



Citizens Jury Project Spring 2006 Ombudservice Report

January 1, 2006 – April 30, 2006



October 2006

The Fund for Modern Courts
351 West 54th Street
New York, NY 10019
www.moderncourts.org



Preface

The Fund for Modern Courts (“FMC”) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, statewide court reform organization founded in 1955. Led by concerned citizens, prominent lawyers, and business leaders, FMC strives to improve the administration and quality of justice in our courts. It is the only organization in New York State devoted exclusively to improving the judicial system.

The Citizens Jury Project (“CJP”) was created in 1995 following the recommendation of the Jury Project, a blue-ribbon panel formed by New York State Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye to review and reform jury service in New York State. The project began with one courthouse location and has grown to include seven courthouse locations in three boroughs in New York City.

As in the past, the goals of CJP are (1) to provide on-site assistance for jurors by answering general questions about jury service, (2) to record comments made by jurors about amenities, facilities, and procedures, and (3) to report on the conditions of jury service.

Jurors have an opportunity to voice their concerns and suggestions to improve jury service to CJP interns who staff the ombudservice booths in each courthouse location. Through analysis of comments provided by jurors, CJP makes recommendations for change with a view toward increasing public participation in jury service and improving the experience of jurors as they provide a service critical to the democratic system.

CJP’s work has shed light on the conditions of jury service in New York City. Through the ombudservice and reports on the jury system, CJP looks forward to continuing its collaboration with the Office of Court Administration and local jury administrators to improve the experience of jurors.

Dennis R. Hawkins
Executive Director
The Fund for Modern Courts

Barbara A. DiFiore
Director, Citizens Jury Project

Acknowledgments

This report was written by Barbara A. DiFiore, J.D., M.P.A., Director of the Citizens Jury Project and Danielle Shalov, Esq., Assistant Director of the Citizens Jury Project.

The work performed by the Citizens Jury Project would not be possible without the dedication of the interns who staff the ombudservice booths. CJP would like to acknowledge the work of the interns who staffed the ombudservice booths during the Spring of 2006. These interns are:

Joseph Calfos
William David
Sheanni Gunasekera
David Anton Johnson
Reginald Madden
Katiris Marmol
Jennifer Messina
Leah Moore
Sheila Raj
Alyson Theeman
Celeste Visser

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Executive Summary.....	1
Overview of Data at All Courthouse Locations.....	5
Analysis of Data By Individual Courthouse Location.....	14
Kew Gardens.....	14
Jamaica.....	16
60 Centre Street.....	19
100 Centre Street.....	21
111 Centre Street, 3rd Floor.....	24
111 Centre Street, 11th Floor.....	25
360 Adams Street.....	28

Introduction

Part I of this report begins with an Executive Summary highlighting key findings and recommendations for improving jury duty at the seven courthouse locations where the Citizen Jury Project (“CJP”) operates ombudservice booths to assist jurors. Part II of the report presents an overview of data collected from juror questions and comments at these locations. This overview examines the sources of juror questions and comments, explores those questions and comments most frequently mentioned at all of the locations and compares questions and comments among these locations.

Finally, Part III of this report examines the data from each courthouse location and provides further detail on the five most frequently mentioned questions and comments at each location.

I. Executive Summary – Spring 2006

From January 1, 2006 to April 30, 2006, CJP staffed seven ombudservice booths in New York, Kings and Queens counties. During this time, CJP interns collected 1,552 questions and comments on jury service from 1,271 jurors called to serve at these courthouses.

The questions most frequently asked of CJP interns during the spring of 2006 were:

- (1) whether jurors were in the right place or where they should go (**15%**),
- (2) the location of bathrooms (**13%**), and
- (3) questions about the paperwork (**12%**).

These three categories accounted for 40% of all comments made by jurors.

Other questions and comments raised by jurors included:

- postponements and excusals (**7%**),
- location of food and beverages (**6%**),
- questions about breaks, signing in and the procedure for calling names (**6%**),
- general questions about jury service (**5%**), and
- difficulties with performing jury service (**5%**).

These five categories accounted for 29% of juror questions and comments during the spring of 2006.

Overall, very few jurors complained about jury service. Juror comments about wasted time constituted less than 1% of all comments. Complaints about facilities accounted for under 2% of all comments, and complaints about court personnel made up just under 1% of all comments.

CJP Overall Recommendations:

Given the nature and frequency of questions and comments by jurors, CJP makes the following recommendations to better serve those reporting for jury duty:

1. Post signs or maps indicating the location of jury rooms and offices that deal with issues such as postponements and excusals.

In the spring of 2006, many jurors asked questions about where to go in the courthouse to report for jury duty, to find out where they were assigned for *voir dire* or trial, or where courtrooms were located.

The best way to address these issues is to create a map or sign that contains the following information:

- Juror Room – Floor and Location
- Postponements/Excusals – Floor and Location
- Jurors who cannot speak English – Floor and Location

This information should be posted inside and outside of the jury assembly room. If feasible, jury assembly room personnel should work with officials who are in charge of the building where the jury assembly room is located to have signs posted outside elevators and in the lobby so that jurors entering the building will be able to find out where they should go to report in, and to deal with particular issues such as postponements and excusals.

2. Improve signage for bathrooms in and around the jury assembly room.

Given the persistent frequency of questions about the location of bathrooms, the signage for bathrooms in and near the juror assembly rooms should be evaluated to better alert jurors to the locations of rest rooms. If there are no signs or too few signs, additional signs should be posted in and around the jury room and near the elevator.

Recommendations for specific locations:

60 Centre:

Post several large signs at eye level in each section of the jury room. Signs located outside of the jury room should be enlarged and placed closer to the assembly room and the elevators.

100 Centre:

Post several large signs at eye level throughout the jury room.

111 Centre – 3rd floor:

Post several large signs at eye level throughout the jury room.

111 Centre – 11th floor:

Post several large signs at eye level throughout the jury room.

360 Adams:

No adjustment needed. This courthouse could be used as a model. Two large signs (approximately 3 x 2 feet) are located on either side of the court room desk, directly in front of the pews in central jury room 261. They read: "Restrooms located in the jury lounge" and have arrows pointing towards the lounge.

Jamaica:

Post more distinctive signs closer to where the jurors are seated. The current signs are too far away and blend in to the background, making them difficult to see.

Kew Gardens:

No recommendation made at the present time.

3. Install vending machines or arrange for food and beverages to be easily available to jurors near the jury assembly room.

Because jurors continue to ask frequently about the location of food, beverages and related amenities in and near the jury rooms, efforts should be made to make food and beverages available to jurors by placing vending machines in or near the jury room.

If it is not feasible to install vending machines within a particular jury room, court personnel should work with city officials who maintain the buildings in which the jury rooms are located to make food and beverages available either inside the courthouse or just outside the courthouse.

4. Re-evaluate the instructions on the summons and post instructions in the assembly room for what to do with the paperwork and how to fill out the paperwork.

One way to address juror concerns about paperwork is to re-evaluate the layout and language of the summons itself. Another way to assist jurors is to provide a poster-size layout of the summons at the front of the jury room or along the sides and provide directions on how to fill out the summons. These directions should also include a statement of how and

when the summons will be collected. This would be a benefit for all jurors and would be especially helpful to those who arrive late and miss the beginning of the morning orientation.

5. Incorporate the latest technology to better meet juror needs.

In courthouses where there is a high volume of jurors, technological solutions should be explored and exploited to get as much information to as many people as possible. For example, electronic screens similar to those used at the Department of Motor Vehicles could be used to display information about where to report, what to do with the summons, what to do if you cannot speak English, in addition to providing answers to other routine inquiries made by jurors. These screens could also be used to display the names or numbers of jurors being called to panels, and could be used both within the jury room and in the hallway outside the jury rooms to make it easier for jurors to get information.

6. Provide additional information on jury service on jury service on the www.nyjuror.gov website and highlight the web address in the summons.

At present, the Office of Court Administration (“OCA”) hosts a website for jurors at www.nyjuror.gov. This website provides a great deal of useful information. OCA should review the information currently posted at that website and consider adding additional information about postponement procedures, the location of assembly rooms, clerks’ offices, and food and beverages in and near the jury rooms.

A link to the CJP website from www.nyjuror.gov can also be included for jurors who may be interested in obtaining additional information such as lunch guides for the courthouses currently staffed by CJP.

The website www.nyjuror.gov should be prominently featured on materials sent to jurors along with a brief description of information that is available at this website. At present, the reverse side of the juror summons contains a great deal of information which differs from one county to another. However, the URL for this website is in small letters and included amid other information. There is no description of what information can be found at the website.

To increase public awareness of the information available at www.nyjuror.gov, the font size of text for the website should be made larger and bolded on all summonses. There should also be a short description of the type of information available at this website.

II. Overview of Data Collected from All Courthouse Locations

Background

From January 1, 2006 to April 30, 2006, CJP interns obtained 1552 questions and comments about jury service from 1,271 jurors in Kings, Queens and New York Counties. CJP maintains ombudservice booths at seven locations. The interviews were conducted at the following courthouse locations in New York County: 111 Centre Street, 3rd floor; 111 Centre Street, 11th floor; 60 Centre Street; and 100 Centre Street. In Queens County, interviews were conducted at three different locations: 120-55 Queens Boulevard; 125-01 Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens; and at 89-17 Sutphin Boulevard in Jamaica. In Kings County, interviews took place at 360 Adams Street.

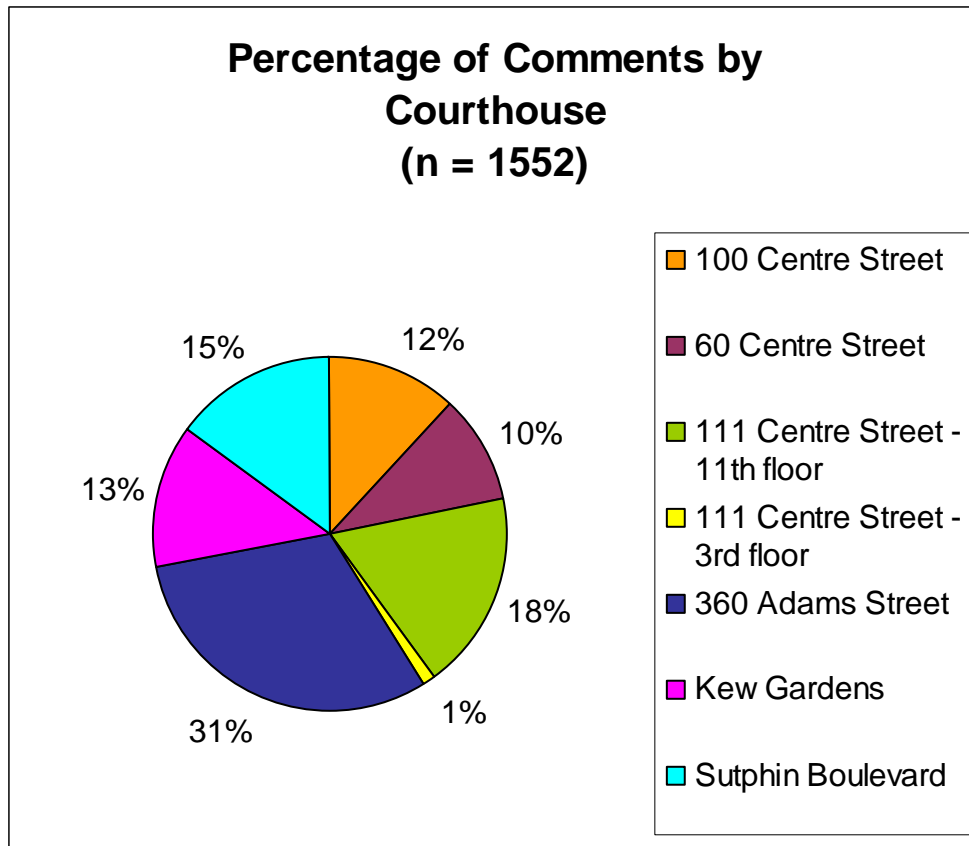
CJP interns do not solicit information from jurors as they enter the building or while jurors are waiting for cases to be called; instead, they respond to questions or comments from jurors who approach the booth. In Kew Gardens and 360 Adams Street, the booths are located in the jury rooms; at 100 Centre Street, 111 Centre Street, 60 Centre Street, and Jamaica, the booths are positioned just outside of the entrance to the jury rooms.

CJP operates the ombudservice booth for a minimum of two half-days per week in each of the courthouses; these days generally correspond with the days that new jurors report for service. In courthouses in which jurors are called for all five days of the week, CJP interns are generally assigned for four days per week. The booths are open from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The table below shows the days of the week that CJP operates the ombudservice booths in each of the courthouse locations:

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
60 Centre	X		X	X	
111 Centre <i>(3rd and 11th Floors)</i>	X		X	X	
100 Centre	X		X	X	
Kew Gardens	X	X	X		X
Jamaica	X	X	X		X
360 Adams	X	X	X		X

Source of Juror Questions and Comments

CJP records and analyzes juror questions and comments overall and by individual courthouse location. The following pie chart shows the percentage of juror comments from each courthouse location:



During the current reporting period, almost one-third of all questions and comments from jurors were from 360 Adams Street. This may be due to several factors: (1) 360 Adams Street calls new jurors five days a week; (2) there are hundreds of new and returning jurors reporting to this location each day; and (3) the CJP booth is located inside the assembly room and is easily accessible to jurors. Because 360 Adams calls new jurors so often, CJP often assigned interns there for 4 days each week.

Conversely, at 111 Centre Street, there is only one booth available to cover both the 3rd and the 11th floors. Over the course of a week, CJP interns answer questions or record comments on either the 3rd floor or the 11th floor. As a result, interns are present on either one or two days per week on these floors. At the 3rd floor location, the number of jurors called is small compared to the Kings County and Queens County locations. These factors may explain why 111 Centre Street provided only 1% of all juror comments during the spring of 2006.

Questions and Comments Most Frequently Made by Jurors

During the spring of 2006, the top eight categories of questions and comments made by jurors from all courthouse locations are presented in table form below:

Top Eight Juror Questions and Comments		
All Courthouses		
Jan. - April 2006		
(n = 1552)		
Top Questions and Comments	Count	Percentage
<i>Right place/Where do I go?</i>	231	15%
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	198	13%
<i>Paperwork</i>	183	12%
<i>Postponement/excusal</i>	109	7%
<i>Location of food and beverages</i>	88	6%
<i>Break/sign in/procedure for calling names</i>	86	6%
<i>General questions about jury service</i>	83	5%
<i>Difficulties with performing jury service</i>	76	5%
<i>Other*</i>	498	31%

**Examples of other categories include suggestions to improve jury service, appreciative comments, and complaints about personnel and facilities.*

To better understand these juror questions and comments, a brief summary of what is included in each category is provided below:

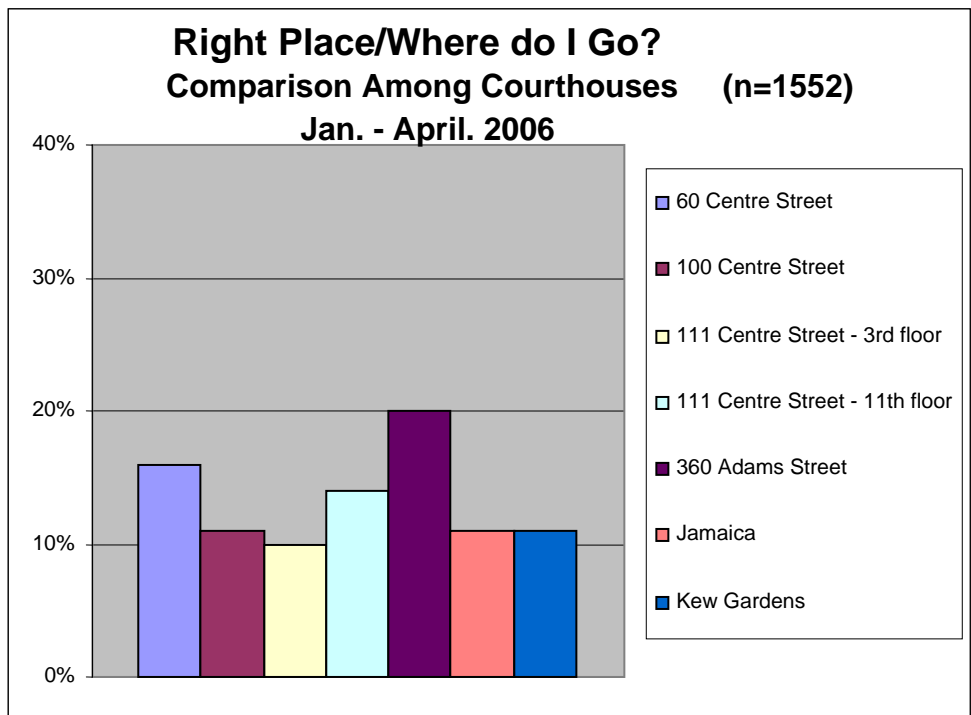
- ***Right place/where do I go?***
This category encompasses not only jurors reporting for the first day of service who are unclear about the location of the jury room, but also those who are returning for a subsequent date of service who are not sure about whether they should be reporting to the jury room or directly to the courtroom in which the trial or *voir dire* is being conducted. This category also includes jurors seeking directions to a courtroom or to another building.
- ***Location of bathrooms***
This includes all requests for directions to bathrooms by jurors first reporting for service, undergoing questioning during *voir dire* or sitting as a selected juror.
- ***Paperwork***
This includes all inquiries about what to do with the summons, how to fill it out, how to obtain proof of service and what to do if there is a lost or duplicate summons.
- ***Postponements***
This includes requests for postponements, questions about the grounds for postponements, and where to go and how to obtain a postponement.
- ***Break/sign in/calling names procedure***
This includes all questions about procedures for breaks, signing in and out and calling names. It also includes questions about leaving the jury room for coffee, to use the restrooms or to smoke and what to do if the juror missed his or her name being called.
- ***General questions about jury service***
This includes a variety of subjects including how long service is each day, and overall, how much jurors are paid, who pays jurors, how the jury system works and what happens if a juror does not report for jury duty.
- ***Difficulties with jury service***
This includes jurors who commented about medical and health issues affecting their ability to serve. It also encompasses jurors who faced difficulties in obtaining child and elder care as well as the problems faced by employees, the self-employed, and students in serving jury duty.

A Closer Look at the Questions and Comments Most Frequently Mentioned by Jurors

The three most frequently asked questions at all of the locations at which CJP operated ombudservice booths during the spring of 2006 were (1) whether jurors are in the right place or where they should go; (2) the location of bathrooms; and (3) questions about the paperwork.

1. Right Place/Where do I Go?

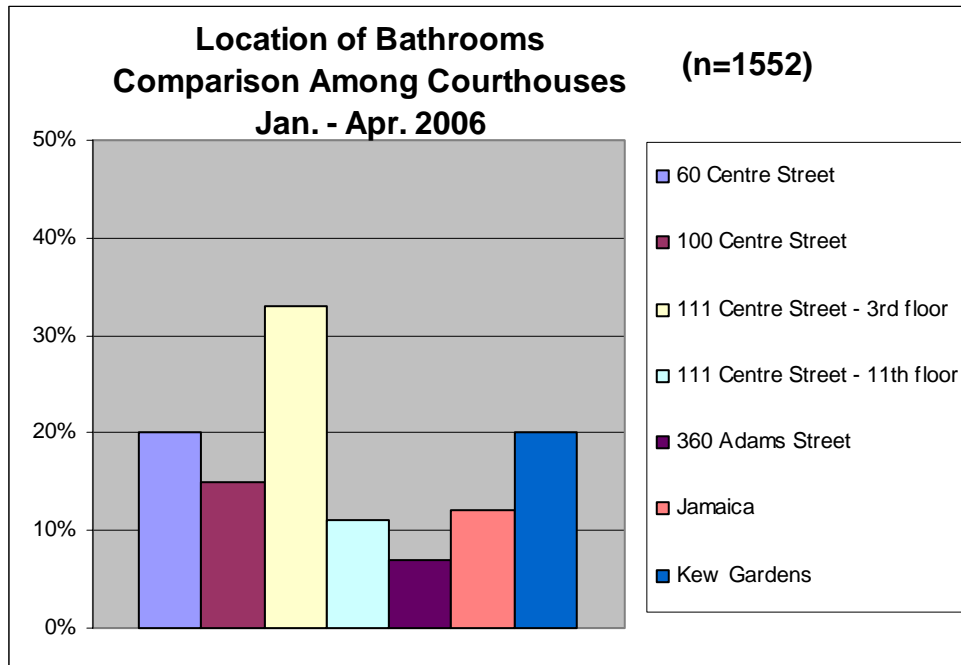
The following chart shows the relative importance of this issue at each courthouse location:



In the spring of 2006, jurors at 360 Adams Street were most likely to raise this concern, followed by jurors at 60 Centre Street and 111 Centre Street 11th floor. At 360 Adams Street, many of the returning jurors were not clear about where to report once they have been selected. At the New York County locations, many jurors must leave one building to go to another for *voir dire*, so there is the potential for confusion regarding where to go when they travel between buildings.

2. Location of Bathrooms

The following chart shows the relative importance of this issue at each location:

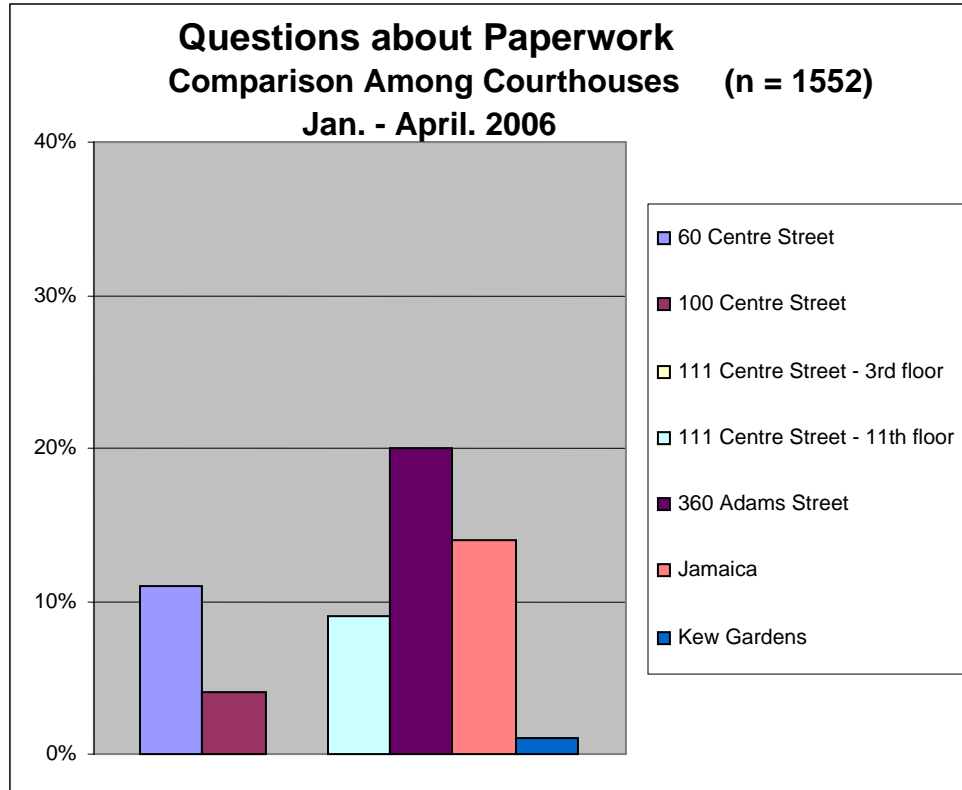


At 111 Centre Street, 3rd Floor, over 30% of jurors asked about the location of bathrooms. At 60 Centre Street, 20% of jurors asked about the location of the bathrooms. Although 20% of jurors at Kew Gardens asked about the location of the bathrooms, these inquiries were made regarding the temporary jury room which is no longer in use. The high percentage of jurors asking for the location of the bathroom at these three locations highlights the need for better signage for bathrooms in and near the assembly rooms.

360 Adams Street provides a good example of how proper signage can reduce the number of juror inquiries on this issue. Only 8% of jurors at this location asked about the location of the bathroom. This may be because clearly posted signs provide this information directly to jurors.

3. Questions about paperwork

The following chart shows the relative importance of this issue at each of the courthouses:



The highest percentage of jurors asking questions about the paperwork was at 360 Adams Street. The majority of jurors who asked questions about the paperwork (82%) were not clear about what to do with the summons. At 111 Centre Street, 3rd floor, there were no questions about the paperwork during the current reporting period.

One possible explanation for the high number of jurors asking interns about what to do with the summons was the availability of interns in the jury room. Interns are available four days a week to assist jurors with filling out questionnaires and advise them as to which parts of the summons will be retained by the juror and which parts need to be turned in to clerks.

At 111 Centre Street, 3rd floor, the lack of questions about the paperwork may be explained by the fact that far fewer jurors are called to service here than in Brooklyn and Queens. The low number of inquiries may also be a function of the fact that the CJP booth is located outside of the jury room in the hallway and is therefore less accessible to jurors than at other locations.

The locations with the highest percentages in these categories are highlighted. 360 Adams Street had the highest percentage (20%) of jurors inquiring about whether they were in the right place or where they should go. However, all other courthouses also had at least 10% of jurors making this inquiry. This indicates that jurors at all locations lack information about where to go for jury service either on the first or the second day of service. Personnel should evaluate the adequacy of the signage for the jury rooms or auxiliary offices such as where to go for language evaluations or postponements.

111 Centre Street, 3rd floor and 60 Centre Street all had substantially higher percentages of jurors inquiring about the location of bathrooms as compared with other locations. At 111 Centre Street, 3rd floor, however, the figure of 33% reflects only seven out of 21 jurors as opposed to much higher numbers of jurors asking about this issue at other locations. Although Kew Gardens also had a high percentage of jurors who inquired about the location of the bathrooms, these inquiries were made at the temporary jury room location. Serious consideration should be given to posting larger, more visible signs indicating the location of the bathrooms at 60 Centre Street.

360 Adams Street had the highest rate of jurors who had questions about the paperwork. One way to address this problem would be to include additional directions on the summons as to how to fill it out. Another would be to post enlarged versions of the summons in the jury room to provide an example for jurors on how to complete the questions and what to do with the summons once it is filled out.

III. Analysis of Data by Individual Courthouse Location

Kew Gardens

During the spring of 2006, CJP interns recorded 205 questions and comments from jurors at Kew Gardens. All comments were recorded at the temporary jury assembly room located at 125-01 Queens Boulevard. The permanent jury room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard re-opened in June 2006 after a complete renovation of the facility.

The top five questions and comments mentioned by jurors at the temporary Kew Gardens jury room are summarized in the table below:

Top Five Questions and Comments Kew Gardens (n=205)	
Type of Concern	Percentage
<i>Non-jury questions</i>	23%
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	20%
<i>Right place/Where do I go?</i>	11%
<i>Location of food and beverages</i>	6%
<i>Complaints about jury service</i>	6%
<i>Other</i>	34%

Because questions about the location of bathrooms, food and beverages, where jurors should go and questions not relating to jury issues are all tied to the temporary location, CJP will not address these questions in this report.

34% of juror questions and comments fell into the category of "other." These included complaints about jury service in general, general questions about jury service, complaints about personnel and facilities, and questions about postponements and excusals.

Here are some comments on these issues from jurors at Kew Gardens:

- Complaints and Suggestions about jury service in general

I am a psychotherapist. There should be exemptions for us. I deal with particular patients, it's difficult to up and leave. When did they do away with exemptions?

Kew Gardens, 4/26/06

Jury duty should be voluntary and the pay should be higher. When people are here, the process should begin promptly. We should get 24 hours notice of when to come in.

Kew Gardens, 3/1/06

- General Questions about Jury Duty

I put unemployed on the summons, will I still get paid? How long will it take?

Kew Gardens, 1/5/06

How long do people usually serve on a criminal case if they are selected?

Kew Gardens 1/31/06

What happens if you don't go to jury duty?

Kew Gardens, 3/1/06

What's the age range to serve on jury duty?

Kew Gardens, 3/20/06

Am I going to be here tomorrow if I'm not excused today?

Kew Gardens, 3/20/06

Will I really be here until 5pm?

Kew Gardens, 4/17/06

How are the jurors selected for service? Are high school kids supposed to serve?

Kew Gardens, 4/26/06

Although complaints about personnel comprised only 4% of all comments at Kew Gardens during the spring of 2006, this location has the highest percentage of complaints about personnel among the seven locations at which CJP operates an ombudservice booth.

- Complaints about personnel

Court clerks are rude, they say one thing and after we do it then they scream at us and tell us to do another!!! This happened all day yesterday and today...what's going on?? Where is the organization here?

Kew Gardens, 3/8/06

This is really bad, they have this chain up in the jury room and we have to scream "EXCUSE ME" just to get their attention. At this point all the other jurors are staring at this one person up there...it shouldn't be like that!

Kew Gardens, 4/4/06

Jamaica

The total number of questions and comments from Jamaica in the spring of 2006 was 230. The table below summarizes the top five areas on which jurors commented:

Top Five Questions and Comments Jamaica (n=230)		
Type of Comment	Jamaica Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Paperwork</i>	14%	12%
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	12%	13%
<i>Right place/where do I go?</i>	11%	15%
<i>Break/sign in/procedure for calling names</i>	7%	6%
<i>Postponement/excusal</i>	7%	7%
<i>Other</i>	49%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.

The question most frequently asked by jurors at Jamaica was what to do with the paperwork. The frequency of this question was slightly higher than the overall average. This is a typical juror comment about this issue:

What do I do with this? (referring to summons)

Jamaica, 2/21/06

The second most frequently asked question by jurors at Jamaica was about the location of bathrooms. The frequency of this question was slightly lower than the overall average. At present, there are two bathroom signs in and around the jury room. One is positioned on the wall in the jury room, about 30 or so feet from the jurors seating area. The sign blends into the wall, however, and is 8 x 11 with black lettering on a white background. There is also another sign on the way to the bathrooms which just is black lettering saying "Restrooms," but some jurors are apparently not able to see it.

Although questions about breaks, signing in and out and the procedure for calling names were among the top five questions raised by jurors at Jamaica, it should be noted that questions about these issues have dropped 50% since the last reporting period. In November 2005, the staff at Jamaica revised the procedures for signing in and signing out. Many of the comments about the sign in procedure at Jamaica reflected comments made before the change. As a result of the new procedure, jurors at Jamaica have significantly fewer questions about signing in and out.

There were no complaints about any of the personnel at Jamaica. There were several appreciative comments made by jurors about the staff at this location. Some examples of the appreciative comments are below.

Everyone here is very nice and helpful. Here they help like teachers and explain. Everything is great!

Jamaica, 1/18/06

This courthouse is great! I love it! Staff is so great! Everyone is so friendly. The atmosphere is great!

Jamaica, 4/19/06

49% of questions and comments fell into the category of "other;" these included questions about the location of food and beverages, complaints about jury service in general, general questions about jury service, suggestions on how to improve the facilities and jury service, difficulties with jury service, and questions about qualifications to be a juror. Here are some of the juror comments from Jamaica on these subjects:

- Complaints and suggestions about jury service in general

Jury duty is deadly. Yesterday I was here from 8:30 to 4:20 sitting on an uncomfortable chair. I understand but can't they call half the people in the morning and the other half in the afternoon?

Jamaica, 1/18/06

They should have refreshments (coffee, tea, etc.) for jurors.

Jamaica, 1/26/06

I heard a pre-recorded message on court house voice mail stating no cell phone allowed. But, cell phones are allowed as long as there are no picture capabilities. They should change the recording.

Jamaica, 2/23/06

Unfortunately my comprehension of English is limited, but I like to serve. It is my civil responsibility. You should use translators for those who need them. [This comment was obtained through an interpreter.]

Jamaica, 3/17/06

They should put speakers in the bathrooms so you can hear if your name is called.

Jamaica, 4/24/06

- General questions about jury service

A good question (referring to the CJP poster asking what jurors think of jury service). Is it six years now between the time you last served and now? The last time I did it was four years ago.

Jamaica 1/18/06

I have a civil case going on myself, can I still serve? What are my chances of getting picked?

Jamaica, 4/19/06

If I work from 3-11pm can I be exempt?

Jamaica, 4/28/06

- Difficulties with jury service

Jury duty affects my schedule for work, since I work from 2 p.m. – 10 p.m. The MTA is my employer and I will have to make up hours if my jury duty is extended beyond 3 days. I will also be scheduled to work at farther distance from my house.

Jamaica, 3/24/06

60 Centre Street

The total number of questions and comments obtained by CJP interns at this location was 152. The table below presents the top five questions and comments:

Top Five Questions and Comments 60 Centre Street (n=152)		
Type of Comment	60 Centre Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	20%	13%
<i>Right place/where do I go?</i>	16%	15%
<i>Postponement</i>	12%	7%
<i>Paperwork</i>	11%	12%
<i>Qualifications</i>	5%	Less than 5%
<i>Other</i>	36%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See *Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.*

20% of jurors made requests for information about the location of bathrooms. This is significantly higher than the overall average for this question in all courthouses combined. This highlights the need for improved signage for bathrooms both inside and outside the jury room.

Currently, there are no signs which indicate the location of the bathrooms in one section of the jury room (the jury room consists of two separate sections with the clerk's desk in the middle). In the other section, there is one small sign (about the size of an envelope) perched above eye level on the side of the assembly room. There is also a sign on the door located in the back of this half of the jury room. It contains several directions including those to the bathrooms. There are several small signs with arrows pointing to the location of the bathroom; however, these signs are visible only as jurors exit from the main or back doors of the jury room.

16% of jurors at 60 Centre Street also asked whether they were in the right place or where they should go. This is about the same frequency as the overall

average. This is down about one-third from the prior reporting period but is still the second most frequently asked question by jurors at this location. Below is an example of the juror questions recorded at this location:

Where do I go? I think I'm at the wrong place.

60 Centre Street, 3/13/06

12% of jurors at 60 Centre Street asked about how to get a postponement. This was noticeably higher than the overall average.

Where do I go for postponements?

60 Centre, 1/10/06

Questions about whether a person who does not speak English can serve as a juror constituted only 5% of juror questions and comments at 60 Centre Street during the spring of 2006. This is a drop of 50% from the last reporting period. However, questions about language qualifications for jurors have been among the most frequently asked questions over the last several reporting periods. One juror commented:

I don't speak English, where should I go?

60 Centre Street, 4/5/06

CJP recommends that information be posted in Spanish, Chinese and other languages directing potential jurors who do not speak or understand English to the location in the courthouse where they can ask questions and receive assistance with questions relating to language qualifications.

27% of juror questions and comments fell into the category of "other." These included questions about breaks, sign in procedures, general questions about jury service and complaints about jury service in general. Here are some of the questions and comments from 60 Centre Street:

- Complaints and suggestions about jury service

I think it is unreasonable to expect self-employed persons to serve on the jury because that is how we make a living. I don't even have any employees. How can I and my business make money if I am here?

60 Centre, 2/16/06

I think that on the summons form they send to you in the mail, the minimum requirement of days should be on there, just to inform the jurors what the minimum time requirement is.

60 Centre, 2/16/06

100 Centre Street

The total number of questions and comments from 100 Centre Street was 182. The table below shows the top five questions and comments at that location.

Top Five Questions and Comments 100 Centre Street (n = 182)		
Type of Comments	100 Centre Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Location of food and beverages</i>	21%	6%
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	15%	13%
<i>Right place/Where do I go?</i>	11%	15%
<i>Complaints about Physical Conditions</i>	5%	Less than 5%
<i>Paperwork</i>	4%	12%
<i>Other</i>	44%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See *Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.*

The two most frequently expressed questions at 100 Centre Street were the location of food and beverages (21%, substantially higher than the overall average) and the location of bathrooms (15%, slightly higher than the overall average).

To address these issues, CJP recommends adding signs in and around the jury room about the location of bathrooms. Currently, the signs to the bathrooms are located on the doors which lead to the bathrooms. There are no other signs around the jury room which direct jurors to the location of the bathrooms.

Announcements about the general availability of food and beverages in and near the courthouse during orientation would give jurors the information that they need.

Jurors also commented on the physical conditions in and around the jury room at 100 Centre Street:

They need to clean the bathroom and add more lighting in it.

100 Centre Street, 3/31/06

The TV in the jury lunch room is not working properly - can it be fixed?

100 Centre Street, 2/15/06

The jury room is too stuffy and has no air, but I don't want to sit in the hallway because too many people are talking on their cell phones and I can't read.

100 Centre Street, 2/15/06

44% of juror questions and comments fell into the category of "other." These included questions about postponements or excusals, general questions about jury duty, difficulties with performing jury service, suggestions to improve jury service and appreciative comments about the staff.

- Complaints and suggestions about jury duty

Start on time please!!

100 Centre, 3/15/06

Jury service should be reduced to one day because it burdens employers and gives more people a chance to serve.

100 Centre, 2/15/06

They should put the right room number on the summons and they should translate it into different languages for those who don't speak English.

100 Centre, 3/8/06

They should use TV for reporting information, hooking a computer to it to display info related to jury duty when attendance is being taken.

100 Centre Street, 3/15/06

- General questions about jury duty

If I have already postponed three times before, can I postpone again?

100 Centre, 1/17/06

Do criminal cases run longer than civil cases?

100 Centre, 1/17/06

I am an attorney and have cases. Will they excuse me from jury duty?

100 Centre, 3/2/06

Do I have to stay for three full days? Do they let you out early if you're not called for a case?

100 Centre, 3/8/06

How much do jurors get paid each day? Will I get paid? Who will pay me? I need to get these questions answered because I am self-employed. How will I get paid and how long will it take?

100 Centre, 2/15/06

- Difficulties with jury service

I'm late on my first day and don't know where to go. I'm late because my child has a disability and I need to care for the child.

100 Centre, 2/15/06

I have young kids who are still in school. I postponed once but can I postpone again? I didn't make arrangements for them and she's saying I might be here until 5.

100 Centre, 4/3/06

- Appreciative comments

Rhonda was a great supervisor!

100 Centre, 2/27/06

111 Centre Street – 3rd Floor

Jurors at 111 Centre Street, 3rd Floor asked questions and gave comments 21 times during the spring of 2006. The table below shows the top five questions and comments at that location.

Top Five Questions and Comments 111 Centre 3rd Floor (n = 21)		
Type of Comment	111 Centre 3rd Fl. Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Location of bathrooms</i>	33%	13%
<i>Right place/where do I go?</i>	10%	15%
<i>Appreciative comments</i>	10%	Less than 5%
<i>Postponement/excusal</i>	10%	7%
<i>Non-jury question</i>	10%	Less than 5%
<i>Other</i>	27%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See *Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.*

Overall, as in the last reporting period, there were relatively few comments from jurors at this location. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the low number of comments from this location may be a function of the relatively small number of jurors called to this location as compared with the locations in Brooklyn and Queens and the number of days that the CJP booth is open there (one or two days a week).

Jurors at this location asked most frequently about the location of the bathrooms (seven out of 21). This was higher than the overall average. Currently, there are no signs within the jury room indicating the location of the bathrooms. This issue could be addressed effectively by posting signs with the locations of the bathrooms on the walls near the elevators and in the assembly room.

Two out of 21 of jurors asked about where to go and whether they were in the right place. This was lower than the overall average.

27% of questions and comments fell into the category of “other.” These included general questions about jury service, questions about juror qualifications and non-jury questions.

111 Centre Street, 11th Floor

CJP interns collected 274 questions and comments at this location during the spring of 2006.

Top Five Questions and Comments 111 Centre Street, 11th Floor (n = 274)		
Type of Question/Comment	111 Centre 11th Fl. Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Right Place/Where do I go?</i>	14%	15%
<i>Location of Bathrooms</i>	11%	13%
<i>Paperwork</i>	9%	12%
<i>Postponement/excusal</i>	7%	7%
<i>Appreciative comments</i>	7%	--
<i>Other</i>	52%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See *Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.*

The most frequently asked question during the spring of 2006 was about whether jurors were in the right place (14%). This was about the same as the overall percentage. A juror commented:

Where's the room for jury service?
 111 Centre 11th Floor, 3/1/06

CJP recommends that signs be posted in the courthouse directing jurors to the assembly room.

The second most frequently asked question at 111 Centre Street, 11th floor during the spring of 2006 was about the location of bathrooms (11%). However, this occurred at a slightly lower frequency than the overall average. Currently, there are no signs within the jury room indicating the location of the bathrooms. Posting signs in and near the jury assembly rooms indicating the location of the bathrooms would be the most direct way to give jurors the information that they need.

The third most frequently asked question was about what to do with the summons and how to fill it out (9%). This was lower than the overall average. One juror asked:

Do I fill this [pointing to summons] out now?
111 Centre, 11th Floor, 3/29/06

Appreciative comments about the staff at 111 Centre Street, 11th floor constituted 7% of all questions and comments at the location. Here are some examples of juror comments:

Overall improvement; more efficient. Gentleman in room friendly and entertaining. Nice to have computers, although they're very slow.
111 Centre 11th floor, 2/15/06

He [the clerk] was the best part of it.
111 Centre Street, 11th Floor, 3/1/06

The clerks are heroes. That guy with the white hair and the lady today...I've been here 3 times and they are always great.
111 Centre Street, 11th Floor, 4/20/06

52% of juror questions and comments fell into the category of "other." These issues included complaints about jury duty, general questions about jury duty, suggestions to improve facilities, suggestions to improve jury service and questions about the location of food and beverages in and near the courthouse.

- Complaints and suggestions regarding jury service

They should have something for people who are self-employed. Do they address this issue in any way? I take care of patients, and forty dollars is not going to help me pay my rent.
111 Centre, 1/25/06

Get rid of the juror system. Use professional jurors.
111 Centre, 1/31/06

There should be lockers for clothing and other valuables.

111 Centre, 2/23/06

Why isn't it set up so we get called when we get here? Why do we have to wait around?

111 Centre, 3/27/06

Jury service should be voluntary and then if there are sufficient jurors, done by selection. There are many who want to serve who are not called or picked. Jury service can be a very good experience if the timing is right, otherwise it could be a great inconvenience. Could have been. Why made to return a third day when there is an entire new group starting today?

111 Centre, 3/1/06

The summons should specify the potential length of time you will be a juror (i.e. in voir dire, trials, etc.) so that the individual can decide whether or not the time required is a conflict prior to making the necessary arrangements to do so (although once here, court officials are very helpful). I have children and am concerned that if I need to be here longer than 3 days, time constraints will be an issue.

111 Centre, 3/27/06

I think we should be able to view the video online and sign a waiver.

111 Centre Street, 2/11/06

On www.nyjuror.com, there were no directions to the courthouse.

111 Centre, 4/5/06

- General questions about jury service

How does this process work?

111 Centre, 3/27/06

If I serve one day in the court room and the next not in the court room, does that count as time served?

111 Centre, 1/18/06

How long do I have to serve?

111 Centre, 1/25/06

How will I know if my English is good enough to serve? What should I do?

111 Centre, 3/27/06

- Difficulties with jury service

I'm a physician and I'm on call every three weeks. Two weeks of mandatory availability for service falls into my 3rd week of service. It also did last time. It will every time. I am trapped in the system. Do you have any suggestions?

111 Centre, 1/30/06

- Appreciative comments

The jury process is very important and that it has made many strides recently.

111 Centre, 3/23/06

360 Adams Street

486 juror questions and comments were recorded by CJP interns at 360 Adams Street in the spring of 2006. The table below shows the top five comments at this location:

Top Five Questions and Comments 360 Adams Street (n=486)		
Type of Question or Comment	360 Adams Percentage	Overall Percentage*
<i>Right place/Where do I go?</i>	20%	15%
<i>Paperwork</i>	20%	12%
<i>Break/sign in/procedure for calling names</i>	9%	6%
<i>Difficulties with jury service</i>	8%	Less than 5%
<i>Postponement/ excusal</i>	8%	7%
<i>Other</i>	35%	--

* Overall percentage from all courthouses. See Top Eight Juror Questions/Comments table p.7.

The most frequently asked question at 360 Adams Street was whether jurors were in the right place (20%). This was noticeably higher than the overall average. Many of these jurors were returning for a second day of service and were unclear about whether to report to the courtroom where they were part of a *voir dire* panel or to return to the central jury room. Here is a typical juror question about this issue:

I've already been selected as a juror. Where do I go?
360 Adams, 3/15/06

Given the large number of jurors serving at 360 Adams Street and the fact that many returning jurors seemed unclear about where to go, CJP recommends that court clerks consider giving slips of paper to jurors who are in a panel for *voir dire*. This procedure is already used in criminal parts; if people must return to court to pay a fine or serve community service, court officers and clerks provide a pre-printed piece of paper with the name of the part, date to return, place to return and, where applicable, the amount of the fine and how to pay it or where to report for community service. A pre-printed slip with blank spaces for the name of the case, the time to report and the number of the courtroom would decrease the number of jurors going back to the central jury room or approaching the CJP booth for information on where to report when they return for a second or third day of service.

Jurors at 360 Adams Street also had questions about what to do with the paperwork (20%). This was significantly higher than the overall average. This was a typical juror question:

Did I fill this [summons] out okay?
360 Adams, 3/15/06

One way to address juror questions about paperwork is to re-evaluate the layout and language of the summons itself; a second way to deal with this issue is to put a poster-size copy of the summons on the wall of the jury room with a description of how to fill out the summons and state how and when it will be collected. This would be particularly helpful for jurors who arrive late and miss the beginning of the morning orientation.

Questions about breaks, signing out and the procedure for calling names were raised by 9% of jurors at 360 Adams Street. This was only slightly higher than the overall average. Most of the juror questions in this category focused on when the breaks were scheduled, the number of breaks and whether jurors had to sign out to go to the bathroom or to leave the building. Here is an example:

Is it okay to go out and have a smoke?
360 Adams, 2/21/06

Can I go to get something? How would I know if I was called?

360 Adams, 2/22/06

8% of jurors at 360 Adams Street commented about the difficulties associated with performing jury service. Several juror comments are included below:

I'm a corrections officer and I work the night shift, so by staying here until 5 pm I don't get any sleep. They told me downstairs that I have to stay because this is the day I picked (when postponed formerly) but my schedule varies and I don't always know when I'll have to work.

360 Adams Street, 4/5/06

I have a note from my doctor because I suffer from IBS and I'm in and out of the bathroom. The officer told me that I can't use my doctor's note if I work. What can I do?

360 Adams Street, 4/26/06

I was told that I am supposed to be here Thursday but I have finals. What do I do?

360 Adams Street, 3/31/06

35% of juror questions and comments fell into the category of "other." These included questions about the location of bathrooms, the location of food and beverages in and near the courthouse, qualifications to be a juror, general questions about jury service in general and complaints about jury service.

- Complaints and suggestions regarding jury service

I think the elderly should be exempt. Say from 70-75 and up. They have memory and health issues. Plus, elderly people should not be traveling in extreme hot and cold temperatures. It should be voluntary.

360 Adams, 2/22/06

The video and booklets are very helpful. You need more information about amenities. You also need signs to say 20 minutes or so for the computers.

360 Adams, 4/5/06

- General questions about jury service

If I get selected for a jury, may I wear jeans?

360 Adams, 3/27/06

How do you know if your employer pays you?

360 Adams, 4/11/06

Let me ask you a question - what if I get dismissed from a panel and I don't come back? It's my day off so I'm not worried about getting paid.

360 Adams, 4/21/06

Page 10 of the Juror's Handbook says jurors are eligible to serve every 6 years, but I've also heard it was 4 years. I served 4 years ago. Which is it?

360 Adams, 3/23/06

Is this more than one day?

360 Adams, 4/26/06