



Mendocino County Juvenile Hall

Summary

In accordance with duties required, the Mendocino County Grand Jury visited the Mendocino County Juvenile Hall.

Background

California Penal Code Section § 919 (b) states that "The Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county." Juvenile halls fall under this directive, so the 2004-2005 Mendocino County Grand Jury undertook their charge with visits to the Mendocino County Juvenile Hall.

Methodology

The Grand Jury toured the Mendocino County Juvenile Hall, including the cells, recreation areas, educational facilities, and dining facilities. The Grand Jury reviewed Inspection Documents and interviewed supervisory personnel and staff.

Findings

1. The staff turnover rate at the Mendocino Juvenile Hall is very low.
2. In response to budget cuts, management has been able to keep line-staffing levels by not filling the office of Assistant Superintendent.
3. The Juvenile Work Program, which provides community service opportunities for juveniles on probation, has been discontinued due to lack of funding.
4. Most juvenile arrests are drug related.
5. Most juvenile crime does not result in a stay in Juvenile Hall.
6. Most juvenile incarceration is the result of probation violation.
7. Juvenile Hall has experienced an increase in incarcerations as a result of gang activity.
8. Officials working in Juvenile Hall state that ninety-five percent of the incarcerated youth at Juvenile Hall come from dysfunctional homes.
9. Resident youth who are incarcerated at the Mendocino County Juvenile Hall receive educational opportunities through the services of the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE).
10. Legal guardians are expected to pay \$15 per day while their charge is in Juvenile Hall.
11. Pay phones in Juvenile Hall pay for all recreational equipment.



County of Mendocino
Grand Jury

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Recommendations

1. The Grand Jury recommends that the funding for the Juvenile Work Program be reinstated (Finding #3).

Comments

The Grand Jury finds that Juvenile Hall management and staff are doing a commendable job. They strive to find a balance between punishment and rehabilitation. The Grand Jury believes the minimal staff turnover rate is the result of their commitment to making positive changes in the lives of local youth.

The absence of a Juvenile Work Program negatively impacts on the rehabilitation process for Mendocino County youth on probation. While the Graffiti Abatement program located in Ukiah could be restored at a cost of \$28,000, a broader program with centers in Willits, Fort Bragg and Ukiah would require funding up to \$280,000.

Response Required

Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Response Requested

Mendocino County Juvenile Hall Superintendent

Mendocino County Chief Probation Officer