

## **Statement of Confidentiality and Ownership**

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All of the analyses, findings and recommendations contained within this report are the exclusive property of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch.

As required by the Code of Ethics of the National Council on Public Polls and the United States Privacy Act of 1974, The Center for Research and Public Policy maintains the anonymity of respondents to surveys the firm conducts. No information will be released that might, in any way, reveal the identity of the respondent.

Moreover, no information regarding these findings will be released without the written consent of an authorized representative of the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The Center for Research & Public Policy (CRPP) is pleased to present the results of a Satisfaction Survey conducted among individuals using the Connecticut Court System.

The survey was designed to collect user input on satisfaction, awareness, expectations and strengths / areas for improvement.

The research study included a comprehensive telephone survey. Interviews were conducted among residents of the State of Connecticut. CRPP, working together with Commission and Court Officials, designed the survey instrument to be used when calling users of the Court System.

This report summarizes information collected from telephone surveys conducted November 19 – 24, 2007.

The survey instrument employed in the Satisfaction Survey included the following areas for investigation:

- Awareness of the Court System;
- History with the Courts;
- Perceptions of Court strengths and areas in need of improvement;
- Expectations;
- Rating the Court process and treatment;
- Rating the Court system operations;
- Rating Court personnel;
- Perceptions of translators, notices and the website;
- Juror ratings of Court characteristics; and
- Demographics

Section II of this report discusses the Methodology used in the study, while Section III includes Highlights derived from an analysis of the quantitative research. Section IV is a Summary of Findings for the telephone surveys - a narrative account of the data.

Section V is an Appendix to the report containing a crosstabulation table and a copy of the survey instrument.

## METHODOLOGY

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Using a quantitative research design, CRPP completed 500 interviews among users of The State of Connecticut Court System.

The Judicial Branch provided CRPP with the names and addresses of users for the following: criminal, motor vehicle, civil, small claims, family, juvenile, housing and jurors. Names were provided roughly proportional to the total universe of Court system users.

CRPP sent the sample off to Survey Sampling Inc. for appendage of phone numbers after reverse lookup occurred.

All telephone interviews were conducted between November 19 – 24, 2007. Residents were contacted between 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekend.

Survey input was provided by the Commission and Court Officials.

Survey design at CRPP is a careful, deliberative process to ensure fair, objective and balanced surveys. Staff members, with years of survey design experience, edit out any bias. Further, all scales used by CRPP (either numeric, such as one through ten, or wording such as strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree) are balanced evenly. And, placement of questions is carefully accomplished so that order has minimal impact.

Population-based surveys conducted by CRPP are proportional to population contributions. This distribution ensures truly representative results without significant under or over representation of various geographic or demographic groups within a sampling frame.

CRPP utilized an Nth name stratified sample derived from records provided by the Court. This process allows randomization of numbers, which equalizes the probability of qualified respondents being included in the sampling frame.

Respondents qualified for the survey if they confirmed they had an experience with Connecticut Courts. Researchers reminded prospective respondents that “This survey does not cover any Probate or Federal court experiences you may also have had”.

Training of telephone researchers and pre-test of the survey instrument occurred on November 16, 2007.

All facets of the study were completed by CRPP’s senior staff and researchers. These aspects include: sample design, survey design, pre-test, computer programming, fielding, coding, editing, verification, validation and logic checks, computer analysis, analysis, and report writing.

Completion rates are a critical aspect of any telephone survey research. Because one group of people might be easier to reach than another group, it is important that concentrated efforts are made to reach all groups to an equal degree. A high completion rate means that a high percentage of the respondents within the original sample were actually contacted, and the resulting sample is not biased toward one potential audience. CRPP maintained a 72% completion rate on all calls made during this 2007 Satisfaction Survey. And, a high completion rate, many times indicates an interest in the topic.

Statistically, a sample of 500 surveys represents a margin for error of +/-4.5% at a 95% confidence level.

In theory, a sample of Court users will differ no more than +/-4.5% than if all users were contacted and included in the survey. That is, if random probability sampling procedures were reiterated over and over again, sample results may be expected to approximate the large population values within plus or minus 4.5% -- 95 out of 100 times.

Readers of this report should note that any survey is analogous to a snapshot in time and results are only reflective of the time period in which the survey was undertaken. Should concerted public relations or information campaigns be undertaken during or shortly after the fielding of the survey, the results contained herein may be expected to change and should be, therefore, carefully interpreted and extrapolated.

Furthermore, it is important to note that all surveys contain some component of "sampling error". Error that is attributable to systematic bias has been significantly reduced by utilizing strict random probability procedures. This sample was strictly random in that selection of each potential respondent was an independent event, based on known probabilities.

Each qualified user had an equal chance for participating in the study. Statistical random error, however, can never be eliminated but may be significantly reduced by increasing sample size.

# HIGHLIGHTS

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## A Satisfaction Index...

- A satisfaction index is a measurement device created by averaging the mean positive ratings for Court Process / Treatment (80.9%), Court System Operations (80.9%), and Court Personnel (83.2%) after assigning equal weight to the three categories.
- The 2007 Satisfaction Index percent is 81.7.
- Most service organizations strive to attain satisfaction ratings in the high eighties.

## On Awareness...

- A large majority, 84.7% of all respondents suggested they were very or somewhat familiar with the Courts.

## On Court History...

- Just over one quarter of all respondents, 26.9%, suggested they initiated their most recent court experience. Another 71.9% said the experience was initiated by another party and 1.2% were unsure.
- Nearly two fifths of all respondents, 37.0%, said they were represented by an attorney.
- On average, respondents made 2.91 visits to the Court during the most recent case or experience.

## On Strengths / Areas for Improvement...

- In declining order, the most frequently perceived strengths of the Court included: good system, efficient, organized, polite, good communication, did the best they could, knowledgeable personnel, very thorough, security was tight, treated good/fair, and probation officers were helpful.
- And, in declining order, the most frequently perceived areas needing improvement included: improve the wait time, more expedient, better court system, lack of communication, too much time between cases, need fair process, prosecutors should listen more, more programs for children, and need to explain things better.

### On Expectations...

- In an open end format question, respondents named their expectations of the Court System. In declining order, the most frequently cited expectations included: fairness, expedient, justice should be served, efficiency, helpful, effective communication with court personnel, honesty, process quickly, do the job, treat everyone the same and organization.
- After further coding of the 59 different expectations presented by respondents, most fit into one of four new categories: speed, treatment, quality, and logistics.

Expectations	Percent
Treatment	71.3
Speed	29.2
Quality	26.6
Logistics	12.6

- A majority of respondents, 83.1% (without “don’t know” respondents), suggested their most recent Court experience met their expectations always, most of the time or sometimes.

### On Rating the Court Process / Treatment...

- The average overall positive rating for two different characteristics measured (treating you fairly and being open and honest) was 80.9%.

### On Rating the Court System Operations...

- The average overall positive rating for eight different characteristics measured was 80.9%.
- The highest ratings were recorded for “the building is easy to get around in” (90.0%) and “having convenient hours” (86.6%).
- The lowest positive ratings were recorded for “operating efficiently” (72.4%), “operating effectively (76.0%), and “having sufficient staff” (76.3%).
- A large majority of respondents, 95.5% suggested they felt very (72.8%) or somewhat safe (22.8%) during their respective court experiences.

### On Rating Court Personnel...

- The average overall positive rating for Court personnel across nine characteristics measured was 83.2%.
- The two highest positive ratings were recorded for the “courtesy of Court Marshals” (86.6%) and “having courteous court staff overall” (85.2%).
- The two lowest positive ratings were recorded for “court staff on being good listeners” (79.2%), and “on helping you understand the process” (80.5%).
- Overall, 81.8% suggested they were very or somewhat satisfied with their recent court experience.
- Some respondents, 5.8%, indicated they felt discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, gender, age or disability. No respondent suggested feeling discriminated against based on sexual orientation.

### On Communication...

- While only 2.4% indicated requiring the services of a translator in Court, 100% said they were provided a translator. Of this group, 83.3% suggested the time spent with the translator was about right. And, 91.7% of those receiving translation support, said they understood the translation very or somewhat well.
- Nearly two thirds of all respondents, 62.5%, received notices from the court related to their most recent experience. The average overall positive notice rating for three characteristics measured was 92.0%.
- Nearly one quarter of all respondents, 23.7%, visited the Judicial Branch or Connecticut Court System website. The average overall positive rating for the three characteristics measured was 79.9%.
- The most frequently named sources for information about Connecticut Courts appears to be the internet (25.5%), newspapers (13.9%), and directly from the Courts (29.5%).

### Among Jurors Only...

- Jurors, alone, were asked to rate the Court on six different characteristics. The average overall positive rating was 86.9%.
- The highest positive ratings were recorded for “overall treatment by the judge” (90.6%), and “timely entrance into the building” (93.8%).
- The lowest positive rating was recorded for “parking” (71.4%).

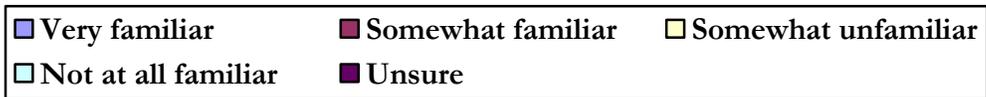
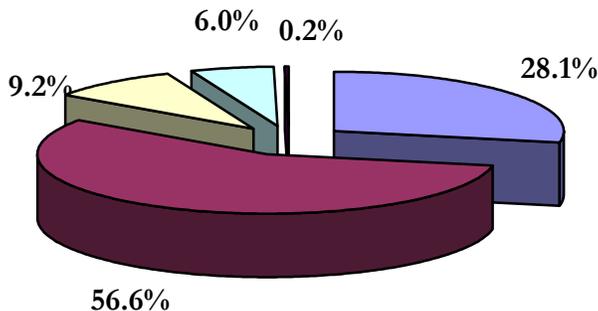
# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Readers are reminded that the following section summarizes statistics collected from surveys among 500 Court system users.

## AWARENESS

All respondents, having had an experience with the Courts, were asked to report how familiar they were with the system today.

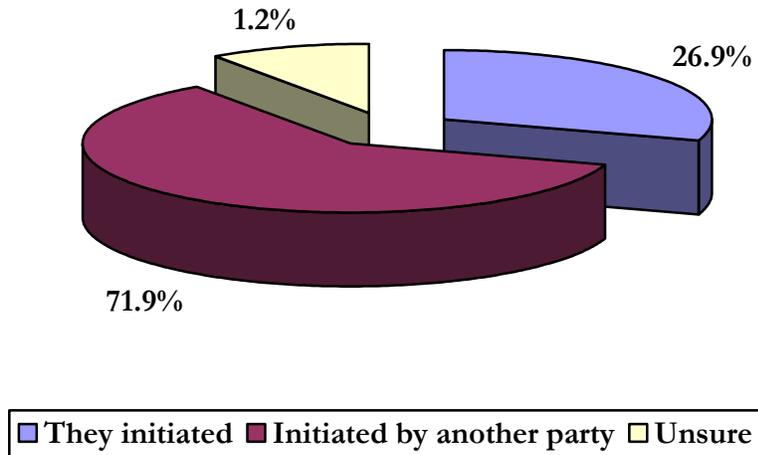
A large majority, 84.7%, suggested they were very (28.1%) or somewhat (56.6%) familiar with the courts. Another 15.2% indicated they were somewhat unfamiliar (9.2%) or not at all familiar (6.0%). Just one respondent (0.2%) said they were unsure.



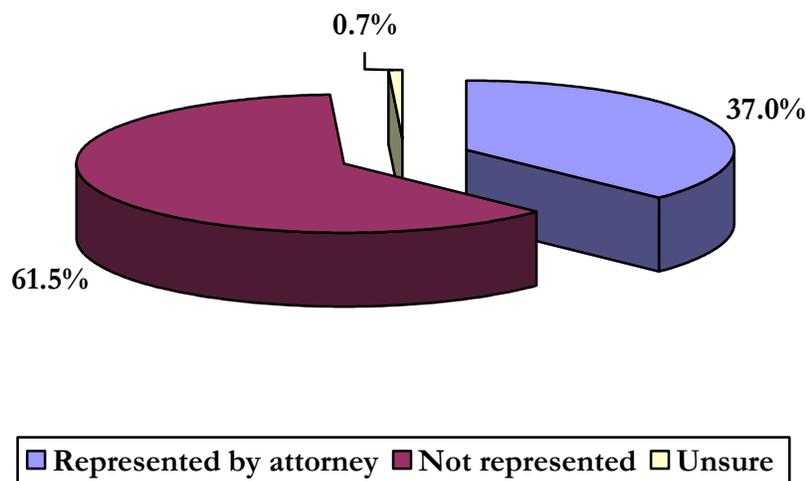
## COURT HISTORY

Researchers asked respondents about their most recent experience within a Connecticut court. Respondents were asked if this experience was initiated by them or another party.

Just over one quarter, 26.9%, indicated they initiated the experience while 71.9% said the experience was initiated by another party. Some, 1.2%, were unsure.



All respondents, except jurors, were asked if they were represented by an attorney. Nearly two fifths, 37.0%, said they were represented by an attorney. Another 61.5% said they were not and 0.7% were unsure.



On average, respondents made 2.91 visits to the Court in response to the most recent case or experience.

## STRENGTHS / AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In an open end format question, respondents were asked to two or three strengths of the Connecticut Court System. Some respondents reported “none” (30.7%) or “don’t know” (13.7%).

The following table presents the most frequently named strengths. Multiple responses were accepted.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Good system	8.6%
Efficient	8.2
Organized	7.4
Polite	7.2
Good Communication	6.4
Did the best they could	6.2
Knowledgeable personnel	4.8
Very thorough	4.6
Security was tight	4.6
Treated good / fair	4.4
Probation officers were helpful	3.2

Other strengths mentioned with less frequency included: safe, if not needed can leave quickly, good judges, fair jury selection, marshals were good, more organization for jurors, access to lawyers, judged by peers, location/proximity to home, comfortable area for jurors, access to TV/PC, good public defender, deal with crazy people, arbitration saves time, was resolved quickly, video was helpful, volunteers, judge was very fair, internet made everything easier, drug alternative programs, legal justice, settled out of court, can’t evict without a lawyer, not overcrowded, clerks are good, proper punishment for crime, confidential, professional, clean building, structure of building was good, law library was helpful, strict with fathers.

Similarly, using an open end format question, respondents were asked to name two or three ways to improve the Court System. Just under one quarter, 21.5% suggested “none” while 13.3% “didn’t know” of any suggestions.

The following table presents the most frequently named areas for improvement. Multiple responses were accepted.

<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Improve the wait time	8.0
More expedient	7.6
Better court system	6.0
Lack of communication	5.8
Too much time between cases	5.4
Need more staff	4.6
Need fair process	4.4
Prosecutors should listen more	3.6
More programs for children	3.2
Need to explain things better	3.0

Others areas for improvement named less frequently included: too much waiting to not be involved, jurors waiting room too small, uncomfortable temp / cold, restrooms need updating, no water, more educated jurors, better sentencing, more tentative laws, resolve cases before court, location / better directions, more alert judges, attorneys taking advantage, better track of jurors on break, tell jurors no pocketbooks, more access to TV / PCs, better parking, wide jury pool, better screening, could not hear the judge, unfair to landlords, should be more flexible with dates, remove politics from jury selection, better public defenders, stop sending innocent to jail, make cases go quickly, stronger laws for child support, need to be more organized, speeding tickets too severe, don’t pick self-employed people, have restaurant in building.

And, others included: treated badly, should be more private, can’t do anything without a lawyer, no more centralized small claims, marshal was incompetent, hire staff for Hartford, online filing, Judges / lawyers look down on you, more counseling for families, need bilingual staff, prosecutor should be more understanding, too many different types of cases, overcrowded, cleaner restrooms, most jurors did not want to be there.

## EXPECTATIONS

Researchers read the following to respondents: “Connecticut residents have expectations of the organizations that serve them such as banks, stores, government and utilities. Please tell me the top three expectations you have of the Connecticut Court System”.

The following table depicts the most frequently named expectations. Multiple responses were allowed. A total of 59 different expectations were named.

Expectations	Percent
Fairness	36.1
Expedient	10.8
Justice should be served	10.8
Efficiency	10.4
Helpful	9.0
Effective communication with court personnel	8.0
Honesty	7.0
Process quickly	6.6
Do the job	4.8
Treat everyone the same	3.8
Organization	3.0

Other responses named less frequently included: safety, good follow-up, judges too old/set in their ways, qualified lawyers/public defenders, system investigates lawyers, caring, good listening skills, good judges, go after people for no-shows, getting forms online would be quicker, better compensation for jurors, better follow-up system, less structured, prosecute the guilty and protect innocent, the right to use the court when needed, time slots would help, need more help locating people in the court, distance is a problem, no help on evictions, reasonable fees, case solved, atmosphere, faster way of collecting settlements, respect ability to defend yourself, respect, more programs for kids, more formal involvement by the court, help work with school system, DA should be more accessible, ability to voice concerns, professionalism, better parking, more staff, not overly crowded, more legal help for women/domestic violence, and have volunteer jury system.

After further coding of expectations into just four categories – speed, treatment, quality, and logistics – the following percentages were recorded for each.

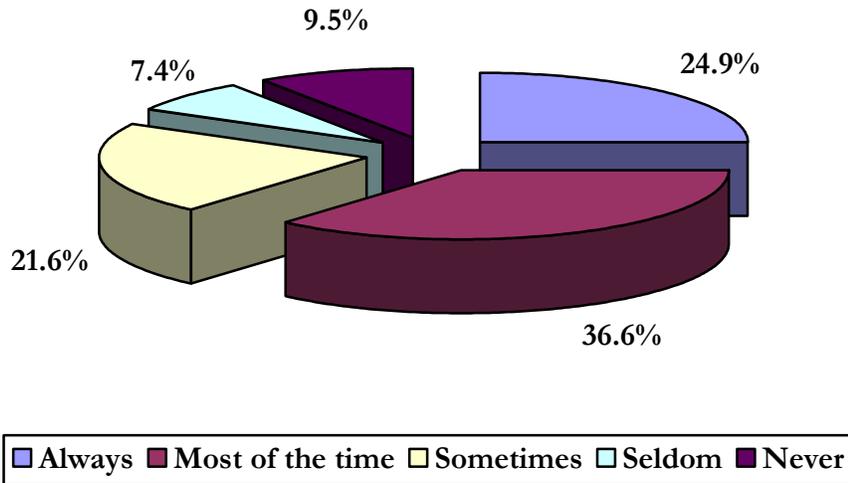
Expectations	Percent
Treatment	71.3
Speed	29.2
Quality	26.6
Logistics	12.6

Respondents were asked to think back on their most recent experience and report if their expectations were met always, most of the time, sometimes, seldom or never.

A total of 83.1% (without “don’t know” respondents) reported expectations were met always, most of the time or sometimes.

The following table presents the results as collected. “Don’t know” respondents were removed from the data in column three.

Expectations met...	Percent (with DK's)	Percent (without DK's)
Always	23.5	24.9
Most of the time	34.5	36.6
Sometimes	20.3	21.6
Seldom	7.0	7.4
Never	9.0	9.5
<b>Top three box</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>83.1</b>



## **RATING THE COURT PROCESS / TREATMENT**

All respondents were asked to think about the court system overall. Each was asked to rate two characteristics of the system using a scale of one to ten where one was very good and ten was very poor.

The following table presents the cumulative totals for positive ratings of one through four. “Don’t know” respondents have been removed from the data.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Rating 1-4</b>
Treating you fairly	79.9
Being open and honest	81.9
<b>Average</b>	<b>80.9</b>

## RATING THE COURT SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Researchers asked respondents to rate the Court system operations on eight different characteristics. Each was asked to use the same scale of one through ten where one was very good and ten was very poor.

The following table presents the cumulative totals for positive ratings of one through four. Again, “don’t know” respondents were removed from the data.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Ratings 1-4</b>
Building is easy to get around in	90.9
Convenient hours	86.8
Having convenient court locations	83.5
Available public transportation	81.6
Procedures are easy to understand	79.4
Having sufficient staff	76.3
Operating effectively	76.0
Operating efficiently	72.4
<b>Average</b>	<b>80.9</b>

Respondents were asked how safe they personally felt during their respective court experiences. A large majority, 95.5%, indicated they felt very (72.8%) or somewhat safe (22.8%).

Another 4.4% indicated they felt somewhat unsafe (2.2%) or not at all safe (2.2%).

## COURT PERSONNEL

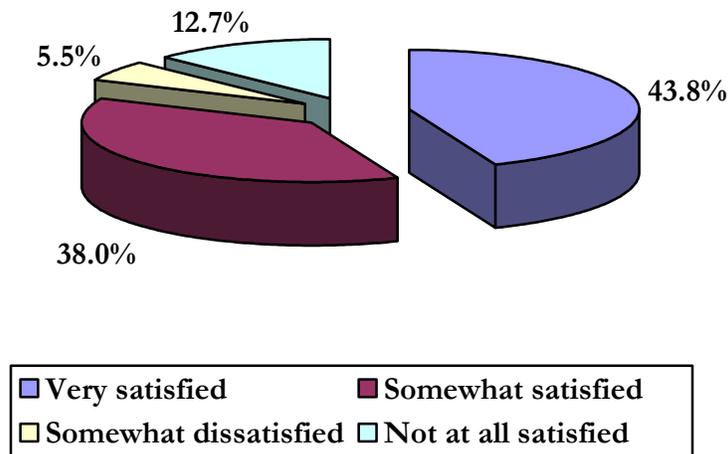
Using the same scale, respondents were asked to rate court personnel on nine different characteristics.

The following table presents the cumulative total positive ratings of one through four. “Don’t know” respondents were removed from the data.

<b>Court Personnel</b>	<b>Ratings 1-4</b>
The courtesy of Court Marshals	86.6
Having courteous court staff overall	85.2
Competence of court staff	84.8
Friendliness of court staff	84.7
On being treated with respect by court staff	84.3
Responsiveness of all court staff	82.9
On patiently explaining things to your satisfaction	80.7
On helping you understand the process	80.5
Court staff on being good listeners	79.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>83.2</b>

Overall, 81.8%, suggested they were very (43.8%) or somewhat satisfied (38.0%) with their recent court experience.

Another 18.2% suggested they were somewhat dissatisfied (5.5%) or not at all satisfied (12.7%).



Those suggesting they were satisfied were asked for the reasons. These included: done in a timely manner (19.3%), good experience (15.1%), satisfied with procedures (13.3%), fair play for all (4.7%), was expedient (3.5%), very helpful (3.5%) and issue was resolved (2.7%).

Those suggesting they were somewhat dissatisfied or not at all satisfied were asked to report the reasons. These included: not happy with new system (18.9%), unfair (15.6%), need better communication (6.7%), personnel need better people skills (5.6%), fair play for all (5.6%), and staff was horrible (5.6%).

Researchers asked respondents if they felt discriminated against based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or disability. While 92.4% said they did not feel discriminated against, a total of 5.8% suggested they did.

The following table presents the results as collected.

<b>Discrimination...</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes, based on race	2.4
Yes, based on ethnicity	0.8
Yes, based on gender	1.2
Yes, based on age	0.4
Yes, based on sexual orientation	0.0
Yes, based on disability	1.0
No	92.4
Don't know / Unsure	1.8
<b>Total Yes</b>	<b>5.8</b>

## COMMUNICATION

### Translators

Just 2.4% of all respondents reported they required translation services while in court. Of this group, 100% said they were provided a translator.

Each respondent receiving translation services (N=12) was asked if the time spent with a translator was too little, about right or too much.

A large majority, 83.3%, suggested the time spent with the translator was about right while 16.7% indicated the time was too little. No respondent suggested time with the translator was too much.

And, 91.7% of those receiving translation services (N=12) said they understood the translation provided very well (66.7%) or somewhat well (25.0%). No respondent indicated “not very well” or “not at all”. However, 8.3% suggested they were unsure.

### Notices

Nearly two thirds of all respondents, 62.5%, suggested they did receive notices from the court related to their most recent court experience.

Those respondents receiving notices were asked to rate them on three characteristics using a scale of one to ten where one was very good and ten was very poor. The following table presents the cumulative total for positive ratings of one through four. Don’t know respondents have been removed from the data.

Notice Characteristics	Ratings 1-4
Understandable (N=312)	92.9
Arriving on time (N=307)	92.2
Informative (N=309)	90.9
<b>Average</b>	<b>92.0</b>

While 3.2% of respondents receiving notices suggested they came too often, 79.0% suggested they received about the right number of notices while 9.2% suggested they came too infrequently. Others, 8.6%, were unsure.

### Website

Nearly one quarter, 23.7%, said they visited the Judicial Branch or Connecticut Court System website.

This group (N=119) was asked to rate the website on three characteristics using the same scale of one to ten.

The following table presents the cumulative totals for positive ratings of one through four. Don't know respondents were removed from the data.

<b>Website Characteristics</b>	<b>Ratings 1-4</b>
Informative	80.9
Graphics or appealing to view	80.8
Ease of use or maneuverability	78.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>79.9</b>

In an open end format question, researchers asked all respondents how they typically get general information about Connecticut Courts.

The following table presents the results as collected. Multiple responses were accepted.

<b>Sources for Court Information</b>	<b>Percent</b>
The Courts	29.5
Internet	25.5
Newspapers	13.9
Don't know / Unsure	11.6
TV	8.6
Attorneys	6.8
Friends	3.4
Brochures	3.2
Mail	3.0
Family	2.8
Radio	2.0
Co-workers	1.2
Magazines	0.8
Education / school	0.8

## JURORS ONLY SECTION

Jurors (N=60) were asked to rate the Court on six different characteristics. For each, respondents were asked for a rating of very good, good, poor or very poor. The following table presents the cumulative totals for those reporting very good and good.

<b>Juror Ratings (N=60)</b>	<b>Very Good and Good</b>
Parking	71.4
Timely entrance into the building	93.8
Comfort of rooms	85.9
Wait time in lines	83.3
Overall treatment by the judge	90.6
How well any delays were explained to you	86.3
<b>Average</b>	<b>86.9</b>

## DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>Internet Access</b>	<b>2007</b>
Yes, home	27.4
Yes, work	2.3
Yes, both	45.5
No	22.9
Unsure	1.9

<b>Primary Language</b>	<b>2007</b>
English	90.2
Spanish	6.0
Polish	0.2
Russian	0.4
Portuguese	0.6
Indian	0.2
French Creole	0.4
Arabic	0.2
Turkish	0.4
Chinese	0.2
Italian	0.2
Refused	1.0

<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>2007</b>
Yes	12.2
No	84.9
Refused	3.0

<b>Age</b>	<b>2007</b>
Average	50.41

<b>Race</b>	<b>2007</b>
White	73.9
African-American	16.3
Asian, Pacific Islander	1.1
Aleutian, Eskimo or American Indian	0.7
Other	1.6
Unsure	1.6
Refused	4.8

<b>Education</b>	<b>2007</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less	1.2
Some high school	7.4
High school graduate/GED	28.1
Some technical school	0.8
Technical school graduate	1.6
Some college	18.5
College graduate	21.5
Post graduate	10.8
Refused	10.2

<b>Income</b>	<b>2007</b>
Under \$25,000	12.5
\$25,000 to less than \$75,000	22.7
\$75,000 or more	16.3
Unsure	7.6
Refused	40.8

<b>Gender</b>	<b>2007</b>
Male	46.6
Female	53.4

<b>Sample</b>	<b>2007</b>
Criminal	14.9
Motor vehicle	22.9
Civil	13.9
Small claims	13.5
Family	7.4
Juvenile	11.4
Housing	4.0
Juror	12.0

# 5 APPENDIX

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## INTERPRETATION OF AGGREGATE RESULTS

The computer processed data for this survey is presented in the following frequency distributions. It is important to note that the wordings of the variable labels and value labels in the computer-processed data are largely abbreviated descriptions of the Questionnaire items and available response categories.

The frequency distributions include the category or response for the question items. Responses deemed not appropriate for classification have been grouped together under the “Other” code.

The “NA” category label refers to “No Answer” or “Not Applicable”. This code is also used to classify ambiguous responses. In addition, the “DK/RF” category includes those respondents who did not know their answer to a question or declined to answer it. In many of the tables, a group of responses may be tagged as “Missing” – occasionally, certain individual’s responses may not be required to specific questions and thus are excluded. Although when this category of response is used, the computations of percentages are presented in two (2) ways in the frequency distributions: 1) with their inclusion (as a proportion of the total sample), and 2) their exclusion (as a proportion of a sample subgroup).

Each frequency distribution includes the absolute observed occurrence of each response (i.e. the total number of cases in each category). Immediately adjacent to the right of the column of absolute frequencies is the column of relative frequencies. These are the percentages of cases falling in each category response, including those cases designated as missing data. To the right of the relative frequency column is the adjusted frequency distribution column that contains the relative frequencies based on the legitimate (i.e. non-missing) cases. That is, the total base for the adjusted frequency distribution excludes the missing data. For many Questionnaire items, the relative frequencies and the adjusted frequencies will be nearly the same. However, some items that elicit a sizable number of missing data will produce quite substantial percentage differences between the two columns of frequencies. The careful analyst will cautiously consider both distributions.

The last column of data within the frequency distribution is the cumulative frequency distribution (Cum Freq.). This column is simply an adjusted frequency distribution of the sum of all previous categories of response and the current category of response. Its primary usefulness is to gauge some ordered or ranked meaning.