



2011-2012
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
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Introduction:

The Housing Authority of the City of Madera (Housing Authority) was created by the Madera City Council in 1968. The five Council Members serve on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners along with two volunteer resident participants.

The Housing Authority owns, operates, or manages 1,280 housing units in the following programs:

- The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, also known as Section 8, provides rent subsidy to eligible low-income families for rental housing in the private market. The Housing Authority administers 741 vouchers, funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- The HCV Veteran's Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, also funded by HUD, provides 50 vouchers for rental assistance to qualifying homeless veterans.
- The Public Housing program provides low-rent rental housing for eligible low-income families. The Housing Authority owns 244 units ranging from apartments to single-family homes scattered throughout Madera.
- The Farm Labor Housing program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides permanent rental housing for domestic farm laborers. The Housing Authority has three separate housing developments with a total of 100 rental units.
- The Pomona Ranch Migrant Family Housing Center provides 50 units of seasonal (6 months) housing to migrant farm workers.
- Yosemite Manor provides 76 units for senior housing.
- Madera Opportunities for Resident Enrichment and Services (MORES), a non-profit charitable organization, provides 14 units of affordable multi-family housing.
- The Madera Mental Health Services Act provides housing for 5 eligible residents who are receiving mental health services.

In its review of the Housing Authority operations, the Grand Jury reviewed the agency's publications and budget and interviewed staff members, a program participant, and a Commissioner.

Findings:

1. The Grand Jury found that the goal of the Housing Authority is to move residents to market rate housing as soon as reasonably possible through resident educational programs regarding home ownership and career opportunities.
2. The Grand Jury found that the Housing Authority pays out approximately \$374,000 monthly for rent subsidies in the HCV program.
3. The Grand Jury found that the Housing Authority maintains waiting lists of program applicants.
 - a. There are approximately 1,900 applicants on the waiting list for Public Housing.
 - b. The waiting list for the HCV program has about 800 applicants.
4. The Grand Jury found that the HCV program provides preferences for homeless families that:
 - a. are referred from support service agencies; and
 - b. qualify under the Domestic Violence, Displaced, Family Unification, Behavioral Health, or Veterans programs.
5. The Grand Jury found that less than 30% of low-income and affordable housing needs in Madera are met by the Housing Authority.
6. The Grand Jury found that, due to current economic conditions, the need for low-income and affordable housing has increased while funding has decreased.
7. The Grand Jury found that the loss of the Redevelopment Agency created a significant reduction in funding for the Housing Authority.
8. The Grand Jury found that Housing Authority program participants must meet eligibility requirements on an annual basis:
 - a. income limits;
 - b. U.S. citizen or eligible immigration status;
 - c. passing criminal background check;
 - d. landlord references;
 - e. credit check; and
 - f. no money owed to the program nation-wide.
9. The Grand Jury found that eligible families who receive their voucher from the HCV program can search for their own rental housing in the private market.
 - a. The rental unit must pass HUD Housing Quality Standards.
 - b. The rent amount must be comparable to unassisted rental units in the immediate area.
10. The Grand Jury found that rent assistance is based on a formula using the family's income, rent amount, and utility expenses.

- a. Generally, families do not pay more than 30% of their adjusted income.
 - b. The remainder of the rent is paid directly to the landlord in rent subsidy.
11. The Grand Jury found that participants who violate Housing Authority rules may be banned from the program for specific periods of time.
 12. The Grand Jury found that the Housing Authority has 31 full-time and 1 part-time staff positions. Interns are utilized through Ready, Set, Go, a training program for young adults.
 13. The Grand Jury found that the Housing Authority employs a full time City Police Officer who:
 - a. patrols all units to provide a secure and safe living environment for program participants;
 - b. performs criminal background checks (1,000 per year) for program applicants;
 - c. investigates criminal activity and fraud; and
 - d. educates tenants about crime and fraud prevention.
 14. The Grand Jury found that the Housing Authority units are well maintained. The maintenance staff:
 - a. provides repair and maintenance services requested by tenants;
 - b. paints, repairs, and sanitizes vacated units for occupancy by the next tenant within 15 days; and
 - c. performs no maintenance or repair services on HCV units.
 15. The Grand Jury found that 16 public housing units have been sold.
 - a. Five units were sold to tenants.
 - b. Capital was reinvested in acquisition and preservation of new affordable housing.
 16. The Grand Jury found that MORES is a partner in a new 65 unit multi-family development in north Madera.

Conclusions:

1. The Grand Jury concluded that the Housing Authority fills a vital role in providing services to eligible residents in need of low-income or affordable housing.
2. The Grand Jury concluded that there is a critical need for additional low-income and affordable housing in Madera.

Recommendation:

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the Housing Authority staff be recognized and commended for their dedication and the outstanding services they provide to participants in the agency's programs.

Respondent: written response required pursuant to PC 933(c)

Madera City Council/
Housing Authority Board of Commissioners
205 W. Fourth St.
Madera, CA 93637

Informational: response optional

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