



**Central California Women's Facility
and
Valley State Prison
2018-2019
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report 1819-01**

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Summary:

California Penal Code Section 919(b) requires the Grand Jury of each county to make an annual inquiry into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county. In Madera County, there are two public prisons: Central California Women's Facility (CCWF), located at 23370 Road 22, Chowchilla, and Valley State Prison (VSP), located at 21633 Avenue 24, Chowchilla.

BACKGROUND:

Two of California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) facilities are located in Madera County. The population of the prisons are 2892 at CCWF and 2968 at VSP. According to the Madera County Economic Development Commission, 1086 individuals are employed at VSP and 1064 are employed at the CCWF. The combination of inmates and employees contribute to the economic well-being of Madera County.

The purpose of the Madera County Grand Jury (MCGJ) is to investigate the public entities within Madera County including the Cities of Chowchilla and Madera. Madera County Grand Jury inquired into the condition and management of the prison system. The MCGJ completed a walk-through of the Women's and the Men's Prisons. The Grand Jury was specifically interested in observing the training and rehabilitation programs that are made available to the inmates, and to make observation of compliance with Proposition 57.

In November 2016, California voters passed Proposition 57. The purpose of Prop 57 is to "enhance public safety, stop the revolving door of crime by emphasizing rehabilitation, and prevent federal courts from releasing inmates."

Under Proposition 57, CDCR incentivizes inmates to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation with credit-earning opportunities for sustained good behavior, as well as in-prison program and activities participation. Proposition 57 also moves up parole consideration of nonviolent offenders who have served the full-term of the sentence for their primary offense and who demonstrate that their release to the community would not pose an unreasonable risk of violence to the community. These changes will lead to improved inmate behavior and a safer prison environment for inmates and staff alike, and give inmates skills and tools to be more productive members of society once they complete their incarceration and transition to supervision (www.CDCR.ca.gov/proposition57).

METHODOLOGY:

The Madera County Grand Jury participated in tours of these two (2) prisons. A senior officer from each prison conducted the tours, described the facilities and rehabilitative programs which are used to prepare potential parolees with employment ready skills. The Madera County Grand Jury observed vocational and educational programs. During each of the tours, members of the MCGJ were able to interact and question teachers,

facilitators, and inmates. In addition to the tour of CCWF, the MCGJ engaged in a lengthy interview with the warden of the CCWF.

DISCUSSION:

The Grand Jury's annual inquiry requirement was fulfilled by visits to both prisons. Central California Women's Facility was toured on October 26, 2018 and Valley State Prison was toured on January 18, 2019. At the Central California Women's Facility and Valley State Prison, the MCGJ observed vocational and educational programs available to inmates. Educational programs address the needs of inmates with drug rehabilitation and counseling, basic high school graduation requirements as well as providing access to college programs. The vocational focus includes training in cosmetology, small engine repair, bicycle reconditioning, eyeglass lens crafting, therapy dog training, veteran service dog training, carpentry, masonry, janitorial skills, landscaping, and fire suppression skills. Following incarceration, those returning to their communities should be better prepared to become employable with skills acquired at the institutions.

FINDINGS:

VSP and CCWF are in compliance with Proposition 57.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Prison management and staff continue to follow state-mandated management and condition procedures.

Invited Responses:

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

Warden
Valley State Prison
21633 Avenue 24
Chowchilla, CA 93610

Secretary of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
1515 "S" Street
Sacramento, CA 95811