

Frequently Asked Questions

Jury Service FAQs

As US Citizens, we have the right to a jury trial and hold the responsibility to serve as a juror. To assist you in completing the personal history questionnaire, we have provided a list of frequently asked questions. **Please review this document before contacting the jury clerk.** If your question cannot be answered in the text below, please call 989-731-7500.

1. How did we get your name?

A: Once a year, the Secretary of State Driver's License Bureau provides us with the names of Otsego County residents who have a driver's license or state ID. The computer then randomly chooses names and the Jury summons are mailed out.

2. What if I've moved out of the county?

A: You must be an Otsego County resident to serve as an Otsego County juror. Please provide the court with your new mailing address along with proof of residency and we will remove you from our mailing list.

3. What if I'm over 70?

A: If you are over 70, you have the choice to serve as a juror. If you choose not to serve, please mark "No" on question number 11 of your questionnaire.

4. What if the recipient is away at college?

A: Please complete the form in their absence and include the dates the recipient will be home. We can transfer their service to a more convenient time.

5. I am concerned about a medical problem or disability (personal or as a caregiver) interfering with my ability to serve as a juror. What should I do?

A: We will only excuse you from a jury service if you have a doctor's note. Mail (225 W. Main St., Gaylord, MI 49735) email (sdefeyter@otsegocountymi.gov), or fax (989-731-7519) a doctor's note in and we will honor your doctor's request.

6. My job is too demanding, and I do not have time to serve on a jury. Do I still have to serve?

A: Yes. A summons is an official court order compelling you to appear for service. Jury duty, although sometimes inconvenient, is not an optional experience. Jurors should also know that following Michigan law:

600.1348 Jurors; threats, discharge, or discipline by employer; requiring additional hours of work; misdemeanor; penalty.

Sec. 1348 (1) An employer or the employer's agent, who threatens to discharge or discipline or who discharges, disciplines, or cause to be discharged from employment or to be disciplined a person because that person is summoned for jury duty, serves on a jury, or has served on a jury, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and may also be punished for contempt of court.

7. What should I wear and what should I bring if I am called to serve?

A: Please wear comfortable clothing, but t-shirts, shorts, midriff baring tops, and inappropriate language and content on clothing is not allowed. Only water is allowed in the courtroom.

8. How long do trials last? How many days will I be called to serve?

A: You will be assigned a 2-week term of service. The judges try to seat their juries by noon; therefore, if you are not seated on a case you are normally released by noon. This does vary. If you are chosen as a juror, you should plan to be at the courthouse until 5:00 p.m. The average trial length is one day in District Court and three days in Circuit Court. The judge will inform you of the expected length of the case during jury selection. On average, a panel will serve on one to two trials per term.

9. Are there breaks during the day in court?

A: Yes. The judges typically break at least once mid-morning, and hour for lunch, and at least once in the afternoon.

10. I do not have a car or transportation. Do I still have to serve as a juror?

A: Yes. You will need to set up rides with a friend, a family member, or Otsego County Public Transit.

11. How much are jurors paid?

A: Jurors are paid \$30.00 for the first full day; \$45.00 each subsequent full day; \$15.00 for the first half day; \$22.50 for each subsequent half day. Jurors are also compensated for mileage. Jurors will be paid \$0.40 per mile from the juror's home to the courthouse.

12. Where do I fill out the questionnaire?

The questionnaire must be filled out **online**. You can use your own personal device or a friend's, such as a smart phone, computer or tablet. If you do not have electronic access, public computers are available at the Otsego County Library, the University Center and the Otsego County Clerk's office. The website to fill out the questionnaire is eresponse.michiganjms.org.