

## **JURY FAQ**

### **Q: Is jury assembly and selection being handled differently in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Yes. We want to make sure everyone understands that there are many important changes, all designed to protect the jurors, attorneys, parties and court staff.

### **Q: Where are jurors supposed to report for jury duty?**

Jurors will report to the Mobile Civic Center for jury assembly, instead of the Courthouse. This is a big change. We will be using the Theater for jury assembly, which will allow us to spread out the assembly to maintain social distancing. There will be signs directing you to the entrance you will use to get into the Theater at the Civic Center.

### **Q: Why were jurors asked to answer questions on a website?**

You are already aware of another big change: online jury questioning and qualification. If you were able to access the internet with the PIN number on your jury summons, answer the questions and attest to your qualification, you are a qualified juror ready to serve. This process reduced the number of people who will report to the Mobile Civic Center for jury duty.

### **Q: What if I could not access the internet website to answer questions?**

If you were unable to obtain qualification through the internet process, you should contact Court Administration at the following number: 574-8603 to answer Covid-related questions. If the Court Administrator determines you are qualified to serve from a health perspective, you will report to the Mobile Civic Center so that a judge can determine whether you are legally qualified to serve as a juror.

### **Q: If I qualified as a juror online, do I still need to report to the Civic Center?**

Yes. If you are already qualified to serve through the online process, you will be reporting to the Civic Center simply to be placed in a panel to be sent to the Courthouse.

### **Q: Will I have to go to the Courthouse?**

Maybe. Once all jurors are qualified, 15-person panels will be formed until there are enough panels to handle the scheduled jury trials. The panels will be sent to the Courthouse; the rest will be sent home.

**Q: How long will I be expected to serve?**

Another big change is that Jury service will last only one day, unless you are actually selected to serve on a jury. If you are not selected for a jury on the day you reported, your service is concluded. Thus, for the vast majority of persons, jury service will begin and end on the same day.

**Q: Will I be required to wear a mask during jury service?**

Yes, there are numerous requirements being implemented for your safety and the safety of others, and the wearing of masks will be required.

**Q: What are the other safety measures?**

Social distancing will be required. Sanitizer will be available throughout the Civic Center and the Courthouse. As you enter the Civic Center and the Courthouse, you will pass through a metal detector and a no-contact thermal scanner will check each potential juror for a fever.

**Q: What will happen when I arrive at the Civic Center?**

There will be signs directing you to the Theater entrance where you will pass through temperature screeners and metal detectors. If your temperature scan shows you have no fever, you will be directed to the Theater foyer to be checked in. As you enter the Theater foyer, you'll notice contactless hand sanitizing stations have been set up so that each person who enters can easily practice good hand sanitizing.

Upon your arrival, if a line has formed to be checked in for jury duty, we ask each person to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others. Social distancing markers have been placed on the floor to indicate where each person should stand while waiting to be checked in.

**Q: Where do I sit in the Theater at the Civic Center?**

Someone will be waiting to greet you as you enter the Theater to begin your jury service. Before jurors arrive for orientation, all seats in the Theater will have been sanitized with a disinfectant solution designed to kill the COVID-19 virus. The seats available for use will be spaced to ensure proper social distancing. If you are already qualified to serve through the online process, you will be placed in a separate seating area than those persons who have yet to be qualified for jury service. Once all jurors have been checked in, the judge will begin the qualification process for those persons who have yet to be qualified for jury service.

**Q: What happens if I am sent to the Courthouse?**

Once the jury qualification process is concluded, jurors will be placed in panels to be sent to the courthouse as necessary. Once the necessary number of panels has been sent to the Courthouse, all remaining persons will be excused from further jury service.

The panel members will make their own way from the Civic Center to the Courthouse. It is a two-block walk. As you enter the Courthouse, you will pass through a metal detector and a no-contact thermal scanner will again check each potential juror for a fever. You will walk up a ramp to the second floor and enter the ceremonial courtroom. The seats in the courtroom will be spaced for social distancing. [If we get to the point where multiple jury trials are being conducted, you may instead enter the elevators to the 8<sup>th</sup> floor assembly room which will likewise be spaced for social distancing]

In the ceremonial courtroom [and assembly room], the Court and the attorneys will ask you questions about the specific case to be tried (for instance, they will want to know if you know any of the potential witnesses). When that questioning concludes, the attorneys will select the jurors. All persons not selected will be excused from further jury service.

**Q: What happens if I am selected to serve as a juror?**

If you are chosen as a juror to hear a case, you will be taken to the courtroom where the case will be tried. Because it would be impossible to keep an appropriate social distance in the traditional jury box, you will be seated in the area normally reserved for the public. During the course of the trial and deliberations, the courtroom will be closed to the public. All jurors will be able to maintain a consistent 6 feet of separation from other jurors.

During the trial, the plan is to integrate technology into the presentation, including placing a camera in front of the witnesses to send that picture to large screen TVs placed close to the jurors to assist you in seeing and hearing the witnesses. If that is not available when we start back, we will likely move the witnesses closer to jurors (but still safely distanced).

When a trial has concluded and it's time for a jury to begin deliberations, jurors will have the entire courtroom to themselves to conduct deliberations.