

Enhancing the Delivery of Quality Justice

Interim Report on the Access and Fairness Survey Project



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE TRIAL COURT

Honorable Robert A. Mulligan
Chief Justice for Administration & Management

July 24, 2008

I am pleased to issue this interim report on the Massachusetts Trial Court's Access and Fairness initiative, which reflects our ongoing dedication to accountability, transparency and continuous improvement of the delivery of justice. Under the leadership of Chief Justice Marshall and the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court the Trial Court has expanded its efforts to assess and improve effectiveness by measuring performance.

The Access and Fairness Survey Project reflects a major commitment by the Trial Court Departmental Chief Justices, the implementation team and local court staff, as surveys are scheduled and conducted at each court site. As of the end of June, court users in 28 locations, including the large multi-department courthouses, have responded to the survey this year. When combined with our 2007 Boston Municipal Court Department initiative, 4,820 surveys now have been completed. And by the end of 2008, we will receive feedback from court users in each of the 106 courthouses across Massachusetts.

I greatly appreciate the active support extended by the Judges, Clerk Magistrates, Chief Probation Officers, Chief Court Officers and Court Facilities staff in the 28 locations who have assured the successful execution of this effort to establish benchmarks for our efforts to improve the delivery of justice.

I also extend sincere appreciation to the hardworking implementation team. They have served as effective ambassadors for this new assessment effort through their thoughtful, cooperative approach and have launched the project as a positive experience across all Trial Court departments.

Overall, the survey results reflect the focus on quality justice across the Trial Court. As we extend the survey to the remaining courthouses across the state, we anticipate similar positive experiences and we will begin to identify ways to respond to this valuable data.



Robert A. Mulligan
Chief Justice for Administration & Management

Interim Report on the Access and Fairness Survey Project

Executive Summary

This interim report on the Access and Fairness Survey Project in the Massachusetts Trial Court details the status of the project through the first half of 2008. The Access and Fairness Survey Project is part of an ongoing commitment to demonstrate accountability and continue to improve the delivery of justice throughout the Trial Court. Access and fairness are key components in the delivery of quality justice. The survey sought feedback from all types of court users on their experiences in accessing the courthouse and conducting business there.

A total of 4,820 court users have participated in the project including:

- 1,507 in the eight divisions of the Boston Municipal Court Department during 2007; and,
- 3,313 in twenty-eight court locations across the Commonwealth during the first half of 2008.

The results of the current phase of the Access and Fairness project provide interesting and valuable data as indicated by the following responses from the 3,313 court users surveyed:

- 80.8% agreed or strongly agreed that their overall experience at the courthouse was satisfactory;
- 87.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they were treated with courtesy and respect;
- 91.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe in the courthouse; and,
- 66.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to complete their court business in a reasonable amount of time.

The project is coordinated by an implementation team with representation from all court departments. The success of

the project is due to the cooperation of court staff at all locations and the willing participation of the court user community. At every court location, judges, clerks, registers, probation officers, security staff, and court facilities staff supported the implementation team to ensure that the survey process could accommodate a maximum number of court users without disruption of the ongoing court activities. At each site, court users of all types - jurors, attorneys, probationers, litigants, victims, police officers, and others - took the time to complete the survey. Implementation of the survey has created goodwill among court users, who generally welcomed the opportunity to provide input to the Trial Court.

The information gathered from the survey will be used by all court departments to guide further improvements in the delivery of quality justice for the citizens of the Commonwealth. The Trial Court expects to achieve its goal to implement the Access and Fairness survey in all remaining court locations during calendar year 2008, based on the current status of the project.

Interim Report on the Access and Fairness Survey Project

Introduction

The Massachusetts Trial Court has expanded its focus on improving the delivery of justice through performance measurement by implementing a nationally-developed Access and Fairness Survey. The survey seeks feedback from all types of court users on their experiences in accessing the courthouse and conducting business there. This survey was piloted and implemented in the eight divisions of the Boston Municipal Court Department during 2007. The current goal of the Trial Court is to implement the survey at all other court locations during 2008. Use of this new measurement reinforces the court's focus on accountability and supports ongoing efforts to enhance access to justice. This interim report describes progress on this initiative and summarizes the key results to date.

Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts

The Supreme Judicial Court under the leadership of Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall convened the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts, popularly known as the Monan Committee after its chair, Boston College Chancellor J. Donald Monan, S.J., to “provide an independent perspective on management in the State’s courts and recommendations for improvement.” The Visiting Committee issued a report critical of Trial Court management practices in March 2003 and recommended that the Trial Court “create a culture of high performance and accountability.”

Greater accountability and transparency represent a commitment to transforming the culture of the Trial Court in an effort to enhance the delivery of quality justice. This commitment to transformation was urged by the Visiting Committee on Management in the Courts, which challenged the Trial Court to “create a culture of high performance and accountability.” The Court Management Advisory Board (CMAB) observed that “the much needed transformation of the management of the court system requires data collection, analytic tools, performance goals and public measurement to spur system-wide improvement and change.”

Court Metrics. A key aspect of this commitment to transform the culture of the Trial Court was the development of performance-based measures and the compilation of objective data to better inform management policies and decisions. The first performance-based metrics initiative focused on the timely and expeditious disposition of cases – an area where the Visiting Committee had found the Trial Court management practices in need of improvement.

Court Management Advisory Board

Consistent with the Visiting Committee recommendation that a “high-profile and respected advisory board” be created to assist in improving management of the courts, the Legislature established the Court Management Advisory Board (CMAB) in 2003. The CMAB has provided thoughtful guidance and strong support to the Trial Court in pursuing Visiting Committee recommendations – particularly the development of performance-based metrics and the integration of empirical data into the management of the courts.

CourTools. The Trial Court has benefited greatly from the existence of CourTools – ten core trial court performance measures developed by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The court first adopted the four metrics that target timeliness and expedition of case management. The Trial Court has issued annual reports for 2006 and 2007 with systemic data on case flow in the Trial Court based

on established time standards and common goals related to these four metrics.

Access and Fairness. A fifth CourTools measure sets forth a survey methodology for eliciting and interpreting data on users’ perceptions of the court’s accessibility and its treatment of users regarding fairness, equality and respect. The Trial Court identified user perceptions as critical data for its ongoing transformation and adopted the CourTools Access and Fairness Survey instrument, which had been tested by the NCSC for reliability and validity.

In calendar year 2007, the Boston Municipal Court Department piloted and implemented the Access and Fairness survey in all eight divisions under the leadership of Chief Justice Charles Johnson. The results of the survey were positive and provided empirical evidence regarding access to the court system in those divisions. The Administrative Office of the Trial Court issued a report with the data in March, 2008, and the Boston Municipal Court has convened a management committee to follow-up on the survey data.

The Access & Fairness Survey supports two major priorities of the Trial Court. Just as the Trial Court has emphasized accountability to improve the quality of justice, it also has advanced initiatives that will promote access to justice. The Access and Fairness Survey not only furthers the empirical approach to accountability, but also produces data on the experiences of court users that will better inform Trial Court efforts to improve access to justice.

Addressing Access and Fairness

Access and fairness are key components in the delivery of quality justice. The Access and Fairness Survey Project furthers access to justice by reaching out to all court users for their input on those areas that are priorities for further improvements to the court system.

Definition	Purpose	Method
<i>Ratings of court users on the court's accessibility and its treatment of customers in terms of fairness, equality, and respect.</i>	<i>Many assume that "winning" or "losing" is what matters most to citizens when dealing with the courts. However, research consistently shows that positive perceptions of court experience are shaped more by court users' perceptions of how they are treated in court, and whether the court's process of making decisions seems fair. This measure provides a tool for surveying all court users about their experience in the courthouse. Comparisons of results by location, division, type of customer, and across courts can inform and improve court management practices.</i>	<i>Everyone in the court on a "typical" day is asked to fill out a brief self-administered survey as he or she exits the courthouse. People are asked to rate their level of agreement with each item, using a 1-5 scale. The survey should be conducted on a periodic basis, for example, annually. The individuals surveyed would include litigants and their families and friends, victims and witnesses, attorneys, law enforcement officers, representative of social service agencies, and individuals doing record searches or having other business at the clerk's office, among others. Because the survey is designed to assess the view of the court's customers, judges and court staff are excluded.</i>

Source: National Center for State Courts, *CourTools Trial Court Performance Measures*, 2005.

Implementation

The expanded implementation of the Access and Fairness survey drew upon the success of the pilot effort in the Boston Municipal Court Department. The guidance and experience of that court's implementation team informed the implementation strategy for the Access and Fairness survey across various court departments, disparate case types, and expanded geographical area.

Working Group. A working group was established to include representation from six court departments, the Administrative Office of the Trial Court, and the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission. The group first met with members of the Boston Municipal Court Department implementation team to review the methodology which had been documented in a user guide.¹ Working group members coordinated and managed every aspect of the project from the design of the survey instrument, to scheduling data collection dates, organizing logistics, and conducting the survey at every court location.

Survey Instrument. The working group decided to adopt a single data collection form for use by all court departments. They made minor modifications to the survey used in the Boston Municipal Court Department, which had slightly modified the original NCSC survey, including adding space for user comments.

One challenge facing the working group was the design of an instrument that could be implemented across all court departments, in multi-court facilities and stand-alone court facilities. It was important to associate court users with specific court departments where possible.

The Massachusetts Trial Court

Chief Justice for Administration and Management

Honorable Robert A. Mulligan

Chief Justices of the Trial Court Departments

Honorable Paula M. Carey
Probate and Family Court Department

Honorable Lynda M. Connolly
District Court Department

Honorable Martha P. Grace
Juvenile Court Department

Honorable Charles R. Johnson
Boston Municipal Court Department

Honorable Steven D. Pierce
Housing Court Department

Honorable Barbara J. Rouse
Superior Court Department

Honorable Karyn F. Scheier
Land Court Department

¹ Boston Municipal Court Department, *Implementing CourTools Access and Fairness Metric: A Detailed User Guide*, January 2008.

**Access and Fairness
2008 Implementation Team**

**Administrative Office of the
Trial Court**

Francis J. Carney, Jr.

District Court

Deborah Propp

Housing Court

Paul Burke
John Umile

Juvenile Court

Donna Ciampoli
Anne Marie Ritchie

Land Court

Deborah Patterson

Probate and Family Court

Ilene Mitchell
Jocelyne Welsh
Christine Yurgelun

Superior Court

Lori Lahue
Susan Marcucci
Marie Zollo

**Massachusetts Sentencing
Commission**

Linda Holt
Lee Kavanagh
Elizabeth Marini

To achieve this objective, an item was added at the top of the data collection form asking court users which court department(s) they visited. A separate category was included for Trial Court Jurors.

In order to better identify those individuals coming to court to meet with probation officers an item was added to the survey question, "Why were you at court today?" The working group also added a number of additional response categories to the question "What type of case brought you to the courthouse today?"

A copy of the survey instrument is included in the Appendix. The final survey instrument was translated into Spanish, Portuguese, and Vietnamese.

Data Collection Strategy. The Trial Court established a goal to complete the Access and Fairness survey in every court location in the Commonwealth by the end of calendar year 2008. In order to reach this goal, the working group developed this data collection strategy:

- Begin implementation of the survey in multi-department court facilities;
- Complete implementation of the survey in coastal regions and the western part of the state during the summer; and,
- Finish implementation of the survey in the remainder of the state during the fall.

The group recommended a single day of data collection as appropriate for each site. There are several sites where different court departments share the same facility on a rotating basis. In those instances data collection occurs over multiple days to capture the unique nature of the court users and case types over various days. For instance, the Salem Housing Court uses the facilities of the Salem Juvenile Court on a revolving basis, so data collection over two days allowed for the representation of both housing and juvenile court users. The Land Court Department has one statewide venue, so data collection was scheduled for two days to capture the variety of court users serviced by that court department.

Outreach to Court Leadership and Justice Partners. Prior to conducting the survey at a court location the working group developed an outreach process that included key local court leaders and principal justice partners. This outreach included communication prior to the scheduled survey date with the presiding justices from each court department, clerk magistrates, register, chief probation officers, chief housing specialists, chief court officer, and facility manager. Court leaders at all sites also received a message from the Chief Justice for Administration and Management apprising them of the upcoming survey and seeking their support. Members of the working group also contacted local key individuals in their respective departments.

In advance of the survey, key justice partners also were contacted. This outreach effort involved letters to district attorneys, chiefs of police, and leaders of local bar associations. The letters informed them of the project and encouraged participation from membership. Other outreach efforts included presentations of the project at judicial conferences, bench/bar forums, and other public forums as appropriate.

Reporting. Statistical reports of the data collected were prepared for each site and distributed to departmental chief justices, Supreme Court justices and management staff at the court site. For all court departments at each site the presiding justice, clerk magistrate or register, chief probation officer, chief court officer, and court facilities manager received the summary report for that site.

Results

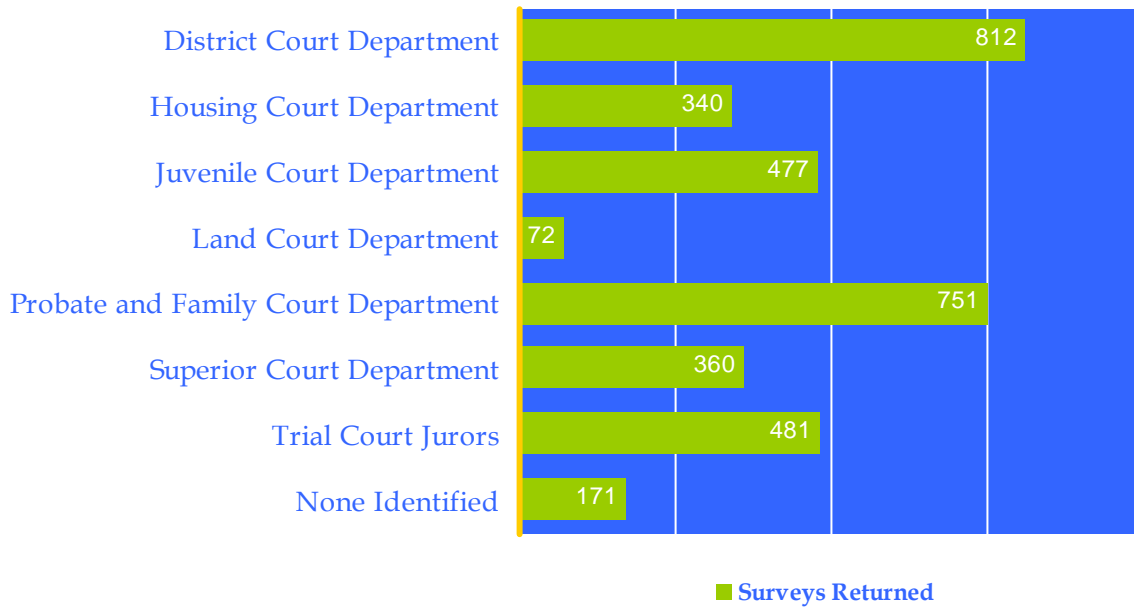
More than 3,300 court users participated in this initiative. As can be seen in the following tables, the number of respondents and the quality of the responses were very high. These users not only took the time to respond to all survey questions but many also provided thoughtful and helpful written comments. All of the results are based on surveys received through June, 2008.

Surveys Returned – First Half 2008

Date	Location	Court Facilities	Surveys Returned
March 27	Worcester Trial Court	1	320
April 17	Plymouth Trial Court	1	165
April 28	Brockton Court Facilities	2	325
May 13	Springfield Court Facilities	2	438
May 22	Edward W. Brooke Courthouse	1	320
June 5 & June 11	Salem Court Facilities	4	321
June 9	Suffolk Superior Court	1	210
June 10	Norfolk Probate and Family Court	1	74
June 12	Cambridge Probate and Family Court	1	106
June 12 & June 16	Fall River Court Facilities	3	280
June 16	Orleans Juvenile Court	1	45
June 17 & June 18	Land Court	1	72
June 18	East Brookfield District Court	1	52
June 19	Lawrence Court Facilities	3	323
June 24	Hingham District Court	1	37
June 26	Barnstable Court Facilities	3	200
June 30	Dedham Juvenile Court	1	25
	Total	28	3,313

Number of Responses by Court Department

(Note: 133 individuals reported using more than one court department.)



Surveys Completed

Number of Surveys Returned 3,313

Languages

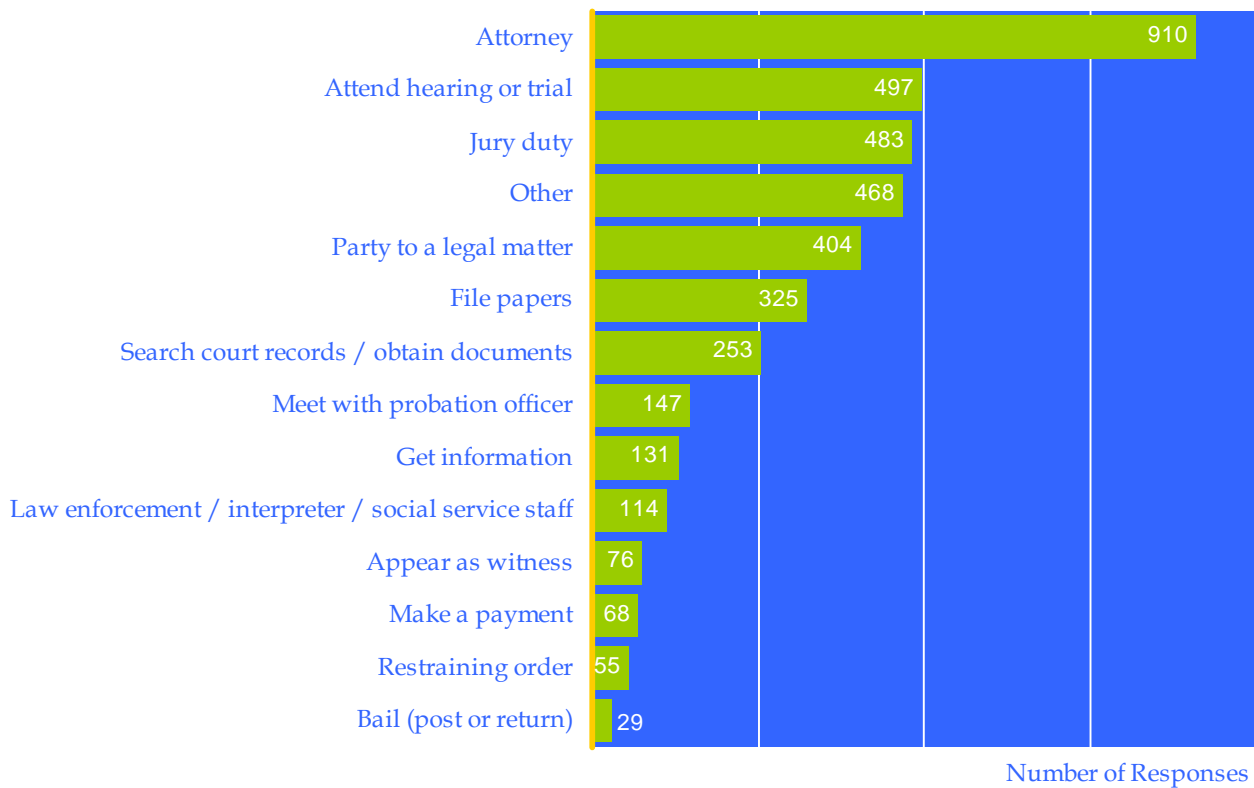
English 3,262
 Spanish 47
 Portuguese 3
 Vietnamese 1

Survey Sections Completed

Section 1. Access to Court 3,302
 Section 2. Fairness 2,340
 Section 3. Purpose of Visit 3,197
 Section 3. Type of Case 2,812
 Section 3. Frequency of Visits 3,183
 Section 3. Race 3,180
 Section 3. Gender 3,145

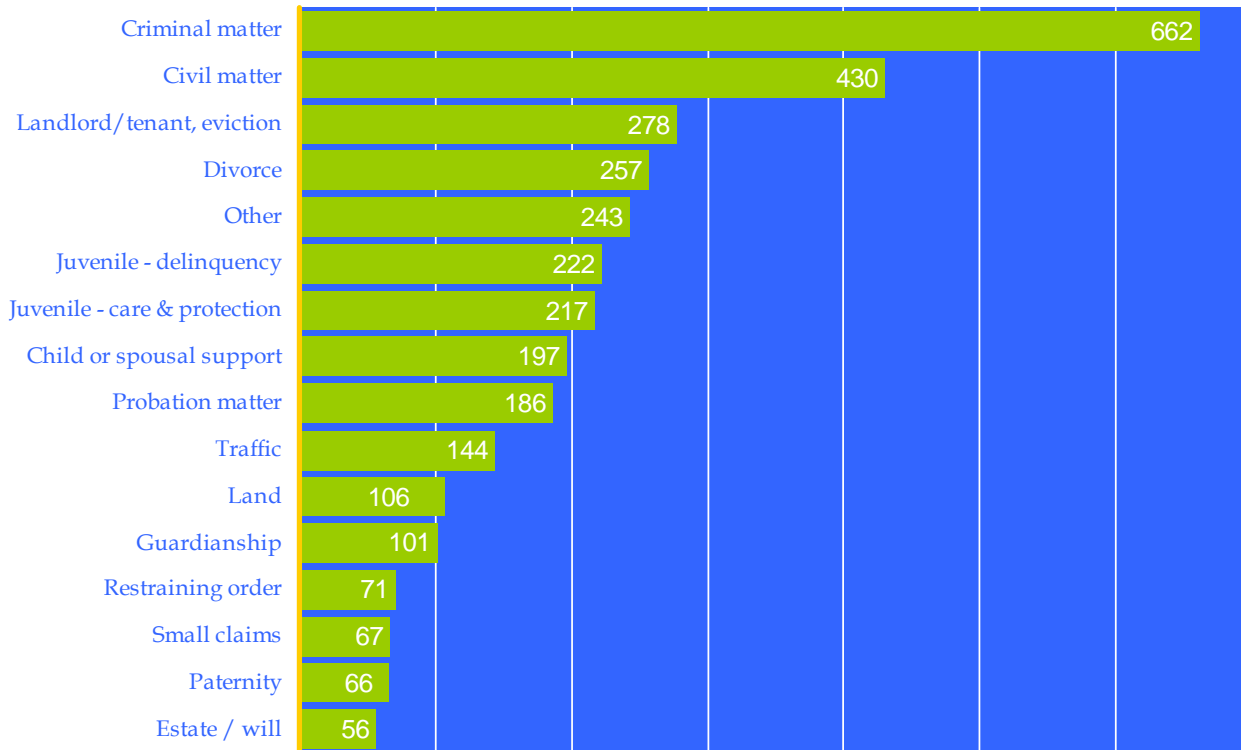
Purpose. People visit the courts for a variety of purposes. The implementation team succeeded in getting a cross-section of types of court users to participate in the survey process. The most commonly noted purposes were: attorney for a client, attendance at a hearing or trial, jury duty and party to a legal matter.

Why were you at court today?



Case Type. A variety of types of cases are heard across the court departments and court facilities and all were represented in the Access and Fairness Survey Project. The most common case types reported were criminal, civil, landlord/tenant, divorce, and juvenile delinquency cases.

What type of case brought you to court today?



Number of Responses

Access. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with each of the eleven items designed to assess access to the courts. There were nine items on which 75% or more of the respondents agreed or agreed strongly:

- I felt safe in the courthouse;
- Finding the courthouse was easy;
- I easily found the courtroom or office I needed;
- I was treated with courtesy and respect;
- Court staff was attentive;
- The court's hours of operation were reasonable;
- The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand;
- My overall experience at the court house today was satisfactory; and
- The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers.

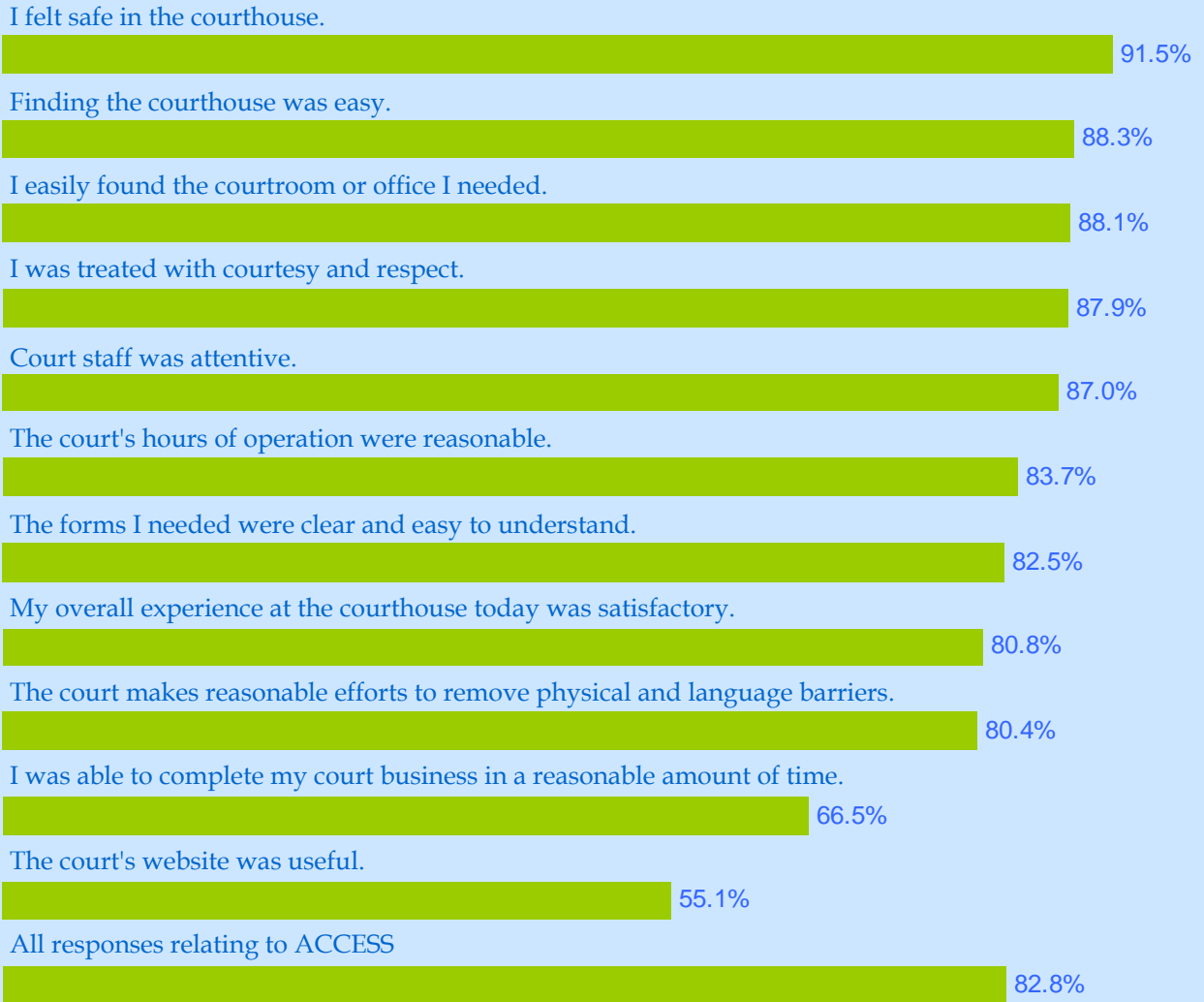
The high proportion of court users who noted the safety, courtesy, respect, and attentiveness of court staff speaks well about the dedication of Trial Court employees.

Fewer respondents gave positive ratings in the following two areas:

- The court's website was useful; and,
- I was able to complete my court business in a reasonable amount of time.

Survey responses indicate that the Trial Court's focus on timeliness is well placed and should continue.

Access

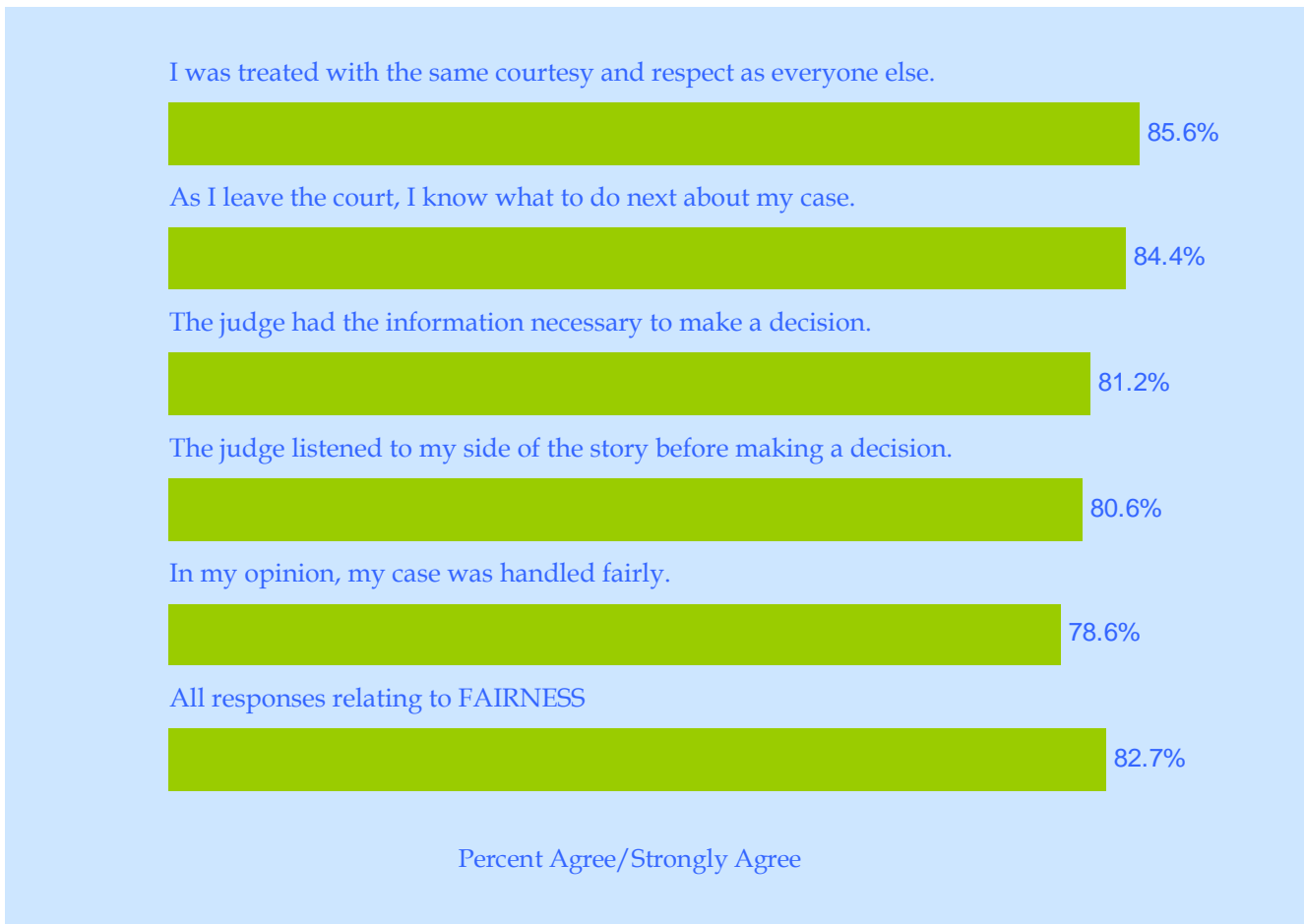


Percent Agree/Strongly Agree

Detailed findings on Access and Fairness for each court department are presented in the appendix.

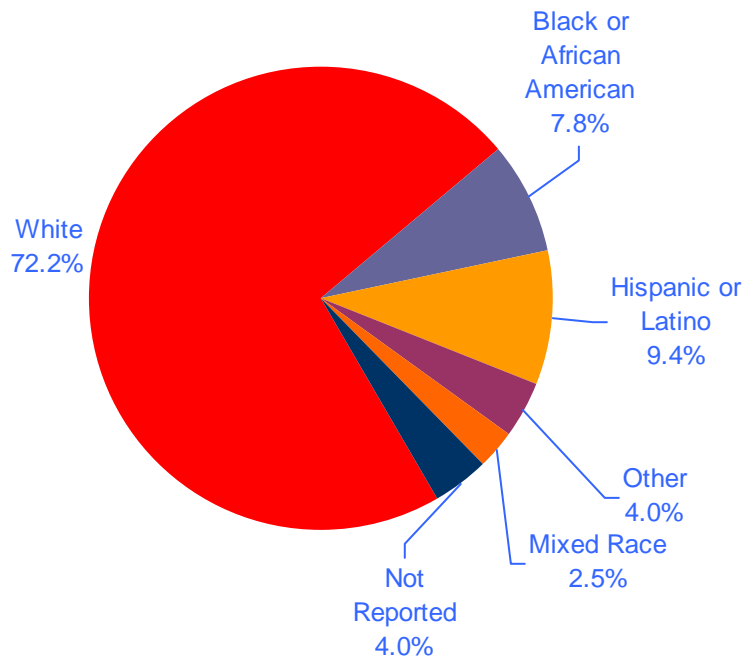
Fairness. The next chart shows the results of the five questions designed to assess the court user’s perception of fairness. These items were only assessed by individuals who appeared before a judge, clerk or magistrate. The ratings ranged from 85.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing with “I was treated with the same courtesy and respect as everyone else,” to 78.6% for “In my opinion, my case was handled fairly.”

Fairness



Race. The following chart shows the race/ethnicity of the survey respondents. The survey elicited responses from a diverse population including 72.2% whites and 23.8% racial/ethnic minorities. Only 4.0% of the survey respondents did not provide this information.

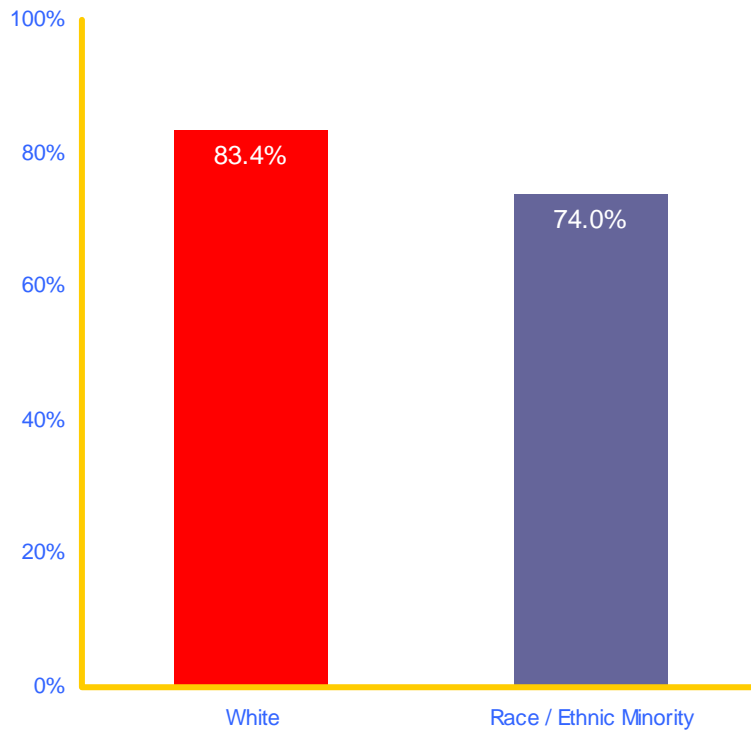
How do you identify yourself?



Combined in the "Other" category were American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other races. The "Not Reported" category consists of respondents who did not provide race or the race was unknown.

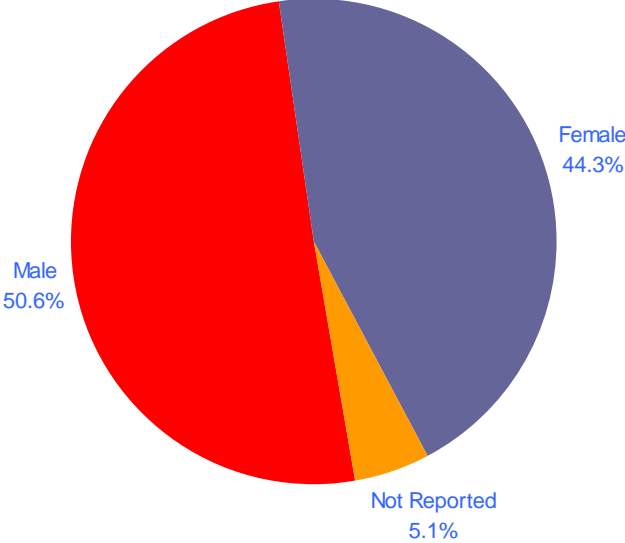
The following chart shows the results of the question "My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory" by the race/ethnicity of the survey respondent. White survey respondents were more likely to agree that their experience was satisfactory than racial/ethnic minority respondents. Further analysis of these patterns may be helpful.

“My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory.”

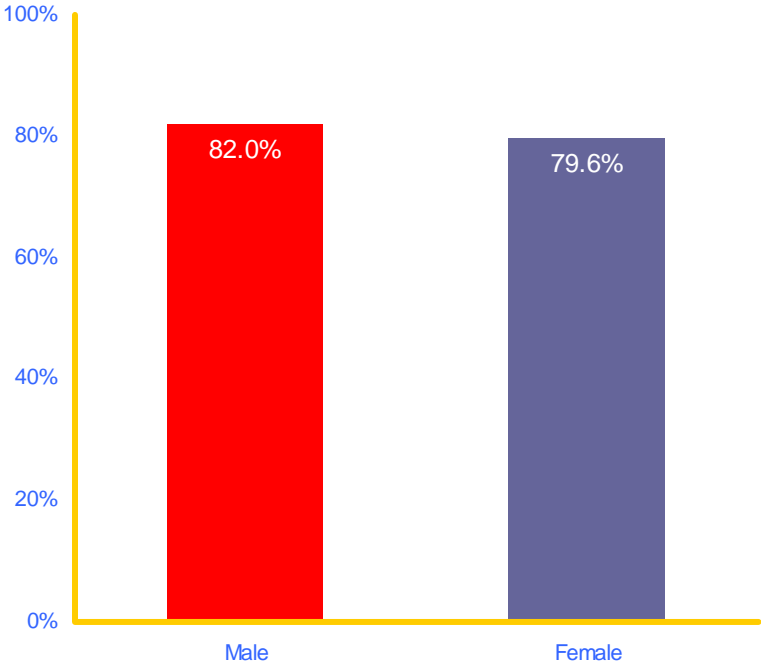


Gender. The following charts show the gender of the survey respondents and the results of the question "My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory" by the gender of the survey respondent. The majority (50.6%) of the survey respondents were male. Males were slightly more likely than females to agree or strongly agree that their experience was satisfactory.

Gender

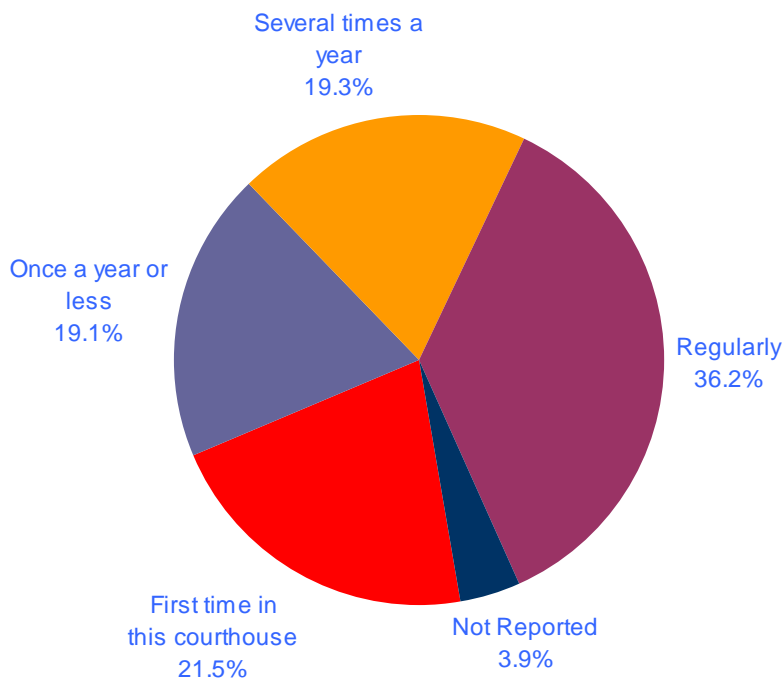


“My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory.”

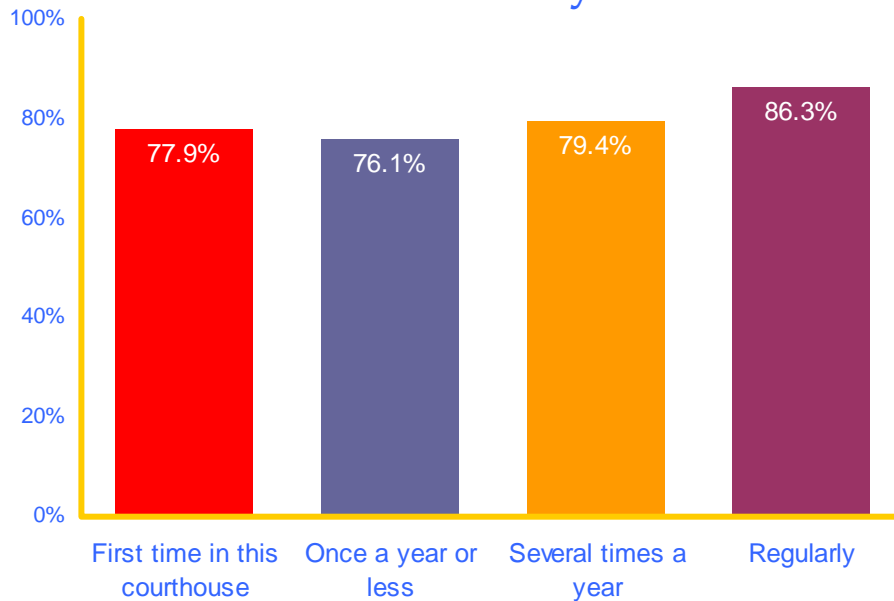


Frequency of Court Visits. The following chart shows the results of the question "How often are you typically in this courthouse?" Of all survey respondents, 40.6% were in the courthouse for the first time or came once a year or less and 55.5% were there several times a year or regularly. At least 76% of all groups agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory." Those respondents who came to court regularly more often agreed or strongly agreed (86.3%) with this statement.

Frequency of Court Visits



“My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory.”



Conclusion

The Access and Fairness Survey Project produced valuable data and generated substantial goodwill in the 28 court locations where it was conducted in the first half of 2008. The success of the ongoing project is due to the efforts of Trial Court staff at all court locations and the court user community. The project enjoys the strong support of Trial Court leaders and cooperation at every court facility. An effective and hard working implementation team represents all court departments. Through planning, preparation and communication, the team encouraged widespread participation in the project.

The results of the Access and Fairness Survey Project will be used throughout the Trial Court to further improve court operations and services. Results of the project are reviewed on an ongoing basis by departmental chief justices, Supreme Court justices, key management staff in every court facility, and the Court Management Advisory Board. The Trial Court expects to achieve its goal to implement the Access and Fairness survey in all remaining court locations during calendar year 2008, based on the current status of the project.

Survey Instrument

Massachusetts Trial Court: Access and Fairness Survey

What court department(s) did you visit today? Check all that apply.

District Housing Juvenile Land Probate & Family Superior Jury duty

Circle the number that applies

Section I: Access To The Court	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
2. I felt safe in the courthouse.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
3. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
4. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
5. Court staff was attentive.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
6. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
7. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
8. I was able to complete my court business in a reasonable amount of time.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
9. The court's hours of operation were reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
10. The court's Website was useful.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
11. My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

If you appeared before a judge/magistrate/clerk today, please complete questions 12-16.

Section II: Fairness	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
12. The judge/magistrate/clerk listened to my side of the story before making a decision.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
13. The judge/magistrate/clerk had the information necessary to make a decision.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
14. I was treated with the same courtesy and respect as everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
15. In my opinion, my case was handled fairly.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a
16. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	1	2	3	4	5	n/a

Section III: Background Information

Why were you at court today? (Check all that apply.)

Search court records/obtain documents
 File papers
 Make a payment
 Bail (post or return)
 Meet with probation officer
 Party to a legal matter (e.g., plaintiff/defendant)
 Attorney
 Jury duty
 Attend hearing or trial
 Appear as witness
 Law enforcement/interpreter/social service staff
 Restraining order
 Get information
 Other _____

What type of case brought you to the courthouse today? (Check all that apply.)

Traffic
 Civil matter
 Small claims
 Criminal matter
 Probation matter
 Restraining order
 Divorce
 Paternity
 Child or spousal support
 Landlord/tenant, eviction
 Estate/will
 Guardianship
 Juvenile-care & protection, custody
 Juvenile-delinquency, youthful offender, CHINS
 Land
 Other _____

How often are you typically in this courthouse? (Choose the closest estimate.)

First time in this courthouse
 Once a year or less
 Several times a year
 Regularly

How do you identify yourself?

Asian
 Hispanic or Latino
 Black or African-American
 White
 American Indian, Alaska native
 Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander
 Mixed race
 Other _____

What is your gender?
 Male Female

Comments:

Thank you for your consideration!

**Access and Fairness Survey Project
Data Collection Staff**

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Laure Karuzis
Paul O'Donnell
Joanne Peyron
Deborah Propp
Darryl Smith
Jill Ziter

Housing Court Department

Paul Burke
Allison Cole
John Umile

Juvenile Court Department

Donna Ciampoli
Jolene Malegieri
James Morton
Anne Marie Ritchie
Alicia Turczyk

**Probate and Family Court
Department**

Jarred Damico
Denise Fitzgerald
Joanne Klimiata
Ilene Mitchell
Nicole Moore
Jocelynne Welsh
Christine Yurgelun

Superior Court Department

Lisa Gomes
Susan Henderson
Lori Lahue
Marcy Maenpaa
Susan Marcucci
Tamara McClinton
Sue Ann Wood
Marie Zollo

**Administrative Office of the Trial
Court**

Francis Carney
Anthony Fortunato
Jennifer Gillis

**Massachusetts Sentencing
Commission**

Linda Holt
Lee Kavanagh
Daniel Lawrence
Elizabeth Marini

Courthouse Locations Scheduled for the Access and Fairness Survey in Calendar Year 2008

July 2008

- Chicopee District
- Eastern Hampshire (Belchertown) District
- Edgartown (all sessions)
- Falmouth District and Falmouth Juvenile
- Gloucester District
- Haverhill District
- Lynn District and Lynn Juvenile
- Nantucket (all sessions)
- New Bedford Probate and Family
- Newburyport District, Newburyport Juvenile, Newburyport Probate and Family, and Newburyport Superior
- Northampton Probate and Family
- Orleans District
- Peabody District
- Pittsfield Probate and Family

August 2008

- Attleboro District and Attleboro Juvenile
- Concord District
- Framingham District
- Holyoke District
- Lowell District and Lawrence Juvenile
- New Bedford District and New Bedford Juvenile
- Northampton District and Northampton Housing
- Northern Berkshire (North Adams) District
- Pittsfield District and Pittsfield Superior
- Pittsfield Housing
- Southern Berkshire (Great Barrington) District

September 2008

- Brookline District
- Clinton District
- Dedham District
- Malden District
- Natick District
- Newton District
- Palmer District
- Stoughton District and Stoughton Juvenile
- Taunton District
- Wareham District
- Wareham Juvenile
- Westfield District
- Winchendon District

October 2008

- Dudley District and Dudley Housing
- Gardner District
- Greenfield District, Greenfield Probate and Family, and Greenfield Superior
- Milford District
- Northampton Superior
- Quincy District and Quincy Juvenile
- Somerville District
- Waltham District and Waltham Juvenile
- Westborough District
- Woburn District
- Wrentham District

November 2008

- Orange District
- Uxbridge District

**Courthouse Locations yet to be Scheduled for the
Access and Fairness Survey in Calendar Year 2008**

**District Court
Department**

Ayer
Cambridge
Chelsea
Fitchburg
Leominster
Marlborough

**Housing Court
Department**

Fitchburg
Gardner
Greenfield
Lowell
Lynn
Marlborough
New Bedford
Uxbridge

**Juvenile Court
Department**

Cambridge
Chelsea
Dudley
Fitchburg
Framingham
Greenfield
Hadley
Holyoke
Milford
North Adams
Pittsfield
Taunton

**Probate and Family
Court Department**

Concord
Fitchburg
Lowell
Marlborough

**Superior Court
Department**

Dedham
Lowell
New Bedford
Taunton
Woburn

Access and Fairness Metric Survey Results by Trial Court Department January thru June, 2008

Percent Agree / Strongly Agree

Survey Question	District Court Department	Housing Court Department	Juvenile Court Department	Land Court Department	Probate and Family Court Department	Superior Court Department	Trial Court Jurors	All Court Users
Access								
Finding the courthouse was easy.	89.3%	88.3%	90.3%	93.1%	88.7%	89.0%	85.5%	88.3%
I felt safe in the courthouse.	90.0%	93.8%	91.3%	100.0%	89.7%	92.9%	93.3%	91.5%
The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers.	81.1%	84.6%	79.1%	84.0%	77.9%	79.0%	78.7%	80.4%
I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	87.1%	86.3%	92.0%	97.1%	85.0%	89.6%	90.7%	88.1%
Court staff was attentive.	82.0%	87.2%	89.3%	98.6%	85.1%	88.8%	92.8%	87.0%
I was treated with courtesy and respect.	82.2%	87.4%	90.0%	97.2%	85.8%	89.6%	95.6%	87.9%
The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	79.9%	80.3%	81.8%	92.9%	79.1%	82.4%	93.1%	82.5%
I was able to complete my court business in a reasonable amount of time.	66.7%	62.5%	58.3%	97.1%	70.0%	76.6%	58.1%	66.5%
The court's hours of operation were reasonable.	82.0%	83.6%	84.6%	97.1%	85.3%	86.1%	80.1%	83.7%
The court's website was useful.	50.1%	50.9%	54.3%	60.6%	56.8%	64.3%	56.3%	55.1%
My overall experience at the courthouse today was satisfactory.	78.3%	80.4%	80.7%	100.0%	82.1%	87.7%	77.1%	80.8%
All questions relating to Access.	80.7%	82.0%	82.7%	94.5%	81.9%	85.8%	84.6%	82.8%
Fairness								
The judge listened to my side of the story before making a decision.	78.3%	83.5%	86.4%	94.9%	76.0%	85.0%	80.8%	80.6%
The judge had the information necessary to make a decision.	79.4%	83.7%	85.8%	97.4%	76.2%	84.2%	79.4%	81.2%
I was treated with the same courtesy and respect as everyone else.	81.2%	86.6%	90.8%	100.0%	83.2%	88.2%	86.0%	85.6%
In my opinion, my case was handled fairly.	75.0%	81.1%	84.1%	94.7%	75.9%	82.7%	63.6%	78.6%
As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	84.4%	83.2%	87.1%	89.7%	82.5%	88.4%	72.0%	84.4%
All questions relating to Fairness.	80.2%	84.7%	87.1%	95.2%	79.5%	86.4%	81.0%	82.7%
Number of Surveys Returned	812	340	477	72	751	360	481	3,313