

History of The Grand Jury

Most believe that the grand jury arose as an institution in England and, in the 1600's the English grand jury developed as a process to determine whether there was probable cause to believe that an accused individual was guilty of a crime.

Today, all states and the District of Columbia use grand juries for investigative purposes.

As the various states were admitted to the Union, the underlying concept remained the same: having ordinary citizens on grand juries was a necessary part of government to ensure that government officials effectively performed their jobs.



The Benefits of Being a Grand Juror

The benefits of being a grand juror are many:

- You will enjoy the satisfaction and pride of doing an important job.
- There is the experience of being a member of a respected panel.
- You will become part of a body of people with the unique authority to see local government workings not available to most county citizens.
- As a grand juror, you have an opportunity to make a difference for your community.

Citizen Complaints

The Grand Jury receives complaints regarding all levels of local government. They may include, but are not limited to, allegations of misconduct by public officials or employees and inefficiencies in local government. Any citizen may submit a complaint by completing a Complaint Form.

Complaints are treated as confidential. This allows a complainant to come forward without intimidation.

Generally, the Grand Jury provides to the complainant written acknowledgement of receipt of a complaint. However, with so many possible investigations, it is necessary for the grand jury to make hard decisions about what investigations to undertake during their term.



How To File a Complaint

The San Joaquin County Grand Jury Complaint Form can be obtained:

Via the internet at:

www.stocktoncourt.org/grandjury/

Via E-mail at:

grandjury@sjcourts.org

By visiting or writing:

San Joaquin County Superior Court
P. O. Box 201022
Stockton, CA. 95201

Superior Court of California County of San Joaquin



San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury

222 E. Weber Avenue
Room 605

Stockton, California 95202

(209) 468-3855

www.stocktoncourt.org/grandjury/



About the Grand Jury

The San Joaquin County Civil Grand Jury's duty is to address citizens' concerns regarding the operation of local government entities.

The Civil Grand Jury is comprised of 19 citizens who are impaneled annually for a one-year term. The Grand Jury has a separate and different function than that of a trial jury and does not hear cases in a courtroom. Instead, grand jurors examine and investigate local governmental activities within San Joaquin County.

The responsibilities of the civil grand jury encompass the examination of all aspects of county government, including school and special assessment districts, to ensure that the county is being governed lawfully, efficiently and that public monies are being handled appropriately. The grand jury may conduct investigations of public agencies and the administration and affairs of any city within the county.

The Grand Jury is authorized by law to:

Inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county;

Investigate and report on the operations, accounts and records of city and county offices, departments and their functions;

Inquire into the allegations of willful or corrupt misconduct of public officials;

Investigate into the activities of all school and special assessment districts within the county;

Submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court.

How the Grand Jury is Organized

The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court empanels 19 Grand Jurors to serve for one year, fulfilling the duties as outlined under state law. The judge appoints a foreperson who presides over the grand jury. The grand jury elects other officers and organizes itself. The jurors meet in a weekly general session. Smaller investigative committees meet throughout the week.

In addition, jurors meet with county and city officials, visit county detention facilities, and conduct independent reviews on matters of interest or concern. Each of the working committees report to the full grand jury. Conclusions are reached after study and thorough discussion of the issues and they may appear as part of the grand jury's final report.

Grand Jury service is a volunteer position with modest monthly compensation for meetings and round trip mileage. Members receive a wealth of experience and provide a vital service to the citizens of their community.

Desirable Attributes

- Good health
- Open-mindedness
- Knowledge of and interest in local government and community affairs
- Skill in working productively with others in a group setting where respect and patience are essential
- Skill and experience in fact-finding, investigative techniques and report writing

Solicitations/Selection Process

Early in the year, questionnaires are mailed randomly throughout San Joaquin County from information obtained from the Voter Registration and Elections Office and from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Positive responses from people who meet the legal requirements constitute a selection pool from which the Superior Court Judges may nominate. The pool may also include other interested individuals for consideration who have made written application to serve. All candidates are interviewed and go through a background check. By June, a random drawing of nominated candidates is held in open court and a new Grand Jury is impaneled to begin its year of service on July 1.

To be considered for nomination, you must meet the following legal requirements:

Be a U.S. citizen;

Be at least 18 years old;

Be a resident of San Joaquin County for at least one year immediately prior to the beginning of your service;

Possess intelligence, sound judgment and good character;

Have sufficient knowledge of the English language to communicate both orally and in writing;

You cannot be considered for selection:

If you are serving as a trial juror in any court in the State of California;

If you have served as a grand juror in any California court within the previous year;

If you have been convicted of malfeasance in office or any other high crime;

If you are serving as an elected public officer.