CIVIL GRAND JURY

WHAT IS THE GRAND JURY?

The Grand Jury is the only independent "watchdog" investigative body in Madera County, keeping watch over numerous government agencies, cities and districts throughout Madera County. The Grand Jury's purpose is to guard the public interest.

WHAT DOES THE GRAND JURY DO?

The Grand Jury may investigate, evaluate and make recommendations to any city, county or special district agency that receives county funds. California law requires the Grand Jury to inspect county and city jails and detention facilities, and to review County financial accounts and records.

The Grand Jury is divided into committees, each of which concentrates on careful and diligent investigation of certain departments. These committees study complaints submitted by citizens of Madera County, visit various facilities, meet with officials, investigates records and documents, and make recommendations regarding the operations of local government.

The Grand Jury is created for the protection of society and the enforcement of the law. Although the responsibilities of a juror are many and diverse, the three predominant functions include:

A. Civil Government Oversight
B. Citizen Complaints
C. Criminal Investigations

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY CONCERNS TO THE GRAND JURY?

The Grand Jury is responsive to the suggestions and complaints from citizens about issues the jury should investigate. Each suggestion is reviewed by the full Grand Jury or assigned to one of the jury's committees for consideration. You can contact the Grand Jury through mail, phone, fax and email. Though the Grand Jury cannot investigate every issue, every comment is duly considered.

WHO ARE THE GRAND JURORS?

Grand Jurors are a diverse Court appointed volunteer group of citizens from the five supervisory districts. The community is best served by a mix of ethnic, gender, age and economic differences.

WILL MY COMMENTS TO THE GRAND JURY BE KEPT SECRET?

Grand Jurors are sworn to secrecy to protect the confidentiality of citizens who bring complaints against local government. The Grand Jury's records may not be inspected nor subpoenaed. All Grand Jury investigations and interviews are kept secret.

HOW DOES THE GRAND JURY RELEASE ITS REPORTS?

The Grand Jury issues its final report each year in late June. The report is available to all county residents and is delivered to the news media and to heads of affected government agencies. Affected agencies are required to respond to the report findings and recommendations within 60 – 90 days. Those responses are also available to the public. The Grand Jury may release individual reports as they are completed over the year. You may contact the Jury Commissioner's Office for a copy of the report.

HOW DOES THE GRAND JURY PERFORM ITS WORK?

The Presiding Judge of the Superior Court or his or her designee each July selects and impanels 19 Grand Jurors to serve for one year, fulfilling the duties as outlined under state law. The judge appoints a foreperson who presides over the Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury elects other officers and organizes itself. The Grand Jury meets in monthly sessions, as well as in smaller investigative committees throughout the week.

REQUIREMENTS:

Prospective Grand Jurors must be:

1. A U.S. citizen
2. Over 18 years of age.
3. A county resident for at least one year.
4. Of sound judgment with no felony conviction.
5. Possess sufficient knowledge of English.

Persons selected for the Grand Jury must make a commitment for a full year and be prepared to serve 20 to 25 hours a week.

GENERAL RULE:

Nominal fees for meetings are subject to 1099 reporting, each juror who is paid $600 or more will receive a 1099 and IRS will be notified of the earnings. Any questions, please notify the Madera County Auditor's Office at (559) 675-7707.

You will make a good Grand Juror if:

- You are interested in how local Government works and how it can operate more effectively.
- You can serve from 20-25 hours a week for one year.
- You are willing to cooperate with 18 others in creating and working toward common goals.
- You are willing to learn (or already have) the skills of listening, ask thoughtful questions, review documents and help write reports.
- You can exercise strict confidentiality during and after your term as Grand Juror.

HOW CAN THE PUBLIC CONTACT THE GRAND JURY?

A citizen may submit a written request for additional information or a signed complaint requesting a Grand Jury review. Based upon case load, the Grand Jury may or may not investigate the complaint.

FORWARD ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

Madera County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 534
Madera, CA 93639
Office: (559) 662-0946
Fax: (559) 662-0848
info@maderagrandjury.org

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Madera Superior Court Jury Division
200 South G Street
Madera, CA 93637
Office: (559) 416-5570
Fax: (559) 675-7853
jury@madera.courts.ca.gov

Madera Superior Court Website
www.madera.courts.ca.gov
Grand Jury Information

California Grand Jurors' Association Website
www.cgja.org

WAYS TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION:

1. Contact the Madera County Superior Court Jury Division.
2. Go to the Madera County Superior Court website and print the questionnaire.
3. Email Jury Division
4. Write to Jury Division