

Grand Jury Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I have to serve in a city that is not in the county I live in?

The United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina is divided into three divisions which have been designated as points of holding court. Each of the three divisions are made up of surrounding counties as follows:

Asheville		Charlotte	Statesville
Avery	Cherokee	Anson	Alexander
Buncombe	Clay	Gaston	Alleghany
Haywood	Graham	Union	Ashe
Henderson	Jackson	Mecklenburg	Caldwell
Madison	Macon		Catawba
Mitchell	Swain		Iredell
Transylvania			Lincoln
Yancey			Watauga
Burke			Wilkes
Cleveland			
McDowell			
Polk			
Rutherfordton			

Grand Jury sessions are held in Asheville for the Asheville Division and Grand Jury sessions are held in Charlotte for the Charlotte and Statesville Divisions.

What do I do when I receive a summons and questionnaire?

Complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability, sign it and return it in the enclosed envelope. There is a space on the back of the form if you wish to include remarks regarding a medical or financial hardship. If you recently served jury duty in another court, you must include a copy of your jury certificate. Your summons contains important information regarding your scheduled appearance dates. Please keep this information.

What if the summons I received is for a family member?

If you receive a summons for a family member who is ill; deceased; not able to read or write or is a student out of town, please complete the questionnaire to the best of your ability and make a notation on the back of the form as to your relation to the person summoned and sign your name. Return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

How often must I serve ?

A person is not required to serve jury duty more often than once every two years. If you have served in the United States District Court or a North Carolina State Court within the last two years, and you wish to be excused, please mail a copy of your official jury certificate, together with your questionnaire, in the return envelope.

How long will I serve?

Grand Jurors are summoned for a term of one year not to exceed 18 months. Grand Jurors reporting to the Charlotte sessions will meet every month and grand jurors reporting to the Asheville sessions will meet every even month for an average of three days for each session.

Can I request a permanent excuse?

If you are seeking a permanent excuse, mail the questionnaire back with a note of explanation and/or any supporting documentation such as a doctor's note, certificate of prior jury service or proof of a new address. Requests for excuse must be made in writing at least two weeks prior to your first date of service.

Will I be paid for my jury service?

The U.S. District Court will pay you, by check, an attendance fee of \$40.00 per day plus round trip mileage from your zip code area and parking (see below for parking rates). Payment vouchers are processed on a weekly basis and forwarded to the financial department. Checks are mailed out within 10 days of the payment voucher processing. The attendance payment is taxable income and should be declared. Jurors who earn over \$600 in attendance income in one calendar year will receive a 1099 Form.

Where do I park?

Asheville Grand Jurors should park in the parking deck across from the federal courthouse or in any public parking lot. Jurors will be reimbursed \$10.00 per day for parking, no matter what lot you park in.

Charlotte Grand Jurors are to park in any available public parking lot. Please be sure you follow the instructions for that lot as some require payment when you park. Jurors will be reimbursed \$8.00 per day for parking no matter what lot you park in.

Is there a dress code?

While no formal dress code exists, jurors are requested to dress in a manner respectful to the Court. You will have to pass through a metal detector each time you enter the courthouse, therefore you may not want to wear steel toe shoes and leave excess metal and jewelry at home to speed your entry.

Can I bring my cellular telephone, tape recorder, camera, beeper or computer?

TAPE RECORDS, CAMERAS, CELL PHONES, LAPTOP COMPUTERS, TABLETS OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ANY KIND ARE PROHIBITED IN ALL OF OUR COURTHOUSES. You will be directed to return any of these items to your vehicle before you are permitted into the courthouse.

General Information:

Several events will occur the first day of grand jury service. An orientation will be conducted by one of the U.S. District Court or U.S. Magistrate Court Judges, a foreperson and deputy foreperson will be appointed and your oath will be administered. During your first session an Assistant United States Attorney will discuss your responsibilities as a grand juror as well as the role of the grand jury in the investigation process.

Responsibilities:

The foreperson has the authority to excuse individuals from specific meetings of the grand jury as long as the requirement that a quorum of 16 grand jurors be present for the transaction of any business is not affected. Grand jurors should notify the foreperson as soon as possible about vacation, travel or other plans which may require an absence from grand jury service. The foreperson should notify the deputy foreperson of his or her own vacation plans or requirements for extended leave so that he or she will be present on those days. Each grand juror will be provided with the home phone numbers of the foreperson and the deputy foreperson in the event a grand juror has an emergency requiring an immediate request for excuse. If a juror is unable to contact the foreperson or deputy foreperson, the jury administrator must be contacted.

How can I speak to a jury clerk?

To reach the jury department please call one of the following numbers. Please keep in mind that there is one jury clerk in each office and we handle a great deal of calls. If you reach a voice mail, please leave a message and your call will be answered as soon as possible.

Asheville - 828-771-7208

Charlotte – 704-350-7415

A word of thanks.....

By serving jury duty you are participating in the administration of justice. There is no more valuable service that a citizen can perform in support of our democratic Government than the good faith performance of jury duty. We hope you find your jury service to be an interesting and rewarding experience.