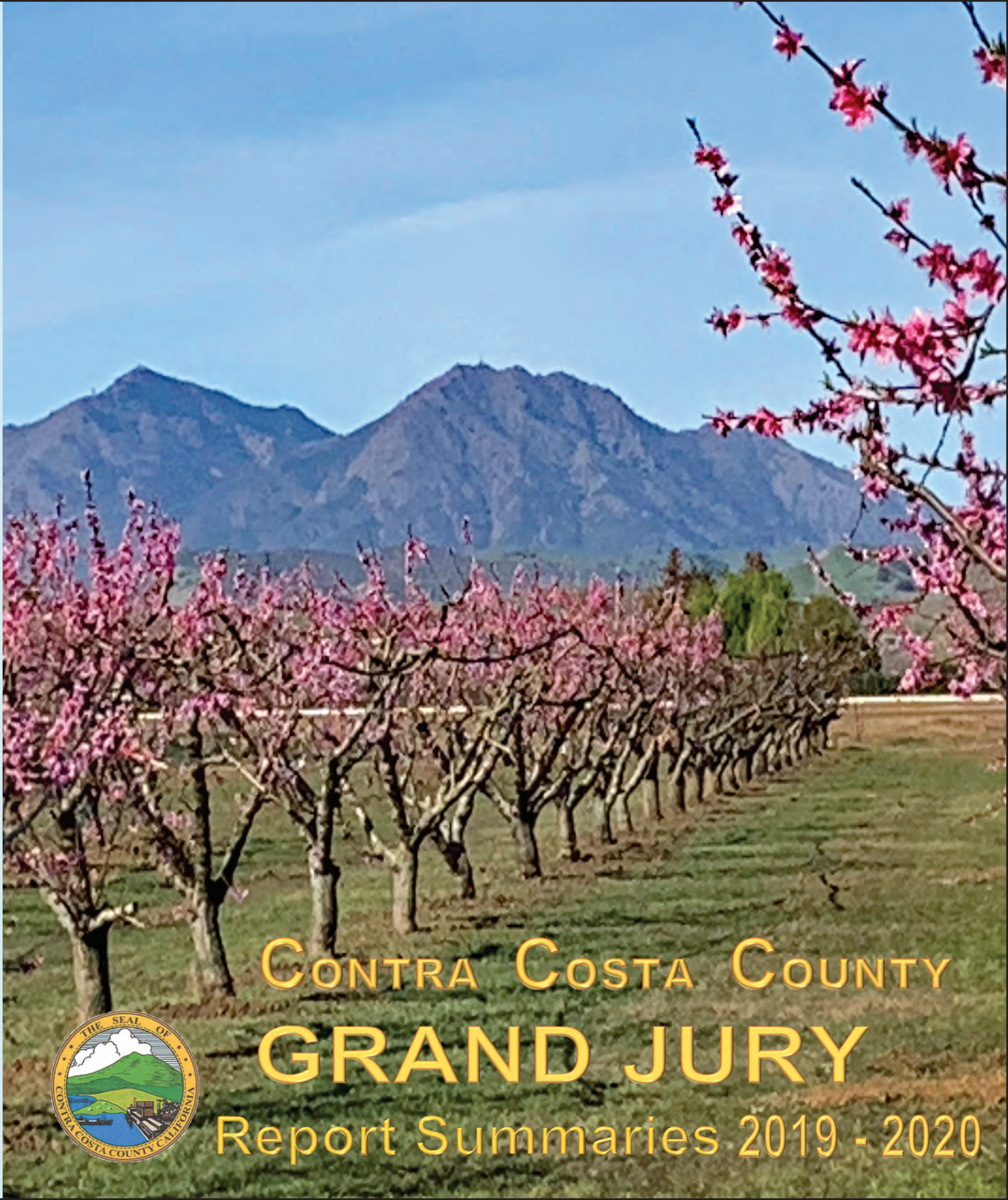


Learn About Our County • Investigate Facts • Recommend Solutions  
[www.cc-courts.org/grandjury](http://www.cc-courts.org/grandjury)



# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY GRAND JURY Report Summaries 2019 - 2020



LEARN ABOUT OUR COUNTY

# Would You Make a Good Grand Juror?

The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury consists of 19 citizens. A new Grand Jury is impaneled each year and functions as officers of the court. It is an independent body under the guidance of a Superior Court Judge. Volunteering represents a minimum commitment of 20-30 hours each week on jury-related activities.

Apart from the investigations mandated by the California Penal Code, each county's Grand Jury decides what to investigate. Grand Juries are authorized to examine, review, and evaluate special districts, city agencies and the county government to ensure that the duties of these entities are being lawfully conducted.

Contra Costa County residents are encouraged to apply for Grand Jury service. Applications are screened for eligibility. Judges interview potential jurors and select about 30 qualified candidates. A random drawing is held to select the final 19 jurors and alternates at the impanelment ceremony usually held mid-June. However, because of the COVID-19 outbreak, the 2020-2021 jury selection has been postponed until mid-December 2020.

#### **To qualify you must be:**

- A citizen of the United States, age 18 or older, and a resident of the county for at least one year immediately before being sworn in
- Possess natural faculties, ordinary intelligence, sound judgment, and fair character
- Possess sufficient knowledge of the English language

#### **No person is eligible to act as a grand juror if any of the following apply:**

- Is serving in an elective office or as a trial juror in any court in California
- Has been discharged as a grand juror in any court in California within one year
- Has been convicted of malfeasance in office or any felony or other high crime

**Interested?** Contact Court Administration at the Superior Court at 925-608-2621 or visit the website: [www.cc-courts.org/grandjury](http://www.cc-courts.org/grandjury)

**How to refer an issue for investigation:** Call 925-608-2621 or go to <http://www.cc-courts.org/grandjury> and submit the online form.

**The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury is a unique experience.**

**It is your County. It is your money.**

**If the Civil Grand Jury does not ask the tough questions,**

**Who will?**

# CIVIL GRAND JURY OF CONTRA COSTA COUNTY



The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury is part of the State of California's Superior Court but operates as an independent body. It investigates and analyzes the operations of local government agencies/departments at the city, special districts, and county levels.

The agencies addressed in the reports are required to respond to all findings. Recommendations are posted on the grand jury's website:

[www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury-reports.aspx](http://www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury-reports.aspx)

This year's 2019-2020 grand jury members are grateful for the cooperation and diligence of the dozens of government employees interviewed, and it was an honor participating in this extraordinary experience.

If you have the time and passion for improving your local government and enjoy working with other like-minded people, consider applying and serving on the Civil Grand Jury.

## **ANNE GRANLUND**

Foreperson 2019-2020  
CCC Civil Grand Jury

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## **SAMIL BERET**

Foreperson 2020-2021  
CCC Civil Grand Jury

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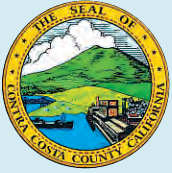
# A NOTE ON THE COVID-19 VIRUS



The Grand Jury conducted the majority of its investigations before Contra Costa County and the State of California issued shelter-in-place orders, and finalized its work using conference calls and virtual meetings. The Jury recognizes that County departments, special districts, public agencies, and cities are currently addressing COVID-19 related matters and the Jury has adjusted implementation dates in the recommendations accordingly.



LEARN HOW GOVERNMENT WORKS



# CONDUCT INVESTIGATIONS

## SECURING OUR WATER SUPPLY FROM CYBER ATTACK



Contra Costa County residents rely on the water districts to deliver safe, clean water for drinking, cleaning, and sanitation. The County's drinking water, like much of our infrastructure, is subject to cyber (or computer) attacks from terrorists.

The Grand Jury investigated the security of the County's water supply and measures being implemented by the two largest providers to comply with federal laws for protecting water from cyberattacks. Both Contra Costa Water District and East Bay Municipal Utilities District were investigated for their compliance with the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the American Water Infrastructure Act of 2018.

The Grand Jury concluded the water districts are securing the County's water supply from cyberattacks. The Grand Jury recommends the water districts consider updating their cyber policy statements and publishing them on their websites to inform the public.

## CONTRA COSTA BART RIDER CONCERNS

The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system is one of the Bay Area's most vital transportation links. Carrying roughly 450,000 travelers every day, BART links four of the Bay Area's nine counties and the region's two largest airports. Contra Costa County residents have a large and continuing investment in BART.

BART routinely surveys its riders to determine how satisfied the riders are with its service. The riders from Contra Costa County (the County) have specific issues with BART's service. These surveys reflect that many County riders feel safety and cleanliness have declined, and fare evasion has increased. The Grand Jury investigated the reasons behind Contra Costa County rider dissatisfaction with three core issues - safety, cleanliness, and fare evasion. BART has many initiatives to improve these three core issues; however, rather than improvement, the Grand Jury found that surveys indicate a downward trend in rider satisfaction.

The Grand Jury makes the following recommendations: To reduce fare evasion, BART should consider identifying funds to modify or replace fare gates and establish a timeline for implementation. BART should consider continuing with its commitment to add 19 police officers per year over the next five years, creating a police presence on all County trains and at all stations. It should also consider adding station agents at the Antioch and Pittsburg Center eBART stations. BART should update its strategic plan, which expires in June 2020, and consider how its target of 85% customer satisfaction will be achieved. Finally, BART should consider a survey process that includes non-riders to improve the accuracy and value of its satisfaction surveys.



## POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING Impact on Community Policing Services and Personnel



Local government provides police services for the safety and protection of Contra Costa County residents. Community law enforcement in Contra Costa County (the County) is performed by the police department in each city and by the Office of the Sheriff in unincorporated areas of the County. The Grand Jury investigated factors affecting police staffing in the County and the resulting impact on community policing services and law enforcement personnel.

The Grand Jury compared staffing levels of sworn officers in each police department to County and California state averages. The Grand Jury found that relatively low authorized sworn officer levels and ongoing unfilled officer positions contribute to mandatory officer overtime, reduced level of some police services, and longer emergency response times. The Grand Jury also found that fewer applicants are applying to law enforcement. Police agencies in the County compete for applicants, and each agency conducts its own recruiting and hiring programs, replicating efforts across the County.

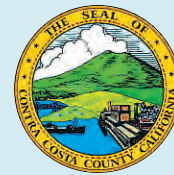
The Grand Jury recommends cities and towns in the County consider identifying funds to increase the number of sworn officers to fill currently understaffed units. The Grand Jury also recommends cities and towns consider identifying funds to study the feasibility of a countywide screening process for police officer positions. The Grand Jury recommends the County consider identifying funds to develop a countywide outreach program to attract more applicants to police agencies.

## PUBLIC SAFETY POWER SHUTOFF (PSPS) Is Contra Costa County Prepared?

In 2018, Pacific Gas and Electric instituted a Public Safety Power Shutoff program whereby power is proactively shut off under certain circumstances in areas of elevated or extreme wildfire threat. In Contra Costa County, there are regions designated by the California Public Utilities Commission as having elevated or extreme wildfire threats that may be impacted by a PSPS event. In 2019, the County experienced two PSPS events. These events occurred October 9-11 and then again October 26-30.

The Grand Jury found that the planning for PSPS events in the County showed considerable variation and that there was no coordinated approach by which to provide County departments with a guide for PSPS planning. The Grand Jury also found that during the PSPS events of October, there were communication issues, including cell site failure, which affected the County's ability to contact medically at-risk residents and compromised the internal communication among first responders and other emergency operations staff.

The Grand Jury recommends that the County consider developing a comprehensive PSPS-specific plan for use as a guide by departments to delineate procedures, identify needed resources, and provide sufficient internal and external communication capabilities. The Grand Jury also recommends that the County continue to work with Pacific Gas and Electric to address issues for improvement and explore areas of opportunity which would benefit County residents.



WRITE REPORTS

## JUVENILES IN DETENTION: Changing Conditions, Changing Lives



Contra Costa County manages two facilities for juvenile detention: John A. Davis Juvenile Hall located in Martinez and Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility located in Byron. The Grand Jury examined both facilities in the County and during the investigation found that their staff were dedicated and professional.

The Grand Jury examined behavioral management systems, mental health services, staffing in detention facilities, educational services, post-release care, and cooperation between the Probation Department and Contra Costa County Behavioral Health Services.

The Grand Jury found that it is difficult to obtain data on program effectiveness and recommends hiring a case manager and acquiring a case management system to compile data on recidivism and program effectiveness. In addition, the Grand Jury recommends hiring additional mental health care staff to reduce the wait time for post-release services for youth and families.

The Jury further recommends that the Probation Department consider expanding the use of the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility to include both male and female low-level youth offenders to allow girls to benefit from the work experience programs.

## WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

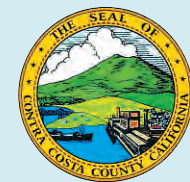
During 2017 and 2018, California experienced the most destructive wildfire seasons on record. Approximately two-thirds of Contra Costa County (the County) is in a fire hazard zone. The Grand Jury examined the County's preparedness for future wildfires.

Contra Costa County fire protection services are provided by five fire protection districts and three city fire departments. The Grand Jury found that fire districts and fire departments in the County have responded to the elevated risk of wildfires in many ways, including:

- Increased staffing and patrols during a Red Flag Warning
- Expanded weed abatement programs
- Advising homeowners on hardening their homes and property
- New technology to detect fires earlier and aid in evacuation
- Evacuation planning
- Public education on fire hazards and preparation for fires

The Grand Jury recommends that County fire districts and fire departments consider updating their wildfire evacuation plans and incorporating advanced routing technology. The Grand Jury also recommends that the County fire district boards and the cities of El Cerrito, Pinole and Richmond consider identifying funds to adopt or expand the use of new technologies to help detect fires in high-risk areas. Additionally, the Grand Jury recommends that East Contra Costa Fire Protection District consider identifying options to fund additional fire stations and staff to restore fire services to pre-2008 levels.





# IMPROVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## DO OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS HAVE ADEQUATE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES?



Contra Costa County school districts develop and implement emergency preparedness plans used by school staff during emergencies. Depending on the nature of the emergency, students and staff may become stranded at school for extended periods. Adequate preparation includes training and the identification of on-site items schools may need during an emergency. These items include water, food, and medical supplies and equipment.

The Grand Jury examined what emergency supplies are stored at public schools in Contra Costa County, how schools fund the cost of these supplies, and whether CPR and First Aid refresher training is currently offered to teachers.

The availability of emergency supplies at Contra Costa County schools varies widely from school to school and district to district. The Contra Costa County Office of Education has published a recommended Emergency Supplies list. Some schools did not demonstrate to the Grand Jury that they have the items on this list, while others met or exceeded the recommendations.

The Grand Jury recommends that Contra Costa County school district boards consider adopting the Office of Education Emergency Supplies list for their schools and identifying funding sources to purchase the supplies. The Grand Jury also recommends that the Contra Costa County school district boards consider developing a plan to identify organizations that provide CPR and First Aid refresher training for all their teachers.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

After the grand jury's reports have been finalized and approved by the supervising Superior Court judge, they are distributed to the agencies addressed in the reports. The reports, including findings and recommendations, are posted on the grand jury's website:

[www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury-reports.aspx](http://www.cc-courts.org/civil/grand-jury-reports.aspx)

Reports are always addressed to elected individuals such as the Board of Supervisors, city councils, special districts boards of directors, or the Sheriff. They are the only ones with legal and/or budgetary authority to respond and implement the recommendations.

Elected individuals must respond within 60 days of receipt of the report, and elected bodies within 90 days. These responses are added to the reports on the website, and a summary of them is issued as a separate report entitled Compliance and Continuity, which is also posted on the website. This process enables everyone to see what the grand jury has reviewed and recommended, and the agencies' responses to these recommendations.





# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2019-2020



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY



*The Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury is composed of nineteen citizens, fully independent of administrators, politicians, and legislators. With its investigatory powers, it makes recommendations that improve city and county services and save taxpayers dollars. The Grand Jury speaks out when government does not perform effectively.*

- Can you keep a secret? All work must be confidential.
- Are you a good listener?
- Do you have the energy to commit to a year of productive work?
- Can you ask thoughtful questions, review documents, and help write lucid reports?
- Are you interested in trying to increase the efficiency of local government, save taxpayers dollars and improve services?
- Would you enjoy developing solutions to problems?

If you answered yes to the above questions, you could make a valuable member of the Civil Grand Jury.

### Benefits

The Grand Jury provides you with the opportunity to make a difference. You will become involved in a challenging and educational year.

### Eligibility

Grand Jury candidates must:

- Be a citizen of the United States and a resident of Contra Costa County for at least one year
- Be at least eighteen years of age
- Possess ordinary intelligence, sound judgment, and fair character
- Possess sufficient knowledge of the English language
- Never have been convicted of a felony, malfeasance, or other high crime

If you have the time and the deep interest in your community, you are urged to apply.

A Civil Grand Jury member is an officer of the Superior Court and operates under its auspices.

You will find it a valuable and rewarding experience in a pleasant and stimulating atmosphere.

## It is a rare privilege to serve on the Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury.

**Refer a complaint or issue** for investigation! You can make public agencies better!

The Grand Jury welcomes inquiries from the public, residents, and employees of Contra Costa County. Call 925-608-2621 or go to <http://www.cc-courts.org/grandjury> and submit the online form.

January	February	March	April	May	June	July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• January 11, 2021 Recruitment Begins</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 12 Applications Due</li> <li>• Applicant Orientation (Scheduled for the end of March )</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews will be scheduled</li> <li>• Live Scan (Fingerprint) Appointments scheduled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Administration will monitor Live Scan Results and schedule reprinting appointments as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 11- 2020-2021 Grand Jury Discharge and 2021/2022 Grand Jury Impanelment Ceremony</li> <li>• June 14 – 18 Orientation</li> <li>• June 22 – 25 Orientation continued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates TBD – California Grand Jury Association (CGJA) Training</li> </ul>

**2021-2022 CIVIL GRAND JURY RECRUITMENT & ORIENTATION**

\*Schedule may be subject to change