



## **Citizens Jury Project Report April 2010**

### **Summary**

In April of 2010, the Citizens Jury Project (CJP) of the Fund for Modern Courts operated Ombudservice booths in nine (9) courthouse locations in New York City for six to twelve hours per week.<sup>1</sup> The primary goal of CJP interns is to provide assistance to jurors and improve the juror experience. In April, 759 jurors approached the booths (or used the virtual ombudservice online), with 789 questions or comments.

This report identifies common questions asked and comments made to interns at each site. Inquiries about the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse were the most common juror questions at seven (7) CJP sites in April 2010.<sup>2</sup> At two (2) sites, the greatest number of questions concerned procedure.<sup>3</sup>

### **New York County**

**60 Centre Street:** During April, the CJP Ombudservice booth was approached by 164 jurors with 179 questions and comments. The questions most frequently asked concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (121). Thirty-two (32) questions were asked about procedure and what jurors could/were required to do. Ten (10) questions were asked in regard to postponement or difficulty in serving. Seven (7) late jurors approached interns, and six (6) jurors raised questions concerning qualifications to serve. One (1) juror complained that *“I’d love to serve on a jury, but I’m never selected because I’m a lawyer!”*

**100 Centre Street:** During April, 99 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth with 103 questions and comments. The questions most frequently asked concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (64). Fourteen (14) questions were asked in regard to postponement or difficulty in serving. Nine (9) late jurors approached interns, and eight (8) questions were asked about procedure and what jurors could/were required to do. One juror complained *“I don’t like that I have been serving on a case for three weeks. I was surveyed for a case involving a matter I did not like.”*

**111 Centre Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor:** During April, 39 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth with 40 questions and comments. The questions most frequently asked concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (21). Nine (9) questions were asked about procedure and what jurors could/were required to do. Seven (7) questions were asked in regard to postponement or difficulty in serving.

**111 Centre Street, 11<sup>th</sup> floor:** During April, 160 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth with 163 questions and comments. The questions most frequently asked concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (95). Twenty-six (26) questions concerned procedure and what jurors could/were required to do, and fourteen (14) were in regard to postponement or difficulty in serving. Eleven (11) late jurors approached interns with questions. Eight (8) questions concerned qualifications to serve.

### **Kings County**

**320 Jay Street:** During April, 43 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth and raised 44 questions and comments. The questions most frequently asked concerned procedure and what jurors could/were required to do (18). Eleven (11) questions were asked in regard to the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse. Seven (7) late jurors approached interns. Four (4) questions had to do with postponements or difficulty serving.

**360 Adams Street:** During April, 52 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth with 54 questions and comments. The most common questions concerned procedure and what jurors could/were required to do (26). Thirteen (13) questions were in regard to the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse. Four (4) late jurors approached interns. Three (3) questions had to do with postponements or difficulty serving, and three (3) concerned qualifications to serve.

### **Bronx County**

**215 East 161st Street:** During April, 102 jurors approached the CJP Ombudservice booth with 104 questions and comments. The most common questions concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (53). Nineteen (19) questions concerned postponements and difficulty in serving. Eighteen (18) questions were asked regarding procedure and what jurors could/were required to do. Four (4) questions were related to qualifications to serve, and four (4) late jurors approached interns. One (1) juror offered this appreciative comment: *“They do a great job handling all these people.”*

### **Queens County**

**Kew Gardens:** During April, 37 jurors approached interns with 38 questions and comments. The most common questions concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (25). Three (3) questions were in regard to procedure and what jurors could/were required to do, and three (3) were about the computers. Three (3) more were asked about postponements and difficulty in serving. One (1) juror suggested *“You guys should put a change machine in here.”* Another said *“I like the cycling map.”*

## Nassau County

**Mineola:** During February, 63 jurors approached interns with 64 questions and comments. The most common questions concerned the location of particular places and/or amenities/facilities inside and outside of the courthouse (30). Twenty-four (24) questions were asked about procedure and what jurors could/were required to do. Five (5) late jurors approached interns. One (1) juror complained “*The vending machine is not working.*”

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<sup>1</sup> While booths are generally in operation from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, three days per week, there are exceptions. In the Bronx, jurors are called twice each week, and so the booth there is operated two days per week. In Brooklyn, interns arrive after the court’s orientation (as requested by court personnel). Interns work until lunch time, when most or all jurors leave the courthouse. Lunchtime varies, but often begins before 1 p.m. Additionally, interns occasionally report that jurors have been discharged early, meaning, of course, that there is no one left to approach them.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of questions about location include: “Where can I get lunch/coffee/a newspaper?”; “Where are the restrooms/water fountains/elevators?”; and “Where is the subway/post office?”

<sup>3</sup> Generally, such questions include “Can I leave? Is there a sign-out sheet?”; “When is lunch?”; “Can I use my cell phone/smoke/eat here?”; “How long does jury service last?”; and “Will I get something proving I served?”