Calaveras Health and Human Services Agency

Kristin Stranger, Director

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FILED

DEC 16 2020

Clerk of the Court
Superior Court of California
County of Calaveras
By _____, Deputy

December 11, 2020

Calaveras County Superior Court
Attn: Honorable Timothy S. Healy, Presiding Judge
400 Government Center Drive
San Andreas, CA 95249

Subject: Calaveras County 2019-2020 Grand Jury Final Report

Please find the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), Veteran Services Division, responses to the Calaveras County 2019-2020 Grand Jury Final Report.

FINDING 1:
As of August 2019, the Veteran Services Office (VSO) staffing levels limited veteran access to available services. As of June 1, 2020, two part time clerical positions were added which enables the office to run efficiently. These federally funded jobs will end on September 30, 2020. As of July 1, 2020, an Outreach Coordinator was hired.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
The VSO partially disagrees with this finding. There is one full-time equivalent (FTE) Veteran Services Officer, one FTE Veteran Services Representative, and one FTE Community Services Liaison (Outreach Coordinator). The VSO also works with Motherlode Job Training to provide work experience opportunities for community members, which is how the VSO has received additional clerical support.

RECOMMENDATION 1:
The Calaveras County Grand Jury (CCGJ) recommends the VSO to seek permanent County funding for the clerical positions.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
This recommendation requires further analysis. The VSO may address this recommendation during the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget development process.

FINDING 2:
Without a written policy and procedure manual there is a lack of clearly-defined operating processes in the event of personnel changes.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
The VSO agrees with this finding.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
The CCGJ recommends that the VSO establish a written policy and procedures manual by June 30, 2021.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be in the future. There is an active recruitment for a new VSO. This will be one of his or her primary duties. The date of completion is anticipated to be June 30, 2021.

FINDING 3:
Information pertaining to the services of the VSO is limited when veterans cannot access the internet or live in remote regions of the County.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
The VSO partially agrees with this finding. Outreach and distribution of information can always be improved. However, all VSO events have been and will continue to be widely publicized by flyers posted through all of Calaveras County at grocery stores, gas stations, libraries, post offices, medical facilities, HHSA outstations, and through direct mailers to all Veteran Memorial Districts, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)/American Legion Posts.

RECOMMENDATION:
The CCGJ recommends the VSO continue to send information regarding veteran services and events to the County library branches, community centers, churches, and merchants, for posting in a public space.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
This recommendation has been implemented. All VSO events have been and will continue to be widely publicized by flyers posted through all of Calaveras County at grocery stores, gas stations, libraries, post offices, medical facilities, HHSA outstations, and through direct mailers to all Veteran Memorial Districts, VFW/American Legion Posts. In addition, the VSO maintains an active webpage with additional information and the outreach coordinator engages the community to provide information about events and services.

FINDING 4:
It can be challenging for veterans living outside the Valley Springs/western Calaveras area to visit the VSO.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
The VSO partially disagrees with this finding. Access to services can always be improved. However, the VSO has always met the veteran/dependent wherever it is most convenient/comfortable for them; at home, at a library, at a park, in the office, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
The CCGJ recommends that the VSO consider partnering with other Veterans Memorial Districts, including Angels Camp and libraries to provide outreach services with regular office hours, in those areas.

RESPONSE REQUESTED:
This recommendation has already been implemented. Since November 2008, the VSO has never required a veteran/dependent to come to the office to receive services. The VSO has always met the veteran/dependent wherever it is most convenient/comfortable for them; at home, at a library, at a park, in the office, etc. Additional staffing would be needed to provide regular hours of service at another location.

Respectfully,

Kristin Stranger, Director
Calaveras County Health and Human Services Agency

cc: Calaveras County Board of Supervisors, C/O Board Clerk
The Office of the Calaveras County Counsel