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FACT SHEET **July 2025**

History of the Jury Improvement Program

December 1995
The Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury System Improvement is established by the Judicial Council and charged to review the operations, procedures, and effectiveness of the jury system in California and make recommendations for improvements, including legislation, rules of court, standards of judicial administration, and identification of best practices.

May 1996
The Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury System Improvement publishes its final report. The report contains 60 recommendations for jury system improvement, covering issues such as juror reimbursements, term of service requirements, summoning procedures, peremptory challenges, and jury size. The commission recommends that two new task forces be created: one to oversee implementation efforts and address myriad critical jury reform issues and one to draft jury instructions that jurors can understand.

August 1998
The Task Force on Jury System Improvements is created to continue oversight and implementation of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission's final report. The Chief Justice appoints 15 members to the task force for a three-year term of service. The primary charge of the task force is to facilitate the implementation of a variety of jury management system improvements in the trial courts, such as one-step juror summoning in all trial courts, a standardized juror summons, and a statewide juror orientation video.

May 1999
The one day or one trial jury system is created. The Judicial Council adopts California Rules of Court, rule 2.1002, establishing new terms of service for jurors: People are not required to come to court more than once every 12 months. If they are not selected for a jury after one day at the courthouse, then service is complete

for at least one year. If chosen to serve on a jury, after the trial is over, service is also completed for at least a year and often longer.

2000
Jurors receive the first pay increase since 1957, from $5 to $15 per day plus travel per diem.

2002
Ideals Made Real, the first statewide juror orientation video, is developed, produced, and distributed statewide to all courts for use in jury assembly rooms.

Jury managers in each court complete the first comprehensive statewide survey about critical components of jury administration and judicial practices, including the implementation of legislative and rule of court requirements initiated by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury System Improvement and the Task Force on Jury System Improvements.

2003
The final report by the Task Force on Jury System Improvements is released. The findings outline jury-related reforms in three major areas of jury administration and management: jury selection, structure of the trial jury, and trial procedures. Based on parallel changes occurring across the state, the report is revised and reissued in 2004.

2004
The Court Executives Advisory Committee (CEAC) establishes an Operational Cost Savings Administrative Working Group to identify areas where trial court operational cost savings could possibly be obtained by achieving statewide economies of scale. One of the working group's final recommendations is to establish a working group dedicated to studying jury panel size as a means for courts to achieve significant cost savings.

The Model Juror Summons Implementation Working Group is created and charged to advise staff in refining and implementing the *Model Juror Summons* developed by the Task Force on Jury System Improvements. The working group, composed chiefly of court jury managers, refines and implements the *Model Juror Summons* in several jurisdictions.

Two studies are published regarding the impact of the employer tax credit on expanding the juror pool, as well as a review on the size of juries and whether smaller juries for certain cases can be useful. These studies are conducted in

collaboration with the National Center for State Courts, providing valuable data on jury administration and management.

2005
The Joint Working Group on Jury Panel Size, Sanctions, and Training is established between the CEAC and the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee (TCPJAC). The working group is charged with making recommendations on standard jury panel sizes, education on those standards, analysis and determination of jury panel needs, and, as a related matter, sanctions for noncompliance with a juror summons.

The working group recommends (1) proposing guidelines to reduce the number of unused jurors, (2) standardizing jury summoning procedures throughout the state, (3) improving juror outreach efforts, (4) identifying effective sanctions procedures, (5) improving juror usage data collection, and (6) increasing the juror per diem.

Concurrently with the activities of the Joint Working Group on Jury Panel Size, Sanctions, and Training, the Steering Committee for Jury Rule Proposals is established to provide guidance in developing California Rules of Court pertaining to juries in the courtroom during a jury trial.

December 2006
Rules 2.1031, 2.1032, 2.1033, 2.1034, 2.1035, and 2.1036 are adopted by the Judicial Council.

2007
The Joint Working Group on Jury Administration is created by CEAC and TCPJAC to continue the work of the Joint Working Group on Jury Panel Size, Sanctions, and Training and the Model Juror Summons Implementation Working Group to pursue innovative strategies for improving the administration of the state's jury system.

Rule 2.1031, Juror Note-Taking, takes effect. Jurors are permitted to take written notes in all civil and criminal trials. At the beginning of a trial, a judge must inform jurors that they may take written notes during the trial. The court must provide materials suitable for this purpose.

Rule 2.1033, Juror Questions, takes effect. A trial judge should allow jurors to submit written questions directed to witnesses. Counsel must be given an opportunity to object to such questions out of the presence of the jury.

2009
A jury sanctions report is sent to the Legislature outlining the changes in response rates to juror summons due to the implementation of sanctions, as well as how often sanctions occurred, how much money was imposed versus received by the court in sanctions, and how effective sanctions have been. The report recommends changes to statute to accomplish its stated objectives of increasing juror participation among the courts.

2011
The Expedited Jury Trials Act, effective January 1, 2011, establishes an alternative, streamlined method for handling civil actions to promote the speedy and economic resolution of cases and conserve judicial resources.

An expedited jury trial is heard by a smaller jury, and the goal is to complete the trial in one day. Participation is voluntary. The decision of the jury is binding on the parties, and appeals and posttrial motions are strictly limited. A key feature of the expedited jury trial model is its flexibility, which allows the parties to enter into agreements governing the rules of procedure, including the manner and method of presenting evidence and high–low agreements on damages. The scheduling of expedited jury trials and the assignment of judicial officers are left to each superior court. See California Rules of Court, title 3, division 15, chapter 4.5, articles 1 through 4 for rules adopted by the Judicial Council regarding expedited jury trials.

In collaboration with the National Center for State Courts, the Judicial Council compiles a report studying juror utilization across the state's courts beginning in 2009. The study reveals that effective juror utilization is heavily dependent on pretrial and trial practices to ensure that courts are effectively managing their jury pools.

2012
Updates and additions to rule 10.469(b) of the Standards of Judicial Administration promote judicial officer education on the treatment of jurors and conducting jury trials, in particular the process of jury selection (voir dire), through use of approved educational materials and programs.

2013
The Center for Judicial Education and Resources (CJER) publishes the *Jury Management Bench Handbook*, a compilation of materials from CJER civil and criminal bench books (the law), the thinking of many different judges (judicial practices), and suggested innovations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury

System Improvement, as well as the Judicial Council's former Task Force on Jury System Improvements appointed by Chief Justice George to implement the commission's work.

2017
Senate Bill 843 temporarily reduces the number of peremptory challenges legal counsel may use in criminal misdemeanor cases from January 1, 2017, until January 1, 2021. This legislative mandate also requires the Judicial Council to conduct a study and submit a report to the Legislature bearing on but not restricted to an examination of the number of peremptory challenges used by legal counsel for the defendant and state in criminal misdemeanor cases after January 1, 2017. Additionally, SB 843 calls for the presentation of findings pertaining to the types of misdemeanor cases that are typically decided by jury trials and related to cost savings that may accrue to courts as a result of this legislation. *Report on Temporary Peremptory Challenge Reductions* represents the Judicial Council's response to the mandate.

2018
The Judicial Council begins consideration of a new rule of court, rule 2.1009, to allow for a permanent medical excuse from jury service for qualified prospective jurors. This proposed new rule includes provisions for confidentiality, the right to reapply if denied, and the right to seek reinstatement if desired. The rule is approved and becomes effective January 1, 2019.

2019
Senate Bill 310 is passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The new legislation changes the eligibility requirements for prospective jurors as described in Code of Civil Procedure section 203 to allow certain individuals with criminal histories to serve on trial juries. The new statute takes effect on January 1, 2020.

2020
Senate Bill 592 is passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The new legislation adds a source list composed of state tax filers to expand the pool of potentially available jurors. Beginning January 1, 2022, this list, along with lists from the Department of Motor Vehicles and voter registration, is considered a representative cross section of the population served by each court.

2022

Justice for All: Jury Service is released for statewide use as a juror orientation video, replacing the 20-year-old *Ideals Made Real*. The video features judges, academics, and former jurors explaining what to expect when called to jury service, including the jury selection process, the trial, and jury deliberations. A companion vignette, *A More Perfect Jury: A History of Jury Service*, is also released. The vignette explores the history of jury service from its beginnings in English common law to the civil rights and women's suffrage movements, as well as new changes created by recent legislation.

Assembly Bill 1981 is passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. Beginning January 1, 2023, the new legislation raises the mileage reimbursement from $0.34 one-way to roundtrip. Additionally, the bill provides a framework for courts to encourage individuals to use public transit by reimbursing them up to $12 per day starting on the first day of service.

2023

The Judicial Council begins a pilot project in the Superior Court of Stanislaus County to test a new, completely digital, electronic payment platform for jurors. Using the branch's agreement with Bank of America, jurors are offered the option to sign up using Zelle for payment of their juror per diem in lieu of receiving a paper check. Hundreds of jurors volunteer, and the pilot program successfully completes its testing phase in 2025. It subsequently opens up to all courts across the state.