

# 17<sup>TH</sup> JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

State of Illinois

Counties of Winnebago and Boone



## Access and Fairness Survey Summer 2012

Trial Court Administration Office –  
Winnebago County Courthouse, 400 West State Street,  
Room 215, Rockford, Illinois 61101  
[www.illinois17th.com](http://www.illinois17th.com)

Access and Fairness Survey  
Summer 2012

**Survey Description:**

The Access and Fairness Survey was developed by the National Center for State Courts in 2005 as part of the national *CourTools* Trial Court Performance Measures initiative. The survey is a research based assessment instrument designed to measure court users' ratings of the accessibility and procedural fairness of a particular court. The *CourTools* survey contains accessibility questions which address issues such as navigating one's self around the court facility, convenience of court services, and the professionalism demonstrated by court staff. The fairness section addresses whether the court process allowed litigants to feel that they had a voice in and understood their court experience.

The 2012 Access and Fairness Survey administered by the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Courts is patterned on the *CourTools* survey. The survey contains six questions about the respondent's background, nine questions concerning accessibility of the court and five questions concerning procedural fairness. The background section is based on categorized options and is completed by respondents to choosing the most appropriate checkbox. The accessibility and fairness sections are based on a five-point scale from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (5) "Strongly Agree" and respondents rate their agreement level with each question. Within these sections the option (N/A) "Not Applicable" is also available.

A copy of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Court's summer 2012 Access and Fairness Survey is provided on the following page.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL COURT**



**You Be the Judge**

Access and Fairness Survey  
Summer 2012

**Section I: Background Information**

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What did you do at the court today?

- Search court records/obtain documents
- File papers
- Make a payment
- Get information
- Appear as a witness
- Attorney representing a client
- Jury duty
- Attend a hearing or a trial
- Law enforcement/probation/social services staff
- Party to a legal matter

What type of case brought you to the courthouse today?

- Traffic
- Criminal
- Civil matter
- Divorce, child custody or support
- Juvenile matter
- Probate
- Small claims
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Which age category do you fit into?

- 18 or younger
- 19-35
- 36-50
- 51-65
- Over 65

How do you identify yourself?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific
- White
- Mixed Race
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How often are you typically in this courthouse?

- First time in this courthouse
- Once a year
- Several times a year
- Regularly

**Section II: Access to the Court**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. I felt safe in the courthouse.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9. The court's website was useful.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

**Section III: Fairness** (*ONLY complete questions 10-14 if you were a party to a legal matter and appeared before a judge today.*)

10. The way my case was handled was fair.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13. I was treated the same as everyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
14. I understand what happened in court today and what will happen next with my case.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

**Survey Administration:**

The survey was administered under the supervision of the Trial Court Administration Office. A well-trained survey team consisting of one Deputy Court Administrator and three court interns administered the survey on six “typical days” over a three-week period. The survey was administered at the Criminal Justice Center on July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, the Boone County Courthouse on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, and the Winnebago County Courthouse on July 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. All respondents were asked to complete the background and accessibility sections. Only individuals who participated in a legal matter and appeared before a judge were instructed to complete the procedural fairness section. Because the survey is designed to assess the views of the court’s customers, judges and court staff were excluded from participation.

A total of 504 surveys were completed and returned from the three locations.

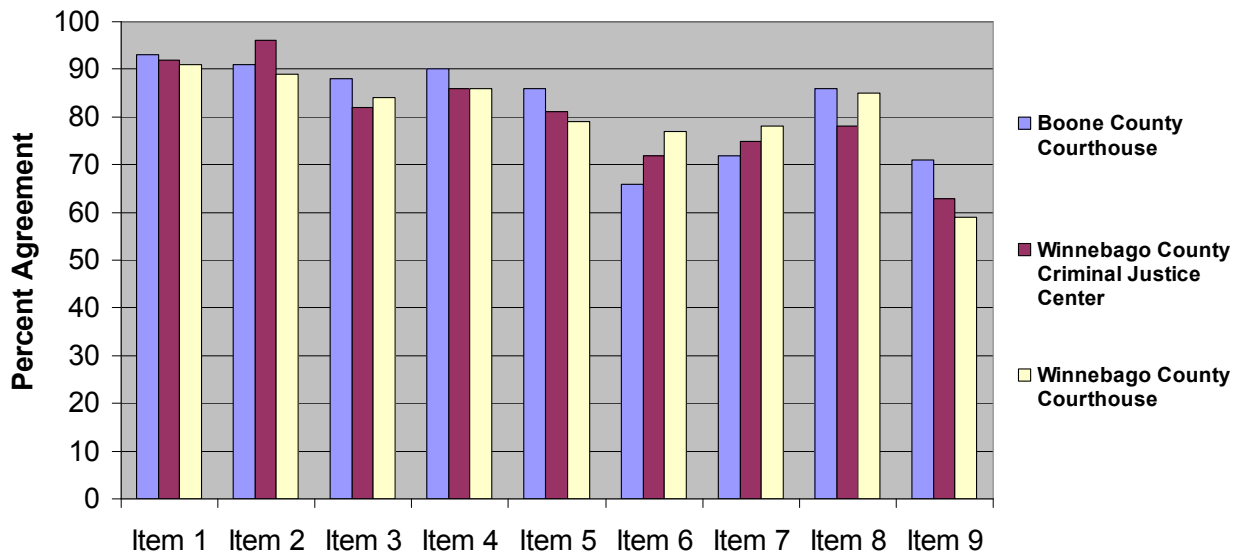
<b>Location</b>	<b>2012 Surveys Completed</b>
Boone County Courthouse	102
Winnebago County Criminal Justice Center	100
Winnebago County Courthouse	302
<b>TOTAL 504</b>	

**Survey Analysis:**

The following charts are based on total number of responses received during this circuit-wide survey. **The percentages shown are the cumulative number of respondents that “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with each survey question.** Responses recorded as (N/A) “Not Applicable” or missing were excluded from the analysis of particular items.

Survey Results  
Section I – Accessibility

Section I - Accessibility		Percent Agreement		
		Boone County Courthouse	Winneshago County Justice Center	Winneshago County Courthouse
Item	Statement			
1	Finding the courthouse was easy.	93%	92%	91%
2	I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	91%	96%	89%
3	The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	88%	82%	84%
4	I felt safe in the courthouse.	90%	86%	86%
5	The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers.	86%	81%	79%
6	I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	66%	72%	77%
7	Court staff paid attention to my needs.	72%	75%	78%
8	I was treated with courtesy and respect.	86%	78%	85%
9	The court's website was useful.	71%	63%	59%



Survey Results  
Section II – Fairness

Section II – Fairness		Percent Agreement		
		Boone County Courthouse	Winnebago County Justice Center	Winnebago County Courthouse
Item	Statement			
1	The way my case was handled was fair.	76%	73%	74%
2	The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	79%	71%	72%
3	The judge has the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	78%	74%	70%
4	I was treated the same as everyone else.	86%	77%	78%
5	I understand what happened in court today and what will happen next with my case.	87%	79%	82%

