



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2022–2023 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Francisco Should Improve Support for Small Businesses

2022–2023 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Publishes “Taking Care of Business: San Francisco’s Plan to Save its Small Businesses”

San Francisco, CA, June 22, 2023 — The 2022–2023 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury released its report on City programs to support small businesses. The Jury was particularly interested in how well two recent initiatives worked. The First Year Free program waived certain license, permit and business registration fees for small businesses during their first year of operation. Proposition H, passed by 60% of the voters in 2020, implemented zoning changes that made it easier for more small businesses to open and expand and required streamlined, 30-day permit processing for eligible small businesses.

The Jury found that much remains to be done. First Year Free and Proposition H were initially too limited in scope and both programs have been expanded in an effort to reach more small businesses. Cooperation among the City agencies that support these programs is occurring more often, but implementation problems have occurred and there is a need for better inter-agency coordination. And the City must amplify its outreach efforts, because too few small businesses know about the

programs designed to benefit those businesses. In addition, better data collection and reporting will enable better support for small businesses in the future.

“The City’s small businesses drive its economy as well as its culture,” said Karen Kennard, Jury Foreperson. “The Jury’s recommendations can help San Francisco’s small businesses thrive.”

The Jury researched public resources, conducted interviews with private citizens and City employees and requested specific documents and information from City departments. The Jury has made a dozen recommendations to improve program implementation, cooperation among departments and outreach to the small business community.

To read the full report, please visit <https://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org/report.html>.

About the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

The Superior Court selects 19 San Franciscans to serve year-long terms as Civil Grand Jurors. The Jury has the authority to investigate City and County government by reviewing documents and interviewing public officials and private individuals. At the end of its inquiries, the Jury issues reports of its findings and recommendations. Agencies identified in the report must respond to these findings and recommendations within either 60 or 90 days, and the Board of Supervisors conducts a public hearing on each Civil Grand Jury report after those responses are submitted. For more information, visit the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury website: <https://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org>.

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