

The Grand Jury  
provides you with the

**OPPORTUNITY TO  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

You will become involved  
with other interested citizens  
in a challenging and  
educational year.

**IT IS YOUR  
COUNTY!  
IT IS YOUR MONEY!  
IF THE  
GRAND JURY DOES  
NOT ASK THE  
TOUGH QUESTIONS,  
WHO  
WILL?**

**PRESENTED  
BY THE  
CALIFORNIA GRAND JURORS'  
ASSOCIATION**

*An association of current  
And former grand jurors who's  
mission is to promote government  
accountability by improving the  
training and resources available to  
California's 58 regular grand juries  
and educating the public about the  
substantial local government  
oversight and reporting powers these  
grand juries have.*

**TO REQUEST  
INFORMATION, AN  
APPLICATION FORM  
or  
TO REQUEST A CITIZENS  
COMPLAINT FORM**

*Call Or Write To:  
The Superior Court  
of the  
County in which you live,  
to the Attention of:  
The Grand Jury*

**Or,  
Visit Us On Line At:  
[www.cgja.org](http://www.cgja.org)**

*click on the link to the county you wish to  
get information on*

**CALIFORNIA  
GRAND JURIES**



**Contact Us at: [www.cgja.org](http://www.cgja.org)**

**T**he California State Constitution requires that each county impanel a "regular" grand jury every year. Regular grand juries consist of 19 members with the exception that in counties with a population of over four million there are 23 members and counties with a population of under 20,000 there are only 11 members. Such grand juries have broad powers to, among other things, investigate and report upon the conduct of local government.

***A Unique Experience***

# WHAT IS THE GRAND JURY?

Historically the grand jury developed in early Anglo-Saxon custom and law as a body of notable citizens who were chosen to protect the community from the King. The grand jury is one of the oldest civil institutions in America.

The activities of California grand juries have always been shrouded in mystery. Indictment proceedings behind closed doors and the power to subpoena citizens and documents in the course of an investigation seem to paint a picture of power.

The true power of the Grand Jury's oversight function lies in disclosing to the public inefficiency, unfairness, wrongdoing and violations of public laws and regulations in their local governments. It is the "power of the process".

**A  
GRAND JURY  
MEMBER IS AN  
OFFICER OF  
THE SUPERIOR  
COURT and  
OPERATES  
UNDER ITS  
AUSPICES**

The Grand Jury may examine all aspects of county and city government, and also special districts, to insure that the best interests of County citizens are being met. The three main aspects covered in investigations are:

As part of the civil function, the

**Efficiency...**

***(are they doing the right things?)***

**Effectiveness...**

***(are they getting results?)***

**Economy...**

***(are they doing it in a cost-effective manner?)***

alleging mistreatment by officials, suspicions of misconduct or governmental inefficiencies. Complaints received from citizens are acknowledged and investigated for their validity. Such complaints are kept confidential.

Valuable information is obtained by meeting with county and city officials, visiting county facilities and conducting independent research. California Statutes mandates a yearly visit to each incarceration facility within the county.

A written accusation against a public official for willful corrupt misconduct in office can lead to a trial and removal of the public official from office.

Most Grand Jury oversight findings are contained in reports describing the problems encountered and recommending solutions. The findings of any investigation conducted by the Grand Jury will be documented in the form of a report.

California Statutes requires that a final report must be released within one month of the close of the fiscal year. Jurors hold numerous investigations from which they prepared written summaries of their investigation findings, conclusions and also recommendations for improvements in procedures and processes.

**IT IS A RARE  
PRIVILEGE TO  
SERVE ON  
YOUR  
COUNTY'S  
GRAND  
JURY**

The full reports can be viewed on the Internet at county's Grand Jury Web site. Responses are also published there as they become available. The reports with responses are also available for review at county libraries.

In most cases, citizens are asked to volunteer to serve as members of the grand jury. From this pool, applicants are selected by the Superior Court to make up a grand jury to act as an arm of the court. This varies by county as some counties require their jury to also do indictments. In both cases, jurors serve for a period of one year.

Grand jurors operate under a strict code of behavior and confidentiality. While grand jurors function lawfully as a body, a grand juror acting alone has no power or authority.

What kinds of people serve as grand jurors? He/she should be able to take an unbiased look at the way government works and, when necessary, offer solutions or suggest more efficient management of operations. He/she also needs to possess strong personal initiative and high energy to face the workload. Above all, a good juror is curious about how his/her government works and how it can be improved. Grand jurors come from all lifestyles.

**IF YOU HAVE  
THE TIME,  
AND A DEEP  
INTEREST IN  
YOUR  
COMMUNITY,  
YOU ARE  
URGED TO  
APPLY**