



Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Releases FY 2019-20 Reports

The Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, announces the release of six reports for this Civil Grand Jury term. The Civil Grand Jury considered 52 complaints that resulted in six reports. The Civil Grand Jury conducted over 120 interviews of government officials, employees, and local experts during the investigations into these complaints. The 2019-2020 Civil Grand Jury volunteered countless hours to ensure the efficiency of local government, including going above and beyond by agreeing to stay on an additional six months while the Court transitioned the institution of the Civil Grand Jury to a calendar-year term.

“Our Court proudly recognizes the dedicated efforts of our Civil Grand Jurors. The time-honored tradition of the Civil Grand Jury is the cornerstone of good County governance. Although the global pandemic and shelter-in-place orders changed the daily lives of everyone in Santa Clara County, our Grand Jurors remained steadfast in their examination of government practices, working to improve quality of life for all of its citizens,” said Presiding Judge Deborah A. Ryan. “This was a tremendous service to the community, and their efforts have resulted in six detailed reports. Our Court celebrates the courage, integrity, and objectivity of our outgoing panel and looks forward to the efforts of the newly empaneled Jurors for 2021.”

DISCLAIMER: THE VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THESE REPORTS ARE THOSE OF THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY ONLY AND DO NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICY OR POSITION OF THE SANTA CLARA SUPERIOR COURT.

[1. Conservatorships Revisited](#)

Shortened Summary: Though the Civil Grand Jury recognizes the difficulty of the work and the dedication of the staff in the Santa Clara County Public Administrator / Guardian / Conservator Office, this report details the communication issues that could be resolved to the benefit of the staff and the conservatees. The Civil Grand Jury recommended several avenues to improve the efficiency of this office and raise the morale of staff.

[Summary in Report on pages 5-6](#)

[2. West Valley-Mission Community College District Police Department: An Open and Shut Case](#)

Shortened Summary: After receiving a complaint from the public, the Civil Grand Jury began an investigation of the Police Department serving the West Valley-Mission Community College District. The Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury concluded that due to a lack of a full complement of sworn officers, deficiencies in supervisory actions, deficiencies in officer training, and an outdated procedures manual, the District Police Department is at a disadvantage for completing police reports in a timely manner. These issues may potentially undermine confidence in the Police Department. The Civil Grand Jury made several recommendations that would enable the Police Department to improve the processes and procedures that govern police report management and ensure timeliness and accuracy of those reports.

[Summary in Report on page 3](#)

[3. The Case of the Felonious Process Server](#)

Shortened Summary: The Civil Grand Jury discovered that an unusual lapse in Department of Justice notifications denied the Santa Clara County Clerk-Recorder's Office accurate information as to the legal status of a registered Process Server. The Civil Grand Jury recommended procedures that, should another lapse be discovered, the County Clerk-Recorder's Office would be able to address the situation in a timely manner.

No summary in report

[4. Why Aren't There More Female Firefighters in Santa Clara County?](#)

Shortened Summary: In a county known for embracing diversity, the Civil Grand Jury explored why there was a dearth of female firefighters in the County of Santa Clara. The Grand Jury found that a lack of effort and attention meant there is little priority from fire departments in the County to seek out female candidates. The Civil Grand Jury offered recommendations that would establish equal support, treatment, and opportunity for female firefighters as is provided for their male colleagues.

[Summary in Report on page 4](#)

[5. Transparency in the San Jose Unified School District: Lessons to be Learned](#)

Shortened Summary: When the San Jose Unified School District began looking for solutions to improve teacher retention by creating teacher housing on District-owned property, gaps in the procurement and contracting processes became apparent. These

gaps led to misunderstandings by the public that caused distrust in the District's activities. The Civil Grand Jury recommended process and procedure changes that, if adopted, could improve the public's confidence in the District's contracting, lobbying, and oversight actions.

[Summary in Report on page 3 - 4](#)

[6. Continuity Report](#)

Shortened Summary: The Civil Grand Jury examined and documented the responses to the 2018-2019 Civil Grand Jury reports. The Civil Grand Jury also requested follow up on commitments that public agencies countywide made in response to selected 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury Reports.

[Statement on page 3](#)