

Jury Summons Process

By: Marybeth Sullivan, Senior Legislative Attorney
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Issue

This report summarizes the jury summons process in Connecticut. It updates OLR Report [2006-R-0497](#).

Summary

To create a jury pool list for each town in a judicial district, the jury administrator annually combines voter, licensed driver, identity card holder, unemployment compensation recipient, and state personal income taxpayer lists. The administrator deletes duplicate names where possible so that names only appear once on the combined town list.

When determining the number of jurors to summon from each town in the judicial district, the jury administrator must calculate proportional representation using a prescribed formula. This formula is based upon the town's population and its jury summons compliance rate. By law, the administrator must exclude or disqualify certain individuals from the jury summons process and also may excuse or cancel others' service under certain circumstances.

Jury Selection Process

Compiling Town Jury Pool Lists

Once a year, the jury administrator estimates the number of jurors each judicial district will need for the upcoming year. Among other factors, the administrator considers the number of judges assigned to jury trials, the type of cases that will come to trial during the period, and the courts' past experiences with the number of jurors summoned who actually serve ([CGS § 51-219b](#)).

The jury administrator must summon jurors from among the state's 169 towns to reflect each town's juror summon compliance rate in the past year. The number of jurors chosen from each town must reflect the proportional representation of each town's population within the judicial district. This is calculated by dividing each town's proportional share of the judicial district's population by the town's "yield ratio."

By law, through December 31, 2023, the jury administrator must calculate each town's "yield ratio" using the following formula:

1. the number of jurors from the town who were summoned during the 2019 court year and complied and appeared for jury service, divided by
2. the town's proportional share of the judicial district's population multiplied by the total number of jurors summoned in the judicial district in the 2019 court year.

A "court year" is the one-year period beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31 the following year. Town population figures reflect the most recent decennial U.S. Census. Beginning January 1, 2024, the "yield ratio" is calculated using the above formula, except that data from the previous court year is used rather than the 2019 court year ([CGS § 51-220](#), as amended by PAs [21-170](#) & [22-26](#)).

The jury administrator creates a jury pool list for each town from voter, licensed driver, identity card holder, unemployment compensation recipient, and state personal income taxpayer lists. The administrator annually combines the lists, deleting duplicate names where possible so that names only appear once. Jurors are randomly selected from the list to meet the court system's needs ([CGS § 51-222a](#)).

The jury administrator may adjust the number of prospective jurors to summon from within a judicial district if the number is too low or too high, apportioning the change among all of the towns within the judicial district in proportion to the town populations when possible ([CGS § 51-219c](#)).

The chief court administrator can authorize the jury administrator to use the previous year's master file to summon jurors if the new one is unavailable or defective ([CGS § 51-222a\(d\)](#)).

People Disqualified From Jury Service

Jurors must be at least 18 years old and electors or U.S. citizens who are residents with a home in the state. A person is disqualified from jury service for any of the following reasons:

1. has a quality (but not deafness or hearing impairment) that the judge finds impairs his capacity to serve as a juror;
2. had a felony conviction in the past three years, is a defendant in a pending felony case, or is in the custody of the correction commissioner;
3. cannot speak and understand English;
4. is a constitutional officer (the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of the state, state treasurer, state comptroller, or attorney general);
5. is a state referee, family support magistrate, or judge of the probate court, Superior Court, Appellate Court, Supreme Court, or federal court;
6. is a member of the General Assembly while in session;
7. is a registrar or deputy registrar of voters for a municipality during the 21 days before and after a federal, state, or municipal election, primary, or referendum;
8. is age 75 or older and chooses not to perform jury service;
9. is incapable of rendering satisfactory jury service due to physical or mental disability (with a letter from a licensed physician stating this opinion); or
10. has served in the U.S. District Court for Connecticut as a federal juror or grand juror during the last three jury years ([CGS § 51-217\(a\)](#), as amended by [PAs 21-170](#) & [22-26](#)).

The jury administrator may excuse a person for extreme hardship ([CGS § 51-217\(b\)](#)). Also, the administrator can cancel jury service for good cause, including when (1) the called juror's town of residence is switched to a judicial district other than the one to which the juror was originally called and (2) there is a reduced need for jurors. If jury service is canceled for the second reason, then the jury administrator must excuse people on a random basis ([CGS § 51-219a](#)).

Exclusions From the Summons Process

The jury administrator may create and maintain a list of people to exclude from the juror summoning process. The list must include (1) people permanently disqualified from jury duty because of a disability, (2) people age 75 or older who ask not to be summoned, (3) constitutional officers and judges during their terms of office, and (4) people who were called and not excused

from jury service within the prior three years and have not requested to be summoned. The law disqualifies these people from jury service.

Anyone requesting an exclusion for either of the first two reasons must give the jury administrator his or her name, address, date of birth, and federal Social Security number for use in matching names. A person with a disability must also submit a letter from a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or advance practice registered nurse stating that the disability is permanent and prevents satisfactory jury service. A person can rescind an exclusion request at any time by giving written notice to the jury administrator ([CGS § 51-217\(c\)](#), as amended by [PA 21-196](#)).

Also, the public health commissioner must annually give the jury administrator, upon request, the most recent list of deceased people. The administrator may remove these names from the jury pool and also remove the names of other deceased people upon receiving death certificates or other satisfactory proof ([CGS § 51-219a\(d\)](#)).

Exemptions From Previous Service

People called for jury service must be excused, at their request, if they were called and not excused from service during the preceding three years ([CGS § 51-217a](#)). A person is not credited with service if his or her request to be excused was granted or service was canceled before actually arriving in court. But credit is given to people who appear in court, are available for service for as little as one day, and do not ask to be excused.

When the number of jurors available for service for a jury year is exhausted, a juror may be impaneled if it is at least three months since his previous attendance as a juror. The provisions excusing service within three years and limits on the length of jury service do not apply in these circumstances ([CGS § 51-232b](#)).

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