
Jury Duty: Cornerstone Of Democracy

History of Juror Service

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, they brought with them trial by jury.

The right to a trial before a jury of one's peers has been guaranteed throughout the history of Massachusetts and the United States, for almost four hundred years.

The Massachusetts Constitution guarantees the right to a jury trial in virtually all criminal prosecutions and provides for jury trials in civil cases.

The Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution also guarantees the right to trial by jury in most criminal prosecutions. The Seventh Amendment provides for jury trials in civil cases.

The One-Day/One-Trial Jury System

Jury duty in Massachusetts calls for people to serve one day or for the duration of one trial. Most jurors complete their juror service in one day, and virtually all the rest fulfill their obligation within three days.

You Do Not Need Special Skills or Experience to be a Juror

Jurors do not need special qualifications to sit on a jury. All that jurors really need are the ability to listen and the ability to understand. Jurors rely upon their common sense and life experience while serving on a jury.

Jurors are seekers of the truth. They listen to both sides of a case, decide what the facts are in the case, and then apply the rule of law (as explained by a judge) to reach a verdict.

Your Presence Counts

In order to preserve the right to trial by jury and safeguard our constitutional freedoms, each of us must perform juror service. People from all walks of life must report for jury duty when summoned: students, judges, homemakers, professionals, police officers, retirees and others. Although we may come from different backgrounds, in juror service we come together in the pursuit of a common goal: determining the facts of a case and applying principles of law to reach a verdict.

Our jury system puts extraordinary power into the hands of ordinary people. Serving on a jury is one of the greatest exercises of authority entrusted to individuals in a democracy.

You Do Make a Difference

One of the concerns sometimes expressed by jurors is that they spent their time in a jury pool and were dismissed without participating by being called to a courtroom for impanelment. Jurors should not consider their time wasted. The mere presence at the courthouse of jurors who are ready and willing to serve helps to resolve many cases. It is important to remember this vital role that jurors play in our judicial system.

Your Juror Service Preserves Democracy

Jury duty stands as a cornerstone of democracy. The right to trial by jury is one of the greatest benefits that a democracy has to offer. It provides citizens with the chance to use their own voices in governing themselves. When jurors report for jury duty each day, they not only exercise their right to participate in the judicial process, but they also give others the chance to exercise their right to trial by jury. In doing so, they ensure the preservation of these rights for all of us. The right to trial by jury is as precious and valuable to us today as it was when our nation was born.



You Make A Difference!

Benefits of the One-Day/ One-Trial Jury System

1. Little or No Financial Hardship

Jurors are paid by their employers for the first three days of juror service. Thereafter, the Commonwealth pays jurors \$50 per day.

2. Short Term of Service

The great majority of jurors finish their juror service in one day.

3. No Exemptions

All persons who are eligible to perform juror service must serve.

4. Broad-Based Jury Pool

Jurors are selected randomly from lists of residents, which are compiled each year by the cities and towns of the Commonwealth.



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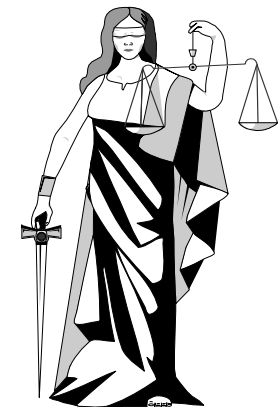
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**Office of Jury
Commissioner**

***The Massachusetts
Jury System***



Commonwealth of Massachusetts