnel or pupils that is sufficiently severe/pervasive to have the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class, creating substantial disorder, and invading the rights of school personnel or pupils by creating intimidating or hostile educational environment), directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of the one or more of the following: a) Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of harm to that pupil's or those pupils person or property; b) Causing a reasonable pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on the pupil's physical or mental health; c) causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with the pupil's academic performance; or causing a reasonable pupil to experience substantial interference with the pupils' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

As of the 2020-2021 academic year, California Education Code section 234.6(c) requires local education agencies like MJUSD to make anti-bullying policies (section 234.1), anti-cyberbullying procedures (section 234.4), social media bullying information, and other relevant prevention resources readily available in a prominent location on their websites for parents. The Safe Place to Learn Act also provides that it is the policy of the State of California to ensure that all local educational agencies continue to work to reduce discrimination, harassment, violence, intimidation, and bullying. (California Education Code section 234) Education Code section 234.1 mandates the State Department of Education to monitor adherence to the requirements of Chapter 5.3 (Nondiscrimination and Educational Equity) of Division 1 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, as part of its Categorial Program Monitoring process

Pursuant to the Safe Place to Learn Act, the California Department of Education assesses whether local educational agencies have done the following: 1) adopted a policy that prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation and bullying based on the actual or perceived

characteristics set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code, including immigration status, and section 220 of the Education Code, and disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics; 2) adopted a process for receiving and investigating complaints; 3) publicized antidiscrimination, antiharassment, anti-intimidation, and antibullying policies, including information about the manner in which to file a complaint; 4) provide information on existing school site and community resources related to support (California Education Code section 234.1(a)-(d).)

The Marysville Joint Unified School District Parent Handbook has the following statement regarding bullying: “All district students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment, and the Board of Education and the district will not tolerate behavior in the form of bullying that infringes on the safety or emotional or physical well-being of a student. As is set forth more fully in Board Policy 5131.2<sup>iv</sup>, the District considers bullying to include abusive actions or conduct, which can be physical, verbal, written, psychological, or sexual in nature, including cyberbullying. Students who are victims of bullying, or who witness bullying, are expected to immediately report such behavior to the school site principal or other school administrator. The District’s schools follow Board Policy 5131.2<sup>v</sup> regarding Bullying and 5145.3<sup>vi</sup> regarding Discrimination / Harassment / Intimidation / Bullying, when receiving and investigating complaints of bullying. Students who perpetrate acts of bullying will be disciplined in accordance with District Board Policy/Administrative Regulation 5144.1<sup>vii</sup>.”

Further, when interviewed, District Personnel provided the following clarification on the definition of bullying: “Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power and strength. Bullying can take many forms, such as hitting or punching, teasing, or name-calling, intimidation through gestures, social exclusion, and sending or posting insulting messages or pictures by cell phone or the Internet (also known as online or cyber-bullying). “

In looking at the MJUSD website, information on bullying was not easily accessible to a user. There is a Nondiscrimination Statement on the main page which includes bullying, however there is no clear definition of “bullying” on the website, nor is information such as resources, or the complaint process readily defined and easily accessible.

Despite a Nondiscrimination Statement on its main page that includes bullying, the MJUSD website fails to provide easily accessible information. Specifically, it lacks a clear definition of "bullying," readily available resources for parents and students, and a well-defined complaint procedure. Navigating the MJUSD website to find information on bullying and how to report it would likely prove difficult for a parent unfamiliar with educational jargon. The site's limited accessibility means crucial details, such as a clear definition of bullying, readily available support resources, and a simple reporting procedure, are not obvious. Instead, parents might encounter unfamiliar terms like "Equity Compliance Officer" or "Title XI Officer" without clear context, hindering their ability to effectively address bullying concerns. For a parent unfamiliar with educational jargon, finding and understanding how to report bullying on the MJUSD website would be a challenge. While the site mentions bullying within a "Nondiscrimination Statement,"

clear information, resources, and a simple reporting process aren't readily apparent, requiring them to navigate complex terms like "Equity Compliance Officer" or "Title XI Officer" without clear guidance.

The District minimally manages bullying per their current policies and provides data to parents and students on how to report bullying that is occurring, but the Grand Jury has concluded that the policies are outdated and need to be updated to meet the current definition of “bullying” provided in the California Education Code. It is also concluded that the “curricula and resources” provided by the District and the schools are not sufficient to provide parents and students the resources they need to recognize and report bullying appropriately. The District needs to update their policy to match the current California Education Code and provide more resources to parents and students by updating the parent handbook. The only resource that could be found by the Grand Jury for anonymous reporting of bullying was a form that was online<sup>viii</sup>. No information on that page provided data or instruction or further education about bullying.

### ***Finances, Safety, and General Management:***

While investigating the finances of the District, it was noted by the Grand Jury that many of the District’s policies were grossly outdated. All school policies should be updated to align with the California Education Code regularly. The Grand Jury has concluded that these outdated policies are indicative of the lack of oversight by the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees. The Grand Jury recognizes there are changes currently happening that are designed to remedy the lack of oversight, and is hopeful Marysville Joint Unified School District is on the mend, with the understanding that there is some hard work ahead to right this ship.

The Grand Jury also discovered that there has been a marked increase in staffing at the District office. Many of the hires were due to COVID funding, but the funding has since dissipated. This was noted by those who were interviewed, and the MJUSD Board of Trustees has taken some actions since the investigation to remedy the situation with Reductions in Force. The reduction in force and re-sizing of the district staff will only improve the budget. The Grand Jury felt it necessary to note that this is a recognized issue and encourages the Board of Trustees to continue its efforts to right-size the District Staff and improve efficiencies in the District.

## **FINDINGS**

F1. The policies on the MJUSD website are outdated and need to be brought to current standards. The majority of the policies reviewed by the Grand Jury have not been revised since 2008.

F2. Curricula and resources, particularly as they pertain to bullying, are not sufficient.

F3. Since 2017, there has been a significant increase in the hiring of district office staff, especially during COVID.

F4. The current budget is \$228 million, with 77-80% used for personnel. The Reserve is being used to pay extra district office staff. There is a 3.7 million deficit.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. Policies should be updated every quarter until they are up to date. Once up to date, a rotational policy update plan should be followed.

R2. The District should educate parents and students on the definition of bullying provided by Cal. Ed Code section 48900(r)(1), provide them with easily accessible complaint process and resources to help overcome the issue if someone is being bullied in school.

R3/R4. District office staff should be decreased to improve the budget. Once the current Reduction In Force is completed, the finances should be re-evaluated to ensure compliance.

## **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

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

From the following governing bodies within 60 days:

- Marysville Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees

## APPENDIX

### Steps to report bullying online with MJUSD:

1. MJUSD website:
  - a. <https://www.mjUSD.com/>
2. Click on the WeTip Button (Marysville Joint Unified School District)



<https://www.mjUSD.com/pictures/Be-the-Solution-Anonymous-Reporting-Homepage-Button.jpg>

3. Select the school
4. Select language (English/ Spanish)
5. Follow the prompts

Marysville Joint Unified School District

**Arboga Elementary**

📍 1686 Broadway Street, Arboga, CA 95961 📞 (530) 741-6101

## Anonymous Community Reports

Please select the form that you feel is most appropriate.

- Bullying Report DETAILS  
▼
- Concern For Self or Others Report DETAILS  
▼
- Discrimination or Harassment Report DETAILS  
▼
- Threat to School or Students Report DETAILS  
▼
- Tip Report DETAILS  
▼
- Vandalism Report DETAILS  
▼

## Bullying Report

Is this an Emergency?

Yes  No

Who was the person being bullied?

Who was doing the bullying?

Date of Incident

Time of Incident

What is the location of the bullying?

How often does this situation occur?

Was an adult informed?

Yes  No

Are there any other details you want us to know?

Yes  No

### Optional Information

If you want to remain anonymous, you do not need to complete this section below.

What is your role?

Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Do you want to include a picture? (optional)

◀ Back

Next ▶

[https://mobile.catapultems.com/marysville-jusd/arboga-elementary/Report/English/bully\\_2](https://mobile.catapultems.com/marysville-jusd/arboga-elementary/Report/English/bully_2)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. California Department of Education. "Ca Ed Code Bullying." California Department of Education, [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).
2. California Department of Education. "Definition of Bullying." California Department of Education, [www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyingprev.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyingprev.asp).
3. California Department of Education. "CDE Sample Policy." California Department of Education, [www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/samplepolicy.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/samplepolicy.asp).
4. Marysville Joint Unified School District. "MJUSD Policy." Simbli, [simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=hlwuJslshDwhvpOEcKoNp3l9w==&st=bullying&mt=Exact4](http://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=hlwuJslshDwhvpOEcKoNp3l9w==&st=bullying&mt=Exact4).
5. Transparent California. "Fiscal Management." Transparent California, [transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2023/school-districts/yuba/marysville-joint-unified/5](http://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2023/school-districts/yuba/marysville-joint-unified/5).
6. National Center for Education Statistics. "Fiscal Management." National Center for Education Statistics, [nces.ed.gov/ccd/6](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/6).
7. National Center for Education Statistics. "Fiscal Management." National Center for Education Statistics, [nces.ed.gov/ccd/finance\\_data.asp9](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/finance_data.asp9).
8. Edunomics Lab. "Fiscal Management." Edunomics Lab, [edunomicslab.org/all-data-tools/10](http://edunomicslab.org/all-data-tools/10).
9. Marysville Joint Unified School District. *MJUSD*. Marysville Joint Unified School District, [www.mjUSD.com](http://www.mjUSD.com).
10. Marysville Joint Unified School District. *MJUSD Organizational Chart*. Marysville Joint Unified School District, 13 Mar. 2023, [www.mjUSD.com/documents/District/Departments/Superintendent/Org-Chart-3\\_13\\_23.pdf](http://www.mjUSD.com/documents/District/Departments/Superintendent/Org-Chart-3_13_23.pdf).
11. California Department of Education. MJUSD. California Department of Education, [www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/details?cdscode=58727360000000](http://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/details?cdscode=58727360000000).
12. California School Dashboard. "MJUSD." California School Dashboard, [caschooldashboard.org/reports/58727360000000/2024/academic-performance14](http://caschooldashboard.org/reports/58727360000000/2024/academic-performance14).
13. Marysville Joint Unified School District. MJUSD Bullying Reporting. Marysville Joint Unified School District, [www.mjUSD.com/Divisions/Anonymous-Community-Reporting/index.html](http://www.mjUSD.com/Divisions/Anonymous-Community-Reporting/index.html).
14. StopBullying.gov. Bullying Info. StopBullying.gov, [www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/california](http://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/california).

15. ACLU of Southern California. Bullying Info. ACLU of Southern California, [www.aclusocal.org/en/seths-law](http://www.aclusocal.org/en/seths-law).
16. Cyberbullying Research Center. "Bullying Info." Cyberbullying Research Center, [cyberbullying.org/bullying-laws/california20](http://cyberbullying.org/bullying-laws/california20).
17. California Legislative Information. Penal Code Section 916. California Legislative Information, [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=916](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=PEN&sectionNum=916). Accessed 22 Apr. 2025.

End Notes:

- 
- <sup>i</sup> <https://www.niche.com/k12/d/marysville-joint-unified-school-district-ca/#report-card>
  - <sup>ii</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/edfin/search/peergroupdata.asp?dataid=1&mt=0&subdataid=1&bleaid=0624090&jobid=%7B9A8DFECE%2D289C%2D4C6E%2DBF0C%2D42D60FF20354%7D>
  - <sup>iii</sup> <https://www.niche.com/k12/d/marysville-joint-unified-school-district-ca/#report-card>
  - <sup>iv</sup> <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=hlwuJslshDwhvpOEcKoNp319w=&st=harassment&mt=Exact>
  - <sup>v</sup> <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=hlwuJslshDwhvpOEcKoNp319w=&st=harassment&mt=Exact>
  - <sup>vi</sup> <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=DSCAYqslshslshVfl6FmQVpbtg9w=&st=harassment&mt=Exact>
  - <sup>vii</sup> <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=36030547&revid=eKTdj2ONCzneZbS0ApplusTwQ=&st=harassment&mt=Exact>
  - <sup>viii</sup> <https://www.mjusd.com/pictures/Be-the-Solution-Anonymous-Reporting-Homepage-Button.jpg>



## **Yuba County 2023-2024 Grand Jury Previous Investigations Grid**

**Tables:**

The following tables show which committees are responsible for which cities, schools, special districts, departments, and other agencies. The tables also set forth the year in which those committees have investigated the entities or had tours or meet and greet events with them.

Cities Committee	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
City Council								X	X					X		
City of Marysville			X						X			X	X	X	X	X
City of Wheatland									X					X		
Marysville Business Improvement District																
Marysville City Cemetery										X	X	X	X			X
Marysville City Clerk's Office													X			
Marysville City Council-Meeting Minutes		X													X	
Marysville Fire Department					X			X	X							
Marysville Public Works					X											
Marysville Red Light Camera System					X											
Marysville Redevelopment Agency													X			
Marysville Website	X														X	
Parks & Recreation - Ellis Lake					X											

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

<b>County and Special Districts Committee</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
Administrative Services																
Administrative Services - IT																
Agriculture																
Airport Enterprise Zone												X	X			
Assessor																
Auditor / Controller																
Board of Supervisors												X	X	X		
BoS - Ordinances																
BoS - Yuba County - Office Hours																
Brophy Water District																
Browns Valley Irrigation District														X		
Building - Permit Fee				X	X											
Camp Far West Irrigation District																
Camptonville Community Services District																
Cemetery District - Browns Valley																X
Cemetery District - Brownsville					X											X
Cemetery District - Camptonville					X											X
Cemetery District - Keystone					X											X
Cemetery District - Marysville	X				X							X	X			X
Cemetery District - Peoria					X											X

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

Cemetery District - Smartsville					X												X
Cemetery District - Strawberry Valley					X												X
Cemetery District - Upham																	X
Cemetery District - Wheatland					X												X
Clerk/Recorder/Elections												X			X		
Clerk of the Board											X	X					
Code Enforcement																	
Community Development																	
Cordova Irrigation District																	
County Administrator									X		X						
County Counsel						X					X	X					
District 10 - Hallwood Community Services District																	
Dobbins-Oregon House Fire Protection District																	
Economic Development														X			
Foothill Fire Protection					X												
General Services - Buildings and Grounds																	
Levee District 817																	
Library												X	X				
Linda County Water District									X						X		
Linda Fire District								X			X						
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)																	

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

Loma Rica- Browns Valley Community Services District																
Marysville Levee District																
Mosquito and Vector Control District						X										
Nevada Irrigation District																
North Central Counties Consortium (NCCC)																
North Yuba Water District										X						
Office of Emergency Services			X		X		X									
Olivehurst Public Utility District (OPUD)								X								
Olivehurst PUD - Fire																
Olivehurst PUD - Water																
Personnel Risk Management																
Plumas/Brophy Fire Protection District																
Print Shop																
Public Admin.																
Public Works Road Department					X											
Ramirez Water District																
Reclamation District 10																
Reclamation District 784															X	
Reclamation District 817																
River Highlands Community Service																
Smartsville Fire Department																

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

South Yuba Water District																
Three Rivers Levee Improvement Authority		X														
Treasurer/Tax Collector																
Weights and Measures																
Wheatland Water District																
Yuba County Airport	X				X	X							X			
Yuba County Resource Conservation District																
Yuba County Water Agency																

Special Reports	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Sewage Appeals Board																
Social Media										X						
Youth Project - Runaway Youth																
Yuba County - 1997 Flood																
Yuba Park																
Yuba River Access																

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

<b>Health and Human Services Committee</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
Adult Services																
CAL Works																
Child Protective Services																
Day Care																
Environmental Health																
Environmental Health - Personnel																
Environmental Health - Onsite Sewage																
Environmental Health - YSDI																
First Five Yuba Commission																
Fraud Investigations																
Health and Human Services																
H&H Services Home Safety Visits																
Health Department																
Life Building/ 14 Forward																
Mental Health Services																<b>X</b>
Peach Tree Clinic																
Public Guardian																
Yuba Sutter Veterans Services								<b>X</b>								

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

<b>Law Enforcement Committee</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
Animal Care Services		X							X					X		
District Attorney																
DA - Family Support Division																
DA - Public Administrator																
Grand Jury - Report System																
Juvenile Hall	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Juvenile Traffic Court																
Marysville Police Department		X							X			X				
Probation												X	X			
Public Defender																
Sheriff								X	X			X	X			
Sheriff - K9 Unit												X			X	
Victim Witness - Probation Department									X	X	X					
Wheatland Police Department					X							X	X			
Yuba County Jail	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

Schools Committee	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Abraham Lincoln (Home) School																
Alternative Education Program																
Anna McKenny Intermediate																
Arboga Elementary School					X											
Bear River Intermediate									X							
Browns Valley Elementary						X										
Campton Union School District																
Cedar Lane Elementary School					X											
Charter School																
Citizen Bonds Oversight Com	X															
Cordua Elementary																
Core Charter																
Dobbins Elementary School																
Edgewater Elementary																
Edward P. Duplex Continuation High School																
Ella Elementary																
Food Services - School Meals Program																
Foothill Intermediate School																
Harry P.B. Carden				X	X											
Johnson Park Elementary																
Kynoch Elementary																

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

Linda Elementary																
Lindhurst High																
Loma Rica Elementary School						X		X								
Lone Tree Elementary																
Mary Covillaud Elementary School																
Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts					X											
Marysville Community Day School																
Marysville High																
Marysville Independent Study																
Marysville Joint Unified School Board				X		X									X	X
Olivehurst Elementary School																
Paragon Collegiate Academy											X	X	X			
Plumas Elementary School																
Preparatory Charter School																
Regional Career Center JPTA																
School Safety - Yuba County Schools																
South Lindhurst High School																
Thomas E. Mathews								X								
Virginia School																
Wheatland Charter Academy																
Wheatland Elementary School																
Wheatland High																

Yuba County Grand Jury Handbook and Procedures Manual

Wheatland Independent St.																
Wheatland School District																
Wheatland School District Building																
Yuba College																
Yuba County Career																
Yuba County Office of Education																
Yuba Feather Elementary																
Yuba Gardens Int.																

## The Yuba County Civil Grand Jury Process

Any United States citizen who is a resident of Yuba County may apply to serve on the Grand Jury. Application forms are available from the Yuba County Superior Court or on the Yuba County Grand Jury website: <http://www.co.yuba.ca.us/departments/grand%20jury/default.aspx>. The Jury Commissioner receives applications and the presiding judge reviews them. Every effort is made to impanel a jury of qualified men and women, including the following factors:

- Age
- Diversity
- Socio-economic background
- Ethnic background
- Educational background
- Geographical areas of the county

By court policy, and at the discretion of the Presiding Judge, up to 10 members of the previous year's jury may serve a second term to provide continuity. A total of 19 people serve on the Grand Jury. A drawing of names of qualified applicants names is made to bring the number of grand jurors to 19. Another drawing of the remaining applicants' names is held to provide a pool of alternates.

Jurors are sworn in and begin their one-year term commencing the first day of July. The presiding judge appoints a foreperson to preside over meetings. The jury then chooses the remaining officers and organizes itself into committees. Meetings investigations and interviews are set by each group. Committees investigate various departments and functions of local government, as decided by a super majority (12 or more) vote of the plenary. (all members of the grand jury) Jurors interview Department personnel, conduct site visits and investigate policy compliance, fiscal management, and operations. The grand jury may choose to review previous civil grand jury recommendations.

Some of the matters investigated by the grand jury are brought forward from citizen complaints about mistreatment, suspected misconduct or inefficiencies of local government. All complaints are kept confidential. If the situation warrants further investigation, the grand jury may follow up and make a report with recommendations for action.

A large portion of the public mistakenly believes an individual's appearance before the grand jury, particularly a public official, indicates suspicion of wrongdoing. It is the responsibility of the grand jury to review the conduct of city, county and other

government entities each year. This often requires public officials appearing before the grand jury to provide departmental information.

Grand jurors are a part of the judicial system and considered officers of the court. The grand jury is an independent body. The presiding judge, the district attorney, the county counsel, and the state attorney general act as advisors, but cannot limit or direct the actions of the jury except for illegality.

The confidential nature of the grand jury's work requires most business be done in closed session. Members of a grand jury are sworn to secrecy, assuring confidential testimony for all who appear. No one may be present during meetings of the grand jury except those specified by law (Penal Code 939). The minutes of grand jury meetings may not be inspected, nor can records be subpoenaed.

Grand juror statements or votes may not be disclosed. Evidence given before the grand jury must be kept secret. It is a misdemeanor to violate the secrecy of the grand jury room. A grand juror cannot confide any witness information, testimony, or action of the jury. Leaks concerning proceedings might impair or destroy the effectiveness of the jurors' efforts.

Final reports describe investigations, contain findings, and recommendations. Responses are required within 90 days for public agencies and 60 days for elected county officers or agency heads specified in these reports.



**YUBA COUNTY  
GRAND JURY  
COMPLAINT  
FORM**

**COMPLAINT PROCESS**

- Present your complaint as soon as possible. The Grand Jury's term of service begins July 1<sup>st</sup> and ends June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year.
- Identify your specific concern and describe the circumstances as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Document your complaint with copies of pertinent information and evidence in your possession.
- Mail or deliver your complaint in a sealed envelope to:

Yuba County Grand Jury  
215 5th Street, Suite 213  
Marysville, Ca 95901

Among the responsibilities of the Grand Jury is the investigation of the public's complaints to assure that all branches of city and county government are being administered efficiently, honestly and in the best interest of its citizens.

Complaints submitted to the Grand Jury will be treated confidentially whenever possible. However, it may be impossible to conduct an investigation without revealing your name and complaint.

The results of the complaints investigated by the Grand Jury are published in its final report in which the residents of the county are made aware of its investigations, findings and recommendations and the entities reported on are required by statute to respond.

(This blank form may be duplicated)

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

A major function of the Yuba County Grand Jury is to examine local county and city government, special districts, school districts, and any joint powers agency located in the county to ensure their duties are being carried out lawfully.

The Grand Jury:

- May review and evaluate procedures used by these entities to determine whether more efficient and economical methods may be employed;
- May inspect and audit the books, records and financial expenditures as noted above to ensure that public funds are properly accounted for and legally spent;
- May investigate any charges of willful misconduct in office by public officials;
- Shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.

Anyone may ask the Grand Jury to conduct an investigation of an issue within its jurisdiction. Whether it chooses to investigate such a complaint is entirely in its discretion and may be affected by workload, resource limitations or legal restrictions. It is important to note that the Grand Jury may not investigate a matter that is currently being litigated in the court system.

By law, the proceedings of the Grand Jury are confidential. The findings and recommendations and issues it chooses to address are published in its final report.

# GRAND JURY COMPLAINT FORM

**PERSON OR AGENCY ABOUT WHICH COMPLAINT IS MADE**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

GRAND JURY USE ONLY:	
Date Received:	_____
Number:	_____
Subject:	_____
	_____
	_____

**NATURE OF COMPLAINT** (Describe events in the order they occurred as clearly and concisely as possible. Use extra sheets if necessary and attach copies of any correspondence you feel is pertinent. Documentation becomes the property of the Grand Jury and will not be returned. **Please note: The Yuba County Grand Jury has no jurisdiction over state or federal agencies, the courts, judicial officers, private companies or most organizations.**)

---



---



---



---



---



---



---

**WHAT PERSONS OR AGENCIES HAVE YOU CONTACTED ABOUT YOUR COMPLAINT?**

Person or Agency	Address	Date of Contact	Results

**WHO SHOULD THE GRAND JURY CONTACT ABOUT THIS MATTER?**

Person or Agency	Address	Telephone No.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 Complainant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_   
 Date

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF YUBA**

**GRAND JURY APPLICATION**  
*(Please print legibly in black or blue ink)*

To: Office of the Jury Commissioner, 215 Fifth Street, Suite 200, Marysville, CA 95901

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE/PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

DRIVERS LICENSE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DURATION OF RESIDENCE IN YUBA COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_ MARITAL STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

RETIRED (If retired please indicate your former employer and occupation above.)

*Personal Information is confidential and will not be disclosed unless otherwise required by law.*

1. **Have you ever served as a member of the Grand Jury?**  Yes  No  
If yes, where and when? \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Are you a United States Citizen?**  Yes  No
3. **Have you been convicted of malfeasance in office or of any felony?**  Yes  No
4. **Have you ever been an employee of Yuba County?**  Yes  No
5. **Do you have any relatives employed by Yuba County? If so,**  Yes  No  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Spouses employer \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_**  N/A
7. **Have you ever been in the military service? If yes, Branch \_\_\_\_\_**  Yes  No  
Nature of Employment \_\_\_\_\_ Period served \_\_\_\_\_ Highest rank or grade held \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Highest school grade completed \_\_\_\_\_ Degrees held \_\_\_\_\_ School/University attended \_\_\_\_\_**  
Years of attendance \_\_\_\_\_
9. **If appointed to the Grand Jury, will you make a conscientious effort to attend and participate in all of those sessions of the jury as a whole and of the committees of which you are a member?**  
 Yes  No
10. **If appointed to the Grand Jury, will you conscientiously adhere to all applicable rules on confidentiality and security?**  Yes  No
11. **Are you interested in serving as a Grand Juror?**  Yes  No
12. **Will you be available for jury service for approximately four hours per week?**  Yes  No

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that the information provided in this questionnaire is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) in \_\_\_\_\_ (city), California

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*