

In Louisiana and the rest of the United States, the parties in certain legal matters have the right to have important questions decided by a jury of impartial citizens. This is not true in all countries in the world and it has not always been true in the United States. The right to a Jury Trial is one of our most significant rights; it can be preserved for us only if our citizens are willing to do their civic obligation to report for jury service when they receive a subpoena to appear and to serve on a jury if selected for a particular case.

Jurors are drawn randomly by computer from a master list which is compiled by the Jury Commission. The list is called the General Venire. The Jury Commission compiles the General Venire from sources such as voter registration. When the Jury Commission makes the drawing for a particular jury, each person has as much chance to be drawn for jury service as any other person. As a result, some people are called frequently and some are never called.

Jury Service is one of the most important civic duties you can perform. Without people like you to serve, our jury system would not work. Keep in mind that if you had a matter requiring a jury, you would want someone who would be fair and impartial to hear your case. If people fail to report for Jury Service the right to a Jury Trial may not be there for you when needed.

[What to do if you Receive a Subpoena for Jury Service...](#)

A SUBPOENA is an order to appear in court at the time and place stated. Until a few years ago the law allowed the judges to excuse or exempt people whose jobs the legislature considered essential. That is no longer true. Now everyone who is qualified must participate in jury selection unless the service would result in undue hardship or extreme inconvenience. You may also ask to be excused if you have actually appeared for jury duty within the last two years.

If you believe...

- 1) That you are not qualified for jury service;
- 2) That jury service would be an undue hardship or extreme inconvenience; or
- 3) If you have appeared for jury duty within the last two years...

You may be able to obtain permission not to appear at the time and place stated on your subpoena. Contact the office of the judge appearing on your subpoena in order to address any concerns you might have. Remember you are not free from your obligation to appear unless you have received written verification that your reason has been accepted by the Court.

1. YOU MAY NOT BE QUALIFIED:

Louisiana Law requires that persons serving on juries be residents of the Parish for at least 1 year prior to date of service, be 18 years of age or older, be able to read, write, and speak the English language and be possessed of sufficient knowledge of the English language, not be interdicted or incapable of serving because of a mental or physical infirmity, and not be under indictment, incarcerated under an order of imprisonment, or on probation or parole for a felony offense within the five-year period immediately preceding your appearance for jury service.

Here are some examples of ways in which you may obtain the permission not to appear due to a disqualification. In each case you must send the required material to the judge by mail or fax.

If you are living in another parish you may send a note to that effect and a utility bill or other proof of new residence. Similarly, if you have not been a resident of this parish at least one (1) year prior to jury service, you are not qualified to serve as a juror.

If you are unable to read, write, or speak the English language you may send a notarized statement to that effect.

2. JURY SERVICE MAY BE AN EXTREME HARDSHIP FOR YOU IF...

a. You have a physical condition which affects jury service. The Jury Commission is attempting to remove the names of people who are physically unable to serve. To do so we must have a letter from a doctor stating clearly that your medical condition prevents you from being able to do jury service. An appointment card or note which describes your condition is not sufficient. The doctor must actually inform the court that you cannot serve.

b. If you are medically unable to serve on this jury only, but may be able to serve in the future, your doctor's letter may so state. In that case, the judge will postpone your jury service to another date occurring within six (6) months.

c. If your occupation or your family responsibilities are the cause of the hardship, you may send an explanation. In these cases you will receive a postponement to another jury in the near future.

3. IF YOU HAVE SERVED ON A JURY WITHIN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND WISH TO BE EXCUSED FROM SERVING AGAIN...

You may send to the judge on your subpoena when and where you served. The judge will need to verify that the parish, the jury term and the case was actually tried. You may request to be excused from jury duty if you appeared for jury selection.

4. IF YOU ARE OVER 70 YEARS OF AGE AND DO NOT WISH TO SERVE...

Contact the Clerk of Court. They will remove you from the master list upon verification of age.

PLEASE CALL THE NUMBER ON YOUR SUBPOENA THE DAY BEFORE AND THE MORNING OF YOUR SCHEDULED APPEARANCE TO MAKE SURE YOU STILL HAVE TO ATTEND.