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FACT SHEET

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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, summonsing procedures, preemptory challenges and jury size. The commission recommended that two new task forces be created: one to oversee implementation efforts and to address myriad critical jury reform issues, and one to draft jury instructions that are understandable to jurors.

- August 1998: The Task Force on Jury System Improvement is created to continue oversight and implementation of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission 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 implementing one-step juror summonsing in all trial courts, creating a standardized juror summons, and creating a statewide juror orientation videotape.

- May 1999: One-day or one-trial jury system is created. The Judicial Council adopts rule 2.1002 of the California Rules of Court 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: Jury data survey—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.

- 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.

- 2004: The Court Executives Advisory Committee (CEAC) established 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 costs savings and/or avoidance.

- 2004: 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 Improvement. The working group, composed chiefly of court jury managers, refines and implements the Model Juror Summons in several jurisdictions.

- April 2005: Joint Working Group on Jury Panel Size, Sanctions and Training is established as a joint working group 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 non-compliance with a juror summons.

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

- 2005: 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.

- November 2007: Joint Working Group on Jury Administration was created by CEAC and the 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.

- 2007: Judicial Council adopts rule 2.1031, Juror Note-taking. Jurors are permitted to take written notes in all civil and criminal trials. At the beginning of a trial, a trial judge must inform jurors that they may take written notes during the trial. The court must provide materials suitable for this purpose.

- 2007: Judicial Council adopts rule 2.1033, Juror Questions. A trial judge should allow jurors to submit written questions directed to witnesses. An opportunity must be given to counsel to object to such questions out of the presence of the jury.

- 2009: Jury sanctions report sent to the California 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 effective sanctions have been. The report recommended changes to statute in order 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 to 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 post-trial 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 the 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.

- 2011: In collaboration with the National Center for State Courts, the Judicial Council compiled a report studying juror utilization across the state's courts, beginning in 2009. The study revealed that effective juror utilization is heavily dependent upon 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 California Standards of Judicial Administration, promotes judicial officer education on the treatment of jurors and on 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 Research (CJER) office 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 Improvement, appointed by Chief Justice George to implement the Commission's work.

- 2018: The Judicial Council began consideration of a new California 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 was approved and became effective January 1, 2019.

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

Originally created August 2018