



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2023–2024 CIVIL GRAND JURY

Press Release

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Civil Grand Jury Calls For “Lifting the Fog” on San Francisco Government

2023–2024 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury Report Identifies the Need to Improve Budget Oversight, Increase Interdepartmental Cooperation and Provide Clarity on the Government’s Function and Structure

SAN FRANCISCO (PR NEWSWIRE) JUNE 25, 2024 – San Francisco city departments operate within vertically structured silos that obstruct the effective delivery of critical city services, a new San Francisco Civil Grand Jury report has found. The city needs governance approaches that encourage interdepartmental cooperation.

A yearlong Jury investigation included interviews with over 50 current and former city officials and employees as well as nationally recognized government experts and legal scholars. The investigation uncovered persistent challenges that have affected San Francisco’s government for decades.

“We focused on the highest levels of its governance structure including the Office of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, the Office of the Controller and selected departments,” said Paul Dravis, the investigation’s chair. “Our investigation does not reflect upon current city officials or staff, but on the processes, structures and constraints of city government.”

The Jury found

- The city's budget oversight responsibilities need to be reviewed to improve their effectiveness;
- The duties of the City Administrator are ambiguously defined and need more clarity;
- Siloed departmental structures hinder the effective delivery of critical city services;
- The city's incomplete official organization charts make it difficult for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to understand the function and structure of government entities;
- Voter-mandated spending significantly affects the city's ability to effectively manage its budget.

The report additionally identified ways that City Hall continues to pursue civic innovation through partnerships with organizations such as the California Policy Lab, Harvard Kennedy Government Performance Lab and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

"Our Jury concluded that despite bureaucratic obstacles, an active legislative culture and 'non-binding' policies, City Hall continues to pursue civic innovation to enhance its effectiveness," Dravis said. "However, addressing its many challenges will likely require charter reforms and operational changes."

To read the full report, please visit

<https://www.sf.gov/resource/2024/civil-grand-jury-reports-2023-2024>.

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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