

## ***YOU COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE!***

The Grand Jury is a unique and powerful institution because it offers the opportunity for an average citizen to directly investigate and directly influence how well government is serving the citizens of Sonoma County. Nineteen jurors and a minimum of five alternates are needed to successfully complete the annual cycle. Typically, about 45% of those who initially apply remain as candidates in June, at the time of the final random selection. This means that a minimum of 60 candidates are needed and they should be as interested, energetic, capable and as representative of Sonoma County demographics as possible. The Grand Jury is an institution that can particularly benefit from giving voice and attention to the various points of view that frequently accompany differences in age, gender, ethnicity, education, etc. Because the Grand Jury has near perfect independence, everything depends on the interests, capabilities and skills of the panel members.

The year-long commitment and the amount of time required on a weekly basis does not permit candidates to make frivolous decisions about whether to serve. It's easy to understand why more parents with young children, college students and working men and women do not volunteer. However, the nature of jury service does not explain why we don't have representative numbers of Hispanic, Native American, Black, Asian, or female candidates, etc. We need more candidates and we want them to reflect the diversity in age, ethnicity and gender found in Sonoma County.

Recruiting candidates and informing citizens about the opportunity to serve as a Grand Juror is primarily the responsibility of the Superior Court and its administrative staff. However, this Grand Jury has examined the recruiting process and has taken additional steps to reach out to the community. We would like to have more Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, young adults and women as candidates. To encourage this change, we have contacted established leaders in various recognizable parts of the community and impressed upon them the importance of Grand Jury service and the opportunity that it provides for personal growth and improving the effectiveness of government services. We asked that each leader personally invite several people who would meet the general requirements of talent and available time required of jurors to apply for the Grand Jury. We also invited these diversity leaders to meet together with current jurors to accomplish these goals. Recognizing that change will probably come slowly, we have suggested that everyone would further benefit if these leaders would meet at least annually to help continue this process.

Finally, a new group of Grand Jury alumni and interested citizens has formed locally; The Sonoma County Chapter of the California Grand Jurors' Association. This group will have stability and longevity not possible for a sitting jury and they plan to work closely with the Superior Court administrative office to improve the quantity and diversity of candidates on an annual basis. Their website is <http://sccja.org>.

## ***REQUEST TO BE A GRAND JUROR***

Each spring, applications for the new Grand Jury are solicited from the public for the fiscal year beginning in July. The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury is composed of 19 concerned citizens. Applicants are screened and interviewed by Superior Court Judges and 30 prospective Grand Jurors are selected from the applicant pool. The prospective Grand Jurors are summoned to appear before the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court in a public session. At this time, the clerk of the court draws individual names at random. They are added to the holdover members (up to 6) until a total of 19 is reached. This body constitutes the Civil Grand Jury for one year beginning in July. All 19 members take the oath of office and are "charged" by the Presiding Judge concerning their duties and responsibilities.

Each member is required by statute to be a U.S. citizen, at least eighteen years of age, be a resident of Sonoma County for at least one year, have a command of the English language, not be presently serving as a trial juror, have no felony or malfeasance convictions, and not be presently serving as an elected official. In addition to the above statutory requirements, a grand juror should be able to fulfill the time commitment required to be effective (15 hours/week), have the ability to work with others and be tolerant of their views, be free of personal agendas, have some familiarity with investigative techniques, report writing and computers, and have a genuine interest in community affairs.

Citizens on the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury should feel privileged to be selected to serve. They enter their service with interest and curiosity for learning more about the administration and operation of the government of Sonoma County. They give generously of their time for the betterment of government which, ultimately, belongs to them and to their fellow citizens.

Yes, I am interested in serving on the Sonoma County Grand Jury. Please send me a questionnaire to that I can apply for the Grand Jury or nominate someone else.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ Office/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Office/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail This Form To: Superior Court of California County of Sonoma  
Attn: Administration  
600 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Additional information may be found on the Grand Jury website:

[http://www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/index.php?v=gjury\\_info](http://www.sonomasuperiorcourt.com/index.php?v=gjury_info)



**THE SONOMA COUNTY**  
**CIVIL GRAND JURY**

P.O. Box 5109 · Santa Rosa · California · 95402 · (707)565-6330

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**CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM - CONFIDENTIAL**

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The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury is an investigative body which deals with complaints falling within its jurisdiction. The Grand Jury may examine all aspects of County and City government, public schools, redevelopment agencies and special districts.

**PERSON FILING COMPLAINT**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIBE YOUR COMPLAINT**

Identify the person(s) and/or the County or City government, school, redevelopment agency or special district that is the subject of this complaint. The complaint should clearly state specific and verifiable facts. (Include all names, dates, places, etc.)

Note: All information will be held in the strictest confidence.

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What other agencies, officials or persons have you contacted about this matter? What was (has) been their response to you? (Give names, addresses, phone numbers, contacts, dates)

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Is the subject matter of your complaint currently involved in litigation? NO \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_

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What action are you expecting from the Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury?

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**It is a crime to knowingly make a false report to the Grand Jury that a felony or misdemeanor has been committed. (CA Penal Code No. 148.5.d)**

**Attach copies of all pertinent documents and correspondence. Use additional sheets if necessary.**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please Note: Signed submissions are more likely to be considered.*

**Mail this completed form to:**

**THE SONOMA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY  
P.O. Box 5109  
Santa Rosa, California 95402**