

Madera County Grand Jury Final Report 1415-02

Veterans Administration Office

It goes without saying, yet it can't be said enough, that veterans of our armed forces deserve the thanks and gratitude of a free and secure United States. To this end the Veterans Administration offers many benefits to our veterans, their family members and survivors. The County of Madera maintains a Veterans Service Office (VSO) for assistance in the application process to receive these benefits.

To ensure our local veterans are receiving the best assistance possible, the Madera County Grand Jury has reviewed the operation of the Veterans Service Office, and has published a report of its findings. The Madera County Grand Jury is pleased to encourage and recommends that our veterans seek the assistance of the VSO. We thank all veterans for their service and thank the VSO staff for their excellent service to our veterans.



**2014 – 2015
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
1415-02 Veterans Service Office**

2014 – 2015
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
1415-02 Veterans Service Office

Introduction:

The Madera County Grand Jury received a complaint regarding customer service in the Madera County Veterans Service Office (VSO), in August 2014. Based on this complaint the Madera County Veterans Service Office was selected for investigation by the Madera County Grand Jury.

Facts:

1. Although office administration and staff are employed by the County Of Madera, claims processing procedures are governed by the Veterans Administration Code.
2. The department head is the Veterans Service Officer, who is contracted from the County of Fresno two days per week to Madera County.
3. The 2013 – 2014 VSO budget was \$120,363 with a staff of one Veterans Service Officer and one Veterans Service Representative. Both are trained and certified by the Veterans Administration (VA) to assist veterans and their families in filing claims for VA benefits.
4. The 2014 – 2015 VSO budget is \$136,210 which includes the addition of one extra help clerical employee funded by one-time special project monies from the VA.
5. The VSO initiates 350 – 400 claims and maintains approximately 2,000 open claims per year.
6. The Veterans Service Representative sees 8-9 appointments and 8-10 walk-in visits per day, and accommodates 25 appointments one day per month in Oakhurst. In addition, the Veterans Service Officer also maintains a full schedule of appointments the two days per week he is in Madera.

Findings:

1. The Madera County Veterans Service Office administrative staff is knowledgeable, experienced, professional and courteous.
2. Newly hired extra help staff has reduced the clerical burden of the Veterans Service Representative. Effectiveness of the clerical personnel should further improve with experience in the position.
3. Delays in claims processing are a result of the bureaucracy of the United States Veterans Administration and are beyond the scope of the local Veterans Service Office.

Recommendation:

The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Madera County Board of Supervisors allocate funding to reclassify the current temporary extra help clerical position to permanent full time status. This would reduce the clerical burden for the Veterans Service Representative.

Respondents:

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

Information Only:

Veterans Service Officer
200 West 4th Street
Madera, CA 93637

Veterans Regional Office
Officer in Charge
1301 Clay Street, North Tower
Oakland, CA 94612