

Madera County Grand Jury

Final Report

2012-2013



Central California Women's Facility



Valley State Prison for Women

Madera County Grand Jury Final Report

Central California Women's Facility

Valley State Prison for Women

Introduction:

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 919(b) the Madera County Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county. The Grand Jury toured the Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) located at 23370 Road 22, Chowchilla, CA on September 14, 2012, and Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW) located at 21633 Avenue 24, Chowchilla, CA on September 17, 2012.

As a result of AB109 (Public Safety Realignment) both institutions have observed a substantial decrease in population. Inmates who do not have a history of violence or sexual offenses are sent to county jail facilities or are paroled to the community where they were convicted and sentenced for their crimes. The institutions provide medical and dental services, academic and vocational training as well as religiously prescribed meals.

Facts:

1. CCWF is the largest women's prison in the United States. The population at CCWF on September 13, 2012 was approximately 2,800 inmates which is a decrease of 10% since February 8, 2012.
2. The population at VSPW on September 17, 2012, was approximately 1,791 inmates which is a decrease of 53% from November 4, 2011.
3. In July 2012, staffing and budget for both prisons were changed to comply with "Standardized Staffing" implemented by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
4. VSPW will begin the conversion to low and medium security male inmates in October 2012. The anticipated completion date is early 2013.
5. Medical, dental, optical and mental health facilities are provided at both institutions by the Correctional Health Care Services Division. The staff of doctors, nurses and other professionals number over 600.

6. Food and dietary preparation adheres to the state guidelines at both institutions which includes allowances for religious and medical needs.
7. Both CCWF and VSPW provide academic education, vocational training, rehabilitation programs, self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and alternative to violence counseling. Inmates participate in a juvenile diversion program called Crossroads.
8. CCWF and VSPW staff and inmates contribute to fund raising efforts for local schools and organizations in Madera County. Donations exceeded \$153,000 in the past year.
9. CCWF inmates augment Cal Fire personnel at Madera Fire Station 5. They respond to emergency calls at the institutions, traffic accidents, brush and structural fires. Their area of responsibility is approximately 200 square miles in Madera County.
10. The Prison Industry Authority (PIA) is a self-funded organization that operates in both institutions. PIA provides productive work assignments for inmates to gain and develop work skills. Some of the programs include dental prosthetics, crop cultivation, state flag manufacturing, prescription glasses for Medi-Cal patients and prison laundry services.
11. All Wire Incorporated (a private company with a facility located within CCWF) employs inmates, at minimum wage, to manufacture wire harnesses, cables and circuit boards. The wages earned by the inmates are distributed equally for: room and board, restitution, family support and trust fund/savings.
12. The prison population across the state has declined due to the implementation of AB109. Rates of recidivism have been reduced in the state prisons due to paroled inmates sent to county jails for parole violations instead of being returned to state prison.

Findings:

1. Inmates from VSWP will be transferred to CCWF when VSWP is converted to a male prison. The increase in the CCWF population will create housing problems.
2. Training programs at VSWP will have to be restructured to accommodate the conversion to male inmates.
3. Staff and inmates at both prisons raised over \$153,000 from 2011 to September 2012 through their volunteer efforts along with cooperating vendors. The money was donated to local schools, charities and victim programs.

Recommendations:

None

Informational: response optional

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

Valley State Prison for Women
Warden
PO Box 99
Chowchilla, CA 93610

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

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
1515 S Street, Room 400-S
Sacramento, CA 95811