SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN BENITO
Office of the Jury Commissioner

440 Fifth Street, Room 205
Hollister, CA 95023
(831) 636-4057, ext. 40

INFORMATION ABOUT THE GRAND JURY

WHAT IS THE GRAND JURY?

The California Constitution requires the appointment every year of a Grand Jury for each county. In San Benito County, 19 Grand Jurors are appointed to serve for a term of one (1) year, but not more than two (2) consecutive years. The Grand Jury is an official body of the Court with independent authority that is not answerable to administrators or legislators. Its principal purpose is to protect the public interest. Appointment to the Grand Jury provides citizens a means to participate in the affairs of the local governments.

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE GRAND JURY?

California Penal Code section 893(a) states that a person is competent to act as a Grand Juror if that person possesses each of the following qualifications:

- Be "a citizen of the United States"
- Be "of the age of 18 years or older"
- Have been a resident of San Benito County for one (1) year immediately before being selected
- Be in possession of "natural faculties, of ordinary intelligence, of sound judgment, and of fair character"
- Be "possessed of sufficient knowledge of the English language."

California Penal Code section 893(b) states that a person is <u>not</u> competent to act as a Grand Juror if any of the following apply:

- "The person is serving as a trial juror in any court of this state"
- "The person has been discharged as a grand juror in any court of this state within one year" of being selected (although for ease of transition from one year to the next, Jurors may be held over for a second year at the discretion of the Court)
- "The person has been convicted of malfeasance in office or any felony or other high crime"; or;
- "The person is serving as an elected public officer."

The Grand Jurors are selected by lot after a screening process by the Court at the beginning of the County's fiscal year (July 1). Anyone interested in becoming a Grand Juror may submit an application to the Jury Commissioner at the above address.

WHAT DOES THE GRAND JURY DO?

The Grand Jury serves a primary civil (non-criminal) function – namely the investigation of county and city government, special districts, and school districts. These civil investigations result in recommendations for improvements to save taxpayers' dollars and to improve services.

To do this, the Grand Jury is divided into committees, each of which concentrates on careful and diligent investigation of certain departments or functions of government. These committees study complaints submitted by citizens of San Benito County, visit various facilities, investigate records and documents, draw conclusions regarding the operation of local governments, and meet with officials.

The Grand Jury may subpoena witnesses to give testimony or deliver documents for study. The Grand Jury may seek advice from the District Attorney or County Counsel and may discuss problems with a Judge of the Superior Court. If these officials are unable to assist properly, the Grand Jury may request advice from the State Attorney General. After performing these activities, the Grand Jury submits recommendations for improvement of the operation of the county government to the Board of Supervisors.

WHO MAY ASK THE GRAND JURY FOR AN INVESTIGATION?

The Grand Jury may receive and investigate complaints by private citizens, local government officials, and local government employees regarding the actions and performance of public officials. Complaints requesting an investigation must be submitted in writing with a legible signature, address, and telephone number, and must include any supporting evidence available. Members of the Grand Jury are sworn to secrecy and, except in very rare instances, neither minutes nor records of its meetings can be subpoenaed by any outside body, thus assuring that all complaints will be handled in an entirely confidential manner. If the Grand Jury believes that the evidence submitted is sufficient or within their jurisdiction, a detailed investigation may be conducted. Complaints requesting a Grand Jury investigation must be mailed to the following address. Complaints submitted to an address other than the one listed below will not be reviewed by the Grand Jury.

San Benito County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 1624
Hollister, CA 95024

DOES THE GRAND JURY INVESTIGATE CRIMES?

In San Benito County most criminal complaints are handled through the Court. The Grand Jury may hear evidence concerning criminal activity and, where there is probable cause to bring charges, return an indictment. This happens infrequently. Information about the Grand Jury's work in this area is not included in the Grand Jury's Final Report.

THE FINAL REPORT

A Final Report is prepared at the end of the Grand Jury's term, which contains each committee's recommendations. Copies of this report are distributed to the public officials, county libraries and news media. The County Board of Supervisors must respond to each of the Grand Jury's recommendations within 90 days. Should you want to know what your Grand Jury has investigated and recommended, read the local library's copy or ask to read a copy of the Report at

Clerk of the Superior Court

440 Fifth Street, Room 205

Hollister, CA 95023

SAN BENITO COUNTY

PROSPECTIVE GRAND JUROR QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is to assist the Superior Court Judge in compiling a list of nominees which fairly represents a cross-section of our county. The information supplied on this questionnaire is confidential

YOUR NAME _____ HOME PHONE _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____ WORK PHONE _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____ E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY IN SAN BENITO COUNTY _____ DRIVER'S LICENSE OR I.D. NUMBER _____

If you are currently employed, please provide the following information:

YOUR OCCUPATION _____ ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER _____

EMPLOYER'S NAME _____ CITY/STATE _____

If you are married or have children, please provide the following information:

YOUR SPOUSE'S NAME _____ SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION _____

AGE(S) OF CHILDREN _____ SPOUSE'S EMPLOYER _____

BELOW ARE THE STATUTORY QUALIFICATIONS FOR SERVICE AS A GRAND JUROR. PLEASE ANSWER EACH ONE BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX:

Are you a citizen of the United States?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are you at least 18 years of age?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Have you resided in San Benito County for at least one year before being selected?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Do you possess ordinary intelligence and good character?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Do you possess a working knowledge of the English language?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are you presently serving as a trial juror?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Have you been discharged as a Grand Juror within the last year?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Have you been convicted of a felony or malfeasance in office?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Do you possess ordinary intelligence and good character?	☐ YES	☐ NO
Are you presently serving as an elected official?	☐ YES	☐ NO

The following questions are to assist the court in ensuring that it selects individuals who are representative of the community and free of bias.

NAMES AND LOCATIONS OF SCHOOLS YOU HAVE ATTENDED:

NAME OF SCHOOL	LOCATION OF SCHOOL	GRADE LEVEL COMPLETED OR DEGREE ATTAINED

LIST ANY ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH YOU BELONG, AND THE LENGTH OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT:

_____

_____

_____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN NOMINATED FOR OR SERVED ON A GRAND JURY? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please state when and where: _____

_____

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SERVING ON A GRAND JURY?

_____

_____

_____

HAVE YOU EVER HELD A PUBLIC OFFICE? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what office and where?

_____

_____

ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN AN ELECTED OFFICIAL? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please state what office and when it was held by you:

_____

_____

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN AN EMPLOYEE OF A PUBLIC AGENCY IN THIS COUNTY? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what agency and when?

_____

_____

DO YOU HAVE RELATIVES EMPLOYED BY ANY PUBLIC AGENCY IN THIS COUNTY? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please state relative's name, relation to you and by whom they are employed:

_____

PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS, INCLUDING EMPLOYERS, POSITIONS HELD, AND DURATION OF EACH:

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	POSITION HELD	LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT

PLEASE SUMMARIZE YOUR SPOUSE'S EMPLOYMENT HISTORY FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS, INCLUDING EMPLOYERS, POSITIONS HELD, AND DURATION OF EACH:

PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	POSITION HELD	LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please state the dates, what branch, highest rank attained, and nature of employment:

DATES OF SERVICE	BRANCH OF SERVICE	HIGHEST RANK	NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY SPECIAL SKILLS OR ABILITIES YOU POSSESS THAT THE JUDGE SHOULD BE AWARE OF IN CONSIDERING YOUR APPLICATION:

_____

_____

_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS, COMMENTS OR OTHER MATTERS YOU WOULD LIKE FOR THE JUDGE TO CONSIDER IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR APPLICATION?

_____

_____

_____

***NOTE*: Applications for nomination as a member of the San Benito County Grand Jury may be subject to background check and investigation as to the statutory qualifications for service and the applicant's ability and suitability for service.**

In support of my application for selection as a member of the San Benito County Grand Jury, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed at _____, California, on this _____ day of_____20_____.

_____

Signature

The following questions are optional and will be used for statistical purposes only. The information provided will not be used as part of the grand jury selection process.

1. Age at the time of this application:

   ☐ 18-25

   ☐ 26-34

   ☐ 35-44

   ☐ 45-54

   ☐ 55-64

   ☐ 65-74

   ☐ 75 and over

2. Gender:

   ☐ Male ☐ Female

3. Race or ethnicity (you may select more than one):

   ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

   ☐ Asian

   ☐ Black or African-American

   ☐ Hispanic/Latino

   ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

   ☐ White

   ☐ Other race or ethnicity (please state:_____)

   ☐ Decline to answer