

LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
FACT SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE CIVIL GRAND JURORS

(Please read carefully before completing the nomination form)

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 “watch-dog” function by examining, carefully and completely, the operations of various government agencies within Los Angeles County. The Civil Grand Jury cannot investigate state or federal agencies as they lie outside their 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. By statute, the Civil Grand Jury is required to inquire regarding the conditions and management of all public prisons within the County of Los Angeles.

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. The Audit, Citizens Complaints, and Jail Committees are considered essential because of the Civil Grand Jury’s mandate to audit the county, examine complaints from individual citizens, and inspect the jails.

CIVIL GRAND JURY – FULL TIME FOR ONE YEAR

Twenty-three citizens of Los Angeles County are sworn each July to serve as Civil Grand Jurors for 12 months. Membership on this body is a full-time commitment, 5 days a week and approximately 30 – 40 hours each week. Los Angeles County, with its large population, its numerous facilities, and problems, is so big and so complex that the members of the Civil Grand Jury must be prepared to devote their time and energies almost totally to the needs and demands of the Civil Grand Jury.

It is essential that all Civil Grand Jurors be in attendance at every grand jury session. All jurors are required to be in attendance for productive discussion of issues and decision-making to take place. Therefore, only the most pressing emergency or illness is considered legitimate reasons for being absent.

A particular juror’s hours may vary depending on his/her committee assignment that needs to be completed on the Final Report. Some members of the grand jury may not be required to report during the later part of their grand jury’s term.

Anyone who is nominated to serve on the Civil Grand Jury must be fully cognizant of the time involved. Each prospective civil grand juror should sincerely and thoughtfully weigh any and all family, personal, and business obligations before accepting nomination to the Civil Grand Jury.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CIVIL GRAND JURY NOMINATION?

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.

HOW ARE CIVIL GRAND JURORS SELECTED?

Each year every Superior Court judge may nominate two persons that he/she deems qualified to serve as Civil Grand Jurors. Any interested citizen who wishes to be considered for nomination may submit an application before the deadline in November to the Superior Court, Criminal Justice Center, 210 West Temple Street, 11th Floor, Room 11-506, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Applicants will be interviewed by the Grand Jurors Committee to determine each person's qualifications. The applications of qualified individuals are then made available to all Superior Court judges for possible nomination. The First Drawing is held in April to randomly select 40 prospective Grand Jurors and 30 alternates from the pool of nominees. A thorough background investigation of the prospective civil grand jurors and alternates is conducted by the Sheriff's Department. In June a final drawing is conducted to select 23 Civil Grand Jurors and 17 Alternates.

The 23 Civil Grand Jurors and Alternates are required to complete financial disclosure forms in compliance with California Government Code Sections 81000 – 91015.

Swearing-In for the civil Grand Jurors is July 1st of each year (or the earliest day thereafter if July 1st falls on a weekend). Jurors are required to be present for the Swearing-In Ceremony in July to receive the Charge to the Civil Grand Jury. In addition, all Civil Grand Jurors must be available during the month of July and August. These two months are dedicated to organization and training. Civil Grand Jurors unable to be present during these two months will be permanently replaced by Alternates.

CIVIL GRAND JURY FEES AND MILEAGE

Each member of the Civil Grand Jury is paid \$60.00 for either each day's attendance at sessions of the full Civil Grand Jury or each day's attendance as a member of any committee of the Civil Grand Jury, and for mileage at a rate payable to employees of the County for each mile actually and necessarily traveled in attending meetings of the Civil Grand Jury, or any session of a Civil Grand Jury committee duly called by the Foreperson or Committee Chair.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

If you have any questions about the nomination procedure, please contact:

County of Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury
Clara Shortridge Foltz, Criminal Justice Center
210 W. Temple Street, 11th Floor, Room 11-506
Los Angeles CA 90012

P.O. Box 866008(mail)
Los Angeles, CA 90086-6008

Telephone: 213-893-1047
<http://www.grandjury.co.la.ca.us>