

NEWS RELEASE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT IN SEARCH OF VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

SAN FRANCISCO -- The San Francisco Superior Court is accepting applications for Civil Grand Jury service for the 2016-2017 term, Judge Susan Breall announced today.

"As chair of the Court's Civil Grand Jury Committee, I would like to encourage San Franciscans who want to make a difference in our City to apply to become a member of the Civil Grand Jury," Judge Breall said. "The Civil Grand Jury offers the opportunity to contribute to our community by examining City government to identify efficiencies, to suggest reforms or to highlight things that are not working well. This is a unique and exciting way to become involved in City affairs."

Applications and more detailed information about the Civil Grand Jury are available at <http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/>.

The application deadline is May 13, 2016. In order to serve, volunteers must be U.S. citizens; at least 18 years of age; have lived in San Francisco for at least the past 12 months; have no felony convictions; and be able to communicate in English.

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SFSC/2016 CIVIL GRAND JURY
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A requirement of the California Constitution, the Civil Grand Jury provides a “watchdog” function and has broad latitude to examine City departments, agencies and officials. The Civil Grand Jury issues a report detailing its findings and recommendations. Each affected City department or official is required to formally respond to each recommendation contained in the reports. The reports are then presented in public hearings before the Board of Supervisors.

The Civil Grand Jury is independent and selects its own topics for investigation. Past Civil Grand Juries have investigated issues such as the City’s Whistleblower Protection Ordinance; affordable housing; homelessness; disaster preparedness; and a variety of City Departments, including the Office of Assessor-Recorder, the Fire Department, and Public Utilities Commission. To conduct its investigations, the Jury interviews City officials, department heads, staff and others who have information relevant to the investigation. The Jury also has the authority to request data, reports, statistics, and other records to assist in its work.

The Civil Grand Jury’s term runs from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. After the initial screening, volunteers are interviewed by a panel of Superior Court Judges who select a pool of 30 jurors. From that pool, the 19 sworn jurors and 11 alternates are randomly selected.

Interested volunteers should be able to commit time consistently throughout the one-year term. The Civil Grand Jury usually meets once per week, with additional meetings and interviews scheduled as necessary.

A combination of diverse backgrounds, skills, and interests makes for the most effective Grand Juries. “San Francisco is a vibrant and diverse City,” Judge Breall said, “and we want our Civil Grand Jury to reflect that character.” Volunteers who enjoy researching, learning about City government, writing, editing, analyzing data, or meeting people committed to making San Francisco a better place to live are strongly encouraged to apply.

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