



Photo by Grand Jury

**Dedicated December 10, 2022
to the
Veterans of WWII**



Superior Court State of California

COUNTY OF KERN

COLETTE M. HUMPHREY
Judge

1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield, CA 93301
(661) 868-4934

Dear Members of the 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury:

You have been duly impaneled, sworn, and now constitute the 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury. In accordance with Penal Code section 914, it is my duty to instruct and charge you concerning the functions and laws that apply to your work. It is your duty to follow these instructions.

Your responsibilities are chiefly investigatory. There are two broad components.

- First, to examine the functioning and performance of public offices and officers. You will report on your examinations and you may make recommendations for changes to the operations and structure of public offices or agencies. This is sometimes called the civil or “housekeeping” function.
- Second, to inquire into possible public offenses and, more rarely, allegations of misconduct in office of public officers and then determine whether to return indictments charging the commission of public offenses, or accusations in the case of public office misconduct. This responsibility is sometimes called the criminal function.

Most grand juries have found their various functions are more easily accomplished by dividing into committees. There is no hard and fast rule as to what or how many committees you should organize. In the past, grand juries have functioned through committees such as administrative, criminal justice, health & welfare, and various other special committees. The foreperson will make committee appointments after having had an opportunity to become acquainted with all members of the grand jury, including the background, occupation, and general qualifications of each member. Each committee will take part in selecting its own chairperson.

The 19 of you are expected to work as a body of one. You will need to determine a specific day for a weekly group meeting as well as set the operating schedule for your committees. Depending upon the work you do, there may be additional days requiring your participation and attendance with the entire Grand Jury. To be eligible for a daily juror’s fee, each juror must serve in two official sessions per day for a total of at least five hours or more. Further, you shall hold sessions when requested by the District Attorney for the presentation of criminal cases; or when requested by the Presiding Judge; and when directed by the Attorney General.

The Grand Jury is required by law to inquire into or investigate and report certain agencies or institutions. The majority of these required reporting fall under the Law and Justice Committee. To ensure that all other committees are functioning at a standardized pace, the Court, by this charge, will require all committees to investigate and report on a minimum of two entities under that committees’ jurisdiction.

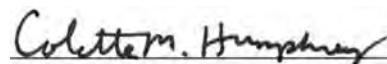
Through your Foreperson, you may ask the advice of the Presiding Judge, the County Counsel, or the District Attorney. Unless advice is requested, only members of the Grand Jury may be present during your sessions. The District Attorney may appear before you for the limited purpose of providing information or advice as to matters within their authority. Only Grand Jury members may be present during the expression of the opinions of the Grand Jurors or when the Jury votes.

You may seek advice from the County Counsel on civil matters. As to administrative and organizational matters, the issuing of reports or other similar matters, the Foreperson may contact the Presiding Judge for advice.

Grand Jury proceedings are confidential and are not to be discussed outside of the Grand Jury. Unauthorized disclosure of grand jury matters is a criminal offense. No grand juror has any authority to act individually. All visits made on behalf of the Grand Jury are to be made with two or more grand jurors present. Action may be taken only after a majority of grand jurors have authorized it.

Wednesday, July 6, 2022, you are to report to the third floor, Multi-Purpose Room of the County Administrative Center for a one-day orientation. This will mark your first day of duty.

The public rightfully expects you will diligently and impartially perform your duties, dedicating yourselves to the furtherance of the general good. I have confidence in each of you and I am equally confident your term will prove to be rewarding for you and the citizens of the County whom you have chosen to serve.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Colette M. Humphrey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Colette" being more prominent.

Colette M. Humphrey, Presiding Judge
Superior Court of California, County of Kern



GRAND JUROR'S OATH

The following oath is administered to Grand Jurors:

"I do solemnly swear (affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of the State of California, and all laws made pursuant to and in conformity therewith, will diligently inquire into, and true presentment make, of all public offenses against the people of this state, committed or triable within this county, of which the grand jury shall have or can obtain legal evidence. Further, I will not disclose any evidence brought before the grand jury, nor anything which I or any other grand juror may say, nor the manner in which I or any other grand juror may have voted on any matter before the grand jury. I will keep the charge that will be given to me by the court."

(Penal Code §911)

2022-2023

Kern County Grand Jurors



Name	Terms Served	City	Nominating Judge
Enrique Vicuna, Foreperson	2018-19, 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. M. G. Bush
Georgina Atchison	2018-19, 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. M. G. Bush
Donalda Biscar	2018-19, 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. M. G. Bush
Stephen Bowles	2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. J. K. Dulcich
Melissa H. Brown	2022-23	Tehachapi	Hon. G.A. Pulskamp
Gary J. Chaffin	2014-15, 2015-16, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. J. W. Lua
Dennis Mike Elliott	2013-14, 2014-15, 2016-17, 2017-18, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. R. W. Wyatt
Sharron K. Forney	2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. B. M. McNamara
Raymond Gallaher	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. E. Rodriguez
Gayle Royal, and Ladybug	2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23	Pine Mountain Club	Hon. J. D. Oglesby
Kathleen Green	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. D. R. Zulfa
Charlene Hill	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. D. R. Zulfa
Patricia Jepsen	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. J. R. Brownlee
Cheri Olcott-Banks	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. J. W. Lua
Tom Pasek	2016-17, 2017-18, 2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. T. Organ-Bowles
J. Randall Regan	2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. G. A. Pulskamp
Alfredo Robledo	2021-22, 2022-23	Wasco	Hon. R.W. Wyatt
Duane Shellcross	2022-23	Tehachapi	Hon. B.M. McNamara
Debra Watson	2021-22, 2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. D. R. Zulfa
Valerie Edmondson (Also Served)	2022-23	Bakersfield	Hon. R.W. Wyatt

2022 – 2023
Kern County Grand Jury





2022 – 2023 Kern County Grand Jury Formal Statement

Grand juries have existed in the State of California since the adoption of the State's Constitution in 1849-50. The Constitution requires that a grand jury be drawn and summoned at least once a year in each county. According to Kern County Board of Supervisors' records, the first Grand Jury was selected in 1867. The Board of Supervisors' meeting minutes, reflected the apportionment of persons to be selected and returned from various townships to serve as Grand and Trial Jurors for the year 1867. This would have been the first Kern County Grand Jury. At that time names of persons to serve were drawn from the property tax assessment roll. One hundred and fifty-six years later, the 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury was selected by a blind draw of over 30 volunteers. Nineteen volunteers and six alternates were selected to represent Kern County and sworn in by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court to uphold the Grand Juror's Oath.

All grand juries are independent judicial bodies. The primary function of the grand jury, and the most important reason for its existence, is the examination of all aspects of county government, special districts, cities, and citizen complaints to insure that these bodies are being effectively governed and that public funds are being judiciously handled – in general, assuring that honest, efficient government is carried out in the best interest of the people. Additionally, the law mandates the grand jury inquire into the condition and management of public prisons within the county.

The Grand Jury is considered to be the watchdog for the citizens of the county and an arm of the court. The Grand Jury also functions as an investigative body, conducting hearings which can lead to indictments by the Attorney General and the District Attorney's offices. To fulfill these responsibilities the Grand Jury may subpoena persons and/or records to obtain information on subjects under investigation. To protect the constitutional rights of parties being investigated, the Grand Jury as a group is and as individuals are sworn to complete lifelong confidentiality.

Standing Committees are established to conduct investigations:

- **Administration, Audit, and County Service** Committee reviews and oversees County Departments management, performance, and execution of fiscal responsibilities to the taxpayers of Kern County.

- **Cities and Joint Powers** Committee reviews and oversees incorporated cities (11) and Joint Powers Agreements within the County. This committee investigates records, accounts, officers, departments and functions of cities.
- **Health, Education, and Social Services** Committee reviews and inquires into the operations of all schools and hospital districts, and county departments dealing with health services, social services, and educational issues.
- **Law and Justice** Committee reviews and investigates all law enforcement agencies, jails and prisons within Kern County.
- **Special Districts** – Oversees and reviews the performance, and the execution of fiscal responsibilities the Special Districts (65) within Kern County.
- **Ad Hoc** committees are formed to assist when needed.

For effective operation, there are five non-investigative internal committees.

- Budget
- Edit and Final Report
- Grand Jury Library
- Kitchen
- Public Relations

The Grand Jury conducts business, with a quorum of at least 15 jurors, at a weekly General Meeting (Plenary). Any and all action taken during the year is considered to be official Grand Jury business and must be approved by a supermajority of at least 12 of the 19 Jurors. When an investigation involves an issue that could not be completed within the year, the Presiding Judge can hold over the evidence gathered for the next Grand Jury (if the previous Grand Jury so requests).

At the end of the term, the Grand Jury issues a Final Report to the Presiding Judge containing all the reports and responses received to date. The Final Report concludes the obligation of the Grand Jury to the Superior Court.

The 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury, consisted of ten women and nine men, who found this service to be personally rewarding and enriching as well as a significant public service. The Grand Jury encourages all citizens to apply to serve on the Grand Jury. All reports and recruitment information are available on the Grand Jury website at: www.kerncounty.com/grandjury. Or by calling 661-868-4797.



2022 – 2023 Kern County Grand Jury

Summary of Activities

Activities

California Grand Jurors' Association
Orientation and Report Writing Workshop
Grand Jury Awareness Month
Kern County Home and Garden Show
City of Bakersfield Christmas Parade
Toys For Tots
Monitored the 2022 Election
Narcotics Training
The City of Bakersfield "Point in Time" Count
Kern High School District Regional
Occupational Center Foodservice

Guest Speakers

Mission at Kern County, Carlos Valdovinos
CHP Public Information Officer, Robert
Rodriguez
CAPK, Martha Martinez and Jeremy Tobias
Jason's Retreat, Bakersfield Recovery Services,
Eric Sanders
KernTax, Michael Turnipseed
Kern County Sheriff Lerdo Facility, Sergeant
Contreras and Officer Perez
Kern County Superior Court, Colette
Humphrey, Presiding Judge
Kern County Budget Office, Richard Benson
Kern County Fire Department, Chief Aaron
Duncan

Indictments 1
Complaints 28
Reports 11

Tours

Kern County Regional Crime Laboratory
Kern County M Street Navigation Center
James G Bowles Youth Detention Center
Kern County Sheriff Lerdo Pre-Trial Facility
Kern County Jail Central Receiving Facility
Kern County Sheriff-Coroner's Office
Kern County Sheriff Property Room Facility
Kern County Probation, Camp Owen
Kern County Probation, Crossroads
Tehachapi Cummings-County Water District
Annual Facility Tour & Lunch
Kern County Public Cemetery Districts
Brundage Lane Navigation Center
Central Election Facility
The WWII Memorial
Lerdo – Maximum and Minimum Facilities
Maricopa Museum
Tehachapi State Prison
Wasco State Prison
North Kern State Prison
Kern Valley State Prison
Shafter Police Department/Jail
Shafter Animal Control

2022 – 2023
Grand Jury Presiding Judges

Honorable Collette M. Humphrey (2022)
Honorable J. Eric Bradshaw (2023)

2022-2023
Kern County Grand Jury
Officers

Enrique Vicuna	Foreperson
Georgina Atchison	Sergeant-at-Arms
Donalda Biscar	Recording Secretary
Stephen Bowles	Sergeant-at-Arms
Dennis Mike Elliott	Sergeant-at-Arms
Sharron K. Forney	Parliamentarian
Gayle G. Royal	Fee Manager
Tom Pasek	Information Services Assistant
Alfredo Robledo	Pro Tempore

Eleanor Lara, Senior Office Services Specialist



2022-2023

Enrique R. Vicuna
Foreman

Georgina L. Atchison

Donalda Biscar

Stephen D. Bowles

Melissa H. Brown

Gary J. Chaffin

D. Mike Elliott

Sharron K. Forney

Raymond Gallaher

Gayle Gentile-Royal

Kathleen D. Green

Charlene Hill

Patricia Jepsen

Cheri Olcott

Thomas Pasek

J. Randall Regan

Alfredo Robledo

Duane Shellcross

Debra Watson

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BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301
(661) 868-4797
FAX: (661) 321-0761
www.kerncounty.com/grandjury

Kern County GRAND JURY

June 22, 2023

The Honorable J. Eric Bradshaw
Presiding Judge
Kern County Superior Court
1415 Truxtun Avenue
Bakersfield CA 93301

Dear Judge Bradshaw,

As the term of the 2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury comes to an end, I respectfully submit our Final Report.

On behalf of the Grand Jury, I would like to commend you and your staff, in particular Julie Flores, Executive Administrative Secretary, for your leadership and support. Special thanks to Senior Office Services Specialist Eleanor Lara for her excellent service—her valued assistance in all things, whether technical, operational or trivial (Eleanor, my computer is frozen!) was extremely helpful, especially in this environment of the ever-changing dynamics in the Grand Jury.

The Grand Jury relies heavily on advice from our legal advisors. Special thanks to Margo Raison and Bryan Alba, County Counsels, for their direction and encouragement throughout the year.

This year, at the request of the District Attorney's office, this Grand Jury heard testimony in a criminal indictment. The indictment process was challenging and educational. We would like to thank Supervising Deputy District Attorney Eric Smith and his staff, including Deputy District Attorney John Allen for their continuing support and guidance during the indictment process.

Many of our experienced hold-over jurors mentored newer members and took them under their wing to prepare for the challenges the year would bring. The group of nineteen individuals, from diverse and varied backgrounds, became a dedicated working unit.

In addition to the indictment, we enthusiastically assumed our role as watchdog of the community. To be sure that agencies are being administered efficiently, honestly and in the best interest of their constituents, the Grand Jury is asked to objectively investigate all branches of county and city government, as well as special districts and joint power agencies,

This Grand Jury conducted several in-depth investigations (not all resulting in reports to the public), completed 11 reports, reviewed 28 complaints from concerned citizens, and inquired into the prisons in Kern County. Our investigative process involved numerous interviews, on site tours, collateral contacts and in-office research. The Grand Jury takes great care to triangulate and verify facts to accurately present our results to the public. We volunteered and served in civic events such as Toys for Tots and the Point-In-Time homeless collaborative count. Our activities included tours of county and city offices and operations i.e., homeless navigation centers, DA crime lab, etc.

Raising awareness and sharing the opportunity to serve the community has been a large part of our mission this year. This year we participated in the Bakersfield Christmas parade and the Home and Garden Show which allowed us to convey the merits of being a grand juror. Hopefully, our recruitment effort draws to the Grand Jury individuals who want to serve Kern County and help it to continue to be a *great place to live!*

We look forward to what the future has for Kern County and, as we pass the torch to the 2023-2024 Kern County Grand Jury, we wish them all the best.

Thank you once again to you and your staff for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Enrique R. Vicuna', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Enrique R. Vicuna, Foreperson
2022-2023 Kern County Grand Jury

Kern County Grand Jury Reports



Reports and responses received after the Final Report printing are available on the Grand Jury website at www.kerncounty.com/grandjury