

## **PETIT JUROR INFORMATION GUIDE**

### **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, PITTSBURGH DIVISION**

#### **WELCOME**

Welcome to the Pittsburgh division of the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The Pittsburgh division encompasses 13 counties in the Western portion of our state. Those counties are: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Clarion, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington and Westmoreland. You have been summoned for jury service in our division, based upon your residence in one of these counties.

The federal courthouse in downtown Pittsburgh is known as the Joseph F. Weis, Jr. U.S. Courthouse. Our building's address is **700 GRANT STREET, PITTSBURGH, PA 15219** and our building is located on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Grant Street. Be advised that our courthouse IS NOT associated with either the Federal Building or the Allegheny County Courthouse, both of which are also in downtown Pittsburgh.

During your term of service, we ask that you use good judgment in attire that is respectful of the formality of a court proceeding (i.e. no shorts, tank tops, torn jeans, flip flops, tee shirts, hats, etc.). Business casual is appropriate. The Court also asks that the rules of etiquette be followed in the courtroom. Since the courtroom can be cool at times, you may also want to bring a sweater or light jacket.

In order to enter the building, you will need to present your juror summons and a form of photo identification. At all times, a valid Pennsylvania driver's license or identification card, with photo, is an acceptable form of identification. You, and any personal belongings you bring, will be required to pass through electronic security equipment. This means that you may bring your lunch, books, magazines, study materials and laptop computers and cell phones into the building. However, Court Security Officers will screen, and they have the discretion to confiscate, any items. Firearms, pocket knives, scissors, razors, mini batons, etc., are NOT permitted in the courthouse. These items, as well as any others that can be construed as a weapon, will be confiscated. Furthermore, while cell phones are permitted in the building, cameras and recording devices are NOT ALLOWED. Picture taking and video/voice recording is PROHIBITED throughout the entire Courthouse.

#### **PROTECTION OF JUROR'S EMPLOYMENT**

Pursuant to federal law (28 U.S. Code § 1875(a)), "No employer shall discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any permanent employee by reason of such employee's jury service or attendance in connection with such service, in any court of the United States." If such a situation arises, you should contact the Court immediately.

#### **HOURS**

A court day, whether for jury selection or trial, will usually run from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. **You should plan on being in the courthouse for a full day.** You are not to leave at any time until officially dismissed. If a selection is still ongoing, your lunch break will be announced by either a jury clerk or a member of the selecting Judge's staff.

If you are selected as a trial juror, most trials start immediately after selection. The presiding Judge on that case, or a member of their staff, will verbally inform you as to when you will need to report to their courtroom. At the conclusion of any trial in which you serve as a juror, your term of jury service will be considered complete.

## **REPORTING DATE**

Although your summons gives you a specific date to the start of your term, that may not be the date of your first appearance. In our Court, juries are only selected on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays of your service weeks. Therefore, please be advised that you are not reporting for jury selection every day for two weeks.

The “Official Notice” that accompanied your summons instructs you on when to begin calling the automated phone system for your reporting instructions. Please follow those instructions carefully. You will need to have your nine (9) digit participant number that appears on your summons prior to calling for instructions. To retrieve your initial reporting instructions, you will call the telephone phone number on your summons (1-866-498-8562) any time **AFTER 4:00 p.m. the Friday before your week of scheduled service** for your reporting instructions. **DO NOT CALL PRIOR TO THIS TIME.** At that time, you will be instructed to either report for selection on the first date of your term, or to call that number again at a later date. **YOU SHOULD NOT REPORT UNTIL YOU HAVE CALLED THE ABOVE NUMBER FOR YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.** If you appear for jury service and have not been instructed to report, you will not be authorized to collect any juror fees or expense reimbursement. If you are not instructed to report when you call, you should go to work and/or proceed with your normal day.

Should an emergency arise during your term of service, or while you are on your way to the Court on a date you are scheduled to report, please call the jury office immediately at **412-208-7540**. Handicapped jurors can also call the above number with questions about access to the courthouse.

## **JUROR IDENTIFICATION**

When you first report, a juror badge will be issued to you by Jury Office staff. **This badge is to be worn at all times while you are in the Courthouse.** This badge will have a handwritten number on it that will be used during the selection process. It is not to be confused with your nine-digit participant number which is used when you call for your reporting instruction.

## **WHILE YOU WAIT-- JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM (Room 3300)**

On the day you are required to appear, you will report to the Jury Assembly Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the courthouse (Room 3300). There, you will be checked in by a member of the Jury Office staff, after which time you are not permitted to leave the assembly room for any reason until instructed by Court personnel. Relatives or friends are not permitted to wait with you in the jury assembly room. Should an emergency arise while you are in the assembly room, immediately notify one of the Jury Office staff.

You are welcome to bring your own reading material or some other item to occupy your time in the event that there is an extended waiting period. However, the Clerk's Office cannot be responsible for items lost or stolen while you are on jury service. Television, magazines, books and wireless internet access are also available while you wait as well. For more information, disclaimer and terms of use about the court's wireless internet access, please visit [www.pawd.uscourts.gov/wireless-internet-access](http://www.pawd.uscourts.gov/wireless-internet-access).

You are also welcome to bring a lunch and/or a snack with you as well. The Jury Assembly room has a kitchen area equipped with a microwave oven and refrigerator for your use. Coffee, tea, bottled water, and a variety of juices and sodas are provided by the Court, while you wait in the assembly area on your selection day. Restrooms are also located within the Jury Assembly Room. The Courthouse also has a full-service cafeteria, where you can purchase breakfast, lunch, snacks, and beverages. Operating hours for the cafeteria are from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. **Meals ARE NOT provided or paid for by the Court.**

From time to time, the courthouse undergoes routine fire alarm drills. Should an alarm sound while you are in the Jury Assembly room, you will receive instruction from the Jury Office staff. In the unlikely event of an actual fire, court personnel will escort you safely out of the building.

**Our Courthouse is a smoke-free building.** While waiting in the assembly area, you will not be permitted to leave the building to smoke. You are, however, permitted to smoke outside the building when dismissed as a group for lunch or break by court personnel.

### **REQUESTING A DEFERRAL, EXEMPTION, EXCUSE, OR PARTIAL EXCUSE**

If you have reason to request a deferral (postponement), exemption, excuse, or partial excuse from your term of service, you must follow the steps below. In order to process your request quickly, **ALL** requested information must be provided and should be submitted as soon as possible. No action on a request can be taken until your response to the Jury Information Form, attached to the bottom of your summons, has been submitted either by mail or online. In addition, all requests must come from the summoned juror themselves. Family members, employers and/or medical personnel cannot submit requests on your behalf.

1. Requests for deferral, exemption, excuse or partial excuse can be made:
  - a. Online through the eJuror system when completing your Jury Information form.
  - b. In writing via the U.S. mail, accompanied by your completed Jury Information form.
  - c. By an email to [EJuror2@pawd.uscourts.gov](mailto:EJuror2@pawd.uscourts.gov), submitted with or after completion of your Jury Information form.
  - d. By a fax to 412-208-7545, also submitted with or after completion of your Jury Information form.
2. Requests must be specific (i.e. dates and times of conflict, specific ages of children, etc.). In its discretion, the Court may grant partial excuses, depending on the nature of request. Failure to provide sufficient information for the Court to make a determination will result in a denial of that request.
3. Additional documents are also **REQUIRED** if...
  - a. A request is being made for **medical** reasons. In that instance, a note or letter from your physician or health care provider must accompany your request, explaining why they feel you should not serve on a jury. This note should state their reason(s) clearly and should have an original signature. A generic “for medical reasons” statement will not be accepted. In lieu of a note, a Doctor or Physician may complete and submit a Physician’s Statement for Medical Excuse form, available at [www.pawd.uscourts.gov/sites/pawd/files/PhysicianFormRev.pdf](http://www.pawd.uscourts.gov/sites/pawd/files/PhysicianFormRev.pdf).
  - b. A request is being made for **financial** reasons. In that instance, either a letter from the employer, or proof a company policy concerning pay while serving as a juror, must accompany your request or advising of any other viable issue that presents a financial hardship.

Any additional documents, if the request was submitted online, can be supplied to the Jury Office using one of the submission methods mentioned above. These documents should clearly identify you as the potential juror and include your participant number. Otherwise, all required documents should be sent when the original request is made. While it is your responsibility to submit all requested documentation, a member of the Jury Office staff may contact you for additional or missing information.

Once all of your documentation is submitted, it will be processed and reviewed by the Court. Please wait at least five (5) days after you submit your request before checking on the status. You can do so by either calling the automated phone system at 1-866-498-8562 or by checking online through the eJuror system. You will need to have your nine (9) digit participant number to check on the status of any request.

In most cases, requests that are granted are temporary, including requests based on a financial hardship, and you cannot be deferred you to a specific date or time of year. This means that if you are granted a deferral, you should expect to be summoned again. However, we will not re-summon you any time within the first three (3) months of your deferral.

An individual who is summoned for a second term of jury service in our Court can request another deferral at that time. If granted and a third summons for jury service in our Court is sent, however, any further request for deferral will be denied.

### **GROUND TO REQUEST AN EXEMPTION OR EXCUSE FROM JURY SERVICE**

A summoned juror may request to be exempt or excused from jury service upon written request and with proof to establish the basis for their request. The Court, in its discretion, may or may not grant the request and could instead defer a juror's service to a later date:

#### **Grounds for Exemption**

- Members in active service in the Armed Forces of the United States;
- **Full-time** members of the regular fire or police departments of any state, district, territory, possession or subdivision thereof; and
- **Full-time** public officers in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of any federal, state, or local government who are actively engaged in the performance of official duties. "Public officer" shall mean a person who is either elected to public office or who is directly appointed by a person elected to public office.

#### **Grounds for Excuse**

- Any person 70 years of age and over;
- Any person who served as a **federal** grand or petit juror within the last two years;
- Any person not gainfully employed full-time outside the home and having sole full-time active custody of a child or children under eight (8) years of age and the health and/or safety of such child or children would be jeopardized by that person's absence for jury service;
- Any person not gainfully employed full-time outside the home that is essential to the care of aged or infirmed persons who reside full-time in the same household. This category does not apply to health care workers and/or those employed as caregivers;
- Any person whose presence is so essential to the operation of a business, that such business must close or cease to function during the absence of that person for jury service;
- Any volunteer safety personnel who serve in an official capacity, without compensation, as firefighters, rescue squad members or ambulance crews of a public agency of the United States, or any state, district, territory or possession thereof. "Public Agency" for this purpose means the United States, any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any unit of local government, department, or instrumentality of the foregoing.

**JURORS RESIDING 60 MILES OR MORE AWAY FROM THE COURTHOUSE**

Any juror who resides 60 or more miles away from the courthouse will qualify for a subsistence reimbursement from the Court for an overnight stay. Please note that this mileage is for one-way, not round trip, transportation to and from the courthouse.

Be advised that Jury Office staff cannot make hotel accommodations for jurors and, if eligible to stay over, you will have to contact a hotel of your choice to make a reservation. When making hotel reservations, you should advise the reservation agent that you are requesting the “federal government rate” as your summons for jury service from our court allows you to receive such consideration. At the time you check in, you may need to present your summons as proof to the hotel and the hotel is permitted to make a copy of it for their records. Please retain your original summons and bring it with you to the courthouse when you are directed to report.

It is important that **before** finalizing any reservation, you confirm that you are receiving the “federal government rate”. If a hotel cannot provide this rate (or a lower one) to you, **do not** make the reservation and instead, contact another hotel that will. The reason is that reimbursement will only be made at the current government subsistence rate, which is deemed sufficient to cover the government rate of lodging at a local hotel and reasonable subsistence. Any expense above that amount is not eligible for reimbursement and thus would become your responsibility. Confirming the lower room rate will help ensure that you will not incur any out-of-pocket expenses.

You should also request that the hotel provide you with an itemized invoice for each day of your stay. Hotel receipts are required for any overnight stay and they should be turned in on a daily basis in order to receive the proper amount of per diem. In addition, some taxes and expenses associated with your stay may also qualify for reimbursement. Those expenses should be clearly indicated on any invoice you receive and submit to the jury office for reimbursement.

As an alternative, jurors who qualify for an overnight stay at a hotel have the option to stay with family or friends. Upon identification of the person(s) they are staying with to the Jury Office, they will receive a reduced subsistence payment, also at the current government rate.

**LOCALS HOTELS AND LODGING**  
**(Not intended as a complete listing or any endorsement)**

Courtyard by Marriott - Downtown	412-434-5551
Doubletree Hotel - Downtown	412-281-5800
Drury Hotel – Downtown	412-281-2900
Marriott Hotel - Downtown	412-321-3000
Omni William Penn Hotel - Downtown	412-553-5100
Westin Convention Hotel - Downtown	412-281-3700
Hampton Inn - Smallman Street (“The Strip”)	412-288-4350
Sheraton Hotel - Station Square	412-261-2000
Hyatt Place - North Shore	412-995-4244
Hampton Inn - Greentree	412-922-0100 (Door to door shuttle service)

## **COURTROOMS**

The questioning and actual selection of a jury, done through a process known as voir dire, is usually conducted in the courtroom. No food or drink is permitted in the courtroom. Certain reading material is allowed, but all electronic equipment **MUST** be turned off while in the courtrooms. Failure to follow these procedures may result in the confiscation of your device.

## **JUROR PAYMENTS**

All jurors will receive \$50.00 for each day of attendance. Federal employees are required to report their employment status to the jury clerk on their first day of jury service, as they are paid their regular salary in lieu of this fee. Jurors will also receive round-trip travel mileage, at the current government rate, from their residence to and from the courthouse. Jurors can also be reimbursed for any parking fees, **up to \$15.00 per day**, upon submission of a valid receipt with pertinent information (i.e. name, participant and/or juror number, date and amount of expense). Jurors who incur any tolls during their travel to and from the courthouse may also receive reimbursement upon presentation of a valid receipt and/or EZ-Pass statement, showing the dates of travel, fees and identifying information. If you take public transportation or a ride-sharing service, you do not need to get receipts from the transit operator or driver as those are not directly reimbursable expenses. All receipts should be turned into the Jury Office on a daily basis to ensure prompt processing. Please be aware that you will not receive reimbursement on your day of service. Instead, a check for your service as a juror will be mailed to the address where your summons was sent.

Reimbursement checks for jurors are prepared and mailed twice each month. However, each check run is limited to a two-week period and if a receipt is not received or an expense not reported during your time of service, you will not receive reimbursement. Therefore, it is important that you turn in any receipts or report any expenses promptly to the Jury Office. More information about the submission of receipts and expenses will be provided to you on the first day you report for jury service. When you leave that day, or after any other day you serve, Jury Office staff can issue attendance letters to you as proof to any employer or agency of your service in our court. These letters can also be printed by logging into the eJuror system through our Court's website, [www.pawd.uscourts.gov](http://www.pawd.uscourts.gov).

Your check will be sent directly to you from the Department of Treasury, much like a tax refund. A sub-voucher, which is an itemized breakdown of your total juror payment, can be provided separately upon request. Jury attendance fees are considered to be income and should be reported to the IRS on your tax form. The Court will issue a 1099 form to all jurors who earn \$600.00 or more in jury attendance fees. However, even if you earn less than \$600.00 in jury attendance fees, this amount should still be reported as income on your tax form. Payments for mileage/parking expenses/tolls are not considered income.

## **EMERGENCY MESSAGES TELEPHONE NUMBER (1-866-602-3219)**

This toll-free telephone number is to be used by all federal judiciary employees and jurors to find out if the courthouse will be open, closed, or have a delayed opening during times of inclement weather or any other emergency condition that may occur. This service will also be used to provide any other important information during a facility shutdown. If our building is forced to close, individuals can call this toll-free number and hear a pre-recorded message that provides the status of the courthouse. If the message does not specifically state that the courthouse is closed, then the Court is open for business as usual.

You should not hesitate to call this number if you feel that there could be a message during an unusual circumstance at the Court. You do not have to wait for direction from anyone at the Court to call this number. This telephone number will be the best way to hear current information in the event that an issue or problem necessitates a delay in the opening or closure of the courthouse.

## **PARKING & TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Below is a list of parking and transportation resources that service downtown Pittsburgh. The Court has no affiliation with, nor explicitly endorses, any of the following transportation options. Please note that parking rates are set by each individual operator and those rates may exceed the maximum reimbursable amount of \$15.00/day. Any expense over that amount would be your responsibility. Therefore, if you have questions about the rate at a particular facility, you are advised to consult their website or contact them directly.

Alco Parking Corporation (412) 323-4455 ([www.alcoparking.com](http://www.alcoparking.com))

Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (412) 566-4190 ([www.downtownpittsburgh.com/parking](http://www.downtownpittsburgh.com/parking))

Pittsburgh Parking Authority (412) 560-7275 ([www.pittsburghparking.com](http://www.pittsburghparking.com))

ParkPGH (412) 423-8980 ([www.parkPGH.com](http://www.parkPGH.com))

Port Authority of Allegheny County (412) 442-2000 ([www.portauthority.org](http://www.portauthority.org))

Beaver County Transit Authority (724) 728-8600 ([www.bcta.com](http://www.bcta.com))

Butler Transit Authority (724) 283-1783  
(<http://www.butlertransitauthority.com/bus-routes/service-to-pittsburgh/>)

Fayette Area Coordinated Transportation 1-800-321-7433 ([www.factbus.com](http://www.factbus.com))

Freedom Transit (724) 223-8747 ([www.freedom-transit.org](http://www.freedom-transit.org))

Lenzner Coach Lines 1-800-342-2349 ([www.coachride.com/Scheduled-Services](http://www.coachride.com/Scheduled-Services))

Mid Mon Valley Transit (724) 489-0880 ([www.mmvta.com](http://www.mmvta.com))

New Castle Area Transit Authority (724) 654-3130 ([www.newcastletransit.org](http://www.newcastletransit.org))

Westmoreland Transit 1-800-221-9282 ([www.westmorelandtransit.com](http://www.westmorelandtransit.com))

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

**412-208-7540** (Jury Office Voice)

**412-208-7545** (Jury Office Fax)

**1-866-498-8562** (Automated Juror Information System-AJIS)

**1-866-602-3219** (Automated Emergency Message)

## **THANK YOU**

The Court greatly appreciates your time and service and trusts that your experience in our courthouse will be pleasant, rewarding, and memorable.