

## Court Information Release



### United States District Court

Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division  
219 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60604

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### **Academic study found district's jury plan revisions have increased representation of African-American and Hispanic citizens**

A new academic [study](#) found that the U.S. District Court for Northern District of Illinois' jury plan revisions between 2009 and 2015 have had an impact in increasing the diversity of the district's jury pool and increasing the rate of response to mailed juror qualification questionnaires.

"Assembling a diverse pool of potential jurors that represents a cross-section of the community is critical to the administration of justice. As this study confirms, changes to our district's jury plan are helping us make progress toward the goal of more representative jury pools," said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer. "We know that more improvement is needed, and we will continue these efforts, because we are seeing that these changes can be effective."

Using data from four draws of the court's master jury wheel, Jeffrey Abramson, Professor of Law and Government at University of Texas School of Law, and Mary R. Rose, Professor of Sociology at the University of Texas, studied the effect of the following jury plan revisions:

- Adding state driver's license list and the list of those holding state-issued photo ID cards to the voter registration list as sources of prospective jurors. (2012)
- When a questionnaire to a potential juror is undelivered, sending substitute qualification questionnaires to another person residing in the same zip code. (2013)
- Sending follow-up reminder letters and questionnaires to potential jurors who appear to have received their initial mailing but have not responded. If a third mailing elicits no response, sending a substitute qualification questionnaire to another person residing in the same zip code as the non-respondent. (2014)
- Adopting a new juror qualification questionnaire, which reversed order of questions, now asking respondents first whether they are Hispanic before asking for their race. (2014)
- Changing two-week jury duty summons to a one-week summons. (2015)
- Adding list of persons who applied for and/or received unemployment insurance from the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) as source of potential jurors. (2017)

The study concluded that the jury plan revisions succeeded in increasing the rate of response to mailed juror qualification questionnaires. The rate of undeliverable mail fell to 2.4% compared to 6.5% in 2009. Additionally, the rate of nonresponse fell to 11.7% from a high of 35.9% in 2011.

The study also concluded that jury plan revisions are resulting in increased representation of African-American citizens. In 2009, African-Americans comprised 19.5% of the 18+ citizen population and 13.4% of the qualified jury wheel. By 2015, African-Americans comprised 19.2 % of the 18+ citizen population and 14.0% of the qualified jury wheel.

Representation for Hispanic citizens improved more significantly. In 2009, Hispanics comprised 12% of the 18+ citizen population and 10.2% of the qualified jury wheel. By 2015, Hispanics comprised 13.6% of the 18+ citizen population and 12.4% of the qualified jury wheel.

A copy of the full report, Study of the Revised Jury Plan for the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, is available [here](#).