



## FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

### Satisfaction Survey of Fourth Judicial District Jurors

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## *Executive Summary*

- In 2006, the Public Trust and Confidence committee of the Fourth Judicial District bench commissioned the Research Department to survey citizens coming through the jury office.
- Close to 200 people come through the jury office each week and they are, by definition, a cross-section of the Hennepin County population. They typically spend time in the jury waiting room, and many are eventually called to a courtroom to be interviewed and potentially serve on a jury.
- We surveyed 501 prospective jurors between the months of July and September 2006.
- Forty-one percent of respondents were male and 59% were female.
- The average age of respondents was 43 years old.
- Eighty-nine percent were white, and 11% were people of other races. Of the non-white jurors who answered the race question, 49% were black, 29% were Asian, 2% were Native American, and 13% were some other race. Of those that answered the race question, 3% chose multiple race categories. Only 2% of jurors said they were of Hispanic or Latino descent.
- Seventy-five percent of those surveyed had never served on a jury before.
- Those jurors who are called to a courtroom for actual jury service typically spend more time on jury duty.
- Overall, individuals surveyed regarding their jury duty experiences gave positive feedback. The highest ratings, on average, were given to the treatment prospective jurors felt they received from jury office staff (4.57 out of a possible 5 points). The lowest ratings were given to the issue of scheduling prospective jurors' time (3.5 out of 5).
- Older jurors gave significantly more positive responses than younger jurors.
- Jurors selected for voir dire gave significantly lower ratings to the availability of parking; jurors eventually selected to serve on a jury gave significantly higher ratings to the comfort of the jury waiting room, and personal safety in the courthouse.
- In general, jurors with prior experience as jurors gave more positive ratings than first-timers.

- Individuals' perceptions of the jury office experience were more favorable once they had begun their jury service, as compared with their perceptions before being called.
- About half of the jurors surveyed were unhappy about the financial aspects of jury duty, feeling that the income they received was inadequate, yet feeling that the pay they received from serving was important.
- Jurors who had direct contact with judges and courtroom staff gave high ratings to both. Older jurors, white jurors, and jurors with prior experience gave the highest ratings to judges on a number of different factors.
- Open-ended responses to physical improvements that could be made to the jury room included the need for more computers/internet access, beverages and snacks, and foot stools/leg room. As far as the jury duty process went, suggestions for improvement had to do with scheduling of jurors' time, jury duty expectations, and juror comfort.

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## **Background**

Over the last several years, the Fourth Judicial District (Hennepin County) of Minnesota has made it a priority to find out how court users view the court, and whether or not individuals feel they are being treated fairly and are satisfied with the court process. To this end we have gathered (via surveys) the viewpoints of criminal defendants, victims, civil litigants, witnesses, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, court staff, juveniles and their parents, social workers, psychologists, and law enforcement personnel. The only group we have not surveyed up to this point are people serving on juries.

In 2006, the Public Trust and Confidence committee of the Fourth Judicial District bench commissioned the Research Department to survey citizens coming through the jury office. Close to 200 people come through the jury office each week and they are, by definition, a cross-section of the Hennepin County population. In short, they are a good resource for providing the court with feedback. While some prospective jurors are only in the courthouse for one day, others end up on a jury and can be with us for weeks. Regardless of the length of time spent in the courthouse, jurors provide objective voices who can tell us what the court appears to be doing well and where improvements can be made. Clearly, however, the more days they spend in the courthouse, the more observations they will likely be able to share with us.

## **Survey Design**

We gave surveys to people in the jury office between the months of July and September, 2006. We received completed surveys from 501 of those prospective jurors. Individuals had the option to fill the survey out while still in the building, or take it home and mail it back.

We had two slightly different versions of the survey. After 259 respondents had completed the survey, jury office administration decided to add a few more specific questions; 242 jurors responded to the second version.

## **Quantitative Data**

### **Demographics**

As stated above, citizens coming through the jury office should, by definition, be representative of the population of Hennepin County. However, the survey was voluntary, and thus is representative of those jurors who were willing to take the time to complete it, which may or may not be related to demographic indicators. While we have no reason to believe that there would be a selection bias (e.g., that certain demographic groups would be more willing than others to complete the survey), we cannot be certain that none exists.

Forty-one percent of respondents were male and 59% were female. The average age of respondents was 43 years old. Eighty-nine percent were white, and 11% were people of

other races. Of the non-white jurors who answered the race question, 49% were black, 29% were Asian, 2% were Native American, and 13% were some other race. Of those that answered the race question, 3% chose multiple race categories. Only 2% of jurors said they were of Hispanic or Latino descent.

### Jury Experience

Of the 501 survey respondents, 75% had never served on a jury prior to this current experience, whereas 25% had served on a jury before. Most of those who had served before (75%) had not served within the last five years. At the time of the survey, the average number of days that jurors had spent at the courthouse for this particular jury obligation was nearly four days.

The longer people are on jury duty, the more likely they are to spend time in the courtroom rather than the jury room, as shown in the following graph. This is because those who are there longer are likely being interviewed and potentially chosen for a jury.

Nearly all the potential jurors (89%) were sent to a courtroom to be interviewed by the prosecutor and defense attorneys, a process known as “voir dire.” In the second version of the survey, we also asked jurors how many times they were actually selected to serve on a jury (beyond the voir dire stage). Of the 259 people who answered this question, 117 (23%) reported being selected for a jury – 84% on a criminal jury, and 24% on a civil jury. (There is overlap as some were selected for both civil and criminal at different times). In short, most selected jurors’ experiences regard criminal rather than civil trials.

### Satisfaction with Jury Office Experience

Overall, individuals surveyed regarding their jury duty experiences gave positive feedback. We asked them several questions regarding their perceptions of how the process went before they were actually called to a courtroom, as well as physical comforts of the courtroom itself. Respondents were asked to choose a rating from “Very Poor” (1) to “Excellent” (5) regarding their satisfaction with various aspects of their jury duty experience. Averages on these seven indicators ranged from 3.5 to 4.6, as shown in Table 1 (below). The highest ratings, on average, were given to the treatment prospective jurors felt they received from jury office staff (4.57). The lowest ratings were given to the issue of scheduling prospective jurors’ time (3.5).



Table 1. Satisfaction Ratings for Overall Jury Experience

<i>How would you rate the following factors?</i>	<i>Average Score (out of a possible 5 points)</i>
Jury Office Orientation	4.29
Treatment by Jury Office Staff	4.57
Physical comforts of the jury waiting room	3.87
Physical comforts of courtroom <sup>1</sup>	4.03
Personal safety in jury room <sup>2</sup>	4.47
Parking availability	3.89
Scheduling of your time	3.51

We analyzed whether or not there were any differences in satisfaction based on demographic factors (e.g., race, gender, age). We found no significant differences in responses to the scaled questions based on gender, but did find a race difference regarding the availability of parking: non-white jurors had significantly more issues with parking availability than white jurors. (See Table 2.)

As seen in Table 2, significant differences emerged based on age for all seven of these satisfaction indicators, with older people giving more positive responses than younger people. In short, older jurors had significantly more positive things to say about juror orientation, how they were treated by jury office staff, the comfort of the waiting room, the comfort of the courtroom, their feeling of personal safety while at the courthouse, the availability of parking, and the scheduling of their time.

We hypothesized that jurors who had been selected to be interviewed and potentially serve on a jury, as well as those who were subsequently selected for a jury, would give higher satisfaction ratings than those who spent the entire time at the courthouse in the jury waiting room. Those selected for voir dire actually gave significantly *lower* ratings to the availability of parking, which is opposite of what we expected. Those subsequently chosen to serve on a jury gave significantly higher ratings (than those not selected) to the comfort of the jury waiting room, and personal safety in the courthouse. With regard to the comfort of the waiting room, the difference may be explained by the difference in time spent there; in other words, it may be a relatively comfortable place to spend one day (before being called to a courtroom), but becomes less comfortable as one sits in the same waiting room over several days time.

We also hypothesized that jurors who had been asked to serve on juries prior to this experience would be more positive than first timers. This was true for several of the satisfaction questions: orientation, treatment, and parking availability. In terms of the parking availability, it may be that those with prior experience knew what to expect of the parking situation, and came downtown more prepared than first-timers.

<sup>1</sup> This question was only asked of those people called to a courtroom.

<sup>2</sup> There were two separate questions on the survey regarding personal safety. This particular question refers to a perception of safety in the jury room, which is one area of the courthouse that can be accessed without passing through weapons screening. The other safety question (below) refers to overall safety in the courthouse.

Table 2. Significant Differences<sup>3</sup> in Satisfaction Ratings Between Groups:  
Group giving more positive ratings listed

<i>Satisfaction Indicator</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Pulled for voir dire?</i>	<i>Selected for jury (beyond voir dire)?</i>	<i>Prior experience</i>
<b>Orientation</b>	Older jurors***				Yes*
<b>Treatment</b>	Older jurors*				Yes**
<b>Comfort of waiting room</b>	Older jurors*			Yes**	
<b>Comfort of courtroom</b>	Older jurors**				
<b>Personal safety in jury room</b>	Older jurors***			Yes*	
<b>Parking availability</b>	Older jurors**	White jurors**	No**		Yes**
<b>Scheduling</b>	Older jurors**				

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

For two satisfaction questions, we asked respondents to choose the category that represented their level of agreement with two statements: “finding the courthouse was easy” and “I felt safe in the courthouse.” Response choices for these questions were strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, and scored on a 1-5 scale with 5 being “strongly agree” and 1 being “strongly disagree.” Jurors scored both questions relatively high: 4.45 and 4.54 respectively. (See Table 3). There was very little difference (.07) between the overall safety in the courthouse question, and the earlier question about safety in the jury room, indicating that jurors felt safe in the jury room even though that area of the courthouse is not subject to weapons screening.

Table 3. Agreement with Statements Regarding Ease of Finding Courthouse and Feeling of Safety in Courthouse

<i>Jurors asked for level of agreement with the following statements:</i>	<i>Average score (out of a possible 5 points)</i>
Finding the courthouse was easy	4.45
I felt safe in the courthouse	4.54

While there were no significant race or gender differences on these items, older people felt safer in the courthouse and also felt more positive about the ease with which they were able to find the courthouse than younger people (p<.05 for both). There were no significant differences on these two items based on whether or not jurors were called for voir dire, or made it passed the voir dire stage. As we would expect, those jurors who had prior jury experience had significantly higher agreement with the statement about the ease of finding the courthouse (p<.01).

<sup>3</sup> We report the p values which are the levels of statistical significance. For example, a p value of less than .05 indicates that there is a 95% probability that the observed relationships are real and did not occur by chance. A p value of less than .01 means that this probability of a real relationship is at 99%.

## Impressions of Jury Office

We asked potential jurors what their overall impression of the jury office had been before they actually experienced it. While over half (51%) said they didn't know what they thought, 30% had a favorable impression and 18% had an unfavorable impression. After their jury office experience, however, 49% had a more favorable impression, 39% had the same impression, and 11% had a less favorable impression than before. Of those who had an unfavorable impression the first time, 55% said their impressions were now more favorable than they had been before. (See Charts 2a and 2b).

Chart 1. Prior Impressions of Jury Office

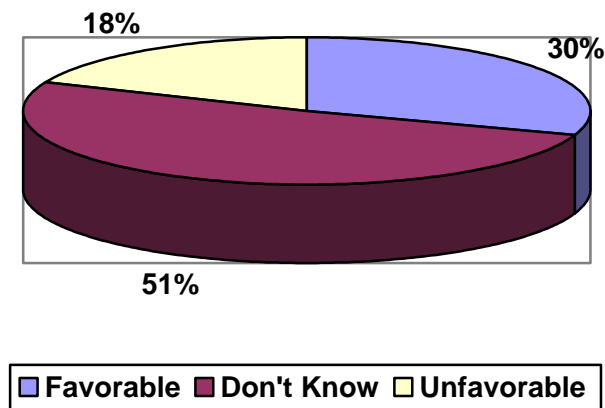
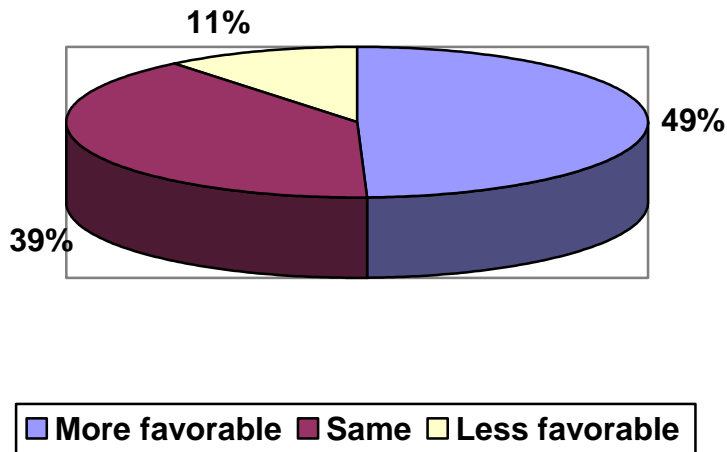


Chart 2. Current impressions of jury office



## Financial Impact of Jury Duty

Thirty percent of respondents said that they lost income as a result of jury service. Respondents were split half and half regarding whether or not they thought payment for jury service was adequate, and were also split half and half on the question regarding whether or not the payment they received was important. There were statistically significant associations between the three finance variables in the direction we would expect. For example, those who reported lost income during their jury service time were significantly more likely to say the payment they received for service was inadequate ( $\chi^2=93.669$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and also more likely to say the payment was important ( $\chi^2=58.286$ ,  $p<.001$ ).<sup>4</sup>

Table 4. Finance Questions

Did you lose income as a result of jury service?	The amount of payment I receive as a juror is important.		TOTAL
	Yes	No	
Yes	114 77%	34 23%	148 100%
No	135 39.5%	207 60.5%	342 100%
TOTAL	249 50.8%	241 49.2%	490 100%

Did you lose income as a result of jury service?	Did you regard your payment as a juror as:		TOTAL
	Adequate	Not adequate	
Yes	26 17.6%	122 82.4%	148 100%
No	220 65.3%	117 34.7%	337 100%
TOTAL	246 50.7%	239 49.3%	485 100%

<sup>4</sup> The  $\chi^2$  value reported here is called a Pearson Chi-Square and is a measure of association between two variables. The p value is the measure of statistical significance of the association, meaning the association did not occur by chance.

The amount of payment I receive as a juror is important.	Did you regard your payment as a juror as:		TOTAL
	Adequate	Not adequate	
Yes	80 32.1%	169 67.9%	249 100%
No	166 69.5%	73 30.5%	239 100%
TOTAL	246 50.4%	242 49.6%	488 100%

Fifty-seven percent of jurors felt the length of time they had to serve was appropriate, while 42% felt the length of time should be shortened.

### Impressions of Judge

We asked the 376 jurors who were actually selected for a jury to rate the judges with whom they had experience, as seen in Table 5.<sup>5</sup> Their ratings of the judges on all indicators were very high (4.2 to 4.69). The lowest score had to do with timeliness (4.2), which is consistent with all other surveys we have given at the courthouse. If court users complain about any one particular part of their courthouse experience, it is nearly always the amount of time they had to spend or the fact that things did not appear to happen on time.

Table 5. Impressions of Judge  
N=376

<i>If selected for a jury panel, please give us your impression of the judge:</i>	<i>Average Score (out of a possible 5 points)</i>
Attentiveness	4.65
Competence	4.69
Demeanor	4.67
Fairness	4.62
Patience	4.66
Listening skills	4.64
Explanations are understandable	4.65
Timeliness	4.20

<sup>5</sup> If jurors were selected for multiple panels, they were asked to comment on the most recent judge from this current experience.

As we observed in the overall impressions of the jury experience, older jurors gave the judges significantly higher satisfaction ratings than younger jurors. (See Table 6). There were no significant gender differences, but there were some race effects, with white jurors giving the judges significantly higher ratings on competence, demeanor, and fairness than non-white jurors.

There were no significant differences on judge ratings between those who were selected for a jury panel (i.e., made it past the voir dire stage). However, prior experience on a jury made a significant difference on each judge item, indicating that those who had previously served on a jury saw judges in a significantly more positive light.

Table 6. Significant Differences in Satisfaction Ratings Between Groups:  
Group giving more positive ratings listed

<i>Satisfaction Indicator</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Selected for jury (beyond voir dire)?</i>	<i>Prior experience</i>
<b>Attentiveness</b>	Older jurors*		(No significant differences)	Yes*
<b>Competence</b>	Older jurors*	White jurors*		Yes**
<b>Demeanor</b>	Older jurors**	White jurors*		Yes**
<b>Fairness</b>	Older jurors*	White jurors*		Yes**
<b>Patience</b>	Older jurors*			Yes*
<b>Listening skills</b>	Older jurors**			Yes***
<b>Explanations are understandable</b>	Older jurors**			Yes*
<b>Timeliness</b>	Older jurors**			Yes*

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

### Courtroom Staff

Jurors who were called to a courtroom were asked about their impressions of courtroom staff, and these impressions were overwhelmingly positive. In answer to the question, “was the courtroom staff courteous and pleasant?”, 97% to 99% of jurors answered “Yes”. (See Table 7).

Table 7. Impressions of Courtroom Staff

<i>Was Courtroom Staff Courteous and Pleasant?</i>	<i>Percentage answering “Yes”</i>
Judicial clerk	99%
Court reporter	97%
Law clerk	99%
Court security	97%

## **Qualitative Data**

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

We asked jurors two “open-ended” questions regarding suggestions for improvement of the physical facilities and the jury system as a whole. In terms of the physical facilities, the three top response categories had to do with computers/internet access, beverages and snacks, and foot stools/leg room. (See Table 8 for top categories; see Appendix A for complete list of response categories with examples).

Table 8. Suggestions for Improvement of Physical Facilities in Jury Assembly Room

<b><i>Response Set and Number of Responses</i></b>	<b><i>Examples</i></b>
Provide computers and internet access (67 responses)	“Internet access!”
	“Computer (internet access) with limits.”
Provide beverages/snacks to jurors (37 responses)	“Beverage machines, water too.”
	“Provide lunch, beverages.”
Foot stools/leg room (26 responses)	“Foot stools.”
	“Foot stools for older people to elevate legs.”

In terms of overall suggestions for improvement of the jury system, the top three response categories had to do with use of time, jury duty expectations, and juror comfort. (See Table 9 for top categories; see Appendix B for complete list of response categories with examples).

Table 9. Suggestions for Improvement of Overall Jury System

<b><i>Response Set and Number of Responses</i></b>	<b><i>Examples</i></b>
Better use of juror time (60 responses)	“Too much wasted time.”
	“Time management needs to be improved.”
Jury duty process (50 responses)	“Don’t wait so long to strike a juror that no one plans to question.”
	“Not summon persons who are still in high school!”
Juror comfort (17 responses)	“More comfortable seating.”
	“There were 35 of us and 2 benches offering 6 seats – people had to sit on the floor!”

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, individuals called to serve on juries in the Fourth Judicial District gave positive feedback regarding the jury office staff, the courtroom facilities, the judge, and courtroom staff with whom they had experience. There are, however, areas with room for improvement. We provide our recommendations from this analysis below:

- *Provide more comfortable seating arrangements in the jury assembly room.*

It would not be cost prohibitive to buy inexpensive footstools, which would probably go a long way toward making the seating more comfortable.

- *Look into possibility of wireless internet access.*
- *Make sure literature that is sent out to jurors clearly delineates what jurors should expect in terms of time, where to park, what to bring with them. In addition, the morning announcements from jury office staff should repeat the time expectations.*
- *Provide a parking discount (e.g., validating parking ramp ticket).*
- *Review process of how individuals are chosen and summoned.*



## Appendix A

*What, if any, improvements do you think should be made regarding the physical facilities of the assembly area for jurors?*

### *Exemplars*

#### *Top 3 response categories:*

**Provide computers and internet access (67)** “Internet access!” “Computer (internet access) with limits.”

**Provide beverages/snacks to jurors (37)** “Beverage machines, water too.” “Provide lunch, beverages.”

**Foot stools/leg room (26)** “Foot stools.” “Foot stools for older people to elevate legs.”

#### *Remainder of exemplars:*

**More comfortable seating/chairs (19)** “Provide a variety of chair styles, for different leg lengths and body sizes.” “More comfortable chairs.”

**More tv’s/tv rooms (18)** “Larger tv viewing area.” “More tv's with television on it.”

**Everything was fine/ok (17)** “It was good, no changes.” “None, very surprised of how accommodating it was.”

**More comfortable (15)** “Should have a lounge if a person wishes to take a snooze.” “Places to lie down.”

**More activities for jurors during down time (10)** “More options for passing time (movies, video games, radio).” “More things to do with your time.”

**Air quality or room temperature should be adjusted (9)** “It was too warm- others agreed.” “Make the air fresher.”

**Problems with facility in general (8)** “Separate bathroom.” “Stop smoking outside buildings. I inhaled more second hand smoke these 3 days than I have in 6 months.”

**Too crowded/cramped (7)** “Pretty cramped.” “Try to make less crowded- either by rearrangement or enlargement.”

**Need windows in jury assembly room (7)** “Windows.” “Windows would be great.”

**Add couches (7)** “Couches would be nice.” “Should have couches.”

**Less waiting time (5)** “Just such an aggravating time waiting!” “Lots of waiting.”

**Parking (5)** “Parking should be reduced for jurors.” “Perhaps a card could be or the like issued for jurors to use for reduced parking or free parking while they are on duty.”

**Quiet area/reading room (4)** “A designated quiet reading room.” “Maybe a room for quiet reading where no one is talking.”

**Better reading materials (4)** “Up to date reading materials/magazines.” “Library books.”

**Improve juror payment (4)** “Fair pay.” “Travel should be reimbursed from work.”

**Cell phone reception (3)** “Should be able to use cell phones in the tower area.” “Any way to improve cell phone reception?”

**On duty multiple times (3)** “This is the 3rd time I have been called over 25 years.” “My 2nd term.”

**Add music in waiting area (3)** “Music.” “Soft music in jury room to muffle noise of interviews.”

**Other comments (11)** “It would be less confusing to have a check in desk at the front as you enter the assembly room.” “Find a larger room for panels to congregate after dismissal.”

## Appendix B

### *Do you have any suggestions for improvement of the jury system?*

#### **Exemplars**

##### **Top 3 response categories:**

**Better use of juror time/Too much waiting around (60)** “Too much wasted time.”  
“Time management needs to be improved.”

**Jury duty process improvements (50)** “Don't wait so long to strike a juror that no one plans to question.” “Not summon persons who are still in high school!”

**Juror comfort (17)** “More comfortable seating.” “There were 35 of us and 2 benches offering 6 seats- people had to sit on the floor!”

##### **Remainder of exemplars:**

**Don't reveal juror names during questioning/ Jury privacy concerns (17)** “Felt that after 3 times being a panelist over 160 people total knew where I lived, where I went to work/school, where my spouse works and where my kids went to school.” “What if the defendant doesn't like something you said, he has family/friends also in the courtroom and it could place that potential juror in danger (ex: gangs).”

**On-call issues/comments (16)** “Let people know will just be on call 2nd week in advance.” “Use the on-call status better.”

**Positive comments (13)** “I was impressed with the entire system and appreciated the opportunity to serve.” “Thank you for making it as easy as possible.”

**Allow longer time between being summoned for jury duty (12)** “Longer than 2 year period of no service.” “Extend length of potential service from 2 years to 5 years in larger counties.”

**Positive staff comments (12)** “Your personnel were courteous, patient and professional.” “The lady in charge has done an outstanding job and is very easy to understand.”

**Work issues (11)** “Ask if people want to lose 2 weeks income- employer didn't pay for jury duty (Target).” “My patients went without care, and I went without an income.”

**Improve the pay/benefits of jurors (10)** “Not enough reward for the time spent.” “With parking up to \$17- the pay needs to get to at least \$30 a day!”

**Negative comments (10)** “The courts are starting to make the jurors feel that the jury is on trial and the courts can discriminate based on looks of a potential juror, when we are told to keep an open mind!” “Other jurors, as well as the judge and lawyers, were cracking jokes and making light of the situation- this was during a criminal case nonetheless.”

**Jury duty service too long (10)** The number of days should be just 5 because of loss of income.” “Just shorten the 10 day period.”

**Parking issues (9)** “Pay for parking or bus.” Parking rate reduction for jurors even more so when court begins later. i.e. 1030 am.”

**Keep jurors better informed (9)** “A little better explanation as to the role of the jury foreman.” “When sending out the letter- I would make it more clear that if you choose the call-in option it probably will not happen the first week.”

**Only call to jury duty once (6)** “Why should some serve twice and some never?” “A person should only serve once in their lifetime.”

**Provide internet service (5)** “They need internet.” “Also, establish wireless internet connection.”

**Lunch breaks are too long (4)** “Lunch hours were too long (one was 2.5 hours).” “Shorten the lunch break- go home sooner (1.5 hours too long).”

**Prosecutors need improvement (3)** “Tell prosecutors to be fair.” “Better prosecutors.”

**Everything is fine/good/ok (3)** “None, it was my pleasure to do my duty.” “The system works well.”

**Other (13)** “Mom's with preschool age children should be exempt!” “More selective on jurors.”