

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE GRAND JURORS

The following information is provided to assist citizens in their decision to volunteer as a prospective grand juror. Anyone who is ultimately selected to serve on the Grand Jury must be fully aware of the time and personal sacrifice involved. Therefore, each prospective grand juror should sincerely and thoughtfully weigh all family, personal, and business obligations before seeking this nomination.

HOW THE GRAND JURY IS SELECTED:

- **Screening Applications:** Application received from prospective grand jurors are forwarded to the Grand Jury Recruitment/Selection Committee comprised of judges of the Superior Court for screening to determine each individual's qualifications for Grand Jury service. The screening process will identify no more than ninety (90) individuals who will be interviewed.

The law requires that prospective grand jurors fairly reflect a cross section of our County. Grand jurors shall be selected from the five Supervisorial Districts in proportion to the number of inhabitants.

- **Investigation by Orange County Sheriff's Department:** Deputies from the O.C. Sheriff's Department will conduct a personal interview, perform a background investigation, make a check of law enforcement agencies, and submit a report to the Jury Commissioner on each of no more than ninety (90) individuals. **In order to facilitate the background investigation process, each applicant must have a California Notary Public verify their signature. The notary service is provided free of charge by the O.C. Sheriff's Department.**
- **Interview and Nomination:** The candidates selected for interview will meet with one to three judges of the Grand Jury Recruitment/Selection Committee. The individuals found to be most qualified will be placed in nomination on behalf of the committee.
- **Processing by Recruitment/Selection Committee:** The law requires that the Superior Court prepare a list of potential grand jurors of not less than twenty-five (25), nor more than thirty (30) names. As previously mentioned, the Recruitment/Selection Committee has the difficult task of screening dozens of applications to select the nominees. The Recruitment/Selection Committee will consider applicants from throughout the County in order to have a Grand Jury Panel as representative of the community as possible.
- **Drawing of Grand Jury:** **The twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) persons selected will constitute the Grand Jury Panel and they will be summoned to appear in court at a date and time designated in the summons.** The names of the persons who appear in response to the summons are placed in a box and nineteen (19) names are drawn by random selection. The nineteen (19) individuals so selected will constitute the Grand Jury for the ensuing fiscal year, July 1 through June 30. After the names of the nineteen (19) grand jurors have been drawn, the remaining names will be drawn by random selection as alternates. If, during the year, a vacancy occurs, a selection to fill this vacancy is made from the remaining names on the Panel in the order drawn.

ORIENTATION

An orientation program for prospective grand jurors will be held at the Superior Court of Orange County, Jury Assembly Room, 700 W. Civic Center Drive, Santa Ana 92701 in late January or early February. The program will be conducted by the Superior Court, the current Grand Jury, and the Orange County Sheriff's Department on the date and time listed on the application. **Attendance at this orientation is required of all applicants.**

REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Service on the Orange County Grand Jury is a full-time position for a full year. Orange County, with a population of more than three million people, numerous facilities, agencies, and challenges, has become so complex that members of the Grand Jury must be prepared to devote time and energy to the needs and demands of this activity.

The Grand Jury normally works a five-day week. Jurors must be flexible and able to serve some evening and weekend hours in addition to normal business hours. Generally, we discourage jurors from planning vacations during the course of their term as a Grand Juror. If a vacation is needed, they are requested to make it brief (one to two weeks). Although it is recognized that illnesses and other emergencies may prevent attendance at all sessions, members are expected to make a special effort to be present to fulfill their responsibilities as much as possible. Prospective grand jurors can anticipate numerous field trips, both in and out of the county, for purposes of gathering information and conducting investigations.

COMPENSATION

CA Penal Code §890 states that, "Unless a higher fee or rate of mileage is otherwise provided by statute or county or city and county ordinance, the fees for grand jurors are fifteen dollars (\$15) a day for each day's attendance as a grand juror, and the mileage reimbursement applicable to county employees for each mile actually traveled in attending court as a grand juror." In 2001 the Orange County Board of Supervisors set grand juror fees at fifty dollars (\$50) per day, and that has been the fee ever since; however, this fee is subject to change by the Orange County Board of Supervisors at any time. Onsite parking is provided without charge.

FACILITIES

The secured Grand Jury suite consists of a panel jury chamber, committee meeting rooms, and administrative offices and is staffed by an executive administrative assistant.

DUTIES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE GRAND JURY

The California Constitution authorizes the creation of a Grand Jury in each County. The California Rules of Court, the California Penal Code, and other statutes and legal opinions address qualifications, the selection of and the powers and duties of Grand Juries. By law, in California, Grand Juries have two basic functions:

- 1) Civil: to act as the public's watchdog by investigating and reporting upon the affairs of local government and to investigate allegations of misconduct against public officials and determine whether to present formal accusations requesting their removal from office.
- 2) Criminal: to weigh criminal charges and determine whether indictments should be returned.

CA Penal Code §912 authorizes the Superior Court judge in charge of the Grand Jury to appoint a Foreperson of the Grand Jury. Recent Grand Juries have found it expedient to elect certain officers, including the Foreperson Pro-Tem, Secretary, Sergeant at Arms, Parliamentarian, and Assistant Secretary. Grand Jury officers and committee chairs may constitute the Executive Board.

Committees are created by each Grand Jury and are responsible for studying and investigating areas of Orange County government, special districts, municipalities, and following through on complaints from the public. In addition, the Foreperson can direct the formation of committees to study unique problems which occur during a Grand Jury's tenure. Committee selection is based on a combination of panel needs and personal interest, with needs of the panel the overriding factor.

Presently, committee membership is determined by the Foreperson and is based upon a juror's expressed interest, past experience and training, as well as the need to balance committees with regard to size and to avoid conflicts in scheduling.

The following committees have been formed in past Grand Juries:

A. **CITIES COMMITTEE**

The Cities Committee is responsible for the thirty-four city governments within the County of Orange. The Cities Committee scope includes, but is not limited to, the functions of city councils and mayors, city managers, city attorneys, city clerks, city engineers, city finance, city parks and recreation, city planners, and city public works.

B. **COUNTY GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

The County Government Committee is responsible for the review of the operations of the Office of the Board of Supervisors, Assessor, Auditor/Controller, County Administrative Office, Clerk/Recorder, County Counsel, Personnel Department, and Tax Collector-Treasurer.

C. **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

The Criminal Justice Committee reviews and examines the operations of the Sheriff-Coroner, Probation Department, city police departments, District Attorney's Office and the Public Defender's Office. It may also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the County criminal justice system. CA Penal Code §919 states that the Grand Jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the County.

D. **ENVIRONMENT/TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

The Environment/Transportation Committee reviews activities of the following countywide agencies concerned with environmental planning and management: Planning Commission, Environmental Management Agency, all transportation agencies (including John Wayne Airport), the Integrated Waste Management Department, water and sanitation districts, waste, and recycling.

E. **HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Human Services Committee studies issues related to the welfare, health, and education of Orange County residents. The committee's area of review responsibility covers a broad range of

county entities. It may interact with the Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, Community Services Agency, and Community Resources, as well as others.

F. **SPECIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

The Special Issues Committee is responsible for studies dealing with Special Districts, Orange County Fire Authority, city fire departments, emergency medical response, and Registrar of Voters. The committee can also study subjects that are not under the purview of any other committee.

G. **SUPPORT COMMITTEES**

The following committees are responsible for the administration of the Grand Jury:

1. **CONTINUITY/EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

The Continuity/Editorial Committee is responsible for the development and implementation of a standardized format for all Grand Jury reports, including text, cover and insert designs, and distribution. It also assists in the compilation and editing of all final and interim reports, letters, and resolutions.

2. **PROMOTION/ORIENTATION COMMITTEE**

The Promotion/Orientation committee plans and conducts a training program for the next year's Grand Jury in compliance with CA Penal Code §914 (b). This committee also assists in the promotion of the Grand Jury function to encourage volunteers for the next term.