

# MARIN COUNTY MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE



**2019  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**MARIN COUNTY MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE**  
**2019 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Chairperson / Law Enforcement Representative: Chief Mike Norton – Central Marin Police Department  
Law Enforcement Representative: Chief Adam McGill—Novato Police Department  
Law Enforcement Representative: Captain Robert Mota—CHP  
County Board of Supervisors: Judy Arnold  
County Administrator's Office: Matthew Hymel  
City Council Person: Pat Eklund – City of Novato  
City Manager: Dave Donery – Town of San Anselmo  
Co-Chair/City Manager: Todd Cusimano—Town of Corte Madera  
Marin Resident: Ed Schulze  
Marin Resident: Dan Falzon



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## **HISTORY**

The **Marin County Major Crimes Task Force** (MCTF) was founded in 1977. A group of parents of San Rafael High School students had growing concerns over drugs at their local school and with the seedy characters hanging around the school. Coinciding with this, a group of local law enforcement officers, along with a local Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent, recognized the need for a countywide, multi-agency, investigative unit to address increasing concerns over illegal narcotics in Marin. They recognized that clearly, individual jurisdictions by themselves could not address the growing problem. This group proposed their idea to the Marin County Police Chiefs' Association (MCPCA) and shortly thereafter the Task Force was formed.

The original Task Force was established as a countywide, general investigations unit charged with assisting local agencies investigating resource intensive crimes in their jurisdictions, as well as narcotic offenses. The Task Force was granted authority by the MCPCA to cross jurisdictional boundaries within the County. After several years of operation, and at the request of the MCPCA, the Task Force compiled statistical data showing the need to focus their investigative efforts primarily on illegal narcotic activities. As a result, in 1979, all the cities, towns and the County of Marin entered into a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).

Member agencies agreed the name of the unit would be "Major Crimes Task Force" rather than simply a narcotics task force. Some participants felt having the word narcotics in the title would not be well received and it implied a limitation on the unit's abilities and purpose.

Under the JPA, the Major Crimes Task Force is responsible to a 9 member Oversight Committee. Currently, the Oversight Committee consists of a City Councilmember, 2 City Managers, and a member of the County Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator, and 2 local heads of law enforcement and 2 Marin County citizens who don't hold any of the above positions. The Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers (MCCMC) and the Board of Supervisors (BOS) approve their respective appointees as well as the appointment of the 2 citizens. The Marin Managers Association (MMA) appoints their two representatives. In addition to the Oversight Committee, the Task Force receives guidance and direction from the Marin County Police Chiefs Association. The Task Force serves the county and participating agencies throughout Marin. This allows the unit the freedom to investigate cases, unimpeded by political and jurisdictional boundaries.

In the beginning, the MCTF was staffed and run by personnel from different law enforcement agencies. Funding for the MCTF was provided by the participating agencies. In 1993, local law enforcement suffered growing budgetary challenges and personnel shortages. Also in 1993, the MCTF suffered some internal issues, including an internal lawsuit. Rather than disband the MCTF, the MCCMC determined the MCTF needed to be restructured, streamlined, and run by a single entity.

In 1993, the Oversight Committee was restructured and the MCCMC approached the Sheriff and asked if he would staff and oversee the Task Force operations. The Sheriff agreed and continues to oversee the unit today. The MCTF members are still primarily Sheriff's Office personnel but also consist of personnel from the Central Marin Police Department, Novato Police Department, California Highway Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Agency.

## **HISTORY (CON'T) AND OVERVIEW**

The Sheriff's Office hasn't always overseen the MCTF. In the past the MCTF's operations had been overseen by the San Rafael Police Department, as well as staffed by members from local agencies; those agencies include the former Larkspur and Corte Madera PDs, as well as Tiburon, Mill Valley, San Anselmo, Sausalito, Ross, and San Rafael. In addition, we've had members of the United States Park Police, FBI, and Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE) in the unit.

The MCTF also operates as a clearinghouse of information and intelligence on criminals and their activity throughout Marin County. The MCTF retains information on criminal activities affecting Marin, which is linked to organizations outside our county, our state, and the US borders. This allows us to be a resource to local agencies as well as agencies outside of Marin.

The MCTF is a member of HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), as designated by the federal government. As a HIDTA member we have access to equipment, funding, training and additional temporary help and personnel as needed. Being a member of HIDTA also allows us to utilize the Federal system for our asset forfeiture cases and to share in Federal asset forfeiture seizures on cases we assist with.

Currently, under the umbrella of the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force (MCMCTF) resides three independent investigative units:

- **Major Crimes Task Force** - A 9 member multi agency investigative unit consisting of a Unit Commander (a Sheriff's Lieutenant), 3 Sheriff's Office Deputies, 1 Novato Police Officer, 1 Central Marin Police Officer, 1 DEA Agent, 1 CHP Officer, and a full-time Special Investigations Assistant (Sheriff's Office civilian).
- **COPE** (Coordination of Probation Enforcement) - is a 4 member probation enforcement unit consisting of the Assistant Commander (a Sheriff's Sergeant) and 3 Detectives (1 Probation Officer, 1 Sheriff's Office Deputy, and 1 Novato Police Officer).
- **Marin County Auto Theft Unit** - is a 2 member auto theft investigations unit consisting of 2 Detectives (a Deputy and a CHP Officer).



# JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT

## 2019 MEMBERS AND PARTNERS



**Belvedere Police Department**  
City of Belvedere



**Central Marin Police Authority**  
City of Corte Madera  
City of Larkspur  
Town of San Anselmo



**Fairfax Police Department**  
Town of Fairfax



**Mill Valley Police Department**  
City of Mill Valley



**Novato Police Department**  
City of Novato



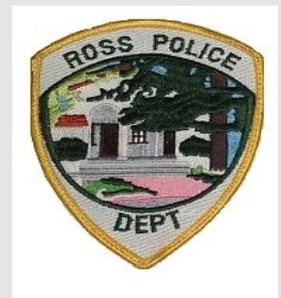
**San Rafael Police Department**  
City of San Rafael



**Tiburon Police Department**  
City of Tiburon



**Marin County Sheriff's Office**  
County of Marin



**Ross Police Department**  
Town of Ross



**California Highway Patrol**  
State of California  
State Partner



**Drug Enforcement Administration**  
United States Federal Government  
Federal Partner

## MARIN COUNTY TASK FORCE OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force is to represent and support our participating JPA agencies with excellent partnership by providing safe communities, free from illegal drugs and major crimes and to protect the quality of life unique to our county. We strive to achieve these goals through proactive covert investigations focused on the activities of those involved in major felony crimes related or non related to illegal narcotic use, sales, and distribution. The Major Crimes Task Force is the only fulltime law enforcement unit dedicated to investigating illegal drugs in the County of Marin. Our non-specific jurisdictional authority allows us to coordinate our investigations with other local, state, and federal partner agencies. Unlike our local jurisdictional law enforcement agencies, the Marin County Task Force has the ability to conduct in-depth, lengthy narcotic investigations. We have the ability and resources to follow our investigations throughout and outside of the county, including out of state and, on a limited basis, out of country.

In addition, the Marin County Task Force provides investigative assistance and resources with major crimes to our partnering local law enforcement agencies as requested and in accordance with the JPA. We offer highly trained and skilled covert investigative assistance. We supplement existing resources, but we do not replace them.

By targeting drug dealers and suppliers at the mid to upper levels and reducing trafficking and sales of illegal drugs, we are making progress in our efforts to achieve our goal of providing drug-free communities in Marin. We know that by targeting illegal drugs in Marin we are having an impact on all crime throughout the county. Illegal narcotics are the catalyst and underlying cause for almost every aspect of criminal activity; homicides, assaults, burglaries, robberies, auto thefts, larcenies and identity thefts (to name a few). Drugs and drug abuse have a direct nexus to most crime. Therefore, it easy to correlate that drug abuse and it's associated crime affect all jurisdictions and in turn, all of us. Combating illegal drugs and drug abuse makes an impact on all crime.



## **STAFFING**

The current staffing level of the Major Crimes Task Force is 9 (nine). The assigned Commander is a Sheriff's Office Lieutenant, 5 (five) detectives assigned to the MCTF include representatives from the Marin County Sheriff's Office, Novato Police Department, and Central Marin Police Authority. We also have a CHP officer and a full-time DEA agent assigned to us, both are assigned by their respective agencies at no cost. There is a full time Special Investigations Assistant as well (Sheriff's Office civilian). With the addition of the Coordination of Probation Enforcement unit (COPE) and the Marin County Auto Theft Unit, the total staffing level under the Task Force umbrella is 15. Currently, the MCTF is fortunate to have one Spanish speaking detective assigned to the unit. Spanish speaking detectives have proven to be an invaluable asset to our operations and to our success; a good portion of the illegal drug trade in Marin County is facilitated and carried out by the Mexican Cartels.

## **TRAINING**

Each MCTF detective is mandated to attend an 80-hour, POST certified narcotics investigation course. During this last year, we had one new detectives complete the course. Also, our detectives attend ongoing narcotics related training courses as well as the annual California Narcotics Officers' Association (CNOA) conference which provides for more training. The conference also offers an opportunity for detectives to network with other detectives from around the county, state and other countries. Some of our detectives are also sent to a certified, 16 hour Asset Forfeiture course in order to make sure we are properly trained and in compliance when seizing illegally obtained proceeds and assets from suspects. During the past year, two of our detectives attended the basic course. In addition, one of our detectives attended a mandated, annual asset forfeiture update class.

## **OTHER**

Each detective is assigned as a liaison to each participating law enforcement agency in Marin County. This provides each agency a direct point of contact and helps bridge the gap between local law enforcement and the MCTF and allows for the sharing of information and training.

The MCTF has a liaison deputy district attorney assigned to our unit. The DDA meets with us weekly to go over cases, provide legal opinions about investigations, and give updates on filed cases. This greatly improves our relationship with the judicial side of our investigations.

We have a narcotic detection canine assigned to the Task Force unit. With the assistance of a HIDTA grant the unit acquired "Max", a 4 year old Springer Spaniel mix. Max is under the care of a Detective assigned to the Task Force unit. Max and his handler graduated from a 200-hour narcotic detection course certified by the California Narcotic Canine Association (C.N.C.A) in accordance with California Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.). The C.N.C.A. canine narcotic detection certification examination has been recognized throughout the United States. Max is certified by C.N.C.A. and P.O.S.T. in the identification of the following odors: cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, heroin, ammunition, and smokeless powder. Max is trained as a "Passive Alert" narcotics detection K-9. He is trained to alert by staring at an object or area as a final response that he has detected the odor of any of the above listed narcotics. Max and his handler continue to participate in monthly update training through Golden Gate K9 in Sonoma County. Golden Gate K9 is used by a large number of Bay Area agencies for their initial and continuous training.

Our unit consists of 5 Special Response Team members: 3 Defensive Tactics Instructors, 1 Range Master, and 3 detectives who are prior military. Each of these duties and skills are important to safe operations during the service of search warrants as well as high risk arrests. Safety is always foremost in any of our operations; our detectives' safety, the public's safety, as well as the safety of our suspects. Our goal, during any of our operations, is to recognize and eliminate any possible hazards before we begin and to react safely and appropriately to threats as they come up. Our goal is for everyone to be safe and go home at the end of the day, with all suspects safely taken into custody. Under normal circumstances this can be challenging for police. Add in an environment fueled by drugs, and the challenge becomes even greater.

## **RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT**

The resources we provide, both detectives and equipment, include:

### **DETECTIVES:**

- *Expertise and knowledge: gained through specialized training, including 80-hour POST certified Basic Narcotic Investigators Course, as well as on-going and continuous narcotic related training.*
- *Informant development.*
- *Undercover operations.*
- *Asset forfeiture expertise.*
- *Safe search warrant entry.*
- *Safe arrest methods and tactical responses.*
- *Liaison: networking with local, state and federal agencies.*
- *Expert testimony for court cases (including other agencies).*
- *Assistance to other jurisdictions and investigative units.*
- *Criminal intelligence.*
- *Covert investigations and surveillance.*
- *Interview and Interrogation*

### **EQUIPMENT:**

- *Vehicles - specially equipped for both undercover and surveillance operations.*
- *Radio and wireless undercover recording and transmitting devices.*
- *Video and audio recording devices necessary for prosecution.*
- *Raid gear, night vision, specialty search warrant entry tools.*
- *Narcotic canine support.*
- *Trackers via GPS and mapping (via court order).*
- *Forensic cell phone data analysis and retrieval.*
- *Currency scanner/counter.*
- *Fiber optic cameras for walls, concealed and tight area searches .*

### **LOCAL AGENCY SUPPORT:**

- *Asset Forfeiture expertise and assistance.*
- *Liaison with District Attorney's Office.*
- *Search warrant preparation and service expertise.*
- *Trial assistance.*
- *Intelligence resource and support.*
- *Covert Surveillance*



## HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA



The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force is a member of the Northern California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) as designated by the Federal Government in 1994. The Northern Californian initiative is comprised of individual local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies within Alameda, Contra Costa, Lake, **Marin**, Monterey, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma counties. These counties and respective agencies are united in the common goal of reducing drug trafficking, drug related crime, violence, and abuse in our communities.

# DRUG TESTING POLICY

The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force has a current policy on drug testing of personnel which calls for random drug testing at least twice a year. This policy has been implemented diligently for all participating officers and deputies with the exception of the California Highway Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration. However, their participating officers and agents are in full compliance with their respective department's and/ or agency's policies.

To date, we are in full compliance with our own drug testing program. Each local departments' employee has been tested twice during this last year with negative results for each employee both times. The CHP and DEA have supplied up to date letters of compliance to the Task Force regarding their employees.

## Specimen Detail for Christine Wheeler, Urine - CONFIDENTIAL

**Lab Management Network Inc**

4445 Eastgate Mall, Ste 200  
San Diego, CA 92121  
760-712-8408



Lab Management Network Inc

**The County of Marin**  
1600 Los Gatos Dr, Suite 200  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Donor	[REDACTED]
Overall Result	Negative
Date/Time Collected	Dec. 20, 2018, 8:37 a.m.
Lab Reported	Dec. 20, 2018, 11:45 a.m.
Type	Random Selection (Urine)
Panel	10
Specimen ID	0938502191

Test	Result	Screen Cutoff	Confirm Cutoff
Amphetamine/Methamphetamine	Negative	1000 ng/mL	500 ng/mL
Barbiturate	Negative	300 ng/mL	200 ng/mL
Benzodiazepine	Negative	300 ng/mL	200 ng/mL
Cocaine	Negative	300 ng/mL	150 ng/mL
Marijuana	Negative	50 ng/mL	10 ng/mL
Methadone	Negative	300 ng/mL	200 ng/mL
Opiates	Negative	2000 ng/mL	2000 ng/mL
Phencyclidine	Negative	25 ng/mL	25 ng/mL
Propoxyphene	Negative	300 ng/mL	300 ng/mL

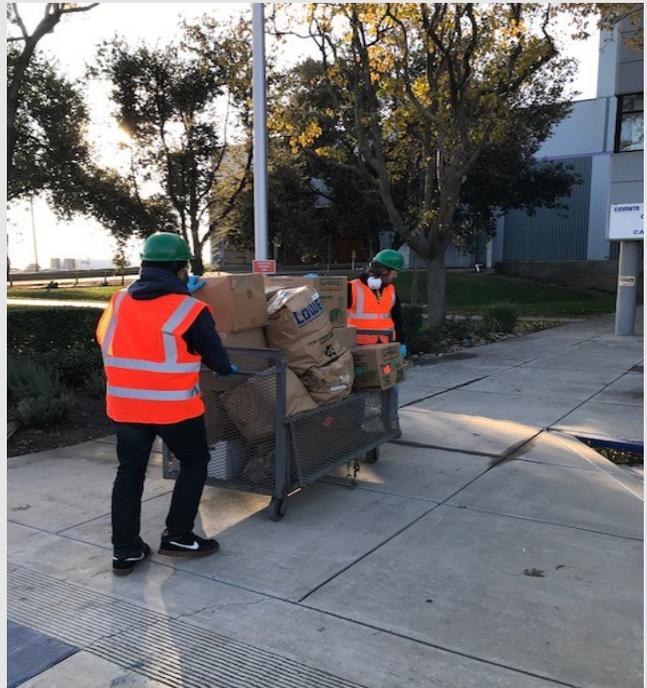
**Collected By:**  
Joyce Holloway  
LABCORP 063448  
153 Lynch Creek Way  
Petaluma, CA 94954  
7077652043

**Lab:**  
LabCorp  
1904 Alexander Drive  
RTP, NC 27709

**COVANTA**  
**EVIDENCE DESTRUCTION**

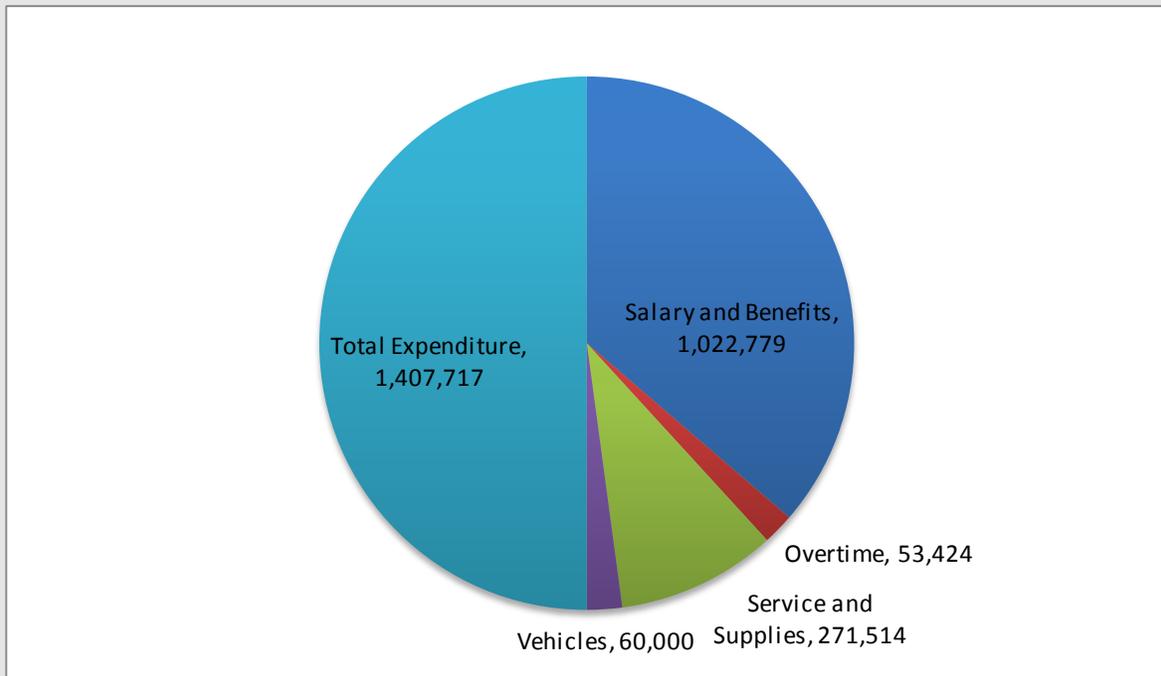
During 2019 the Task Force made two evidence destruction runs. The trips were made in June and in December. All contraband destroyed is by court order and court approval. Evidence taken for destruction includes narcotics, manufacturing equipment, miscellaneous items seized (including unclaimed personal affects) as well as firearms. Electronics and bio hazardous waste are taken to a local resource recovery center for green recycling.

The evidence to be destroyed is brought to the Covanta Energy Plant in Crow's Landing off of Highway 5. The evidence is incinerated by the Covanta Energy facility and witnessed by Task Force staff. The heat produced through incineration of evidence is used to produce steam to power generators to produce consumer electrical energy.



# MAJOR CRIMES TASK FORCE FY 2019-2020 BUDGET

Approved FY 2019-20 MCTF Budget	Budget
Salary and Benefits	1,022,779
Overtime	53,424
Service and Supplies	271,514
Vehicles	60,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,407,717</b>



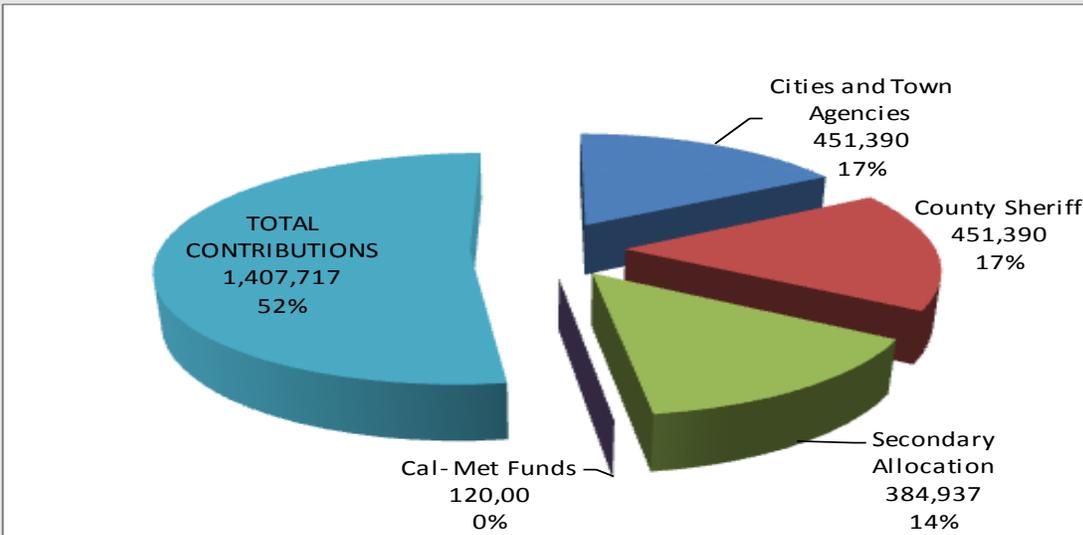
The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force budget is funded through several different sources. The JPA member agencies pay the Salaries and Benefits portion of the MCTF budget in a first allocation. The cities and towns portion is based upon an agreed upon formula using jurisdictional population and assessed property values. The cities and towns pay 50% of the MCTF salaries and benefits. The County pays the other 50%.

The Service and Supplies portion of our budget covers anything other than salaries, including rent, utilities, phones, office supplies, reoccurring fees for service and maintenance of equipment, fuel and vehicle maintenance and repair. Capital Assets generally refers to our vehicles and radios. But is included into Services and Supplies. The JPA member agencies pay the Services and Supplies portion of the MCTF budget in a second allocation.

We have also received additional funds of \$120,000.00 through a State Cal-Met grant. This money is used to offset costs for all contributing JPA members. Monies collected through Asset Forfeiture programs goes directly to service and supplies, as well as our Capital Assets.

## FY 2019—2020 BUDGET CONTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN

Cities and Town Agencies	451,390
County Sheriff	451,390
Secondary Allocation	384,937
Cal- Met Funds	120,00
<b>TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	<b>1,407,717</b>



The budgeting of Asset Forfeiture money for the Service and Supplies has been unpredictable and problematic in past years. Although a significant amount of seized assets goes through the forfeiture process in both the State and Federal systems, we are unable to project when monies will be received and funded. During this 2019-2020 fiscal year we have received some distribution forfeiture funding which is outlined in detail in this report.

Moving forward, the Oversight Committee continues to modify how we prepare our annual budget each year. Rather than list asset forfeiture money as the funding source of Service and Supplies, the committee decided last year to now break the budget into 2 separate, but inclusive allocations for our JPA members.

The first allocation will be for salaries and benefits as we currently do. The second allocation will be for service and supplies. The second allocation will be based on the same formula as the first allocation.

This provides for a more sustainable budget going forward. When Asset Forfeiture money is received, JPA members would either not pay the second allocation or be paid back what they paid towards the second allocation. The Marin County Sheriff's Office is the designated police agency selected by the Oversight Committee to prepare the fiscal year annual budget and the annual report.

# Full FY 2019-2020 BUDGET BREAKDOWN

## Final Approved FY 2019-20 Major Crimes Task Force Budget

March 11, 2019

### MCTF Operating Expenses

	Approved FY 18-19	Proposed FY 19-20
<b>Salaries and Benefits</b>	\$594,717	\$610,468
Deputy Sheriff	\$294,598	\$299,577
Lieutenant	\$101,852	\$112,735
Special Investigations Assistant		
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$991,167</b>	<b>\$1,022,779</b>

### Benefits

	Approved FY 18-19	Proposed FY 19-20
	84.1%	81.8%
	84.1%	81.8%
	58.4%	56.0%

Overtime	\$51,868	\$53,424
Supplies	\$271,514	\$271,514
Vehicles	\$60,000	\$60,000
<b>Total Expense*</b>	<b>\$1,374,549</b>	<b>\$1,407,717</b>

*Note: the \$7,800 interdepartmental cost to the County of Marin is accounted for separately*

### MCTF Revenues

Cal-Met	\$120,000	\$120,000
Secondary allocation	\$331,514	\$384,938
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$451,514</b>	<b>\$504,938</b>

### MCTF Net Costs

Expense	\$1,374,549	\$1,407,717
Revenue	\$451,514	\$504,938
<b>Net Cost Share</b>	<b>\$923,035</b>	<b>\$902,779</b>

50% Incorporated	\$461,517	\$451,390
50% Unincorporated	\$461,517	\$451,390

Agency	Pro Rata	FY 2018-19 Contribution	FY 2019-20 Contribution	FY 2018-19 Contribution less Officer in Lieu Credit	FY 2019-20 Contribution less Officer in Lieu Credit	FY 2018-19 Secondary Allocation with AE Shortfall	FY 2019-20 Secondary Allocation with AE Shortfall	Approved FY 2018-19 Total	Proposed FY 2019-20 Total	% Change from FY 2018-19
Belvedere	2.79%	\$12,830	\$12,594	\$12,830	\$12,594	\$4,608	\$5,370	\$17,438	\$17,964	3.0%
Corte Madera	5.85%	\$26,306	\$26,406	\$0	\$0	\$9,448	\$11,259	\$9,448	\$11,259	19.2%
Fairfax	3.45%	\$16,015	\$15,573	\$16,015	\$15,573	\$5,752	\$6,640	\$21,767	\$22,213	2.0%
Larkspur	7.24%	\$33,737	\$32,681	\$0	\$0	\$12,117	\$13,935	\$12,117	\$13,935	15.0%
Mill Valley	9.59%	\$44,029	\$43,288	\$44,029	\$43,288	\$15,813	\$18,458	\$59,842	\$61,746	3.2%
Novato	25.06%	\$115,795	\$113,118	\$0	\$0	\$41,588	\$48,233	\$41,588	\$48,233	16.0%
Ross	2.65%	\$12,323	\$11,962	\$12,323	\$11,962	\$4,426	\$5,100	\$16,749	\$17,062	1.9%
San Anselmo	6.67%	\$30,783	\$30,108	\$0	\$0	\$11,056	\$12,838	\$11,056	\$12,838	16.1%
San Rafael	28.78%	\$133,240	\$129,910	\$133,240	\$129,910	\$47,854	\$55,393	\$181,094	\$185,302	2.3%
Sausalito	0.00%	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Tiburon	7.92%	\$36,460	\$35,750	\$36,460	\$35,750	\$13,095	\$15,244	\$49,555	\$50,994	2.9%
<b>Total Incorporated</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$461,518</b>	<b>\$451,390</b>	<b>\$254,897</b>	<b>\$249,077</b>	<b>\$165,757</b>	<b>\$192,469</b>	<b>\$420,654</b>	<b>\$441,546</b>	
<b>Total Unincorporated</b>		<b>\$461,517</b>	<b>\$451,390</b>	<b>\$461,517</b>	<b>\$451,390</b>	<b>\$165,757</b>	<b>\$192,469</b>	<b>\$627,274</b>	<b>\$643,859</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Total MCTF</b>		<b>\$923,035</b>	<b>\$902,779</b>	<b>\$923,035</b>	<b>\$902,779</b>	<b>\$331,514</b>	<b>\$384,938</b>	<b>\$1,254,549</b>	<b>\$1,287,717</b>	<b>2.6%</b>

Of the 11 city and town law enforcement jurisdictions in Marin County, currently 10 participate as members of the Marin County Task Force JPA.

## IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Central Marin Police Authority and the Novato Police Department who are both JPA members, provide an officer to the unit rather than money. This is known as an in-kind contribution. Because they provide personnel for MCTF Detectives positions it saves all JPA members money due to the fact the officers are worth more than their respective pro-rata share contributions. If the MCTF had to assign deputies to those 2 positions, the overall salary and benefits costs would go up and those additional costs would have to be shared by all JPA members.

## CAL-MMET Grant Allocation

The California Multi-Jurisdictional Methamphetamine Enforcement Team (Cal-MMET) focuses on methamphetamine producers and distributors by creating specialized, investigative units staffed by experienced personnel. Participating law enforcement agencies, the Anti-Drug Abuse grant, and asset forfeiture proceeds provide additional resources for investigators and prosecutors, as well as support staff, equipment, training, and facilities. The Cal-MMET grant is one source of funding for the Marin County Task Force via the Marin County Sheriff's Office.

# ASSET FORFEITURE

What is asset forfeiture and what's the purpose of it?

Asset forfeiture is the seizing of ill-gotten gains from dealers and suppliers who are clearly profiting and living a lifestyle funded through criminal activities and criminal enterprises. It is a known fact that these criminals are more afraid of losing their money, status and power than they are of going to jail or prison.

Asset forfeiture got a bad reputation in the 1970's. You'll probably remember the stories of law enforcement officers seizing yachts and expensive cars based upon a single marijuana seed being discovered in the vehicle. The "seed" went directly to proving their drug transportation cases. The seizing and flaunting of these "prizes" didn't sit well with the public and politicians. Some saw this as an abuse of power and of the system.

Asset forfeiture has an honorable place in fighting drug trafficking and dealing. The seizing of criminal profits from drug dealers and suppliers is a punishment they fear. It's the ultimate equalizer, especially when we turn around and use those same profits to help fund our fight against them.

There are laws that prevent criminals from profiting from their crimes. They can't publish a book or make a movie about their crimes and profit from it. Asset forfeiture laws allow any illegally obtained wealth to be forfeited, thus removing the incentive for being involved in the criminal lifestyle.

Since the 1970's, the laws have changed to take away the incentive for law enforcement to seize expensive items. Under California law, vehicles seized can't be put into service and must be sold. Although still allowed under federal law, the incentive has been lessened and stricter guidelines are applied.

Recent changes to Asset Forfeiture laws make it more difficult for law enforcement to seize assets resulting from criminal arrests. Under California law, real property (real estate, vehicles etc.) must be sold and can't be put into service or used by law enforcement. Additionally, laws prohibit us from taking a car that is the sole means of transportation for a family, regardless of how the suspect paid for it. Federal law is currently transitioning to stricter guidelines to make it more difficult for all law enforcement.

As stated previously, we use seized assets to supplement our budget. The only problem with this system is asset forfeitures are unpredictable. We never know how much assets we will seize in a given year. We also don't know when we will actually receive the assets. It could be a matter of months or years.

Asset forfeitures are generally awarded through a sharing program administered by the local DA's Office on the state level, or the Department of Justice on the federal level. The administering agency determines agency involvement and amount awarded on a percentage basis. Currently under the federal system, the feds take 20% and the remainder is divided up among the participating agencies. Under the state system, the local DA's Office gets 10%, the State takes another 24% for their general fund and 1% goes to a local, private, nonprofit organization. The remaining 65% goes to participating agencies. However, 15% of that 65% goes into a local special fund to pay for programs designed to combat drug abuse. The Marin County Sheriff's Office was chosen by the Oversight Committee to be the designated fiduciary agency for all equitable sharing funds awarded



## STATE ASSET FORFEITURE PENDING

The MCTF has a number of detectives that are specially trained in asset forfeiture and the current asset forfeiture laws. These detectives also attend mandated annual update training to assure that we are compliant with all current laws. It should be noted that there are 2 different asset forfeiture procedures; civil and criminal. For the State to seize assets through the courts, we need to have a criminal conviction prior to the forfeiture. Under federal law, they can also seize assets civilly, with no conviction. In either case, we need to show a clear and direct connection (nexus) to criminal activity. The chart below shows the current seized assets pending in the **State Asset Forfeiture System**.

<b>2019 STATE ASSET FORFEITURE PENDING</b>		
<b>CASE NUMBER</b>	<b>AMOUNT SEIZED</b>	<b>TYPE OF ASSET</b>
SO06-160021	\$6,444.93	US Currency
SO06-160035	\$5,620.00	US Currency
SO16-160058	\$1,712.52	US Currency
SO06-5490	\$6,572.00	US Currency
SO07-160055	\$1,700.00	US Currency
SO08-160121	\$1,424.00	US Currency
SO08-160203	\$43,912.25	US Currency
SO09-160042	\$3,928.00	US Currency
SO10-160024	\$5,110.00	US Currency
SO10-160083	\$17,039.00	US Currency
SO10-160096	\$27,900.00	US Currency
SO11-160054	\$13,202.00	US Currency
SO11-160125	\$9,917.00	US Currency
SO12-160030	\$3,585.00	US Currency
SO12-160034	\$20,005.00	US Currency
SO14-160064	\$18,872.00	US Currency
SO14-160075	\$64,233.68	US Currency
SO15-1293	\$32,886.87	US Currency
SO15-1293	\$3,900.00	US Currency
SO15-1293	\$172,970.00	Jewelry
SO15-160042	\$14,120.00	US Currency
SO16-160123	\$7,450.00	US Currency
SO17-160103	\$3,000.00	US Currency
SO17-160111	\$3,811.00	Jewelry
SO17-160168	\$5,682.00	US Currency
SO18-160153	\$71,400.00	US Currency
SO18-160239	\$98,551.00	US Currency
SO19-160060	\$42,960.00	US Currency
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$707,908.25</b>	

## FEDERAL ASSET FORFEITURE PENDING

The chart below shows the current seized assets pending in the **Federal System**. You can see in the chart below that some items are "real property". Although the value of each is significant, real property can be unpredictable and is dependent on the current market values and demand. Real property is also subject to liens and encumbrances prior to selling. Likewise, although the total of the chart is significant, we will only receive a small portion in each case if awarded.

<b>2019 FEDERAL ASSET FORFEITURE PENDING</b>		
<b>CASE NUMBER</b>	<b>AMOUNT SEIZED</b>	<b>TYPE OF ASSET</b>
HIDTA	\$ 6,400,000.00	Commercial Business
SO14-160085	\$ 4,260.00	US Currency
SO14-160085	\$ 40,500.00	US Currency
HIDTA	\$ 99,000.00	US Currency
HIDTA	\$ 85,000.00	US Currency
SO14-160030	\$ 350,000.00	Financial Instrument
SO16-160042	\$ 73,823.00	US Currency
HIDTA	\$ 80,300.00	US Currency
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 7,132,883.00</b>	

**TOTAL COMBINED STATE AND FEDERAL AF PENDING=\$7,840,791.20**

Although \$7,840,791.20 is a sizable amount of money pending, we won't receive this amount. The dollar amount represents the total seized amount. As is common with these cases, some amounts will be returned to the owner through the DA's Office, the courts or plea deals. The money and real property that does end up being forfeiture is divided up among participants.

## 2019 STATE ASSET FORFEITURE PAYMENTS RECEIVED

Below you find the **State Asset Forfeiture** funds that the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force received in 2019.

<b>2019 STATE ASSET FORFEITURE DISTRIBUTION</b>			
<b>CASE NUMBER</b>	<b>AMOUNT SEIZED</b>	<b>MCMCTF SHARE</b>	<b>DATE DISTRIBUTED</b>
SO10-160122	\$ 25,476.00	\$ 14,292.17	6/7/2019
SO15-160089	\$ 109,353.00	\$ 61,266.66	6/7/2019
SO15-160109	\$ 42,222.00	\$ 23,570.42	6/7/2019
SO16-160075	\$ 17,100.00	\$ 9,383.26	6/7/2019
<b>*SO15-160042</b>	<b>\$ 14,120.00</b>	<b>\$ (7,872.43)</b>	<b>6/7/2019</b>
SO15-1410	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 11,937.87	9/30/2019
SO10-160025	\$ 5,894.00	\$ 26.03	9/30/2019
SO15-160114	\$ 5,840.00	\$ 3,179.00	9/30/2019
SO17-160082	\$ 2,550.00	\$ 1,413.43	9/30/2019
SO17-160009	\$ 7,452.00	\$ 4,184.84	9/30/2019
SO17-160026	\$ 26,530.00	\$ 12,218.00	9/30/2019
SO15-160084	\$ 81,340.00	\$ 46,141.95	9/30/2019
SO10-160145	\$ 14,057.00	\$ 6,989.95	9/30/2019
SO17-160086	\$ 1,063.00	\$ 565.96	9/30/2019
SO09-160224	\$ 106,782.28	\$ 30,959.06	10/19/2019
SO16-160120	\$ 26,170.00	\$ 14,473.21	10/19/2019
SO17-160136	\$ 7,018.00	\$ 3,739.60	10/19/2019
SO17-160209	\$ 6,765.00	\$ 3,704.68	10/19/2019
SO17-160165	\$ 2,334.00	\$ 1,234.51	10/19/2019
SO17-160166	\$ 7,037.74	\$ 3,783.44	10/19/2019
SO19-160033	\$ 55,890.00	\$ 30,779.34	10/19/2019
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$585,994.02</b>	<b>\$275,970.95</b>	

\*Payment issued 10/18/18 made in error. Return of funds to MCDA on 6/4/19.

## 2019 FEDERAL ASSET FORFEITURE PAYMENTS RECEIVED

Below you find the **Federal Asset Forfeiture** funds that the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force received in 2019.

CASE NUMBER	AMOUNT SEIZED	MCMCTF SHARE	DATE DISTRIBUTED
SO18-160223	\$7,000.00	\$5,460.00	5/23/2019
SO18-160223	\$2,895.00	\$2,258.10	5/23/2019
SO18-160223	\$3,044.00	\$2,374.32	7/22/2019
HIDTA	\$8,100.00	\$1,184.62	11/21/2019
SO18-160237	\$40,000.00	\$31,200.00	12/16/2019
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,039.00</b>	<b>\$42,477.04</b>	

**TOTAL STATE AND FEDERAL AF DISTRIBUTED TO MCMCTF IN 2019 = \$318,447.99**

In June of 2019, the Oversight Committee approved an asset forfeiture distribution on a balance of \$318,477. It was decided that the disbursement would be equally split amongst the member agencies to include the County, Novato PD, and San Rafael PD in the amount to bring each member agency in whole. The remaining funds after the three agencies were paid was a surplus of \$65,383. The surplus of \$65,383 was rolled back into the asset forfeit account and will be distributed at the end of the FY. See chart below explaining the distribution.

<b>Proposed Asset Forfeiture Distribution</b>	
Asset Forfeiture available to be distributed	<b>\$318,477</b>
1/3 County AF reimbursement	\$106,159
1/3 Central Marin AF reimbursement	\$106,159
1/3 Novato AF reimbursement	\$106,159
Deputy Sheriff County Annual Cost	<b>\$203,489</b>
1/3 County AF reimbursement	<b>\$106,159</b>
Total Deficit	(\$97,330)
Central Marin Officer Annual Cost	<b>\$191,503</b>
less Central Marin FY 2019-20 Contribution	<b>\$89,195</b>
Subtotal	<b>\$102,309</b>
less 1/3 Central Marin AF reimbursement	<b>\$106,159</b>
Total Surplus	<b>\$3,850</b>
Novato Officer Annual Cost	<b>\$157,744</b>
less Novato FY 2019-20 Contribution	<b>\$113,118</b>
Subtotal	<b>\$44,626</b>
less 1/3 Novato AF reimbursement	<b>\$106,159</b>
Total Surplus	<b>\$61,533</b>
Surplus	<b>\$65,383</b>

As of 12/31/2019, the current combined State and Federal Asset Forfeiture account balance for the Marin County Major Crimes Task force is **\$428,417.48**.

## **2019 CASE EXAMPLE #1**

### ***Snapchat dealer arrested with stolen guns and Narcotics***

In early 2019, the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force (MCMCTF) initiated an investigation of individual who was involved in the illegal sales of various drugs in Marin County, primarily Xanax pills, or "bars". During the course of the investigation, the individual was identified as Jorge Mario Martinez, age 25 of Richmond. At the beginning of the investigation Detectives believed Martinez to be a resident of San Rafael based on the information he gave to the Probation Department, but surveillance by Detectives showed him living at a home in the 1900 block of Lincoln Ave in Richmond, California.

MCMCTF detectives observed Martinez advertise Xanax for sale on the social media app Snapchat, and also observed him conducting suspected drug sales in the parking lot of a business on Vivian Way in San Rafael's Canal neighborhood. An undercover MCMCTF Detective was able to negotiate the sale of Xanax from Martinez on multiple occasions. On the evening of 3/25/19, Martinez and the undercover Detective arranged to meet in San Rafael, where Martinez sold Xanax to the Detective. Following the deal, Martinez was arrested for drug sales. Upon stopping his car as he left the scene of the deal, Detectives discovered Martinez's girlfriend and infant child were with him in the car. An additional charge of child endangerment was added due to Martinez bringing his infant child to the drug deal. The child was then released to the custody of her mother.

Detectives with the Coordination of Probation Enforcement (COPE) team searched Martinez's car and located additional Xanax. Inside a hidden compartment, Detectives found a key to a different automobile. In previous surveillances, Detectives had observed Martinez coming and going from a parked car on Vivian Way before and after drug deals. Detectives suspected that this hidden key would unlock this second car.

The car was located by COPE parked in a parking lot on Vivian way and a search of the car was conducted. A drug and firearm detection canine was used, and the dog indicated that drugs and/or firearms would be located in the trunk. In the trunk, Detectives found numerous handguns, a shotgun, and a mason jar full of hundreds of Xanax pills. At this time, two of the firearms had been reported stolen previously and the investigation continues as to the others.

A search was then conducted at Martinez's residence in the 1900 block of Lincoln Ave in Richmond. At the residence, Detectives found a jar with over a thousand Xanax pills and approximately \$38,000, suspected to be proceeds of Martinez's drug sales. All told the street value of the Xanax pills seized exceeds \$30,000.



## **2019 CASE EXAMPLE #2**

### ***Sweep of meth dealers targeting the homeless in San Rafael***

In March of 2019, while conducting surveillance operations in the Canal area of San Rafael, the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force observed numerous individuals that were selling narcotics. The Task Force observed these transactions occurring in plain view at various parking lots, gas stations, and neighborhood businesses. While people and families conducted lawful business nearby, the Task Force observed these drug dealers approach, and be approached, by drug users looking to buy narcotics; namely methamphetamine. The suspected drug dealers appeared to be associated with and selling to residents of a nearby homeless encampment.

Based on those observations, the MCTF deployed several undercover detectives to the area. The detectives posed as homeless methamphetamine addicts that were new to the area. Within minutes, one of the undercover detectives was approached and offered methamphetamine for sale. From March until May, the undercover detective was able to purchase methamphetamine with ease 11 times from numerous individuals. Seven individuals were identified as being involved with the selling of methamphetamine, and five arrests warrants were issued.

During this investigation, MCTF surveillance units repeatedly observed a man later identified as Michael Harris, 48, of San Rafael, appear to supply the drug dealers targeted in this operation with methamphetamine. Detectives would observe Harris drive to the area where the dealers were selling, meet with them in his car for a few minutes, and they would then leave and resume selling methamphetamine. Extensive surveillance was conducted of Harris during the last few months, resulting in Harris being stopped and detained and large amounts of methamphetamine located on two occasions. Each time Harris was arrested, he would be released on bail and quickly resume selling large amounts of methamphetamine. On today's date, a search warrant for Harris's home in the 800 block of Las Gallinas in San Rafael was served. Harris was arrested for possession of methamphetamine, felon in possession of ammunition, and committing a felony while out on bail. This was Harris' fourth methamphetamine related arrest this year.

Illicit drugs sales being conducted during the day in public places effects the quality of life for everyone. MCTF is committed to working to improve the quality of life of all residents of Marin, and we hope that by targeting those that prey on one of our most vulnerable communities, the homeless population, we have taken another step towards that goal. MCTF was assisted in this operation by the Marin County Coordination of Probation Enforcement Unit, the San Rafael Police Department, and the Marin County Sheriff's Office.



## **2019 CASE EXAMPLE #3**

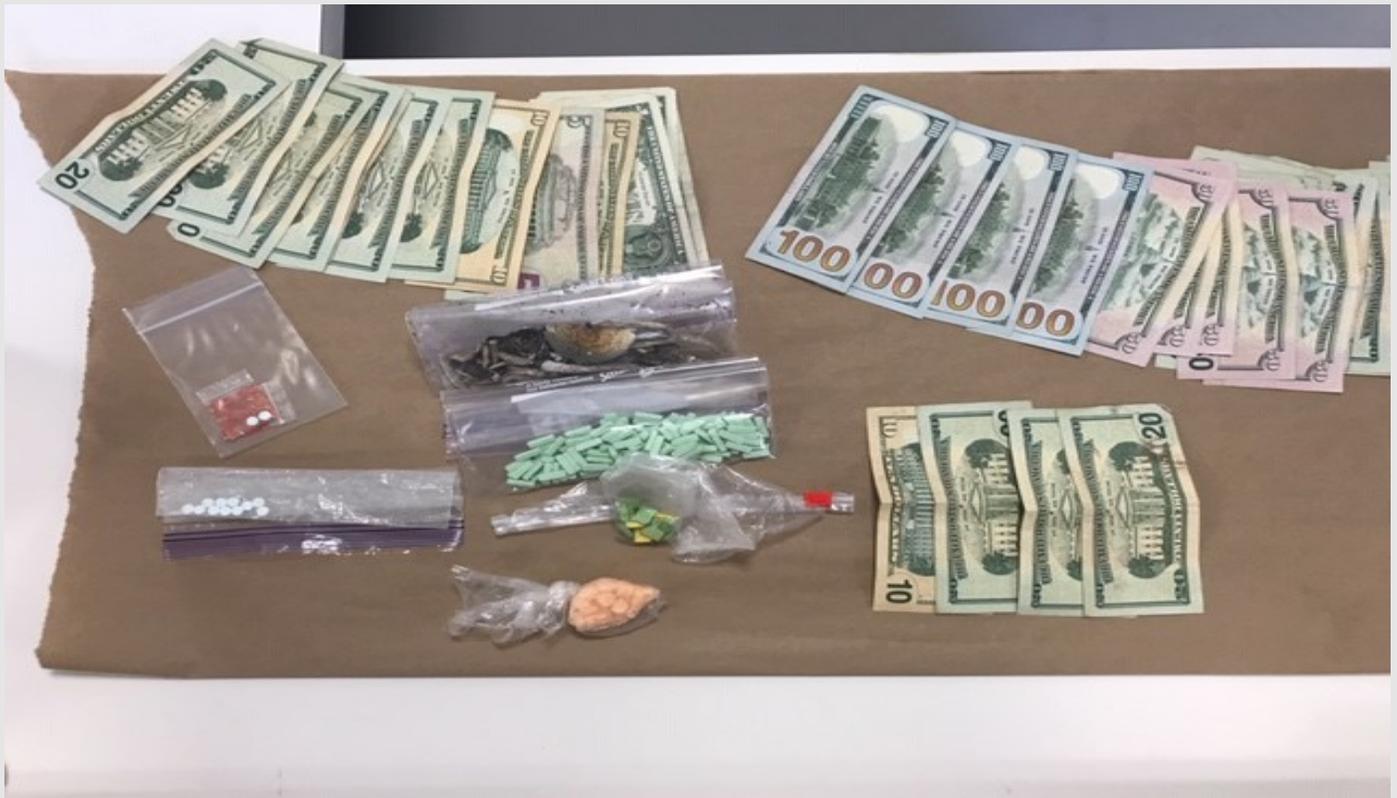
### ***Task Force detectives arrest dealer with mobile pharmacy after observing drug deal***

Throughout 2019, the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force received information from multiple sources regarding a drug dealer nicknamed "Masa" who was very active throughout the county of Marin with regards to prescription pill sales.

Detectives were later able to identify the subject as Brandon Masariegos, 21, of San Rafael. After ongoing investigation and surveillance, MCMCTF detectives were able to get a search warrant for two residences Masariegos frequented one in the 100 block of Nova Albion in San Rafael and the other in the 2000 block of Redwood Hwy in Greenbrae.

At approximately 1130 hours on 10/11/19, undercover Detectives on Nova Albion Way saw Masariegos exit an apartment complex and enter into a gray SUV that was occupied by two additional subjects. MCMCTF suspected an illegal drug transaction was taking place inside of the vehicle and requested San Rafael PD patrol units assist MCMCTF in contacting the occupants of the vehicle and Masariegos. Once the patrol unit turned on its overhead lights, Masariegos walked away from the vehicle and patrol officer. Masariegos was seen crouching down and placing items in the drainage area near the curb and covering that item with pine needles to conceal its location. Masariegos was then detained, as well as the two additional males inside of the vehicle.

After interviews, the two males admitted to purchasing two Percocet pills from Masariegos for \$70. One of the males had the two Percocet pills in his possession and Masariegos had \$70 in his front left jacket. After recovering the items Masariegos hid in the drainage area, Detectives located suspected Molly, Psilocybin mushrooms, Oxycodone, Xanax and methamphetamine all packaged for sale. This incident occurred in front of a nearby Elementary school. Brandon Masariegos was arrested for numerous charges related to the sales of prescription pills, and violating the terms of his probation.



## CITIZEN REPORTING

A valuable source of information regarding illegal narcotic activity or major felony crimes we receive is from our local citizens. We generally receive these tips on our anonymous tip line at 1-800-369-4694. Many people making these type of reports wish to remain anonymous, which we respect and honor. Our citizens may report individuals they suspect of drug dealing or suspicious criminal activity in their neighborhoods that they suspect are related to illegal drug activity or any other major crimes. We take that information and compare it to any information we may already have regarding the persons or place. If the information appears to have credence, we will investigate and try to either corroborate the information, determine if it is unfounded or, decide if it can't be determined at the current time and is documented as intelligence information.

Tips regarding marijuana grows or cannabis operations often lead to a local compliance regulation checks. Many citizens who are compliant with current State guidelines grow their marijuana crop at home. Unfortunately, not everyone is thrilled about this. A lot of these complaints come from families with kids. They object to the pungent odor of the marijuana wafting through their neighborhood. They also fear for the safety of their kids as well as the neighborhood. While marijuana is often termed a victimless crime, we still see marijuana grow houses and cannabis dispensary services being victims of violent crimes like robbery and theft. It is not the non-violent crime pro marijuana advocates want everyone to believe. Persons operating marijuana grows or storage locations often arm themselves with legal and illegal weapons and firearms.

Tips and information provided to the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force (anonymous and or not) is an important component to keeping Marin County communities safe and drug free. The Marin County Task Force documents and investigates all information provided.



## **CITIZEN TIP CASE OF 2019**

### ***Marin Drug Dealer Targets Youth on Social Media***

In late July 2019, the Marin County Sheriff's Office Patrol Division responded to a medical aid call that involved multiple juveniles possibly overdosing on an unknown substance in Mill Valley, CA. At the time, it was unknown what caused the medical emergency as the juveniles gave conflicting statements. During the initial investigation with patrol, all of the juveniles were uncooperative and not forthcoming with what they had ingested. Three female juveniles were transported to the local hospital.

Several days following the incident the parents of one of the juveniles reached out to the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force for help. They believed that their child had purchased unknown pills and alcohol from a male adult advertising the items for sale on the social media site 'Snapchat'. Detectives from the Marin County Task Force interviewed the juveniles and were able to identify the suspect's Snap Chat account and subsequently identified the suspect as Goldfarb. Additional interviews generated information that Goldfarb was selling Xanax pills, alcohol, and cigarettes to juveniles as young as 12 years of age via Snapchat.

Utilizing undercover Snapchat accounts, the detectives requested to be Goldfarb's 'friend' on Snapchat and were able to observe him advertise prescription pills, tobacco products, and alcohol for sale. Detectives sent a request to Goldfarb to buy Xanax pills from him, and he agreed to meet and sell the undercover detective the narcotics.

On 8/2/2019, Goldfarb met the undercover detective in San Rafael and sold them the Xanax bars as requested. Goldfarb was detained after leaving the narcotics transaction and arrested. A search of Goldfarb's vehicle and home located more Xanax 'bars'. Goldfarb was then booked at the Marin County Jail for selling Xanax to the undercover detective. Detectives continued to investigate Goldfarb's business of selling narcotics and age restricted items to Juveniles following the arrest.

While the amount of drugs seized in this case was not large, the Marin County Task Force was able to quickly and efficiently identify an adult suspect targeting juveniles with narcotic, tobacco and alcohol sales in the Marin County community via a social media platform that is popular with youth.



## AGENCY BY AGENCY

Each participating agency in the MCTF JPA has a TF Detective assigned as a liaison. We keep in contact with each agency by attending briefings, through personal contacts, and through phone calls. Our intent is to keep an open line of communication between our 2 entities. It also gives each agency their own MCTF source to go to when needed.

The below table is a breakdown of 2019 numbers of contacts and investigations by agency.

Agency	Contacts	Cases	Arrests	Search Warrants
Belvedere	48	0	0	0
Central Marin	204	26	8	9
CHP	259	0	0	0
Fairfax	46	1	1	2
Mill Valley	144	6	2	3
Novato	320	52	7	9
San Rafael	255	84	12	11
Sheriff	454	32	4	5
Tiburon	100	4	1	0
Ross	17	1	1	1
Other Jurisdictions	56	6	0	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1903</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>

## 2019 NARCOTICS SEIZED OR PURCHASED

Drug	1st Qtrtr	2nd Qtrtr	3rd Qtrtr	4th Qtrtr	Totals
Cocaine	81.6	16.9	2.0	20.7	121.2 gm
GHB/GBL	0	22.1	0	0	22.1 ml
Heroin	29.1	296.4	165.4	34.2	535.1 gm
Codeine	3	0	0	150	153 ml
LSD	77	145	930	4	1,156.00 du
MDMA	59.1	1.5	103	17	180.6 gm
Marijuana Product	11,503	149	135.9	5,393.5	17,109.6 gm
Methamphetamine	67.5	260.9	314.7	184,8	827.9 gm
Xanax/Zoloft*/Klonopin	1,845	69	220	334	2,468.00 du
Fentanyl	112.2	0	.4	1.7	114.3 gm
Oxycontin	3	194	0	40	237 du
Psilocybin Mushrooms	376.9	252	10.5	13.7	653.1 gm

### 2019 PRICES

We paid the following street prices for the most common drugs during our undercover buys this last year.

Cocaine:           \$60 - \$100 a gram  
                       \$700-\$1100 an ounce

Crystal Meth   \$10 - \$30 a gram  
                       \$200 - \$400 an ounce

Heroin            \$40-\$80 a gram

Fentanyl        \$100-\$200 a gram

Psilocybin      \$150 an ounce  
 (Mushrooms)

Xanax            \$2.00-\$30.00 du

It is not unusual for prices to fluctuate during the year. Prices may fluctuate dealer to dealer as well as supplier to supplier. Like any commodity, supply and demand have a lot to do with price. Also, buying larger quantities will bring the price down. As with manufactured drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine, there are different grades produced. Higher grades lead to higher prices.

## **MARIN'S MAKEUP**

Whether you live in this county, work here, or both, Marin has much to offer. Marin sits across the bay from San Francisco and takes in the northern portion of the world famous Golden Gate Bridge. The north end of Marin greets the famed wine country of Sonoma county. The west embraces the Pacific Ocean while the east looks upon the bay waters separating Marin from Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Marin's Highway 101 is also a thoroughfare for the transporting of drugs and money up and down our state.

Marin is considered a medium sized county within our state. Marin covers 520.31 square miles of land (11% developed) and another 308 square miles of water. The majority of the land is either agriculture production, designated as open space or watershed areas, in park lands, resulting in nearly half of the county's land area being in some form of protected open lands. The 2018 estimated overall population for Marin was 260,955 with 67,000 in unincorporated Marin County. The population is expected to reach 275,000 by 2020. This is an increase of 12% since 2000. The annual median income is \$91,477.

## **CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

Upper Level: Marin's well educated, very affluent population is a good place to hide in plain sight. There are those in the drug trade and criminal enterprises who live among us. They blend in as business men and women and as our neighbors. Some appear to be very affluent and financially successful. They may even own a legitimate business. However, their roots are in the criminal enterprise and drug trade.

Hand to Hand Drug Transactions: Like our neighboring counties around us who are plagued with street level dealing, Marin has it too. If you know what you're looking for, you can see constant vehicle and foot traffic going to a residence or business at all hours of the day and night. We know, because we see it in the course of our investigations. Watching people make quick trips to and from a suspected source. We conceal ourselves in the shadows and the background to identify these people to begin our investigation. Our goal is to arrest the dealer and work our way up to their supplier and ultimately to the source.

Narcotics Load Vehicles: Marin is a thoroughfare from the south to the north and the north to the south via the Highway 101. We know vehicles carrying money and drugs travel through Marin. They come from Mexico and below and travel through our state to points beyond. Marin is among many drop off points for drug cartels. Law enforcement stops only a small fraction of these load vehicles and couriers.

Mules: We have arrested people within drug trafficking organizations that move illegal product to and through Marin. They are called mules. Their job is to carry the load of illegal product (guns, money or drugs) that supply the mid and upper level dealers. They, in turn, supply the street level dealers. We know the Mexican Cartels have strongholds on the west coast and in Marin.

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

As with any business, investors want to know what their return on investment is. They want to know what product or service they are getting in return for their money. They want to know if the company is being run properly. Government is no different. While we are a governmental agency serving other governmental agencies, we are still expected to provide valuable services to our partners and their constituency.

There is no other local law enforcement agency or unit that can do what the MCTF does. Likewise, there is no State or Federal agency or unit that has the local knowledge to do what we do. Marin County is blessed with very good law enforcement. This sometimes lulls us into believing there is no crime in Marin. With each agency doing their part and working together, we enjoy efficient and responsive public safety. While we are not exempt from crime or criminals, we pride ourselves on providing a safe county for our residents to live and work in. Sometimes, its hard to imagine how life in Marin would be if local law enforcement didn't keep crime and criminals in check.

We are proud to be part of Marin's law enforcement community. As such, we continually look at the service we provide. How are we doing? Are we being fiscally responsible? Is there anything we need to change. Are we providing a needed service to our partners? Are we being responsible to Marin's communities and residence. With guidance from the JPA Oversight Committee and the Chiefs of Police we are confident we are on the right track and meeting the needs of our partners, communities, residents, and the County.

For their partnership, our JPA agencies get a detective who can come into court and offer expert testimony on their cases. We provide expert advice for their investigations. We provide assistance with significant (major) crimes or series of crimes. We can help with surveillances, locating suspects and assisting with search warrant and arrest services. We provide an entire investigative unit of 14 staff members, all for less than the cost of one officer. For most of our JPA partners, that cost is in fact only a small fraction of the cost of a single officer employed by their respective police departments.

Illegal drugs and major crimes in Marin is a countywide issue. No single agency can address the criminal activity drug epidemic alone. However, together we can make a difference. Together and through the MCMCTF, we have made and will continue to make a positive difference in Marin County.



## **WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

Marin County's law enforcement presence in our schools helps keep students and faculty safe. The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force works closely with our partnering agencies to provide education to the students, faculty and parents about social and narcotic trends. We also provide information, resources and investigative assistance to local agencies and their School Resource Officers.

When a School Resource Officer (SRO) starts seeing a disturbing social trend at the local school, we become a resource for them. Through our on-going trainings, conferences and publication updates, we generally are aware of trends occurring around the state and country before we experience them here. Detectives from the MCMCTF pass information on to SROs about emerging trends in schools and with kids. That information allows the SRO to identify trends in their own local schools at the early stage of development.

In the past, MCMCTF and COPE detectives would go to local high schools and put on educational presentations regarding illegal narcotics and school trends for the students and faculty. Unfortunately, we had to stop using our detectives because some kids remember them outside of school. This posed an officer safety issue and a potential case compromising issue for detectives working undercover. We still provide sealed narcotics display kits, which we loan out to local law enforcement for uniformed officers to use for school presentations (some of which are former MCMCTF and COPE detectives). We also loan our kits out to the head instructor of the Administration of Justice program at the local junior college for use in his training classes. That instructor is a former officer and former Commander of the MCMCTF.

While we no longer directly and personally serve the local schools on the fore front, we are always in the shadows and continue to be a partner and investigative resource to our School Resource Officers within the schools. It's a partnership that is safe for us and one that works for local law enforcement and the schools.



## 2019 TRENDS

Three drugs that Bay Area narcotics task forces are dealing with on an increasing basis are **fentanyl**, **methamphetamine**, and **counterfeit pills, namely Xanax**. Black market marijuana also continues to be an issue, especially concerning cases with marijuana being shipped out of California to states where possession is still illegal. MCMCTF actively works with our partners at the USPS, UPS, and FEDEX to deter and disrupt marijuana transportation across the state line.

### **Fentanyl**

Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid many times more powerful than morphine and heroin, is fueling the opioid epidemic across the country and in Marin. In 2019, the Task Force saw an increased presence of Fentanyl in Marin. Task Force detectives conducted numerous undercover operations where fentanyl was purchased. Detectives were more likely to encounter fentanyl during search warrants and probation searches. A few years ago, encountering powdered fentanyl in Marin was rare. Today, it is an everyday occurrence.

In January of 2019, Task Force Detectives conducted briefings with all JPA agencies on the dangers of fentanyl and how patrol officers and deputies can protect themselves when they encounter fentanyl in the street. The Task Force continues to be available to all JPA agencies to assist in field testing narcotics, as the dangers of fentanyl has made the past practice of handling narcotics in the field for testing less and less common.

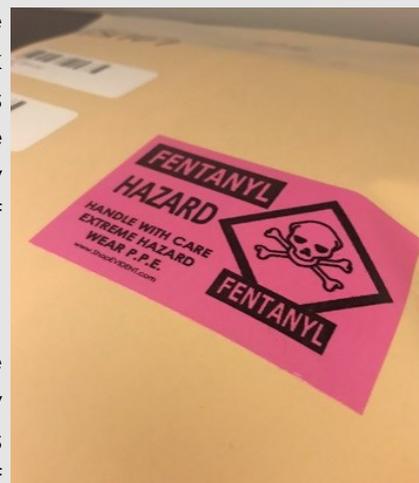
In 2018, the Task Force established an ongoing effort with the Sheriff's Office Coroner's division to assist in the investigation of all drug overdose deaths, the majority of which in 2019 were attributed to fentanyl. These efforts are ongoing and a number of cases are currently under active investigation. Moving forward in 2020, the Task Force will continue to work with the Sheriff's Office Coroner's division, Marin County District Attorney's Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration to proactively investigate fentanyl related overdose cases. The Marin County Task Force will actively seek prosecution on all subjects involved with the distribution and sales of narcotics related to fentanyl overdose cases.

### **Methamphetamine**

The popularity and availability of methamphetamine appears to be on the rise. Throughout the year, MCMCTF detectives were told repeatedly by confidential informants that methamphetamine availability and purity was increasing. Detectives corroborated this by seeing pricing of methamphetamine fall, to as low as \$10 per dose (1 gram). In working with our partners at the Coroner's Office, we learned that overdose death investigations over the year saw a combination of methamphetamine and fentanyl appear over and over again in toxicology reports.

### **Counterfeit pills**

In 2019, MCMCTF Detectives worked a number of narcotic investigations involving the illicit sales of pharmaceuticals, namely Xanax (a benzodiazepine used to treat anxiety that is commonly abused for recreational purposes). DOJ lab analysis of the drugs seized would often show that the drugs were counterfeit, and usually consisted of various cutting agents, substances analogous to Xanax, fentanyl, and methamphetamine. In August, MCMCTF detectives conducted a buy/bust of a subject offering Xanax for sale on Snap Chat. While at a glance the pills appeared to be Xanax, a closer inspection showed that they had an inconsistent texture, chalkiness, and uneven shape. A DOJ lab analysis of the counterfeit pills showed they consisted of a chemical analogous to Xanax commonly offered for sale on the dark web out of India.



## TRENDS CONTINUED

### **Human Trafficking**

The Federal government defines human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons or modern day slavery, as a crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts. The coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological. Exploitation of a minor for commercial sex is human trafficking, regardless of whether any form of force, fraud, or coercion was used.

There is no single profile of a trafficking victim. Victims of human trafficking can be anyone—regardless of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, education level, or citizenship status.

Marin County is not immune to the effects of human trafficking. Whether it be illicit massage parlors, escort services, or sex workers working out of hotels, motels, or sidewalks, human trafficking can occur anywhere. While MCMCTF has monitored cases, arrests, and trends regarding human trafficking in 2019, we plan to take a more active role in the future, as many of those arrested for human trafficking in Marin are also involved in the narcotics underworld. Currently, MCMCTF plans to send two detectives to human trafficking training in February 2020. Following this training, these detectives will be tasked with planning operations to detect, deter, and arrest human traffickers in Marin.

### **Social Media Drug Sales**

In years past, drug dealers looking to increase sales would often resort to selling in public, soliciting and being solicited by strangers. In today's world, the street dealer is increasingly moving to the virtual street corner to locate new customers and expand their sales. The Task Force continues to see more and more drug sales and solicitations moving to social media, where illicit narcotics are advertised on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snap Chat. Task Force detectives are trained to establish online undercover identities, and are able to monitor drug trends and sales in that manner. Detectives also 'cold hit' drug dealer targets in the virtual world as well, which often result in real-world drug sales to our undercover detectives. Our Citizen tip case of the year involved a drug dealer selling pills, alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes to minors and strangers on Snap Chat, causing multiple juveniles to overdose and go to the hospital in Mill Valley in July. In addition to that case, throughout the year Task Force detectives conducted numerous undercover buys that began as solicitations on social media. The case below is one of these instances:

In September of 2019, Marin County Major Crimes Task Force detectives became aware of a man advertising pills (Xanax) for sale on social media. The man, later identified as Miguel Sanchez-Aleman, 21, of Cloverdale, told an undercover detective that he sold drugs throughout the bay area and Marin. During the month of October, Sanchez-Aleman met with the undercover detective at deals in Mill Valley and Novato. During these deals, Sanchez-Aleman sold the undercover detective Xanax pills, or "bars".

On November 13, 2019, Sanchez-Aleman was detained in Novato and arrested for both of these previous drug deals. In his car, detectives found a large quantity of Xanax, oxycodone, and powdered fentanyl. A search warrant was later served at his residence in the 300 block of Portofino Dr. in Cloverdale, where codeine syrup was found. Sanchez-Aleman was booked at the Marin County Jail for selling a controlled substance, felony while released on charge is related to a County case involving being charged with murder, on which he is currently out on bail. This final pending Sonoma investigation by the Department, the and the Cloverdale



## K-9 "MAX"

In March of 2018, the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force suffered a great loss when narcotics K9 Beau was unexpectedly medically retired. HIDTA graciously provided the MCMCTF with a grant to purchase a new narcotics K9.

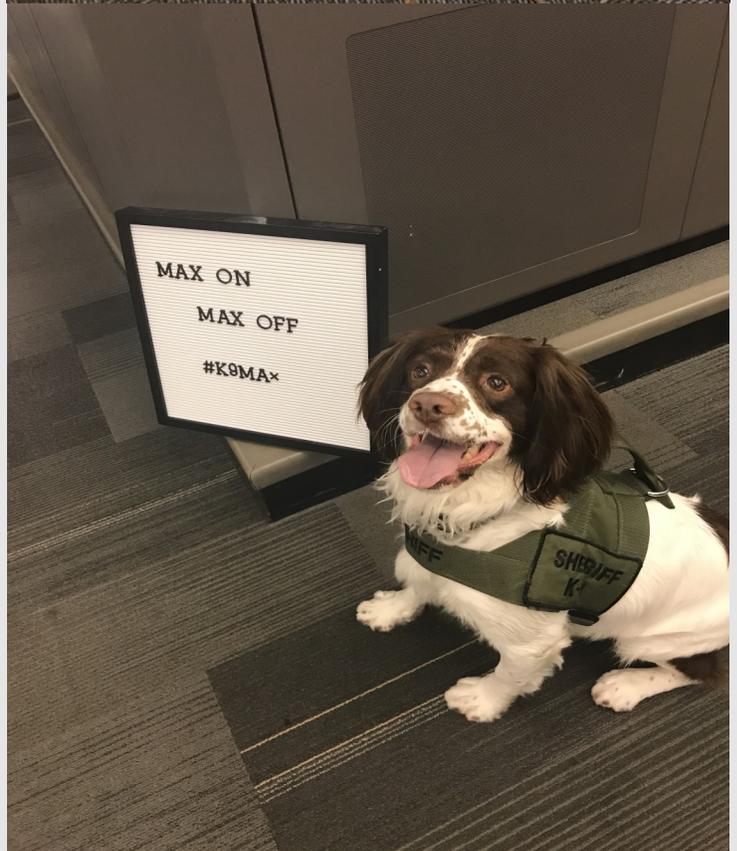
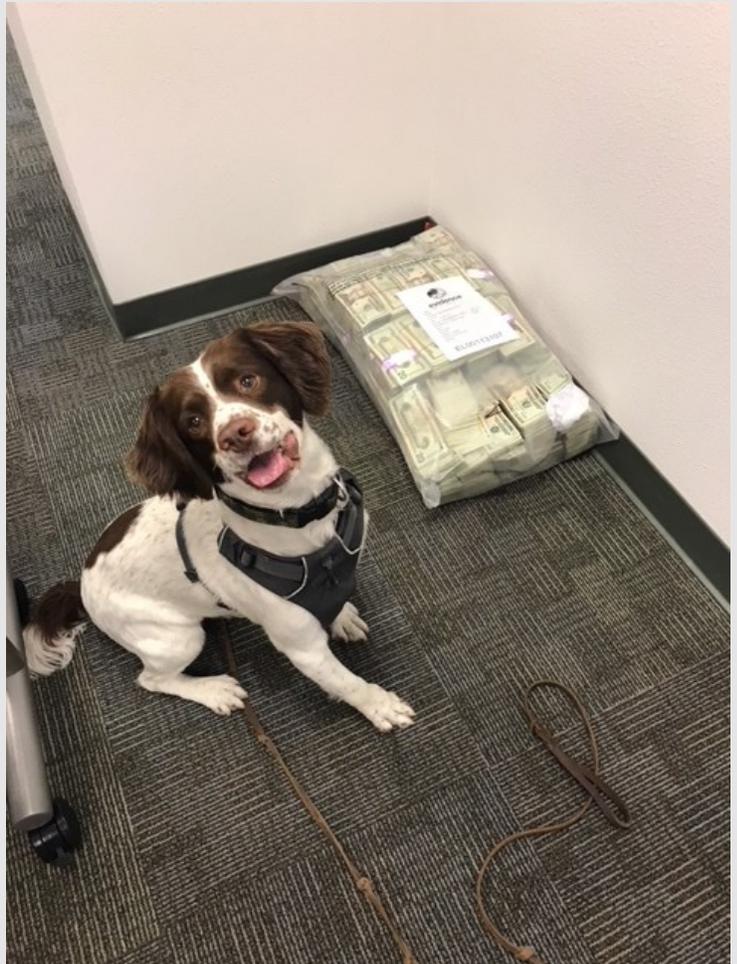
Detective Corin Priest was appointed the position of Task Force K9 handler and through Golden Gate K9 selected a three year old male springer spaniel named Max. K9 Max came to the unit from Ireland and was eager to work the second he stepped foot on California soil.

In April of 2018 Detective Priest and K9 Max were certified through the California Narcotics Canine Association (C.N.C.A.), in accordance with California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). After completing over 280 training hours, K9 Max is certified in the detection of methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, ammunition, and smokeless powder.

In 2019, Detective Priest and K9 Max have been busy this past year providing narcotics sniffs at over 50 search warrant locations. They also have dedicated approximately two hours a week to parcel interdiction at local shipping facilities. Approximately 26 pounds of marijuana has been intercepted in efforts to combat shipping narcotics out of the state of California. One of these cases resulted in a search warrant served and a suspect was taken into custody on two felony narcotics shipping charges.

Since January of 2019 K9 Max has located approximately 78 grams of methamphetamine, assisted in the search of approximately 7 firearms including one used in a homicide, and continues to be proficient in training. K9 Max has successfully assisted in the seizure of over \$669,000 in suspected drug money.

This upcoming year Detective Priest and K9 Max will focus on excelling in the field of parcel interdiction. MCMCTF continues to be grateful for HIDTA's support in their Narcotics K9 program.



## **MCMCTF 2019 Citizen Complaints Reports and Internal Affairs Investigations**

In 2019, the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force received no Citizen Complaints against any member of the Marin County Task Force. In addition, no members of the Task Force were named as the subject involved in an administrative investigation or internal affairs investigation within the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force or their perspective agencies.

### **Our Vision**

The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force members are committed to treating everyone with dignity, respect and professionalism while upholding the highest standards of law enforcement.

### **Our Mission**

It is the mission of the Marin County Major Crimes Task Force to provide all citizen's of Marin County with a narcotics free community. The community shall be protected from crimes such as burglary, larceny, physical assaults and human trafficking which are directly related to the illegal sales and use of narcotics.

### **Our Values**

The Marin County Major Crimes Task Force values accountability, honesty, integrity, professionalism, transparency, and trust.