

NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

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SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CIVIL GRAND JURY

SAN FRANCISCO -- The San Francisco Superior Court is seeking volunteers for the 2015-16 Civil Grand Jury, only 28 days remain to apply.

“San Franciscans who want to make a difference in our City should apply to become a member of the Civil Grand Jury,” said Judge Dekreon, Chair of the Court’s Civil Grand Jury Committee. “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 working well. This is a unique 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 22, 2015. 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.

Required by the California Constitution, the Civil Grand Jury provides a “watchdog” function and has broad latitude to examine City departments, agencies and officials. The Civil

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SFSC/2015 CIVIL GRAND JURY
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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 pension reform; affordable housing; homelessness; the Central Subway; disaster preparedness; and a variety of City Departments, including the Department of Information Technology, the Ethics Commission, and MUNI. 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, 2015 through June 30, 2016. After 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. Initially, volunteers should have at least 5 hours per week; at peak times when reports are being finalized, the time commitment typically increases and may be as much as 20 hours per week. The Civil Grand Jury meets once per week, with additional meetings and interviews scheduled as necessary. Meetings are scheduled during and after business hours.

A mix of backgrounds, skills, and interests makes for the most effective Grand Juries. "San Francisco is a vibrant and diverse City," Dekreon said, "and the Civil Grand Jury should 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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