

*75 percent of people surveyed
by the American Bar
Association would prefer
a jury to a judge.*

*Texas women did not have
the right to serve on juries
until 1955.*

*An important part of the civil
rights movement was ensuring
that Americans of all races
could serve on juries.*

Since its founding, America has struggled to ensure that each person has a right to trial by jury. That promise now rests in your hands. When you receive a jury summons, make time to report for jury duty.



www.americanjuror.org

Are you able to serve?

Under the law, all citizens must report to jury duty as instructed by their jury summons. When you report, however, you may be dismissed from jury duty for one of the following reasons.

Qualifications

When you report, you will be informed of the qualifications for jury duty. If you do not meet each of these qualifications, you cannot serve as a juror:

- You must be at least 18 years old;
- You must be a U.S. citizen and reside in the county of the jury service;
- You must be qualified to vote in the county in which you are to serve as a juror;
- You must be able to read, write and communicate in English; and
- You must be of sound mind and good moral character.

Exclusions

Even if you are qualified to be a juror, you cannot serve as a juror if you fall under any of the following exclusions:

- You have been convicted of a felony or theft;
- You are on probation for a felony or theft; or
- You are under indictment or other legal accusation of misdemeanor, felony theft or any other felony.

Excuses

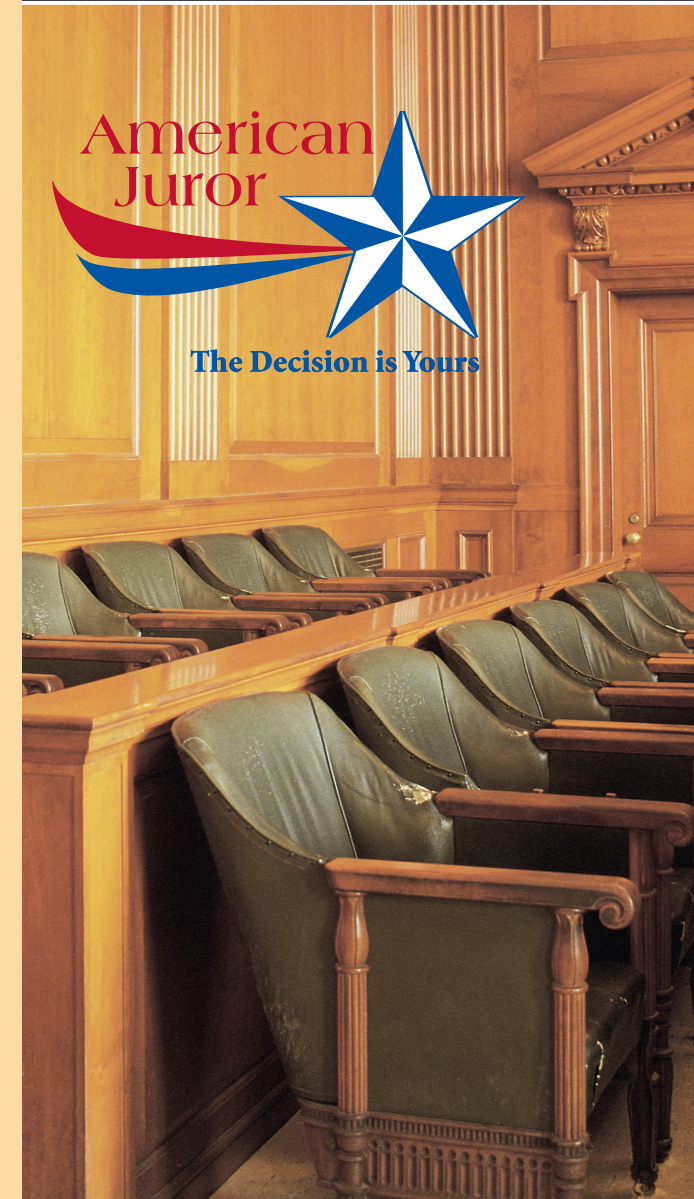
In general, if you are qualified for jury duty and you are not excluded from service, you may, but are not required to, ask to be excused from jury duty if:

- You are 70 years old or older;
- You have custody of a child under 10 years of age and jury service would leave the child unsupervised;
- You are a full-time student or are on active military duty;
- You are an officer or employee of the legislative branch of state government;
- You are the caretaker of a person who is unable to care for themselves;
- You are physically or mentally impaired; or
- You have served as a juror during the preceding three to six months, depending upon the court in which you served.

If you have an excuse that is not included on this list, you should explain your situation to the judge or the court administrator at the appropriate time. Economic hardship is generally *not* considered a valid excuse, and court personnel can often work out scheduling conflicts.



Our justice system depends on you.



The right to trial by jury is the
foundation of our American justice system.
We, the people, decide.
Report for jury service.

Fiction: Jurors are selected according to some secret criteria.

Fact: Jurors are randomly selected from lists of registered voters and drivers' licenses.

Fiction: If a juror is not picked for jury duty, he or she will spend the rest of the week at the courthouse waiting to be picked.

Fact: In most courts, those who are not selected for jury duty on the day that they report are usually excused from further service.

Fiction: All jury trials take several weeks.

Fact: While some cases involve issues that are more complex, most jury trials only last one or two days.

Fiction: Jury verdicts don't matter, because many cases are appealed.

Fact: On appeal, jury verdicts are upheld most of the time, and because they are central to our system of checks and balances, great deference is given to verdicts by higher courts.



American Juror

The Decision is Yours

Trial by jury. It has been featured in many movies and TV programs. It is part of the fabric of the American way of life. It is a right that Americans have fought for and, in some cases, died for throughout our country's history.



Unfortunately, it appears that fewer Americans today are taking the time to serve on juries. This must change. By reporting to jury duty when called, you help to keep alive our cherished right of trial by jury. Our American system of justice, both civil and criminal, includes the principal that people be able to present their case to a jury of their peers. Without people to hear those disputes – people like you – our justice system simply cannot function as it was envisioned by our country's founders.

Service on a jury provides unexpected rewards for those who serve. Most jurors look back on their experience with pride, and rightly so. Americans believe that the jury system is the fairest method for resolving civil disputes and determining guilt or innocence in criminal cases.

You are the one who makes our faith in the jury system possible. And by performing this civic duty, you are the one who will ensure that succeeding generations enjoy the same confidence in juries that we have in you.



Fiction: The purpose of jury selection is to find out about your personal affairs, so lawyers can pick jurors who are biased in favor of their client.

Fact: Before they can be included on a jury, jurors are sworn to tell the truth, so that counsel and the court can ensure that the jurors can be impartial, unbiased, and trusted to make a reasonable decision based on the facts of the case.

Fiction: Discussions between the judges and the lawyers at the bench are about non-legal matters.

Fact: Judges and lawyers often confer at the bench so the judge can decide whether a particular piece of evidence complies with the rules of evidence and should be shared with the jury.

Fiction: The party whose lawyer does the best job of presenting his or her case should win.

Fact: A juror's job is to weigh the evidence presented at trial, not the performance of the attorneys.