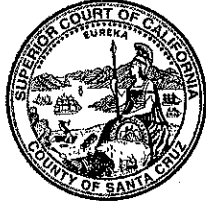


Superior Court of California

County of Santa Cruz



The County of Santa Cruz selects its Grand Jury each year through a combination of random processes and personal interviews. This process is set up to invite participation by as large a segment of the County population as possible and to insure that those selected will be willing to devote a minimum of 15 to 20 hours per week to make the jury a success. Grand Jury service is voluntary and is for a period of one year beginning July 1 – June 30.

The Jury Commissioner sends out approximately 12,000 Grand Jury questionnaires requesting information concerning jury eligibility. The letters are sent to county residents randomly selected from voter and DMV registers. Those who express interest in serving are invited to an orientation meeting where a discussion session is held covering the duties and responsibilities involved in being a Grand Juror. During the initial orientation meeting, prospective Grand Jurors are given the opportunity to ask questions of current Grand Jurors. If those prospective jurors are still interested in serving, 60 are scheduled for a personal interview with the Presiding Judge of the Grand Jury.

After the interviews are conducted by the Judge, a pool of thirty candidates is formed consisting of six finalists from each of the five supervisorial districts. These thirty candidates may consist of all new selections or some new selections and some carryovers from the outgoing jury. From these thirty, up to nineteen people are selected randomly by the Judge. After impaneling the Grand Jury, the Judge appoints one juror to be the Foreperson. The Grand Jury then divides itself into informal committees.

The Grand Jury is part of the judicial branch of the government and has three functions:

- 1- The primary function is to examine all aspects of city and county governments and special districts. The jury examines how tax monies are spent. The Jury ensures that state, federal or local guidelines are followed. The Grand Jury reports on any misappropriation of funds or intergovernmental problems that arise as a result of conflicting laws and regulations.
- 2- The Grand Jury serves as the ombudsman for the citizens of the county and the cities. The Jury receives and investigates complaints from individuals regarding the actions and performances of public officials.
- 3- The third function of the Grand Jury is to conduct criminal investigations and if necessary, issue criminal indictments.

The Grand Jury has many resources at its disposal to pursue investigations. The District Attorney, County Counsel, and Presiding Judge provide legal advice. The Jury has access to the law library.

If necessary, the Jury also has the power to subpoena testimony or documents related to an investigation. The investigations of the Grand Jury are fully confidential.

At the end of its term or at any time during its term, if necessary, the Grand Jury issues its findings to the Board of Supervisors, City Councils, and the residents of Santa Cruz. These findings in report form are available to the public at all libraries in the county and the law library. The Board of Supervisors and the City Councils have 90 days to respond to the reports of the Grand Jury. The recommendations of the Grand Jury are not binding on the Board or City Councils; therefore, the Grand Jury has no power to take action to implement its findings.

The power of the Grand Jury is based upon its ability to investigate the intergovernmental issues no other individual or agency has jurisdiction over. The reports of the Grand Jury provide a foundation for discussion and action by local government agencies. The people of the County can make the recommendations of the Jury become a reality if they demand their representatives in government to act upon their concerns about issues uncovered by the Grand Jury's investigations. In the end, it is the power of the people, which makes the Grand Jury an effective part of government.