



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT
EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Report from July 2024 Community Dialogue

A Community Conversation: For Us, By Us
African American Participation in Jury Service

Background, Findings, and Next Steps

Message from Chief Judge Sara Grewing, Second Judicial District

On July 23, 2024, community members, legal professionals, and local leaders gathered at the Wilder Foundation in Ramsey County for a vital discussion on the role of representative juries in ensuring equal justice under the law. Twenty-one judges attended the dialogue, which was an opportunity to listen, learn, and reflect on the barriers that prevent full and fair participation in jury service—one of the most fundamental responsibilities of citizenship.

A key theme that emerged from the discussion was the impact of low juror pay, which the State of Minnesota currently limits to \$20 per day. Again and again, participants raised concerns that financial hardship prevents many from serving, disproportionately affecting lower-income individuals and communities of color. When jury pools do not reflect the diversity of our communities, the fairness of our legal system is called into question. Addressing this challenge is essential to upholding the constitutional promise of a jury of one's peers.

We are so very grateful to all who participated in this important conversation. Your voices and insights are critical in shaping policies that promote fairness and accessibility in our justice system. This report captures the key takeaways from the dialogue and serves as a step toward meaningful reforms that strengthen the integrity of our juries—and, ultimately, our democracy. The community can expect continued discussions in the future as we collectively work toward solutions that make our justice system fairer and more accessible to everyone.

Message from Elizer Darris, Community Leader & Justice Reform Advocate

The conversation we had in July was more than just a discussion—it was an opportunity for community voices to be heard in a space where they have often felt unheard. Jury service is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of citizenship; yet for many in the African American community, it has felt like an obligation built on barriers rather than an invitation to justice. The dialogue we engaged in was raw, real, and necessary.

Throughout the discussion, participants shared stories of financial hardship, a lack of trust in the system, and the intimidation that comes with stepping into a courtroom. We heard, again and again, that \$20 a day for jury duty is not just inadequate—it is a financial deterrent, disproportionately keeping Black community members from serving. We heard about the need for deeper outreach; more education in schools; and a justice system that actively works to make participation accessible, not burdensome.

This report does more than summarize the discussion—it captures a call to action. The issues raised are not new, but the commitment to change must be renewed. This is not just about jury service; it is about a system that reflects the people it serves. The work ahead will require intention, persistence, and continued engagement from both the community and the courts.

To those who participated, shared, and challenged the status quo—your voices matter. Your experiences matter. And this work must continue with your leadership at the center of it.

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Community Dialogue Report

July 23, 2024

Report Introduction

The Sixth Amendment of the United States Constitution says:

“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.”

The United States Supreme Court has interpreted this language to mean that a jury panel must reflect a **fair cross-section of the community**. *State v. Willis*, 559 N.W.2d 693, 700 (Minn. 1997) citing *Taylor v. Louisiana*, 419 U.S. 522, 527–28 (1975).

The Jury Administration Office asks jurors to voluntarily provide race and ethnicity information. Data compiled from this information compared with 2020 census figures show the Black or African American population in Ramsey County age 18 and over is 11.08%. In 2023, the court sent a jury summons to more than 3,600 Black or African American Ramsey County residents. Only 6.34% or 576 of those summoned appeared for jury duty. This is concerning.

In several cases, criminal defendants in Ramsey County have challenged the makeup of jury panels empowered with the responsibility to determine guilt or innocence beyond a reasonable doubt. They have argued there is a significant disparity between the Black and African American citizens summoned for jury service and the population of Black and African American citizens in Ramsey County.

While the jury selection process in Ramsey County has been found constitutional, more work can be done. In a recent order, then-Chief Judge Leonardo Castro wrote:

It may also be helpful to engage the Black and African American community in a dialogue on how to improve jury representation. Although not an empirical study, getting input from the Black and African American community about what the court system can do to encourage greater participation in the jury system will help inform any corrective action a chief judge would undertake. This can be accomplished through one of the currently existing court/community groups e.g., Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Transforming Systems Together, etc. The

Ramsey County District Court, in collaboration with its justice partners, should engage in such an effort.

The court takes these efforts seriously. At a statewide level, the Minnesota Judicial Branch created a statewide Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ). As part of its FY 2024-2025 Strategic Plan, the CEJ adopted a goal to identify and remove barriers to justice by using an equity lens to foster a fair, equitable, inclusive, and accessible court system. To accomplish that goal, the CEJ was tasked, in part, to increase opportunities for people to serve on juries by increasing diversity of the jury pool through outreach efforts and exploring options for increasing the juror per diem. The CEJ's work is also accomplished through local judicial districts.

In Ramsey County, the Second Judicial District has an Equal Justice Committee (EJC) made up of judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and other court partners. The EJC's goals are to promote equal access to the court, work to eliminate bias from court operations, and to inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the court. The EJC worked to plan the 2024 jury listening session.

The court appreciates that fair and impartial justice *and the appearance* of such is the hallmark of a fair and just criminal and civil system. Consequently, the court engaged with community members to get a better understanding of the issues and barriers that contribute to the low turnout for jury duty. The court understands this is the beginning of a journey to gain a deeper understanding of how to better serve all the members of the community. What follows below is a summary of the feedback the court received from community members that attended the forum. This feedback will inform the court's path moving forward.

Community Dialogue

The purpose of a community dialogue is to create a public forum for community members to describe their experiences and discuss ideas for advancing equality and fairness regarding race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and any other status protected by law.

On July 23, 2024, the Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee held a Community Dialogue at the Amherst Wilder Foundation in Saint Paul. Twenty-one judges attended the session. Representatives from the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the Saint Paul City Attorney's Office, Ramsey County Community Corrections, Justice Point, Second Judicial District Administration, and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office were also present.

Approximately eighty-five people attended the Community Dialogue, including participants from the Darris Group, Saint Paul Public Schools, Let's Circle Up LLC, MNCASA, Generation 2 Generation, Face to Face, Project Restore MN, Saint Paul Youth Service, Circle of Peace, other Ramsey County government representatives, and community members. The Wilder Foundation's space is in a central location, provides free parking, and is on a major bus line.

This Community Dialogue event was focused on African American Participation in Jury Service and was advertised in writing and by word of mouth to specific organizations and partners. The flyer used for the event is attached to this report as Attachment A.

Upon arrival, Chief Judge Sara Grewing welcomed participants and invited them to sit at any table with a judge and notetaker. Judge Andrew Gordon and Mr. Elizer Darris discussed the importance of jury service, followed by small group discussions, a post-discussion report-out from each table, and closing remarks.

Feedback Received

The program agenda used for the discussion is attached to this report as Attachment B.

The responses to the questions were very wide ranging. A comprehensive seven-page list of all the recorded feedback from the listening session is attached to this report as Attachment E.

In general, the issues raised at the listening session fell into three categories. Ramsey County judges heard that:

1. We should support efforts to increase jury pay. The current per diem (\$20/day) is too low and does not cover basic costs like parking and lunch. This disproportionately impacts people who have jobs that do not pay for jury service or people without jobs.
2. We should continue our efforts at community outreach, both to listen to the community's needs and to help educate the public about jury service. Many provided feedback that this outreach helps build community and trust. Many also suggested that some of this outreach should happen in schools throughout Ramsey County.
3. We should improve our efforts to support making jury service easier and less impactful, especially regarding written materials (summons), welcoming potential jurors to court, access to childcare, and the secondary trauma that can happen when serving on a difficult case.

Next Steps and Recommendations

After reviewing the feedback from our community dialogue, the Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee recommends the following:

ONE: The Second District should support ongoing efforts to increase juror pay.

The current per diem of \$20 per day makes it harder to attract and retain jurors from diverse backgrounds. Jurors who work for minimum wage, are otherwise impoverished, or who lack access to childcare are deeply impacted by the difficult decision to work or to further impoverish themselves by serving on a jury.

The Minnesota Judicial Council is already working on this issue¹, and the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee had previously approved a bill that would have increased the per diem to \$50.² At their September 2024 meeting, the Minnesota Judicial Council approved advocating for a per diem increase to \$100 per day. The district can and should support these efforts.

TWO: Work with the county to pay for parking and/or to provide transportation vouchers and/or work with Metro Transit to expand their complementary ride program.

Absent an increase in the per diem, covering the transportation costs associated with jury service could help more jurors afford the time it takes to serve.

Metro Transit does already offer complementary rides for jurors serving at the Ramsey County Courthouse in Downtown Saint Paul.³ Those passes require an individual download the Metro Transit app and create an account. That is a barrier to access for a sizeable portion of our potential jurors. The program also only offers complementary passes for *one* trip to the courthouse. Jurors who serve for multiple days must pay for their transit otherwise.

THREE: The Second District should do annual juror community outreach at community locations.

Remaining engaged with the citizens of Ramsey County was a specific request of the community members that we heard from. Being intentional about those efforts would give us ample opportunity to listen to feedback, to learn more about our jurors, and to encourage efforts to educate the community about jury service. Holding these sessions annually would show the community that we value the opportunities we have to invite direct feedback.

FOUR: The Second District should encourage working with schools on jury service education.

Schools can serve as an easy point of entry for judges, justice partners, and those interested in expanding awareness of the importance of jury service—especially amongst populations that have traditionally not had access to jury information or exposure to jury service. It also appears that school officials would welcome this intervention.

FIVE: The Second District should offer information provided in person at the courthouse in other languages.

A diverse jury of Ramsey County residents will necessarily include individuals whose dominant language may not be English. Even though those jurors may still meet the language requirements

¹ Mohamed Ibrahim, *Just \$20 a day: Metro courts look at increasing jury pay to address racial disparities*, MinnPost (Aug. 26, 2024), <https://www.minnpost.com/public-safety/2024/08/just-20-a-day-metro-courts-look-at-increasing-jury-pay-to-address-racial-disparities/> (last accessed Nov. 1, 2024). In addition, Chief Justice Hudson has indicated that increasing the juror per diem is a top priority of hers for the upcoming legislative session.

² Tim Walker, *Judiciary panel advances \$1.4 billion omnibus bill*, Minnesota House of Representatives (Mar. 30, 2023), <https://www.house.mn.gov/sessiondaily/SDView.aspx?StoryID=17896> (last accessed Nov. 1, 2024)

³ See <https://www.metrotransit.org/jury-duty>.

to serve, having understandable jury information materials available in their dominant language increases the accessibility of the process for these community members.

The Second Judicial District and our Equal Justice Committee look forward to moving these issues forward.



Please Join Us For
**A Community
Conversation**

For us by us: African American
participation in Jury service

Come join fellow community members and Ramsey County District Court
Judges as we discuss how to increase African American participation in the
jury process.

Tuesday, July 23, 2024

5:30 - 7:30 PM

**5:30 - 6 PM: light bites and
conversation**

Program will begin at 6!

Wilder Foundation

**451 Lexington
Parkway, St. Paul**

We want to hear from you: Share your thoughts and
opinions about jury service!

RSVP kindly requested by 7/15/24

@ listeningession@courts.state.mn.us



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A Community Conversation: For Us, By Us
African American Participation in Jury Service

Meet and Greet / Food – 5:30 PM
Program – 6:00-7:30 PM

Program

Introduction	Chief Judge Sara Grewing Mr. Elizer Darris
Why Jury Service Matters	Judge Andrew Gordon Mr. Elizer Darris
Community Small Group Discussions	Judges, Justice Partners And Community Members
Post Discussion Report Out	Judge Andrew Gordon
Closing Remarks	Chief Judge Sara Grewing Mr. Elizer Darris



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

A Community Conversation: For Us, By Us
African American Participation in Jury Service
Conversation Prompts

1. Have you ever received a jury summons? If yes, how did you feel when you received the summons? What was the outcome (e.g., did you appear, were you excused, etc.)?
2. Do you know members of your community who have participated in jury duty? If yes, what have you heard from them about their experience?
3. If you were asked to participate in jury duty, what thoughts or feelings would you have?
4. Could you share about any hesitations you might feel about being on a jury?
5. What do you think might be some barriers to participating in jury duty?
6. Are there things that can be done to make being on jury duty feel more accessible to you?

Juror Demographics of Reporting Jurors

January through July 2024

Race of Jurors Reporting during the First Half of 2024 and 2020 Census Data for Those Age 18 and Over

Table 1

Reported Race	Number of Reporting Jurors	Percentage of Reporting Jurors	Number from 2020 Census Data	Percentage from 2020 Census data
White	2,908	72.81%	280,066	65.57%
Black	297	7.44%	47,319	11.08%
American Indian and Alaska Native	24	0.60%	3,344	0.78%
Asian	473	11.84%	57,534	13.47%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6	0.15%	184	0.04%
Other Race	65	1.63%	15,520	3.63%
Two or More Races	156	3.91%	23,172	5.43%
No Information Provided	65	1.63%	N/A	N/A
Total:	3,994	100%	427,139	100%

Those Identifying as Hispanic/Latino Origin of those Jurors Reporting during the First Half of 2024 and 2020 Census Data for Those Age 18 and Over

Table 2

Hispanic/Latino Origin	Number of Reporting Jurors	Percentage of Reporting Jurors	Number from 2020 Census Data	Percentage from 2020 Census Data
Yes	203	5.08%	29,602	6.93%
No	3,584	89.73%	N/A	N/A
Information Not Provided	207	5.18%	N/A	N/A

Note: The number of reporting jurors above only includes those jurors who filled out the statistical information on Part B of the summons questionnaire. A juror can be qualified to serve jury duty and only fill out the qualification questions of Part A on the front page of the jury summons.

Race and Ethnicity Absolute Disparity and Comparative Disparity Data

Table 3

Race/Ethnicity	2024 Absolute Disparity	2023 Absolute Disparity	2024 Comparative Disparity	2023 Comparative Disparity	2022 Comparative Disparity	2021 Comparative Disparity
White	-7.24%	-7.67%	-11.04%	-11.69%	-14.65%	-16.43%
Black	3.64%	4.74%	32.85%	42.78%	46.93%	47.74%
American Indian	0.18%	0.17%	23.08%	21.79%	29.49%	10.26%
Asian	1.63%	0.71%	12.10%	5.27%	15.89%	21.08%
Pacific Islander	-0.11%	-0.07%	-275%	-175%	-175%	0
Two or More	1.52%	1.89%	27.99%	34.81%	37.75%	40.52%
Hispanic or Latino	1.85%	2.56%	26.70%	36.94%	34.49%	34.63%
Other	2.00%	2.15%	55.10%	59.23%	53.17%	60.33%

Juror Representativeness

Absolute Disparity = Proportion from 2020 Census – Proportion from 2023 Jury Wheel. Goal is 10% or less. Describes the over/under representativeness in the jury pool of a certain proportion of the population. Positive number is underrepresented. Negative number is overrepresented.

Comparative Disparity = Absolute Disparity / Proportion from 2020 Census. Goal is 50% or less. Describes, on average, in regard to a certain portion of the population, whether that portion is more or less likely, when compared to the overall same portion of the population, to be on the jury service list. Positive number is less likely and negative number is more likely.

Note: All calculations are based on data from the 2020 Census.

Attachment E: Feedback Collected at the Listening Session

African American Participation in Jury Service Listening Session Conversation Prompts and Feedback July 23, 2024

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

As mentioned in the Report, these six conversation prompts were used at the tables during the listening session:

1. Have you ever received a jury summons? If yes, how did you feel when you received the summons? What was the outcome (e.g., did you appear, were you excused, etc.)?
2. Do you know members of your community who have participated in jury duty? If yes, what have you heard from them about their experience?
3. If you were asked to participate in jury duty, what thoughts or feelings would you have?
4. Could you share about any hesitations you might feel about being on a jury?
5. What do you think might be some barriers to participating in jury duty?
6. Are there things that can be done to make being on jury duty feel more accessible to you?

We took feedback in three ways: (1) Table reports to the whole group; (2) Notes taken at each table; and (3) Anonymous feedback left in a comment box. Each is discussed, below.

PART 1: TABLE REPORTS TO THE WHOLE GROUP

Each table at the event reported out and discussed highlights, feedback, and points raised. Those reports are included below, in the order the reports were given:

- Help community feel more comfortable through school outreach.
- Childcare.
- Mental health, anxiety about the process.
- People home, no driver's license.
- Public service campaign needed.
- Coffee.
- Reach out through social media.
- Community education – what jury duty entails/why.
- Low compensation for serving (repeated by more than five tables).
- Content of summons is daunting, could be clearer and more informative.
- Perception that the system is biased.
- Language barrier is an issue with forms.
- Community feels traumatized by the system.
- Distrust in the system.

- Burden/guilt of a verdict.
- Summons are intimidating, not sure what to expect.
- Fear of the judicial process due to lack of confidence/knowledge.
- Safety concerns about being on a jury.
- Personal trauma resurfacing from the content in a trial.
- Health issues.
- Threatening language when someone fails to appear (from the summons language).
- Community education on the role of the jury.

PART 2: NOTES TAKEN AT EACH TABLE

Each table at the event had a judge as a listener / notetaker. Those notes are included below, as transcribed. While notes were not required, they were collected if taken.

Discussion Table 1

- Concerned that people are not getting on the jury list.
- Can't afford jury duty – to get reimbursed for parking, transportation, or childcare you have to afford fronting the money.
- Called when summoned – excused because no childcare.
- One served, but defendant took a plea.
- If I was a defendant and jury all white, I would think “no chance”.
- I got summons: “Oh no” What impact on job – how do I get there – where do I park – who gets kids after school?
- I know people summoned – same reaction as me (see prior bullet).
- Even in court, you don't feel you can participate – you can't say anything.
- Cover letters and material are not in plain language – no access to other languages too.
- Additional resources needed (childcare package) to make accessible.
- Accessibility: public service campaign to promote jury duty to the public – has to be social media.
- More inviting – food, coffee, engage those in the pool or ground level, collaborate with the school system.

Discussion Table 2

- Ever received a jury summons?
 - Medical malpractice case in Hennepin County.
- Family & friends
 - Went longer than expected.
 - Friend with new promotion – delayed 3 times.
 - Childcare.
 - Assistance was another barrier.
 - Issue with people not getting paid while on jury duty.

- “Excited if called to serve, but worried about being absent for people on caseload who depend on me”.
- Support service to jurors – make it possible for them to serve – gas card/parking.
- Barriers
 - Triggers/trauma based on type of case.
 - Mental health issues.
 - Cultural differences.

Discussion Table 3

- Making space/court more comfortable.
- Financial barriers:
 - Job, daycare, pay is low, parking.
 - Minimum wage. 8 hours x \$10.85 = \$87 + \$20 parking reimbursement.
 - Jury service tax credit.
- Public campaign.
- Barriers:
 - Part of a discriminatory system.
- Expand lists.
- Safety concerns:
 - Jurors worried about ramifications.

Discussion Table 4

Answers to the six questions:

1. Have you ever received a jury summons? If yes, how did you feel when you received the summons? What was the outcome (e.g., did you appear, were you excused, etc.)?

Yes. Feelings of frustration. Disruptive to the routine. Understaffed at work. The pay makes it difficult. More frustrated when arrive in court – up and down – people taking plea deals last minute. Not cost beneficial. Outcome: didn’t serve.

Yes. Timing was bad; couldn’t afford to take time off; didn’t show up for duty.

Yes. I was excluded but didn’t know why.

2. Do you know members of your community who have participated in jury duty? If yes, what have you heard from them about their experience?

Yes. Mostly said it was interesting and understood the importance of their decision; found it difficult to come to agreement. Issue of economics; can’t afford to take off work. Need to supplement income. These are serious decisions; the payment should so reflect.

Sister and dad summoned for duty; dad disqualified; sister served on jury.

Wonder about emotional consequences and should have services to provide jury trauma support.

3. If you were asked to participate in jury duty, what thoughts or feelings would you have?

Same feeling regarding question #1 – disruptive to work situation, don't know if I would be selected, stressed out about work, and would be removed.

What am I being called to do; nature of case? May be against my belief system. Make sure of equality, justice, fairness. Not sure if I would want to participate depending on case.

4. Could you share about any hesitations you might feel about being on a jury AND
5. What do you think might be some barriers to participating in jury duty? (Combined two questions into one)

Don't want to make judgment call on someone I may know. Financial difficulties. Juror trauma. Daycare problems. Trust of justice system; systemic inequities. Need to build trust with community.

6. Are there things that can be done to make being on jury duty feel more accessible to you?

Build trust; not having the illusion that "we" are included. Access/stipend for food. Access to daycare. Dispel ideas of who is on jury – don't think I would get selected. How do we build trust? Community and justice system communicating. Need confirmation from someone community is familiar with. Need some type of reformation. Need to stop making brick with straw. Why would I come to court to put one of my own in prison?

More barriers:

- Fear of the unknown; many folks don't understand the process completely.
- Need to educate community.
- Not wanting to feel stupid or intimidated.
- First point of contact that many black people have is police.
- Dishonesty and lies needs to change.
- Need to face the trauma the black community has suffered.
- We need more conversations; people need to tell the court how they feel.
- Need more education about the jury process.
- Need more of a stipend.
- Need to have these conversations with defendants.

Discussion Table 5

1. Have you ever received a jury summons? If yes, how did you feel when you received the summons? What was the outcome (e.g., did you appear, were you excused, etc.)?
 - Yes, received a summons. Glad to serve. I'm older or from a different generation. Public service/civic responsibility was taught and encouraged from my upbringing. Civil responsibility was taught in school. I responded and did appear, was seated and paneled.
 - I've never received one, daughter was called. Her health and nerves made her glad not to serve. She didn't want to be the only person of color, didn't want to be responsible for convicting someone.
 - The experience I had – one other person of color was in the potential pool. The questioning was invasive and seemed geared toward getting people off. I was surprised by the lack of diversity in the pool. My daughter has seizures. She needed a medical dismissal, but I encouraged her to go and see the process.
 - I literally don't know anyone who has been asked to serve or who have served.
 - Dad served on a jury. Had a great experience. Compensation is a barrier. Civic education is missing. As a system member, it is so important to help people understand that.
 - We must seriously look at increasing compensation for jury service. Those who live paycheck to paycheck wouldn't be able to do it.
 - What about the burden of potentially being the only black juror?
 - My family member felt like they wouldn't make a difference. A friend of mine did everything they could to get out, but also felt like he didn't want to put himself in a situation where he would have to fight against the rest of the jury. The trepidation of being the only one is going through people's minds.
 - Who doesn't respond to summons? People may be afraid that there could be consequences of participating. People caring for both children and parents makes it difficult.
 - Tone setting needed when people don't respond. Why do we send mean, threatening letters? Why not offer accommodations?
 - What happens when a jury doesn't reflect the community we serve? People in the jury need to be reflective of the actual community.
 - Some juries do nullify verdicts.
 - Education resonated with me. What do young people learn about jury service? Is it in civics class? Getting upstream is where we need to be.
 - Black people may have more distrust in government. How does being unbiased show up in court?

Discussion Table 6

2. Do you know members of your community who have participated in jury duty? If yes, what have you heard from them about their experience?

- Giving someone that has the same color of me, just treatment/equal opportunity.
- Can take up a lot of time.
- Want someone on the jury that will call out racism/sexism.
- Address barriers = pay for jurors raised.
- Educate about jury service/legal system = kids.
- Equal opportunity = jury (peers).
- Snacks, food, coffee for jurors.
- Jury summons by text.

3. If you were asked to participate in jury duty, what thoughts or feelings would you have?

Would not want to be in jury/judge because having the burden of responsibility for someone else – “better person for the job”.

5. What do you think might be some barriers to participating in jury duty?

Barrier – can’t afford to miss work - \$ for rent.

6. Are there things that can be done to make being on jury duty feel more accessible to you?

- Fair compensation for someone who may be missing essential money from work – pay more.
- Get paid from job even when missing for jury duty – bill/policy.
- Better education for kids/individuals about legal system plus jury duty/service.

Discussion Table 7

1. Have you ever received a jury summons? If yes, how did you feel when you received the summons? What was the outcome (e.g., did you appear, were you excused, etc.)?

Some had served on a jury. One person was actually selected in a criminal case. The case resolved before the end of the trial.

2. Do you know members of your community who have participated in jury duty? If yes, what have you heard from them about their experience?

Some called for jury duty were bothered by the prospect. Waiting was a bummer. One person was excited about the prospect of serving.

3. If you were asked to participate in jury duty, what thoughts or feelings would you have AND
4. Could you share about any hesitations you might feel about being on a jury? (Combined two questions into one)

- One person expressed apprehension but recognizes that it's a civic duty.
- There was concern about whether some people called for jury duty would feel confident enough to serve in that capacity. When asked to explain, one participant indicated that some people may not feel as though they have the intellectual wherewithal to understand the proceedings.
- A participant indicated he would have difficulty with the notion that he would be in a position to make a decision that would impact someone's life, whether it's their liberty or financial well-being.
- The per diem would be an issue. Is the judicial branch really interested in facilitating greater participation when the per diem is so low? Some questioned whether the \$15 or \$20/day represents the value the branch places on participation.
- Concerns were expressed about juror safety, especially in such a polarized society. And, of course, everyone was aware of how the "anonymous juror" in the Feed our Children federal case was surveilled for weeks before the courier approached at her home with a bag of money. So much for anonymity.
- We discussed how serving on a jury may be simply too traumatizing for certain people. This opens the door to considering the barrage of traumas the black community may face on a regular basis and the nature of cases they may be asked to serve on.

5. What do you think might be some barriers to participating in jury duty?

Those expressed above.

6. Are there things that can be done to make being on jury duty feel more accessible to you?

Not sure that this fits neatly with the question, but it came up as part of our discussion. The idea that everyone involved in the jury selection process, including the judge, go through some form of trauma-informed training. I guess the idea is that those of us that work in this system is used to doing so and may lose sight of the fact that for many people the process is an intimidating one. And even more so for people who have experienced significant traumas. Perhaps a better introduction into the process before it even starts. Like a video or something that explains things before they come upstairs to help ease the anxiety.

PART 3: COMMENT BOX (TITLED, THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS BOX)

Notecards were left on each table for people to submit written and/or anonymous feedback. Those notes are included below, as transcribed.

1. Please do away with the “random” sampling of jurors. This methodology was most effective with homogenous groups/communities. With the current demographics, over-sampling of smaller groups provides the most equitable pool of candidates.
2. The jury (pool) should represent a jury of peers. The charges are disproportionately against people of color so should the jury pool be as well.
3. Conversation needs to continue. Give voice to those who could not attend tonight.
4. Card comments:
 - Difficult to talk/listen when there was a lot of noise/other races in the room.
 - Need more quiet space.
 - Need better outreach to the black community to have more individuals from the community at the discussion tables.
5. We talked about how some eligibility and or circumstances of other people’s maturity, and sociable positions anoint the certain severity of cases. And where they look at in prerogative of leadership, and agricultural awareness.
6. Card comments:
 - a. No, I have not.
 - b. Nope.
 - c. I wouldn’t want to. Somebody’s life is more important.
7. I fear am I good enough? \$20 per day.