



INTRODUCTION

The Civil Grand Jury is an investigatory body created for the protection of society and enforcement of the law. The concept of juries dates back to Norman times in the 800s. By 1215, the jury concept had evolved into a guarantee expressed in the Magna Carta that no free man would be “imprisoned or [dispossessed] or exiled or in any way destroyed...except by the lawful judgment of his peers...” In the United States, the Massachusetts Bay Colony impaneled the first Grand Jury in 1635 to consider cases of murder, robbery, and wife beating. The U.S. Constitution's Fifth Amendment and the California Constitution call for the impanelment of Grand Juries. Grand Juries were established throughout California during the early years of statehood and are now impaneled annually in each county.

Today the Civil Grand Jury functions as an investigatory body created to ensure that local government is serving the best interests of all citizens of the county. Nineteen volunteer citizens plus eleven alternates are selected from the community to serve from July through the following June.



RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary responsibilities of the Civil Grand Jury include the opportunity to examine all aspects of county government (including special districts), as well as ensuring that public monies are being handled judiciously and that accounts are properly audited—in general, guaranteeing honest, efficient government in the best interest of the people.

The Civil Grand Jury is authorized to:

- Inspect and audit books, records, and financial expenditures to ensure that public funds are properly accounted for and legally spent;
- Inspect financial records of special districts in Monterey County;
- Examine the books and records of any nonprofit organization receiving county or city funds;
- Inquire into the conditions of jails and detention centers; and

- Inquire into any charges of willful misconduct in office by public officials or employees;

Findings may be included in the Civil Grand Jury's final report describing the issues and recommendations for improvement or solutions.



SELECTION PROCESS

The Superior Court seeks to impanel a grand jury that reflects a reasonably representative cross-section of Monterey County's population that is qualified and eligible.

To volunteer for this important civic service, interested citizens may **apply on-line at:**

www.monterey.courts.ca.gov/grandjury

Or applications may be picked up at The Superior Court Clerk's Office in Marina, Monterey and Salinas. You may also request an application be emailed or mailed to you by calling the jury liaison's office at: (831) 775-5400, extension 2081.

Following the application and interview process, the Superior Court Judges will select 30 nominees for a random drawing held in July of each year. A total of 19 of these nominees are drawn and sworn to serve on the Civil Grand Jury; the remaining 11 nominees serve as alternates.

Alternates may be called to serve at any time when a sworn juror becomes unable to complete his or her service during the course of the year. All sworn and alternate jurors participate in an in-depth, 2-day orientation and training session prior to commencing their service.



STRUCTURE

After the Civil Grand Jury is sworn in, the Presiding Judge appoints a Foreperson (presiding juror) responsible for the general oversight, direction and collegiality of the jury.

The jury sets its own schedule and organizes its structure by appointing other positions necessary to its functions. The jury forms committees and establishes areas of investigative interest, goals and timelines. Typical committees include Cities, County, Special Districts, Education, Health and Social Services and Law Enforcement.

Each juror typically serves on 2 investigative committees and one administrative committee, based on his or her availability. Each committee will meet 2 to 3 times per month, depending on the research and investigations undertaken.

The committees meet with county, city and local agency officials, visit government facilities and conduct independent research on matters of interest or concern.

Generally, once a week, the full jury will convene a plenary meeting at which each committee will report and provide updates on its research and investigative progress and findings. The full jury will discuss and study the issues and vote on how to proceed. All actions and investigations require a majority vote by the jury.

The Civil Grand Jury also has direct access to legal advice provided by an advisory group comprised of the Monterey County Counsel, Presiding Judge and the Monterey County District Attorney. When warranted, the jury may also seek advice from the Attorney General.



QUALIFICATIONS

Prospective Grand Jurors **must possess the following qualifications** (Penal Code 893):

- Be a citizen of the United States and 18 years or older;
- Be a resident of the State and of Monterey County for one year immediately before being selected;
- Be in possession of "natural faculties of ordinary intelligence, of sound judgment, and of fair character";
- Possess sufficient knowledge of the English language.

Would you make a good Civil Grand Juror?

- Are you interested in trying to increase the efficiency of local government, save taxpayer dollars and improve services?
- Can you ask questions, review/draft documents and help write reports via Word?
- Do you have access to a computer to communicate via email?
- Can you commit for the full year?
- Does your schedule permit you to attend a *minimum* of 4-6 daytime meetings each month?
- Can you contribute a minimum of 20-25 hours per week to the Civil Grand Jury?
- Can you maintain confidentiality?
- If employed, can you obtain consent from your employer to serve on the Civil Grand Jury?

Desirable Grand Juror qualifications include:

- Be in reasonably good health;
- Be open-minded to the views of others;
- Have an interest in community affairs;
- Have a general knowledge of the function, authority and responsibility of city and county government;
- Possess investigative skills;
- Have the ability to write and edit reports.



DISQUALIFICATION

A person is **not legally qualified** to serve if any of the following apply:

- The person is serving as an elected public official;
- The person has been discharged as a Grand Juror;
- The person is serving as a trial juror in any court of this State;
- The person has been convicted of malfeasance office or any felony or other high crime.



COMPENSATION

Jury members are paid \$15 per day for attendance at regular Civil Grand Jury and committee meetings, along with reimbursement at the current Federal mileage rate for mileage to and from jury meetings and site visits. No additional compensation is provided.



FINAL REPORT

Each year the Civil Grand Jury publishes a final report summarizing its investigative findings and providing recommendations for study and action. Copies of the final reports are distributed to interested parties, public officials, libraries, the news media, and any entity that is the subject of one of the reports. Copies of the final reports are maintained on file with the Superior Court and at local libraries. The reports and responses to the reports are also posted on the Court's website at:

www.monterey.courts.ca.gov/grandjury/reports

As required by statute, agencies investigated and named in the final report must respond to the findings and recommendations within a required timeline; either 60 or 90 days from the release of the report, depending on the agency.

Apply for the

MONTEREY COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

*You can make a difference in
your community!*

**Your reward comes from an
increased knowledge of local
government and
the satisfaction of making a
worthwhile contribution to the
improvement of local government
operations.**

**Monterey County
Civil Grand Jury
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Extension 2081**

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