



SANTA BARBARA CIVIL GRAND JURY FACT SHEET

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

The primary function of the Civil Grand Jury is to investigate county, city, and joint-power agencies. This is a significant civil function. The Civil Grand Jury acts in a “watchdog” capacity by examining, carefully and completely, the operations of various government agencies within Santa Barbara County.

The Civil Grand Jury cannot investigate state or federal agencies as they lie outside its jurisdiction. Part of the investigation of governmental agencies includes the ability to audit operations, accounts, and records of officers and departments within the agency under investigation. The Civil Grand Jury is further charged with investigating individual complaints from citizens.

To carry out this function, the Civil Grand Jury is divided into committees, each of which concentrates on certain areas under investigation. These committees visit facilities, meet with officials, and develop recommendations for improving government operations.

No later than the end of its term, the Civil Grand Jury is required by law to submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Barbara. Agencies to which these findings/recommendations are directed are required to respond within 90 days.

CIVIL GRAND JURY: FULL TIME FOR ONE YEAR

Nineteen citizens of Santa Barbara County are sworn each July to serve as Civil Grand Jurors for 12 months. Each prospective Civil Grand Juror should sincerely and thoughtfully weigh all family, personal, and business obligations throughout the term of service. Membership is a significant time commitment of approximately 30–40 hours each week, depending on a juror’s committee assignments. Members of the Civil Grand Jury must be prepared to devote their time and energies to the responsibilities of their duties as Civil Grand Jurors.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CIVIL AND GRAND JURY NOMINATIONS?

By law, a person is eligible if that person is: a citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident of the County for at least one year, of ordinary intelligence and good character, and has a working knowledge of English. A person is not eligible if the person: has served on a Grand Jury within the past 12 months, is an elected public official, or has been convicted of a felony.

CIVIL GRAND JURY FEES AND MILEAGE

Each member of the Civil Grand Jury receives \$25.00 for their daily attendance at sessions of the full Grand Jury, their attendance as a member of any Grand Jury committee, and their mileage at the current County reimbursement rate for each mile they actually and necessarily travel to attend Civil Grand Jury meetings or any Civil Grand Jury committee session that has been duly called by the Committee chair or Foreperson.

GENERAL TIMELINE: APPLICATION TO SWEARING IN

In mid-May, the recruitment timeline for the Civil Grand Jury will conclude, marking the end of the application period. Following this, interviews with prospective jurors will begin in early June to assess their suitability for the role. By mid-June, preliminary and final drawings will be conducted to select the individuals who move forward in the process. Finally, the swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to take place on or around July 1, officially initiating the newly selected Grand Jury members into their roles.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

The jury offices in Santa Barbara at (805) 882-4530 or in Santa Maria at (805) 614-6464. Past Civil Grand Jury reports and further information can be found at <https://sbcgi.org/>.