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## FISCAL TOPICS

Fiscal Services Division

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## Jury Trials

### Juror Selection

In Iowa, residents are selected at random for jury service from the master jury list. The master jury list consists of licensed drivers, state identification card holders, and registered voters residing in the county where the court is located. To serve or be considered for jury service, a person must meet the following criteria:

- Be 18 years of age or older.
- Be a citizen of the United States.
- Be a resident of the county in which the person was summoned.
- Be able to understand the English language in a written, spoken, or manually signed mode.
- Be able to receive and evaluate information such that the person is capable of rendering satisfactory juror service.
- Have not served as a grand or petit (trial) juror within the past two years.
- If convicted of a felony, the individual may not be under the supervision of the Department of Corrections, Judicial District Department of Correctional Services, or the Board of Parole.
- If convicted of a felony, the individual may not be currently registered as a sex offender under Iowa Code chapter [692A](#) or required to serve a special sentence under Iowa Code chapter [903B](#).

Individuals selected for jury service can request postponement for up to 12 months for hardship, inconvenience, or public necessity; temporary physical or mental illness or infirmity; active educational pursuit; or scheduled vacation.

### Types of Juries

There are two types of juries in Iowa: grand juries and petit juries. A grand jury consists of a group of seven citizens convened to determine whether there is sufficient evidence for a person accused of a crime to be brought to trial, as opposed to the county attorney filing a criminal charge. A grand jury may meet at times specified by order of a district court judge, at the request of the county attorney, or at the request of the majority of the grand jurors. The prosecuting attorney is responsible for presenting evidence to the grand jury. Grand jury proceedings are closed to the public. A petit jury acts as the fact finder when a party in a civil case or a defendant in a criminal case has requested a jury. In criminal trials, 12 jurors sit on a jury. In civil trials, eight jurors comprise a jury. If a jury has not been requested, the judge acts as the fact finder.

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### More Information

Judicial Branch: [iowacourts.gov](http://iowacourts.gov)

Iowa Court Rules: [legis.iowa.gov/law/courtrules](http://legis.iowa.gov/law/courtrules)

LSA Staff Contact: Nathan Moore (515.725.0155) [nathan.moore@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:nathan.moore@legis.iowa.gov)

**Reimbursement and Costs**

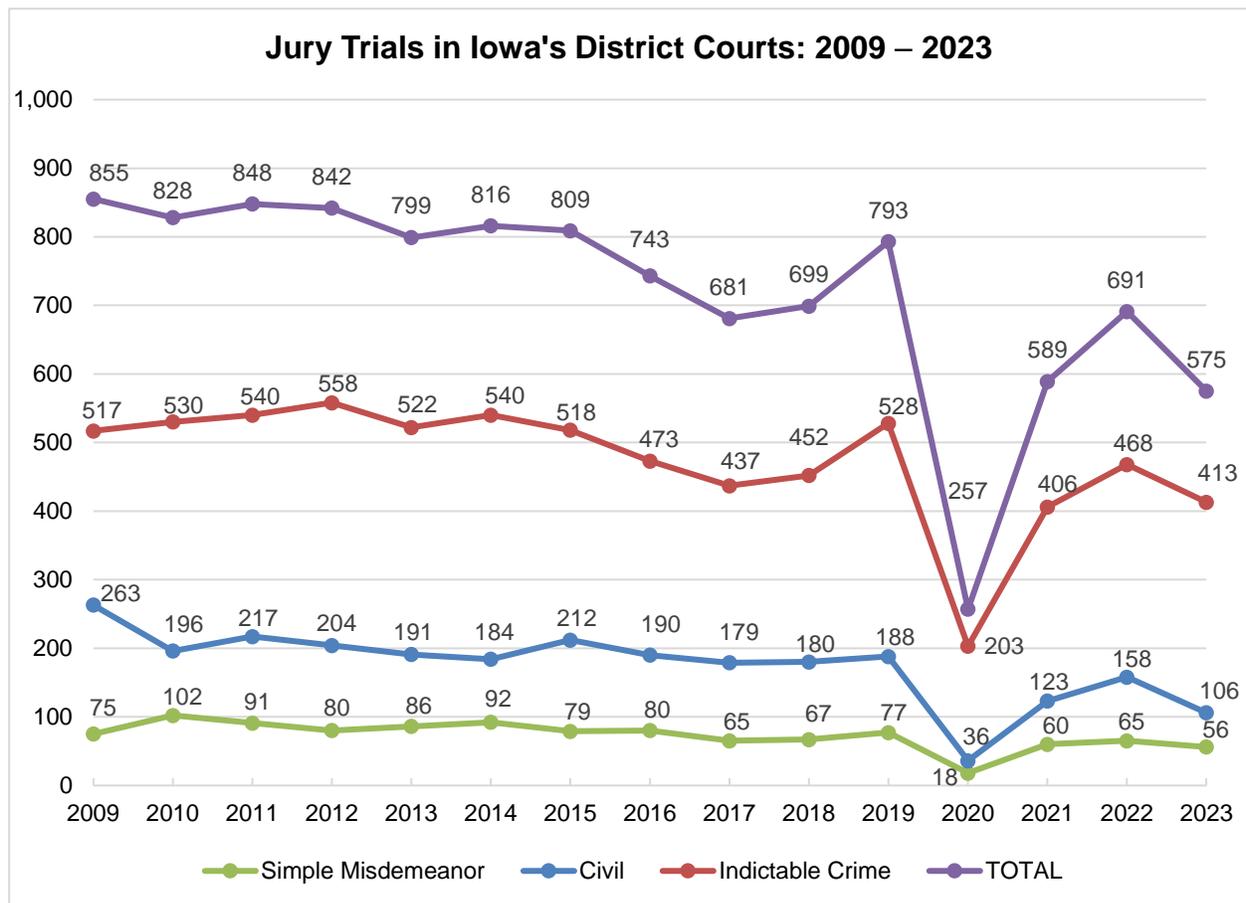
Reimbursement for both grand and petit jurors include pay, mileage, and parking. A grand juror and a petit juror in all courts receive \$30 compensation for each day of service or attendance, including the selection process, and \$50 per day in excess of seven days. A grand juror and a petit juror in all courts also receive reimbursement for mileage expenses at a rate (currently \$0.50) set by the Supreme Court for each mile traveled each day to and from the residence of the juror to the place of service or attendance and receive reimbursement for actual costs of parking. Employers must allow employees time off to serve on a jury. Employers are not required to pay the salaries of employees on jury duty but many do so in recognition of the importance of jury service.

The county pays all costs and expenses incurred by a grand jury. Costs and expenses for a petit jury are paid from the [Jury and Witness Fee Revolving Fund](#). Moneys are transferred from a General Fund appropriation to the Judicial Branch and deposited in the Jury and Witness Revolving Account. Clerks of court request moneys as needed to pay jury and witness expenditures.

**Jury Trial Statistics**

**Figure 1** shows the number of jury trials in Iowa district courts from 2009 through 2023.

**Figure 1**



**Trends in the Number of Jury Trials**

In 2020, jury trials dropped to 257, a significant decrease that correlated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Jury trials were postponed for much of the year by supervisory orders issued by the Iowa Supreme Court. This significant decline in jury trials in 2020 was not unique to Iowa. The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to court systems across the United States.

According to the [National Center for State Courts](#), jury trials across the United States were largely postponed in 2020. The postponement of jury trials resulted from safety concerns for jurors and other participants. The Iowa Supreme Court created the [Jumpstart Jury Trials Task Force](#) in May 2020 with the purpose of recommending policies that would allow jury trials to resume in a manner that would protect the health and safety of all participants and also protect the legal right of a party to a trial by jury. Jury trials eventually resumed across the United States, but the nationwide postponement of jury trials created a growing backlog of cases for states to deal with, including Iowa.

In 2021, jury trials were resumed but have not yet returned to prepandemic levels.

**Related Statutes**

Iowa Code sections [602.1302](#) and [602.1303](#)

Iowa Code chapters [602](#) and [607A](#)

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