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CONTACT: Foreperson, Janice Feingold

Tel: 805/477-1600

Email: [Janice.Feingold@ventura.org](mailto:Janice.Feingold@ventura.org)

## **City of San Buenaventura Freedom of Information**

### **Is the City of San Buenaventura responding to public requests for information?**

The Freedom of Information Act, established in 1967, is a law that gives every citizen the right to obtain information from the federal government. This law allows for the full or partial disclosure of information from the federal government. The California Public Record Act extends the public's right to obtain records from state and local agencies. The 2004-2005 Ventura County Grand Jury reported on the implementation of the California Public Record Act within Ventura County. Eleven years later the 2015-2016 Ventura County Grand Jury, acting on complaints from the public about the City of San Buenaventura's (Ventura) refusal to comply with the law, looked into the processes, procedures, and execution of the California Public Record Act.

The Grand Jury found that Ventura has outsourced the process to a third party allowing state of the art tracking and distribution of requests. The process for requests for information has been extended to the internet via a customer portal allowing for requests to be made from virtually anywhere. Although Ventura's goal is to attain 100% compliance with the California Public Records Act, the Grand Jury found that its execution had been low at first, but improved over-time to currently 92%. The Grand Jury found that not all requests for information are tracked through Ventura's electronic system allowing for a margin of error in the actual performance report provided.

The Grand Jury made a series of recommendations for policy enhancements that would: capture all requests without regard to origin; make statistics more accurate; develop a process to better capture ongoing correspondence between the requester and city officials; and time/date stamp policy reviews and changes on Ventura's online portals.

The complete report may be accessed at [www.ventura.org/grand-jury](http://www.ventura.org/grand-jury); click on the Annual Reports tab and consult "Fiscal Year 2015-2016."