

**ACCESS AND FAIRNESS IN THE GILA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT**

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## Abstract

The Superior Court in Gila County, Arizona, a general jurisdiction court, has a population of approximately 56,885 resident's county wide as of 2007.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this project was to conduct a follow-up survey to the National Center State Courts, (NCSC), *CourTools* Measure 1, survey conducted by the Arizona's AOC in 2007, and to compare the results so that the court could monitor progress and respond to concerns of the community.

The *CourTools* 1 survey assesses accessibility and fairness. The survey asks court users to rate the court's treatment with regard to fairness, equality, and respect. Gila County Court, with courthouse locations in Payson and Globe, administered this survey to court users and the general public.

A total of 73 court users and members of the general public responded to the survey.

The results were presented to the executive group of the Gila County Superior Court. The results from this survey administration (2008) and the 2007 statewide AOC survey administration proved to be very similar. The general public rated the court lower on access and fairness than either group of court users (2007 AOC or 2008). These results will enable the court to implement corrective court management practices to ensure access and fairness to its local community.

The court realizes that even with the good results, there is room for improvement. The court also realizes that periodically monitoring its court users will ensure that the appropriate actions have been taken and desired outcomes are accomplished. Some important findings are that the court needs to continue to enhance its court website to make it more user friendly; and

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau and Arizona Department of Economic Security, Population Statistics Unit, downloaded from the internet on September 29, 2008 from the Arizona Department of Commerce at <http://www.azcommerce.com/doclib/commune/gila%20county.pdf>

provide Gila County specific forms for the use of its court user. Further training on legal advice versus legal information is necessary to more adequately serve the public. This will not only help the court user, but it will also give the staff more confidence as to what they can or cannot tell the public.

Lastly, the court should gain adequate facilities for Payson court users. This will help ensure the consistent and equal service to Payson court users and Globe court users. The Superior Court believes that no matter where you go in Gila County, the court user should be provided with the same high level of service.

## INTRODUCTION

The Gila County Superior Court is a General Jurisdiction Court and resides in the county seat of Gila County in Globe, Arizona. Gila County is approximately 158 miles from one end of the county to the other end, with a population of 56,885 people as of 2007.<sup>2</sup> There are 15 counties in the State of Arizona and Gila County is one of its rural counties. Due to the size of Gila county, satellite facilities have been set up for the Northern end of the county to better accommodate the public. Globe is in the Southern part of the county and there are 81 miles between the two court facilities.

Because of the distance between the two court facilities, the court constantly struggles with consistency of services. The court feels that it is very important that the court user receive that same kind of services regardless of which facility they use.

There are two elected Gila County Superior Court Judges, one part-time *pro tem* judge, one on-call *pro tem* judge, and one commissioner who services both court facilities. The court is broken down into two divisions: Division One judges hold court in Payson up to three days a week and Division Two judges conduct court in Payson two days per month.

Last year, the Arizona AOC visited all General Jurisdiction Courts in the State of Arizona in efforts to reach the Chief Justices Strategic Agenda of “Good to Great” which reflects Arizona’s Judiciary systems commitment to making Arizona’s justice system the best system possible. The results of the 2007 AOC survey of access and fairness showed that Gila County’s scores were similar to that of other rural counties.

A year later, Gila County Superior Court decided to conduct a follow-up survey to compare its results to the AOC’s results so it could monitor progress and respond to the concerns of the community. In addition, the court wanted to determine the general public’s perception of

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<sup>2</sup> Loc. Cit.

Gila County Superior Court. The results of this follow-up survey and recommendations for the Gila County Superior Court are presented in this paper. Section I will review the literature in this areas. Section II will discuss the methodology/research design and explain the survey administration processes. Section III will provide an over view of the findings. And finally, Section IV will discuss the implications of the results and explore recommendations for strategic plans for the Gila Superior Court.

## Literature Review

The issue of the lack of public trust and confidence in the judiciary system is not a new revelation, as demonstrated in the Roscoe A. Pound's 1906 Address "The Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice." Roscoe identified public dissatisfaction causes into four main categories:

1. Dissatisfaction with any legal system.
2. Peculiarities of our Anglo-American legal system.
3. American judicial organization and procedure.
4. Environment of our judicial administration.<sup>3</sup>

Over a century later, why should we care about how the public views the judiciary system?

What dissatisfactions does today's court user have and how can we improve upon them? What is the best way to collect this information? Do court users view the courts differently than that of the general public?

Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, conducted the first comprehensive national survey of public attitude toward courts and justice at the 1977 National conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System.<sup>4</sup> A seven member advisory task force formed to draft the survey instruments which was to tap the public's views about court system performance and at the same time ascertain the respondents' extent of knowledge and experience with the courts.<sup>5</sup>

There were six major conclusions found from this study:

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<sup>3</sup> Pound, Roscoe, *The Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice*, **American Bar Association**, reprint, 1906. Cited by Warren, Roger K, *Public Trust and Procedural Justice*, **Court Review** Fall, 2999, pages 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc., *Highlights of a National Survey of the General Public Judges, Lawyers, and Community Leaders*, **State Courts: A Blueprint for the Future**, National Center for State Courts, 1978, Page i

<sup>5</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

1. “There is a profound difference in views between the general public/community leaders and judges/lawyers with respect to what the courts do and should do in our society.
2. The general public and community leaders are dissatisfied with the performance of courts and rank courts lower than many other major American institutions.
3. The general public’s knowledge of and direct experience with courts is low.
4. Those having knowledge and experience with courts voice greatest dissatisfaction and criticism. The interest of the general public in courts is high and there is impressive support for reform and improvement
5. The attitudes of the general public on crime and punishment are far less simplistic than previous studies have indicated.”<sup>6</sup>

This study showed that the public expects “protection of society, equality/fairness, and quality performance (responsiveness, accessibility, competence). Perceived failure to meet these expectations is the underlying basis of a desire for reform.”<sup>7</sup> Although the public does not expect the courts to solve the crime problem, it does expect courts to help reduce crime. “The perceived inability of courts to reduce the crime rate is the most serious of all court problems studied.”<sup>8</sup> The Courts not only have the responsibility to provide this to the public but they should also be held accountable to do so.

Yankelovich, Skelly, and White, Inc. point out that those having knowledge and experience with courts voice greatest dissatisfaction and criticism than those who have no knowledge and experience with the courts.<sup>9</sup> However, this contrasts with research that has been conducted on other institutions and organizations.<sup>10</sup>

There were 500 attendees at the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System, which included: State chief justices, court managers, and representatives of

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<sup>6</sup> **Ibid, page ii.**

<sup>7</sup> **Ibid, page 27**

<sup>8</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

<sup>9</sup> See Note 4 supra

<sup>10</sup> See Note 6 supra

the federal judiciary, the bar, the media, and the public. Chief Justice Phillips of Texas, in his role as President of the Conference of Chief Justices, asked the Hearst Corporation to take another look at the public's perceptions of the court system in a study by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).<sup>11</sup> The Hearst Corporation was asked to conduct a survey on "The American Public, the Media, and the Judicial System" 16 years prior to this conference.<sup>12</sup>

The Hearst survey covered four areas:

1. Access to the courts
2. Timeliness of court decisions
3. Fairness of judicial decision-making, and
4. Independence and responsiveness of the courts to the public and to changing conditions in society.<sup>13</sup>

In this survey, 1,826 Americans were asked to give their opinions regarding courts in their communities. The conclusion was a mix of high, medium, and low marks across different categories. Views differed widely depending on the race, ethnic group, income, and other factors.<sup>14</sup> The survey also showed that three-fourths of Americans believe courts make an effort for people to have adequate legal representation. Americans believe that the courts treat people with respect and six out of ten believe that they could represent themselves in court. Only one in three Americans agree that taking a case to court is affordable, and nearly nine out of ten point to the cost of legal representation as the main obstacle. Other obstacles were slow pace of justice,

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<sup>11</sup> *National Action Plan: A Guide for State and National Organizations*, National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System, National Center for State Courts, 1999, Page 4

<sup>12</sup> Bennack, Frank A. Jr., *National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System*; Page 1

<sup>13</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

<sup>14</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

complexity of the law, and the amount of personal time required.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the conclusion drawn from this work is that courts are just doing an average job of serving the public.

One major critique of courts is expressed through a majority belief that equal justice under the law is more equal to some than to others. It is the public's perception that your ethnicity type will determine how fair the court system adjudicates your case.<sup>16</sup>

With the results learned from the Hearst survey, the attendees at the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System identified the top six issues regarding public trust and confidence:

1. Unequal treatment in the justice system.
2. High cost of access to the justice system.
3. Lack of public understanding.
4. Unfair and inconsistent judicial process.
5. Partisan versus merit selection of judges.
6. Poor customer relations with public.<sup>17</sup>

After identifying the top six issues attendees then identified the top six effective strategies:

1. Improve education and training.
2. Make the courts more inclusive and outreaching.
3. Improve external communication.
4. Swift, fair justice...resolves cases with reasonable promptness/cost.
5. Share programs and activities among the states that have been used to improve public trust and confidence.

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<sup>15</sup> **Ibid, page 2-3**

<sup>16</sup> **Ibid, page 3**

<sup>17</sup> See Note 5 supra, page 16

6. Implement recommendations of gender, race, and ethnic bias task forces and replicate the successes in other jurisdictions.<sup>18</sup>

In support of these strategies from the National Conference, Resolution IX was created and adopted by the Conference of Chief Justices. It pledges that they will

“strongly support the National Conference on Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System; urges each chief justice, working through a broadly cross-representational committee of citizens, to lead the effort to ascertain the issues affecting public confidence in his or her state and to formulate a strategy to deal with them; and urges each chief justice personally to lead a state delegation to the national conference.”<sup>19</sup>

In the past, national efforts to document and improve court administration translated into the development of performance standards. In 1997, the Commission on Trial Court Performance Standards developed 22 trial court performance standards that judges, court managers, lawyers, policymakers, citizen groups, and others can use to improve trial court performance. The Commission believed that these standards would prove to be a valuable resource for self-assessment and self-improvement of trial courts and provide ways of meeting the needs of court users.<sup>20</sup>

In 2003, the NCSC developed The Trial Court Performance Standards Reference Manual, which provides examples of court programs and initiatives that address each of the Trial Court Performance Standards (TCPS). The Standards identify the goals and responsibilities of courts within five performance areas:

1. Access to justice
2. Expedition and timeliness

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<sup>18</sup> **Ibid, page 21**

<sup>19</sup> *Conference of Chief Justices: Resolution IX: In Support of the National Conference on Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System*, January 29, 1998 page 2

<sup>20</sup> Murphy, Robert C. in, **Trial Court Performance Standards with Commentary**, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1997, page v

3. Equality, fairness, and integrity
4. Independence and accountability
5. Public trust and confidence

These standards were identified by the Conference of State Court Administrators and the National Center's Public Trust and Confidence Initiative.<sup>21</sup>

NCSC's TCPS manual provided courts with examples of projects and programs that other courts have implemented that address the goals and outcomes.<sup>22</sup>

The TCPS have made a significant contribution to judicial administration. They focus on court users rather than "court insiders." They ask how the system can be improved to work better for the people who have to maneuver through it.<sup>23</sup>

In 2005, the NCSC revisited the TCPS in an effort to provide courts with "a manageable set of balanced and realistic performance measures that are practical to implement and use."<sup>24</sup>

The 10 *CourTools* performance measures consist of the following:

1. Access and Fairness
2. Clearance Rates
3. Time to Disposition
4. Age to Active Pending Caseload
5. Trial Date Certainty
6. Reliability and Integrity of Case Files
7. Collection of Monetary Penalties
8. Effective Use of Jurors

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<sup>21</sup> *Trial Court Performance Standards Desk Reference Manual*, National Center for State Courts, 2003, page 1

<sup>22</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

<sup>23</sup> Casey, Pamela, *Defining Optimal Court Performance: The Trial Court Performance Standards*, **Court Review**, Winter 1998, page 28

<sup>24</sup> *CourTools: Giving Courts the Tools to Measure Success*, National Center for State Courts, 2005, page 1

9. Court Employee Satisfaction

10. Cost Per Case.<sup>25</sup>

“The National Center developed *CourTools* by integrating the major performance areas defined by the Trial Court Performance Standards with relevant concepts from other successful public-and private-sector performance measurement systems. This balanced set of court performance measures provides the judiciary with the tools to demonstrate effective stewardship of public resources. Being responsive and accountable is critical to maintaining the independence courts need to deliver fair and equal justice to the public.”<sup>26</sup>

In accordance with CCJ’s Resolution IX, and to the NCSC’s call for accountability for court performance, Arizona’s Supreme Court’s Strategic Agenda is “Good to Great” which reflects Arizona’s commitment to making the best judicial system possible.<sup>27</sup> “To move the Arizona court system from “good” to “great,”” five goals were adopted. 1) To Provide access to swift and fair justice; 2) To protect our children, families, and the community; 3) To be accountable; 4) To improve communication and cooperation with the community; and 5) To serve the public by improving the legal profession.<sup>28</sup>

“One objective of the Arizona Judiciary’s 2005-2010 Strategic Agenda “Good to Great” is the development of court performance improvement measures. In respect of that objective, the Administrative Office of the Court (AOC) set a goal of establishing court performance measurement standards to be implemented, utilized, and maintained by limited and general jurisdiction courts statewide. The *CourTools* 10 Core Court Performance measures created by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) provide the framework for creating the standards.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *CourTools: Giving Courts the Tools to Measure Success*, National Center for State Courts, 2005 pages 1-3

<sup>26</sup> **Loc. Cit.**

<sup>27</sup> *A Strategic Agenda for Arizona’s Courts 2005-2010*, Supreme Court State of Arizona, page 1

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, pages 2-3

<sup>29</sup> *Forum Quorum “at your service” The Court Services Division Quarterly Newsletter, CourTools Measure One: Access and Fairness Survey Statewide Implementation*, Downloaded from the internet on October 23, 2008, from [http://ajin/ctserv/newsletter/archives/fall08/CourTools\\_MeasureOne.htm](http://ajin/ctserv/newsletter/archives/fall08/CourTools_MeasureOne.htm).

Gila County Superior Court supports the “Good to Great” agenda and thus prioritizes court performance measurements. In particular, and as described in this paper, court users’ perception of access and fairness. This paper will explore access and fairness in Gila County, Arizona using the *CourTools* survey. The survey is broken down into three sections.

1. Access to the Court
2. Fairness
3. Background information

Section one, Access to the Court, asks court users about the court facility and its security measures. It is the courts’ obligation to make sure that all court users have easy access to the premises. It is also the courts’ obligation to ensure that the court user feels safe while conducting their business. Section one also asks respondents about their paperwork and how well they were treated by court staff while conducting their business. Such as, if the court user does not speak English does the court provide an interpreter to help them conduct their business? In order to gain public trust and confidence, the court must provide excellent customer service. Court employees are public servants and excellent service is the obligation of the court. Conducting this survey, will not only assess whether the court meets the customer’s expectations, but it will also identify where changes need to be made.

Section two, Fairness, assesses the court users’ perceptions about how their case was handled in court. The court wants to know if the court user, felt that the judge was fair and that the judge listened to his or her side of the story. The purpose of this section is to evaluate, the public’s trust and confidence; the court user should feel that they were treated fairly and understand what was going on in their case.

Section three, Background Information, assesses why the survey respondent was at the courthouse, how often they visit, and whether they were a party to a case. The survey also asks demographic information including, age, race, gender, and income. The background information helps the court focus its responsive actions and identify problem areas.

As previously mentioned, Americans perceive inequality in the way people are treated. One of the reasons for this belief is because of racial or ethnic discrimination. Therefore, the survey, prompts the respondent for background information allowing the court to monitor such behavior. (See App. A)

For over 20 years, the NCSC has commissioned and conducted surveys of the public's trust and confidence in the states court. The same negative and positive issues have reoccurred with varying degrees across all of the surveys. Negatives were centered on "perceived inaccessibility, unfairness in the treatment of racial and ethnic minorities, leniency toward criminals, and a lack of concern about the problems of ordinary people." There were concerns that the wealthy would have the favor of the court. Furthermore, politics played a role in the dissatisfaction of the courts and the perceived favoritisms.<sup>30</sup>

On a positive note, the public perceives judges as honest and fair in the decision making of cases and believe that they are well trained. The public believes that the jury system works and that judges and court personnel treat members of the public with courtesy and respect.<sup>31</sup>

Public opinion surveys can educate judges on the range of views that the insiders have compared to the public's views. Even though the general public does not have intimate knowledge of the court system, they definitely have an opinion on it. A carefully conducted survey can show the causes of public dissatisfaction.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, page 25

<sup>31</sup> Loc. Cit.

“Research on public opinion about the courts suggests that the public is aware that the judiciary on its own can neither be blamed nor expected to solve problems such as unfairness or delay. Courts are viewed as recognition that unfairness is rooted in society at large and can only be partly countered by changes to court procedure or judicial selection.”<sup>32</sup>

Perceptions of the courts are a mixture of information from personal experience and/or exposure to TV shows such as Judge Judy or Judge Joe Brown. Opinion surveys reveal how those opinions have been formed and how a change in policy might change the dissatisfaction among court users.<sup>33</sup> Bad experiences by court users are particularly troublesome in rural communities. Small town residents share their experiences with others and reputation of the court is soon to be under scrutiny.

Opinion surveys show patterns in how people use the courts that cannot be shown from any other court record. Opinion surveys contribute to strategic planning efforts of many entities.<sup>34</sup> Through research, the judicial administration office can identify areas in need of improvement.

There are many opportunities for the judicial administration to improve public dissatisfaction. The *CourTools* allow courts to administer their own surveys in their own communities and the results will affect policy decisions.

Outreach efforts and public education play a key role in overcoming public dissatisfaction. Educating court staff and the local community about the court system will clear up misinformation about the judicial system and its role in the community.

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<sup>32</sup> **Ibid, page 49**

<sup>33</sup> *A Survey of the Public and Attorneys, Trust and Confidence in the California Courts 2005, Part 1: Findings and Recommendations*, National Center for State Courts, 2005, page 1

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

## Methods

There are two separate survey results that will be discussed in this paper. The first is the Arizona's Administrative Office of the Courts, AOC survey that was conducted in 2007 (hereinafter, *2007 AOC*), and the second is a follow-up survey conducted in 2008, using the same materials, but isolated to Gila County. The Gila County 2008 survey is the focus of this paper, but results will be compared to the *2007 AOC* survey.

In 2007, the AOC, came to all the general jurisdiction courts in Arizona to help courts administer the *CourTools I* survey to court users, see Appendix A. This survey was to be completed by court users who were using the court facilities on that particular day. The AOC wanted to determine how the Arizona court users viewed the Arizona court system statewide. The AOC did not conduct a survey of the general public, but limited their scope to court users.

Globe is the county seat of Gila County, but because of the size of Gila County, approximately 158 miles from one end of the county to the other end, court facilities are located in both Payson and Globe. The two facilities are 81 miles apart from each other. There was a total population of 56,885 people residing in Gila County in 2007 with the majority of people living in the Northern end of Gila County.<sup>35</sup>

The Globe facility, in the county seat, is much larger than the facility in Payson. The building in Globe is a three-story building with other county offices occupying the first two floors. The Superior Court is located on the third floor. There are two entrances to the third floor, the front entrance and the back entrance, see Appendix B. The Gila County Superior Court encourages court users to use the front entrance for better security purposes. At times, the back entrance is completely closed off to the public.

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<sup>35</sup> U.S. Census Bureau and Arizona Department of Economic Security, Population Statistics Unit, downloaded from the internet on September 29, 2008 from the Arizona Department of Commerce at <http://www.azcommerce.com/doclib/commune/gila%20county.pdf>

Payson's, facility is a two-story building with the courts occupying the first floor. The Justice Court occupies the left half of the first floor and the Superior Court along with the Probation Department occupies the other half of the floor. There is a waiting room between the two courts. Since the facility is very small, court users have to wait in different areas of the facility or outside for their court hearings.

In Gila County, two days were chosen to spend in Globe, the southern end of Gila County, and two days in Payson, the northern end of Gila County. These dates were chosen so that the court would be able to get as many surveys completed from court users on as many different case types as possible. The court also felt that it was important to survey court users in both ends of the county so that they would be able to see if they were meeting the needs of the court user at each facility. Ultimately, the court's goal is to serve court users equally in Payson and Globe.

The days selected for survey administration in Payson were based on two factors: volume and breadth. A day with a heavy caseload (Monday) increased the number of potential survey respondents and a day with a variety of calendars (Tuesday) provided a more representative sample. Similarly, in Globe, the court chose a Monday calendar, the day with the heaviest caseload. Monday's calendar includes criminal and domestic cases. The other day chosen was Friday. On Fridays, the court hears juvenile, domestic, and civil cases.

In the 2007 AOC survey the AOC asked each court in Arizona for help administering the survey in their perspective county. Gila County scheduled one to two staff members to assist the Arizona AOC and offer help to court users. Floor plans were drawn to decide where the best place would be to place the signs and table, see Appendix B.

On the day of the survey, AOC met with all court staff members and the signs and table went up to alert the public as to what was happening. Employees administering the surveys rotated every two hours.

After the court users finished with their court business, they were asked to fill out a survey. Those who completed surveys were offered to keep the pen they used saying, “I judged the court today,” and they were offered a piece of candy. The court user then inserted their survey into a sealed container to protect their identity. Staff tracked a count of those who did not want to fill out a survey.

At the end of each survey day, the Arizona AOC collected and the surveys for analysis in Phoenix, Arizona. The AOC sent the results to each county, along with Arizona’s overall score so courts could compare their average with the state of Arizona’s average and other county averages.

As a follow-up to the *2007 AOC* survey, the administration of the Gila County surveys followed basically the same plan. The Gila survey itself was almost identical except for some of the demographic questions, see Appendix C. For purposes of comparison, the Gila survey was administered on the same days of the week as *2007 AOC*. In addition to a follow-up survey of court users, Gila County court opted to survey the general public on its perception of the courts, hereinafter, *General Public* survey.

Court staff and family members pretested the survey instrument and offered suggestions for modification where needed. Most of the changes pertained to the demographics part of the survey.

As part of the Gila County survey, signs reading, “I judged the court today” were created, see Appendix D. In addition, an informational sheet was developed to explain the purpose of the

survey, see Appendix E. Like the AOC administration, survey respondents were offered candy upon completion of the survey. Unlike the 2007 AOC survey, the Gila County survey was predominantly administered by the author alone, seeking help as needed.

The *General Public* survey was conducted at the Safeway store in Globe. A table was placed outside the entrance of the store and people were approached as they were either going into the store or leaving. The *General Public* survey was administered on Saturday, August 30, 2008, a busy weekend day. Most of the people either did not want to take the time out to complete the survey or had not used the court facilities in our county. The response rate was low, 33%, but typical for a survey of the general public. Local Payson stores did not permit a survey at their stores. Therefore, a survey of the general public in the northern part of Gila County was not conducted.

One potential reason for a low response rate was using only one person to administer the survey. It was hard to catch everyone who walked by to ask them if they would fill out a survey and track those who did not want to fill out a survey. Future studies should schedule two people to administer surveys.

The Gila County court users survey was administered on Monday, September 1, 2008 in Globe. There was a heavy criminal calendar in one division and a heavy domestic calendar in the other division. A total of 24% (21 out of 65), of court users completed a survey on that day. The second day, Friday, December 05, 2008, 21% (6 out of 23), of court users filled out a survey.

In Payson, the Gila County survey was administered on Monday, September 8, 2008 and Tuesday, September 9, 2008. On Monday, there was a heavy criminal calendar. There was a response rate of 26% (20 out of 57) of court users. On Tuesday, there was a domestic,

guardianship, and juvenile calendar and the highest rate, 31% (11 out of 25) of court users completed a survey. In Payson, some respondents visited the limited jurisdiction court and not just the General Jurisdiction court. Between both days, 29% (9 out of 31), of the court users visited the limited jurisdiction court.

In the 2007 AOC survey, a total of 219 court users responded from the Superior Court and the two Justice Court's in Payson and Globe. In the follow-up Gila County survey, 35% of a total of 88 court users filled out a survey. In Payson, 33% of a total of 82 court users completed a survey, and in Globe 39% of a total of 38 people from the general public completed the surveys. This is a grand total of 73 out of 208 (35%) court users and members of the general public who completed surveys.

The Gila County survey of court users did not include Justice Court in Globe. In Payson, some of the court users coming out of the Justice Court completed surveys.

Table 1. Response Rates			
	Respondents		Total
	#	%	
<i>Court Users</i>			
2007 AOC	219	68	320
2008 Gila County	58	34	170
<i>General Public</i>			
Total	292	54	543

## Findings

Three sets of access and fairness findings will be presented. The first set will include a trend analysis between the *2007 AOC* survey and the Gila County survey to determine how court users view the Gila County courts, and what, if any changes have occurred over the past year. The second set of findings will evaluate whether the two Gila County courthouses (Globe and Payson) provide equal service to court users. The final and third set of findings will compare the viewpoints of current court users to those of the general public in Globe.

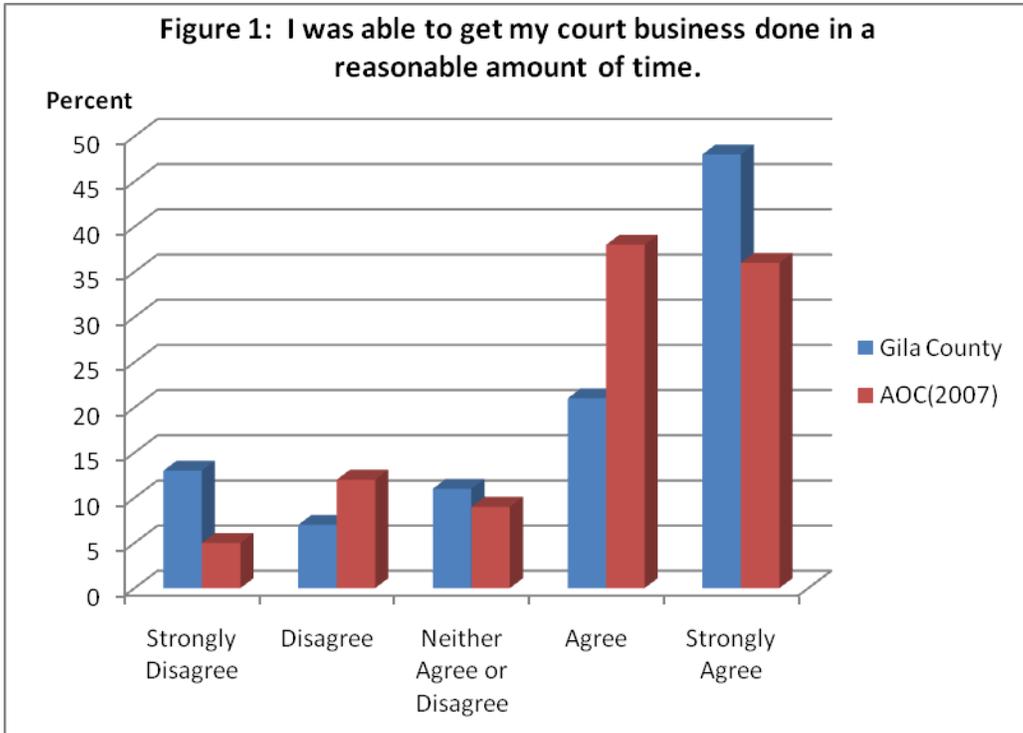
### Perception of Accessibility by Court Users, 2007 to 2008

The first set of findings comparing the *2007 AOC* survey and the Gila County survey, were very similar, see Appendix H. Overall, the *2007 AOC* survey of Gila County shows higher ratings of access and fairness, but this trend is primarily evidenced in thirteen of the fifteen questions. The overall average score from *2007 AOC* was 38% “strongly agree” and 42% “agree” a total of 80% agreement compared to the Gila County survey of 42% “strongly agree” and 34% “agree” a total of 76% agreement. There was an increase of four percent from agree to strongly agree in the recent Gila County survey over the *2007 AOC* survey yet the *2007 AOC* survey scored four percent higher overall. There were a couple of reasons for this, which will be discussed later.

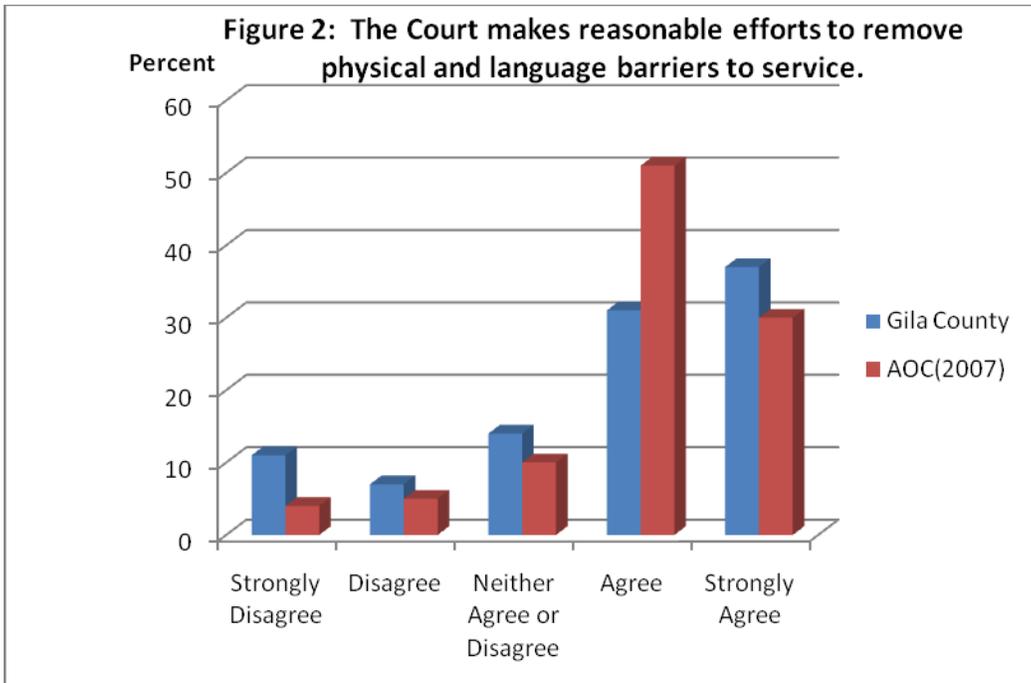
The first ten questions from Section I, asks questions about accessibility to the court. For all of these questions the survey gives five different options (Likert scale), for the court user to choose from that range from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

Court users report that finding the courthouse was easy (91% in 2007 and 90% in 2008), that the forms needed were clear and easy to understand (76% in 2007 and 82% in 2008), and that they felt safe in the courthouse (73% in 2007 and 77% in 2008).

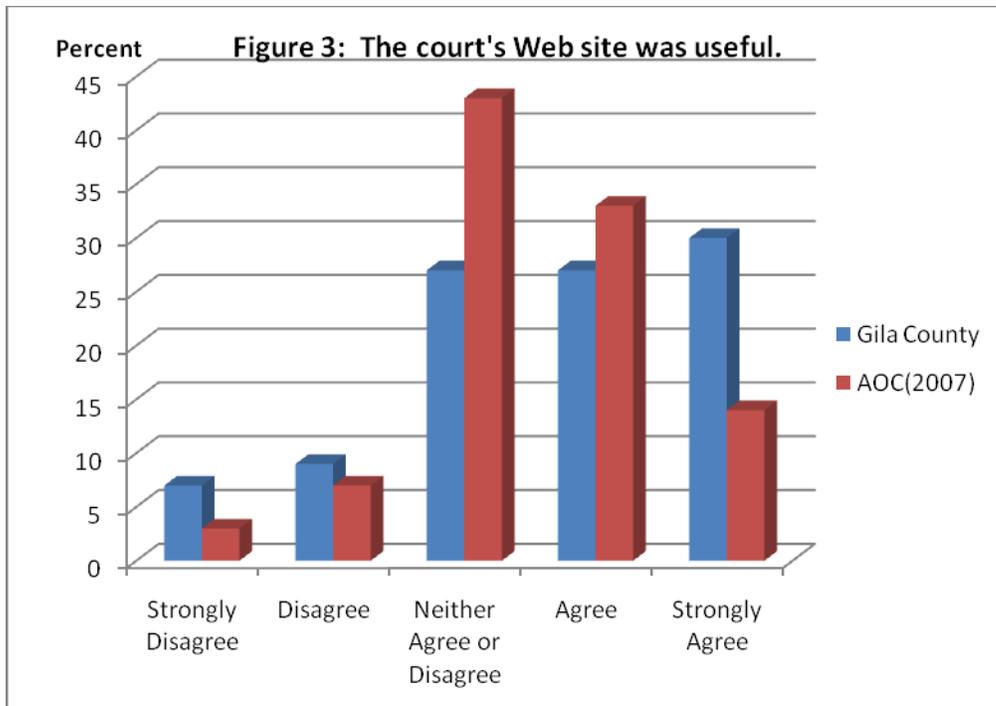
The majority of court users agreed that they were able to get their court business done in a reasonable amount of time (71% in 2007 and 81% in 2008). However, compared to the 2007 AOC survey, the respondents from the Gila County survey were less likely to respond “strongly agree,” as shown in Figure 1.



Most court users agree that the court staff paid attention to their needs (70% in 2007 and 74% in 2008), treated them with courtesy and respect (85% in 2007 and 92% in 2008), and that they were easily able to find the courtroom or office they were visiting (84% in 2007 and 90% in 2008).



Most court users felt that the court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service. However, comparing the two time periods reveals that the respondents had different views, as shown in Figure 2. Of the 2007 AOC survey, 81% agreed with the statement as compared to 67% of the Gila County survey. The emphasis for the need of new court facilities have been on the frontlines of the newspapers this past year. This likely contributed to why court users were more aware of the facilities than they were in prior years. Furthermore, for this reason it is likely that the respondents were referring to physical barriers rather than language barriers.



Many of the court users responded “not applicable” or “neither agree or disagree” to an inquiry about the usefulness of the court’s website. More court users agreed in the Gila County survey as compared to the *AOC (2007)* survey. The court’s Web site has not been marketed well and anecdotal reports indicate that it has not been very user-friendly. Gila County Superior Court is currently in the middle of restructuring the Web site to be more user-friendly and offer more information, such as the ability to view and download forms. Future court users will be able to evaluate the impact of these efforts on future surveys. As shown in Figure 3, more respondents in the current survey agreed with the usefulness of the court’s website than in 2007 and fewer responded neutrally.

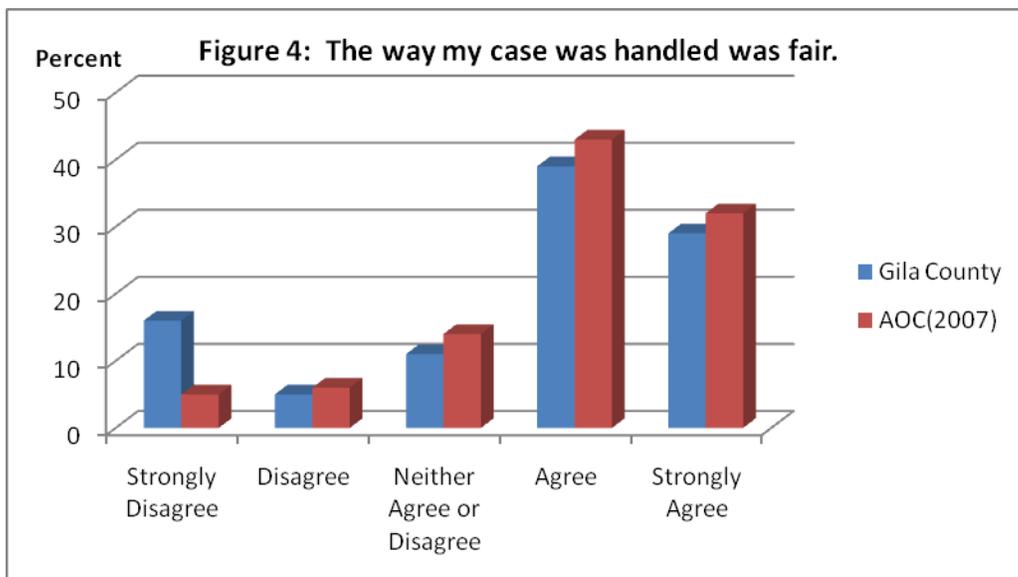
Procedural Fairness in 2007 and 2008

Most court users agreed that they were treated the same as everyone else. (72% agreed with the statement in 2007 as compared to 73% of the Gila County Survey).

Most of the court users felt that the judge listened to their side of the story before he or she made a decision (75% agreed with the statement in 2007 as compared to 72% of the Gila County survey).

The majority of court users agreed that the judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about their case (75% agreed with the statement in 2007 as compared to 73% of the Gila County survey).

Once again, the majority of court users knew what to do next about their case as they left the court, (in 2007, 80% agreed with the statement as compared to 84% of the Gila County survey).

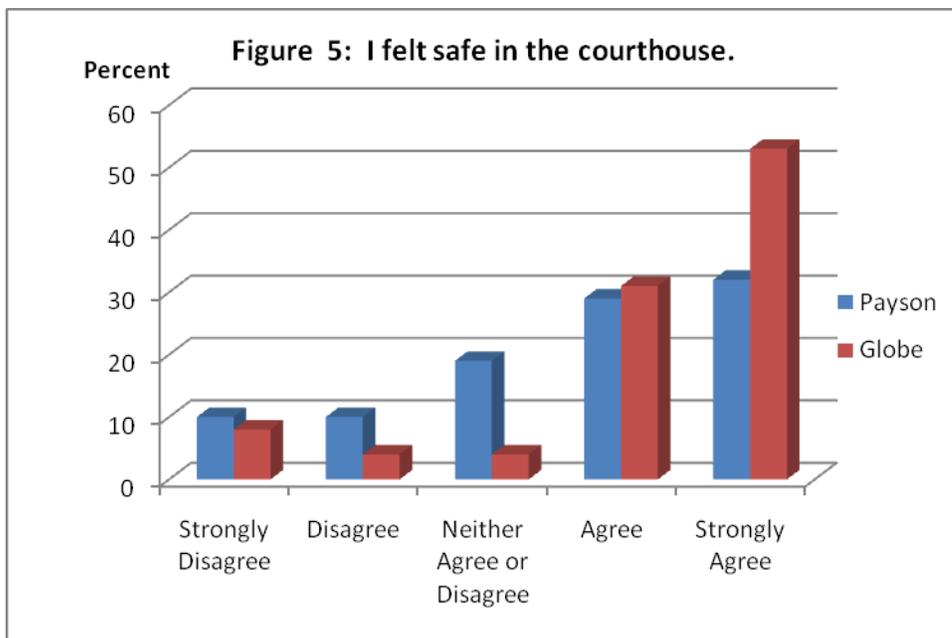


The procedural fairness question with the largest difference between the two surveys was whether court users felt that the way their case was handled fairly. Of the 2007 AOC respondents, 75% agreed with this statement as compared to 68% of the Gila County survey respondents. Although this difference does not appear as great, the “strongly disagree” responses are clearly noted in Figure 4 as more prevalent in 2008 as compared to 2007. This finding

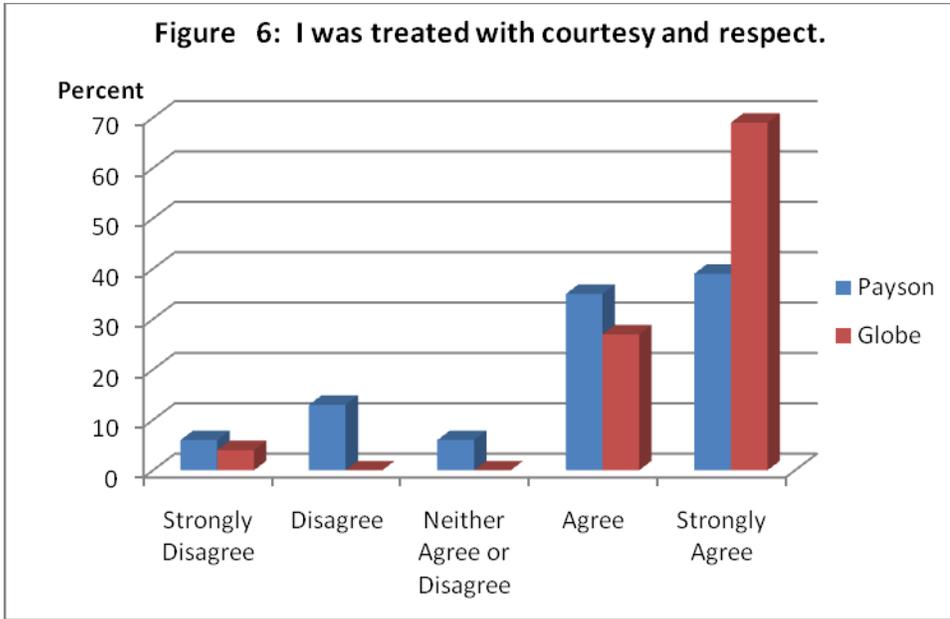
should be further evaluated to determine what demographic or background characteristics identify these court users.

Access and Fairness in Payson and Globe

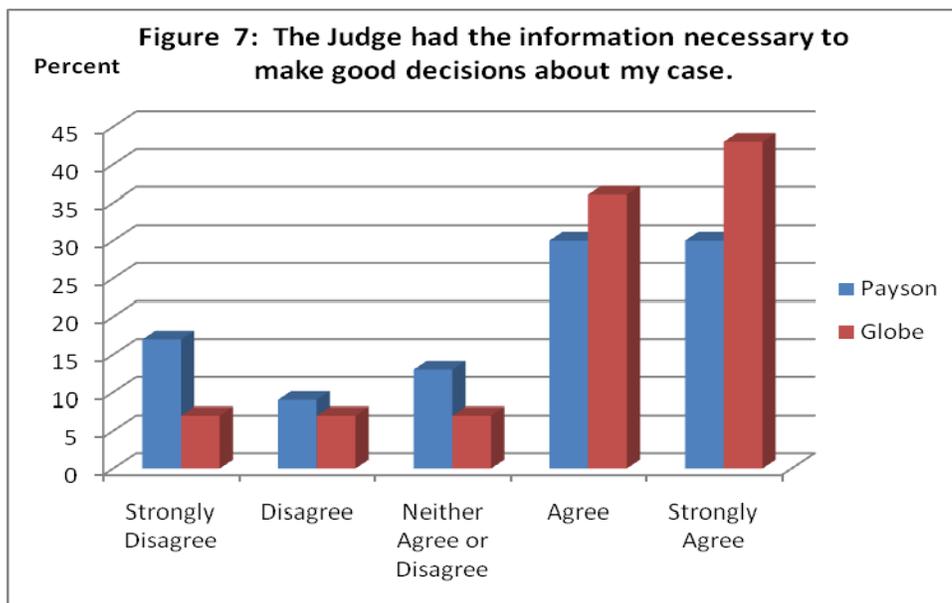
The second set of findings examines court users across both courthouses in Gila County. The court’s mission is to serve all people equally, regardless of which courthouse facility they visit. One of the top five differences in court user viewpoints between the Globe and Payson facilities were: “I felt safe in the courthouse.”



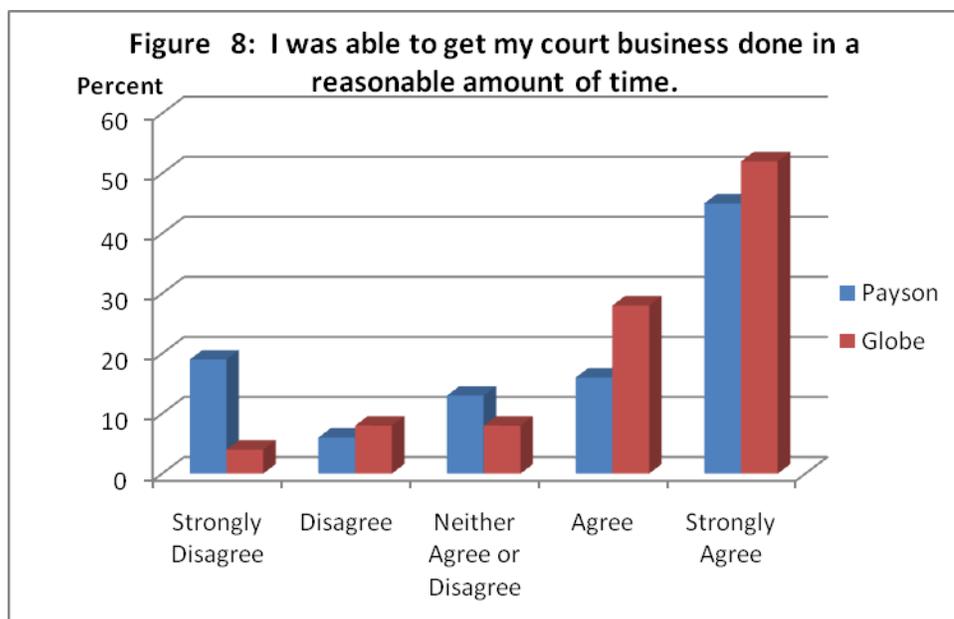
The two groups had different views, as shown in Figure 5. Of the Payson survey, 61% agreed with the statement as compared to 84% of the Globe survey, over half of which were “strongly agree.” In Globe there is a sheriff deputy stationed out in the hallway of the courtrooms. In Payson there is no sheriff deputy and no other security measures. Due to the facility being so small, everyone is in close contact with each other likely causing the court user to feel unsafe.



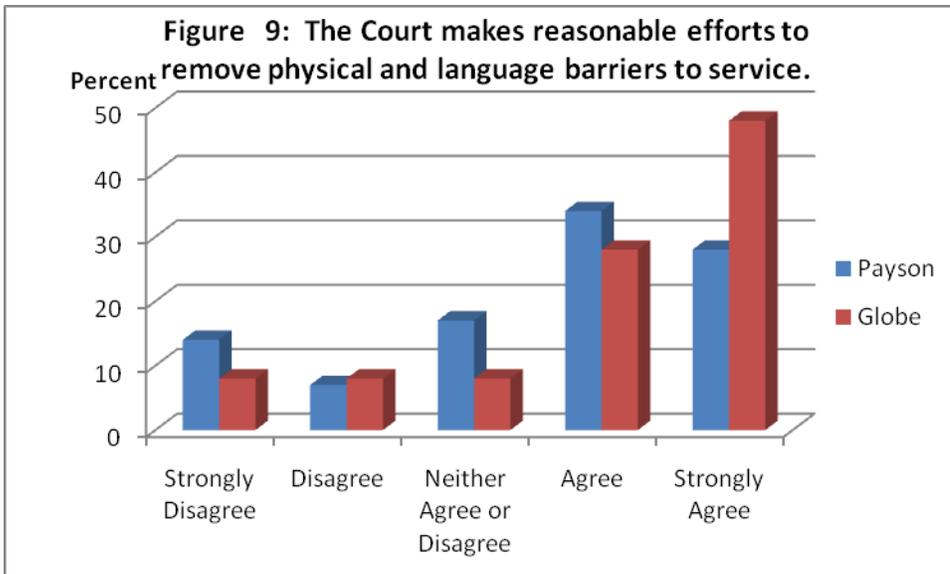
A second difference between the two facility is shown in Figure 6. Of the Payson court users, 74% agreed with the statement as compared to 96% of the Globe respondents. In the Payson facilities, the court user can be served by the probation department staff, clerk of court staff, and the justice court staff. In the Globe facilities, the court user can be helped by the clerk of court staff, court administration staff, bailiffs, and judicial assistants.



A third difference is shown in Figure 7. Of the Payson respondents, 60% agreed with the statement as compared to 79% of the Globe survey respondents. The original files and pleadings are kept at the Globe facilities. For some types of cases a duplicate file is kept in Payson and for other types of cases the original files are sent to the judge in Payson. Situations that where the judge in Payson does not have the paperwork needed and has to wait until it is received. Since all the records are in Globe, files are readily available to the judge when needed. This is likely contributed to why the difference in the scores.



A fourth difference between the two surveys is shown in Figure 8. Of the Payson respondents, 61% agreed with the statement as compared to 80% in the Globe survey. In Globe, the window area of the clerks office is large enough that two people can wait on court users at a time. In Payson, the window area is only large enough for one person. Therefore, the line gets backed up at times. There is also no court administration up in Payson to assist those seeking help.



The fifth and final difference in views, is shown in Figure 9. Of the Payson survey respondents, 62% agreed with the statement as compared to 76% of the Globe survey respondents. Again, due to the size of the Payson and its facilities, court users experience physical barriers to receiving service. Also, Gila County Superior Court does not have interpreters stationed in Payson other than staff members who speak Spanish. This can cause a language barrier as well. In Globe there are two bailiffs who double as interpreters.

These were the top five biggest differences between Globe and Payson. There were other issues that were identified but the differences were minimal.

Access and Fairness , Globe General Public and Current Court Users

The final and third set of findings will compare the view points of current court users to the Globe general public using responses from the Gila County survey.

Of the top five differences of the Globe general public to that of the Gila County survey, the first is the responses to the statement “The Court’s Web site was useful.” Only 20% of the Globe general public agreed. More and more people are looking to the internet to obtain various information. Courts need to aggressively pursue updating and improving their website to not only

be more user-friendly but offer more information. The Gila County Superior Court is currently pursuing updating and offering more services to the court user through its Web site.

A total of 40% of the Globe general public felt safe in the courthouse. The court has been moving into the direction of implementing security for the courts. Currently, there is a deputy stationed in the hall outside of the court rooms on most days. This was not so two years ago.

Of the Globe general public responders, 44% felt that they were treated the same as everyone else. The survey that was distributed to the Globe general public was administered to those who had not only visited the Superior Court but, also those who had visited the limited jurisdiction courts. Since there has not been a survey conducted of the Globe general public in the past, there was no data for comparison. These results are a baseline measure; and this is an area that can be re-evaluated with a follow-up audit.

“The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to services.” Fifty-three percent of the Globe general public felt that the court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to services. Since this question targets two separate issues, it would be helpful to investigate this question further to see if respondents view the problems as more of a physical or language barrier.

“I was treated with courtesy and respect.” Of the Globe general public, 53% felt that they were treated with courtesy and respect. Arizona has taken strides in this area for court staff. They developed training classes on “Legal Advise vs. Legal Information,” which most Gila County staff have attended. The course includes a very good customer service piece that has helped our staff to become more effective guest service representatives.

Overall the scores of the Globe general public were much lower than those of the Gila County court users survey. By conducting a survey of the general public, Gila County can lay the foundation for future analysis of the general public to ensure the public trust and confidence of Gila County residents.

When the Arizona AOC came and conducted the survey in 2007 it was determined that the statewide results were about two percentage points higher than the 13 rural counties results. The results of the AOC's survey were presented to the Gila County Judges by Court Administration. The results were broken down into three categories. The first category was greatest difference from statewide results for Access and Fairness, the second category was Gila County's top five scores, and the third was Gila County's bottom five scores. See Appendix H for complete breakdown.

**Table 2. Top Five Differences Between Responses of Court Users**

<b>Question</b>	<b>AZ Statewide 2007</b>	<b>Gila Co. 2008</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I felt safe in the courthouse. (% agree)	89	77	12
How often are you typically in the courthouse? (% =<once/yr)	41	30	11
Court's web site was useful. (% agree)	57	47	10
Your approximate annual income? (% \$50,001 or >)	29	22	7
Which of the following best describes you? (% White)	64	77	-13

In Table 2, most of the other counties have some type of security system in place (e.g. metal detectors as you walk into the building or court). In Gila County there is not a metal detector system in place. Gila County recently stationed a sheriff officer outside of the courtrooms. Additional officers are added when there is a high profile trial in session and everyone is scanned for weapons before entering into the courtroom.

**Table 3. Gila County's Top Four Scores Versus 13 Rural Counties Top Four Scores in 2007.**

<b>Question</b>	<b>% Agree</b>		<b>Difference</b>
	<b>13 Rural Counties</b>	<b>2007 AOC</b>	
Finding the courthouse was easy.	90	92	-2
I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	89	90	-1
I was treated with courtesy and respect.	91	88	3
Court staff paid attention to my needs.	84	83	1

In table three, the 2007 AOC survey results of Gila County and the 2007 AOC survey results of 13 other rural counties have the same top four of the top five results. This shows consistency among counties that are similar in size.

In table four below, most of Gila County's bottom five scores are the same as the 13 rural counties scores. This shows that the public views the rural counties similarly. This is why it is important for Gila County to compare ourselves with other counties similar to Gila as they face the same type of obstacles and situations as Gila County.

**Table 4. Gila County's Bottom Four Scores Versus 13 Rural Counties Bottom Four Scores in 2007.**

<b>Question</b>	<b>% Agree</b>		<b>Difference</b>
	<b>13 Rural Counties</b>	<b>2007 AOC</b>	
Court's Web site was useful.	57	47	10
I was able to get court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	74	74	0
The way my case was handled was fair.	75	74	1
The Judge had the information necessary to make a good decision about my case.	75	76	-1

The results of the survey that was conducted in 2008 are presented in the same way for an easier comparison. In table five below, there was a 13% difference between the 2007 and 2008 survey as to "Court's Web site was useful." As we move into a more technological age

more people are becoming computer literate which could cause more people to access Gila County's website. This could contribute to the difference that is seen in the scoring.

As the Gila County Superior Court caseload increases, the court facilities are becoming inadequate for court users. Plans are underway to address this problem, but due to budgetary restraints this will be a very slow process.

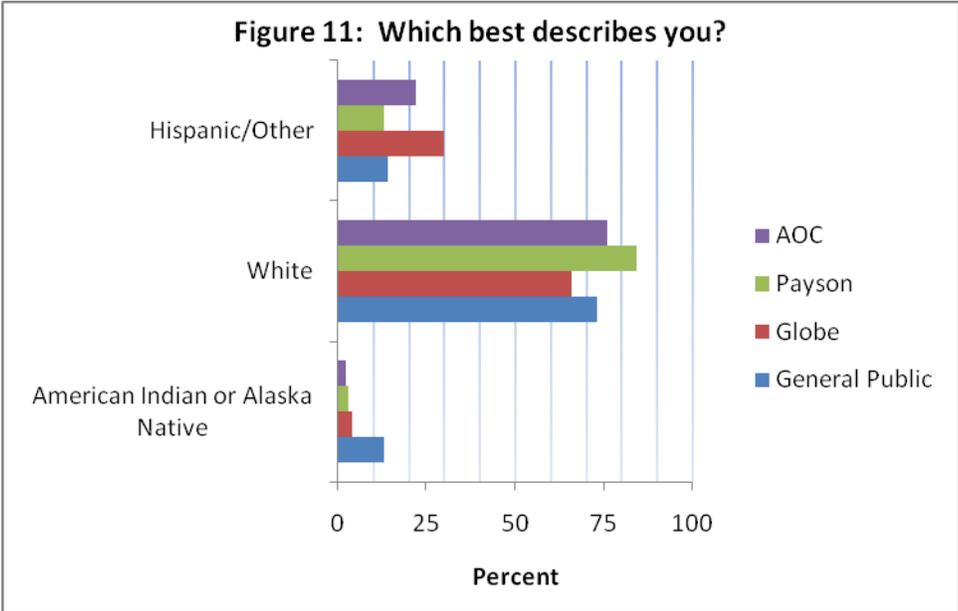
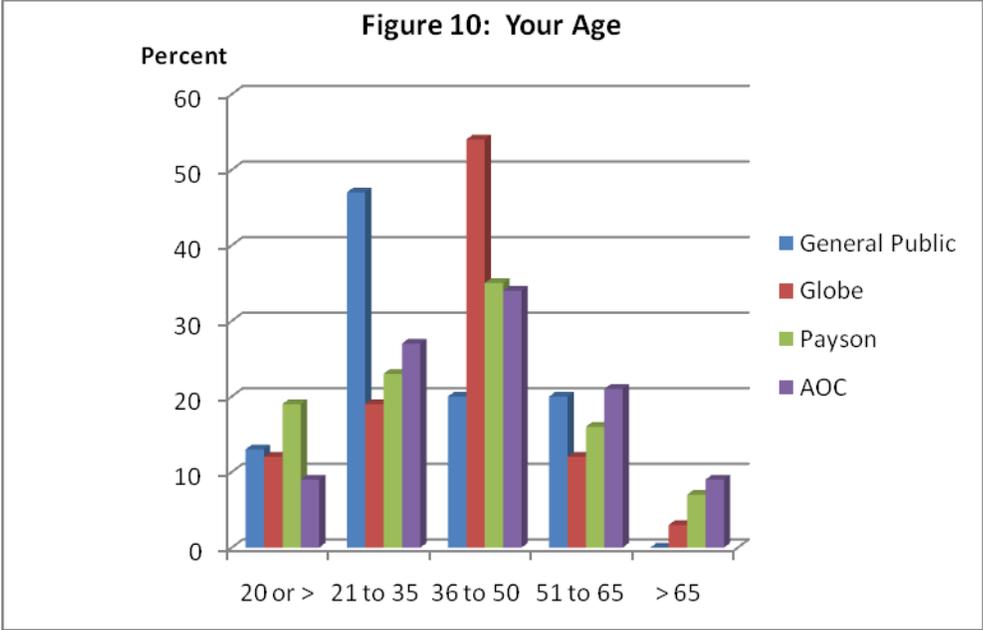
**Table 5. Top Five Greatest Differences Between AOC (2007) Survey Results and the Gila County Survey Results.**

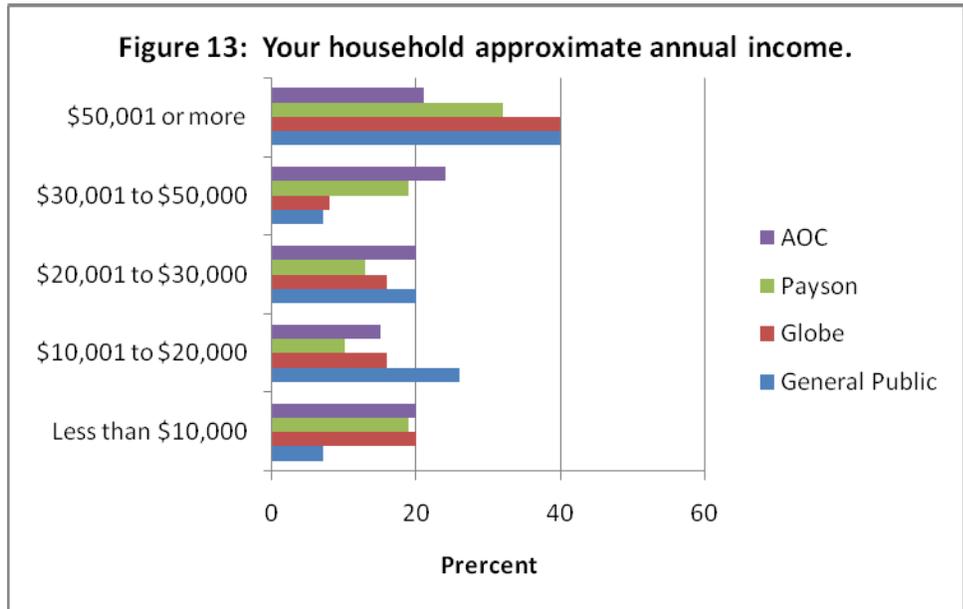
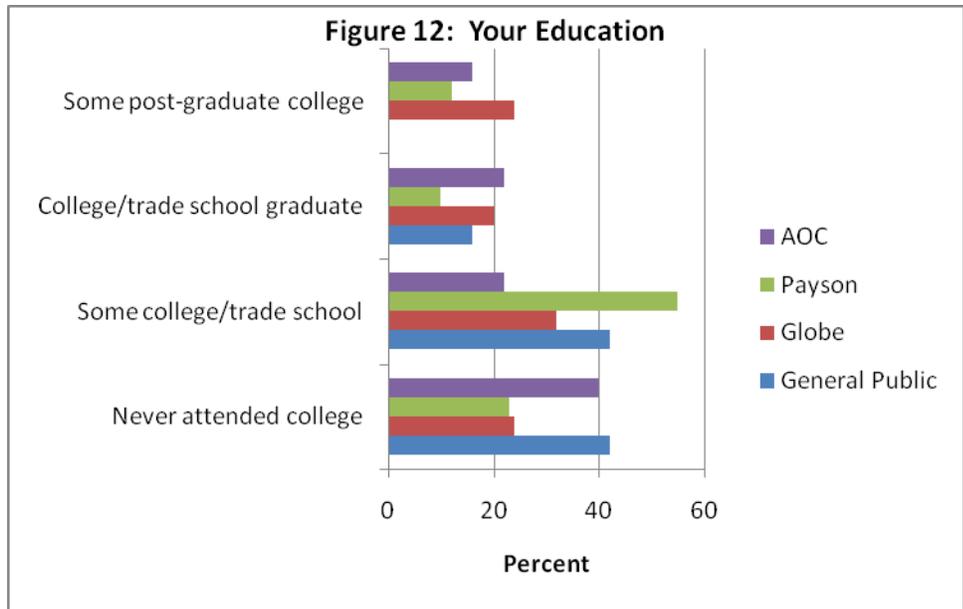
Question	% Agree		Difference
	AZ Statewide 2007	Gila Co. 2008	
Court's Web site was useful.	47	34	13
The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	81	71	10
I was treated with courtesy and respect.	92	85	7
The way my case was handled was fair.	75	68	7
The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	82	76	6

The data from the 2008 Gila County survey is categorized by Payson, Globe and the general public (which were the court users surveyed outside the courthouse), to analyze what type of court user uses what facility.

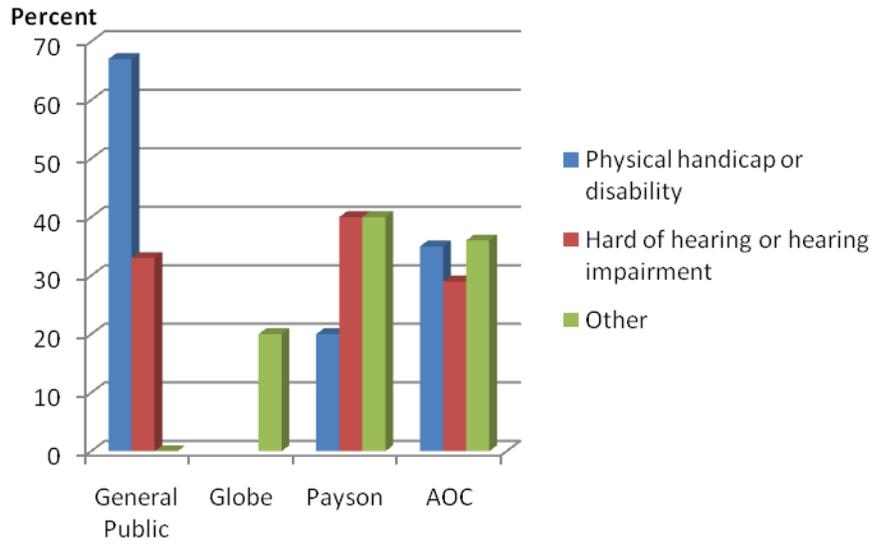
**Table 6. Demographics**

	2008			
	Gen. Public	Globe	Payson	AOC (2007)
% Males	67	54	58	45
% English primary language	100	100	97	94
% Comfortable using computer	75	68	7	86

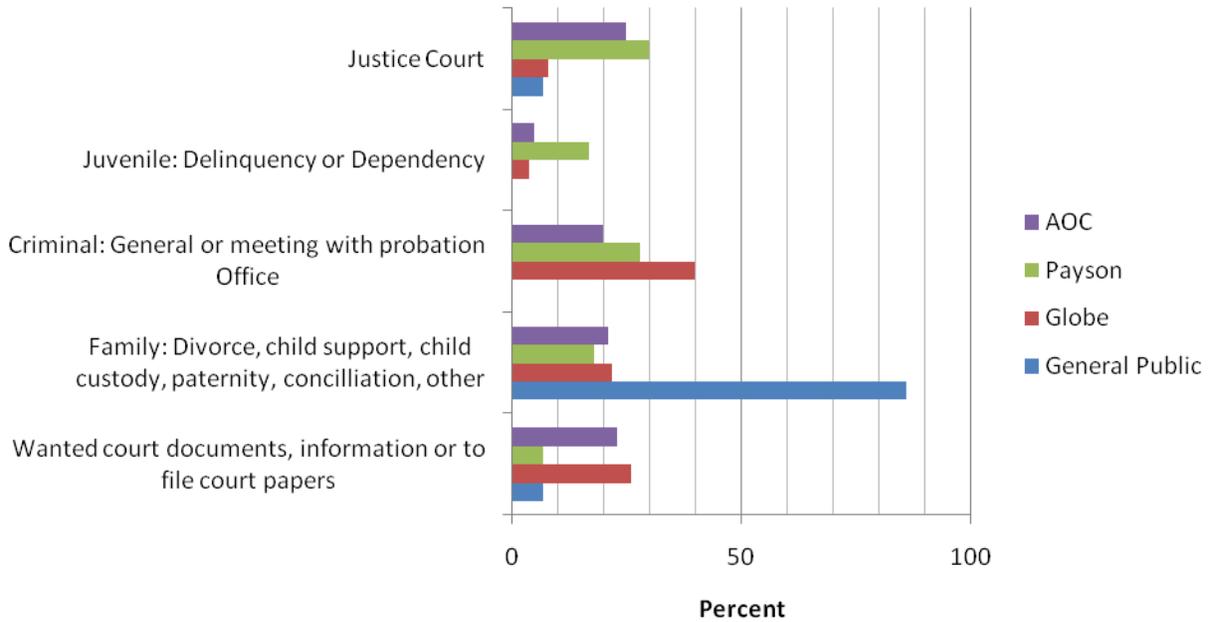


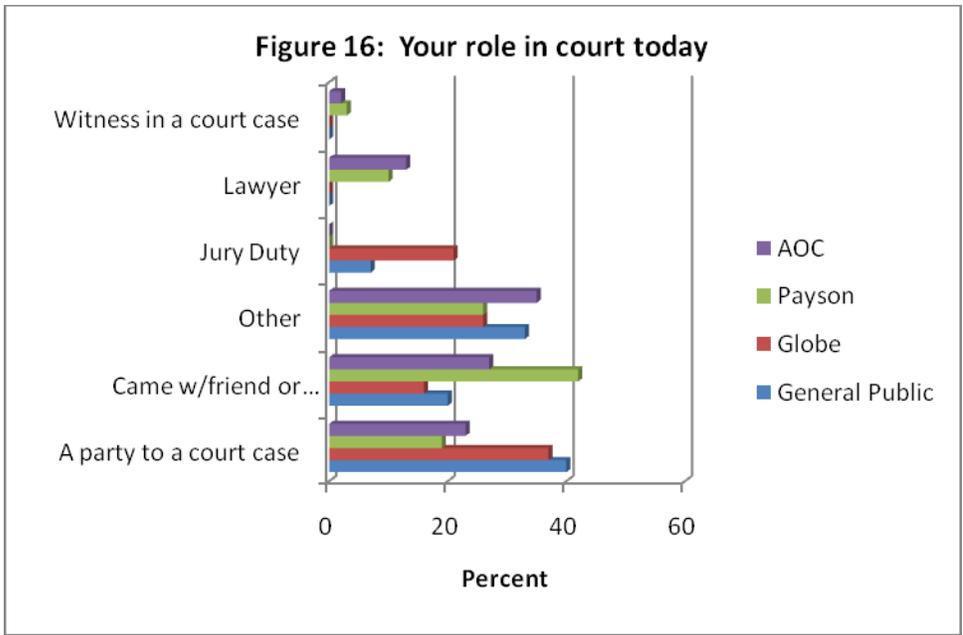


**Figure 14: If you have a disability, what type do you have?**



**Figure 15: Type of court case or business that brought you to court today.**





The average Gila County Superior Court users are mostly male, white, and their primary language is English. Their average age is 36 to 50 and have had some college or trade school. Their approximate annual income is \$50,001+ and are in court regarding a criminal case.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All of the survey results were presented to the court's executive group for discussion.

**CONCLUSION 1: THE DATA THAT WAS COLLECTED BY AOC IN 2007 AND THE DATA COLLECTED IN 2008 YIELD SIMILAR RESULTS.**

The difference in the responses of court users between *2007 AOC* and the Gila County survey was minimal. This shows consistency across time and reinforces that the conclusions drawn about Gila County courts.

**CONCLUSION 2: THE GENERAL PUBLIC CONSISTENTLY RATED THE COURT LOWER THAN THAT OF RECENT COURT USERS.**

This was the first time that Gila County Superior Court surveyed the general public. In the survey that was conducted by Yankelovich, et al. (1977) they found that "There is a profound difference in views between the general public/community leaders and judges/lawyers with respect to what the courts do and should do in our society."<sup>36</sup> Other studies have found a similar conclusion: Court users typically rate the courts higher than the general public. This is due to the general public's knowledge of and direct experience with the courts is low.<sup>37</sup>

Based on these conclusions, the recommendation is that by conducting the survey at least every two years, the court will be able to monitor its progress and make necessary changes or conduct necessary trainings in areas of identified weakness. This will help ensure court users satisfaction with the Gila County Superior Court.

**CONCLUSION 3: THE COURT'S WEBSITE SHOULD BE IMPROVED.**

With a 13% decline in last years AOC's survey to this years' 2008 survey, currently, more people do not find the website useful. However, a flaw in the wording of the survey

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<sup>36</sup> See Note 6

<sup>37</sup> Loc. Cit.

question allows for an alternative conclusion. Current court users may not know that the website exists. In order to find out which is the correct conclusion, one would have to split this question (e.g., “Have you used the court’s website; And, if so did you find it useful?”). Another suggestion is to have a survey on the court’s website itself asking the user questions about the website. Regardless, the court needs to do a better job of marketing the website to court users, and it needs to be more user-friendly.

Currently the Gila County Superior Court website is being revamped to provide more information and be more user-friendly. The court could include its web address on letter head, business cards, e-mails, forms, etc. to promote the court’s website.

**CONCLUSION 4: THE FORMS NEED TO BE MORE CLEAR AND EASIER TO UNDERSTAND.**

Currently, the Gila County Superior Court does not use its own forms. Forms from other counties are used with the other county’s name crossed out and Gila County’s name written in. Some of the information contained on these forms is not consistent with Gila County’s practices. This can cause confusion to court users in filling out forms.

**CONCLUSION 5: THE COURT NEEDS TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO REMOVE PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO SERVICE.**

Court users believe the court could do better by removing barriers to service.

Future surveys should clarify whether the barrier is due to language issues or physical barriers. Almost all of the court users spoke English as their primary language, so an exploration of what types of physical barriers exist would be beneficial to the Gila County Superior Court.

New forms need to be designed to be Gila County-specific and accessible via the website. Changes need to be made with the physical barriers to service in the Payson facilities. The

results of this survey reinforce the actions already underway at the court. New forms are currently being designed to be Gila County-specific and plans of putting them on the website are underway. There are also caseflow charts designed that will also be on the website so court users will be able to see what to do next in their case.

Currently plans for Payson facilities are being reviewed and discussed between the Gila County Board of Supervisors and the Superior Court in Gila County. A resolution to some of these problems is hoped to be reached and administered by July 1, 2009. Unfortunately, a complete resolution to this problem is not feasible at this time, due to budgetary constraints. In the interim, plans need to be strategically placed in order to maintain access to the court user.

### **FINAL CONCLUSION**

When Arizona's AOC first announced that surveys would be completed in each court and in every county, there was much skepticism with the staff and judges. Many believed that the court user facing a court action would have a dismal view of the court and the judge. Fortunately, there were other counties that had already conducted the survey the year before and the results had proven to exceed expectations.

The questions asked at the beginning of this paper can now be answered. What dissatisfactions does today's court user have and how can we improve upon them? In the survey results that were collected, you will see that the results from AOC's 2007 and the Gila County survey (2008) results are very similar to one another. In the study that was conducted by the Hearst Corporation two of their top six concerns are the same as those identified by court users: "Poor customer relations with the public" and "unequal treatment in the justice system."<sup>38</sup> These are just a couple of concerns that have been raised over and over again.

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<sup>38</sup> See Note 5 supra, page 16

A survey is the only way to collect this information. There are several ways to conduct a survey such as through a telephone survey, mail survey, or in person. Regardless of the survey administration strategy, a survey is the only way to get a true picture as to what the court user feels.

Finally, do court users view the courts differently than the general public? As you can see from the survey results above, the general public was more critical than the current court user.

Overall the Gila County Superior Court is following the “Good to Great” mission in regards to the access and fairness for the court user. However, there is room for improvement. Evident by the court’s interest to conduct another survey in 2008 and publicize its results is proof that the judges and department heads of Gila County care about public satisfaction in Gila County.

## Access and Fairness Survey

### Section I: Access to the Court

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I felt safe in the courthouse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The court's Web site was useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you are a party to a legal matter and appeared before a judicial officer today, complete questions 11-15:

### Section II: Fairness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix A

**Section III: Background Information**

- A. Your gender:**
- Female
- Male
- B. Your primary language:**
- English
- Spanish
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Your age:**
- 20 years old or less
- 21 to 35 years old
- 36 to 50 years old
- 51 to 65 years old
- More than 65 years old
- D. Which of the following best describes you?**
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Your education:**
- High school graduate or some high school
- College or trade school graduate or attended some college or trade school
- Post graduate degree or some post graduate work
- F. Your approximate annual income?**
- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,001 to \$20,000
- \$20,001 to \$30,000
- \$30,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 or more
- G. If you have a disability, check all that apply:**
- Physical handicap or disability
- Hard of hearing or hearing impairment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- H. Are you comfortable using a computer?**
- Yes
- No

**I. Type of court case or court business that brought you to the court today:**

- General**
- Order of protection or injunction against harassment
- Wanted court documents, information or to file court papers

- Superior Court Case**
- Family: Divorce, child support, child custody, paternity, conciliation, other
- Criminal: General or meeting with probation officer
- Civil: General, commercial or business matter
- Juvenile: Delinquency or dependency
- Probate: Will, inheritance, guardianship

- Justice of the Peace Court Case**
- Traffic
- Landlord/Tenant
- Criminal
- Small Claims: General civil, commercial or business

**J. Your role in court today.**

A party to a court case If so, is a lawyer representing you in court?

- Came with a friend or family member  Yes
- No

- Jury Duty
- Witness in a court case

- Lawyer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

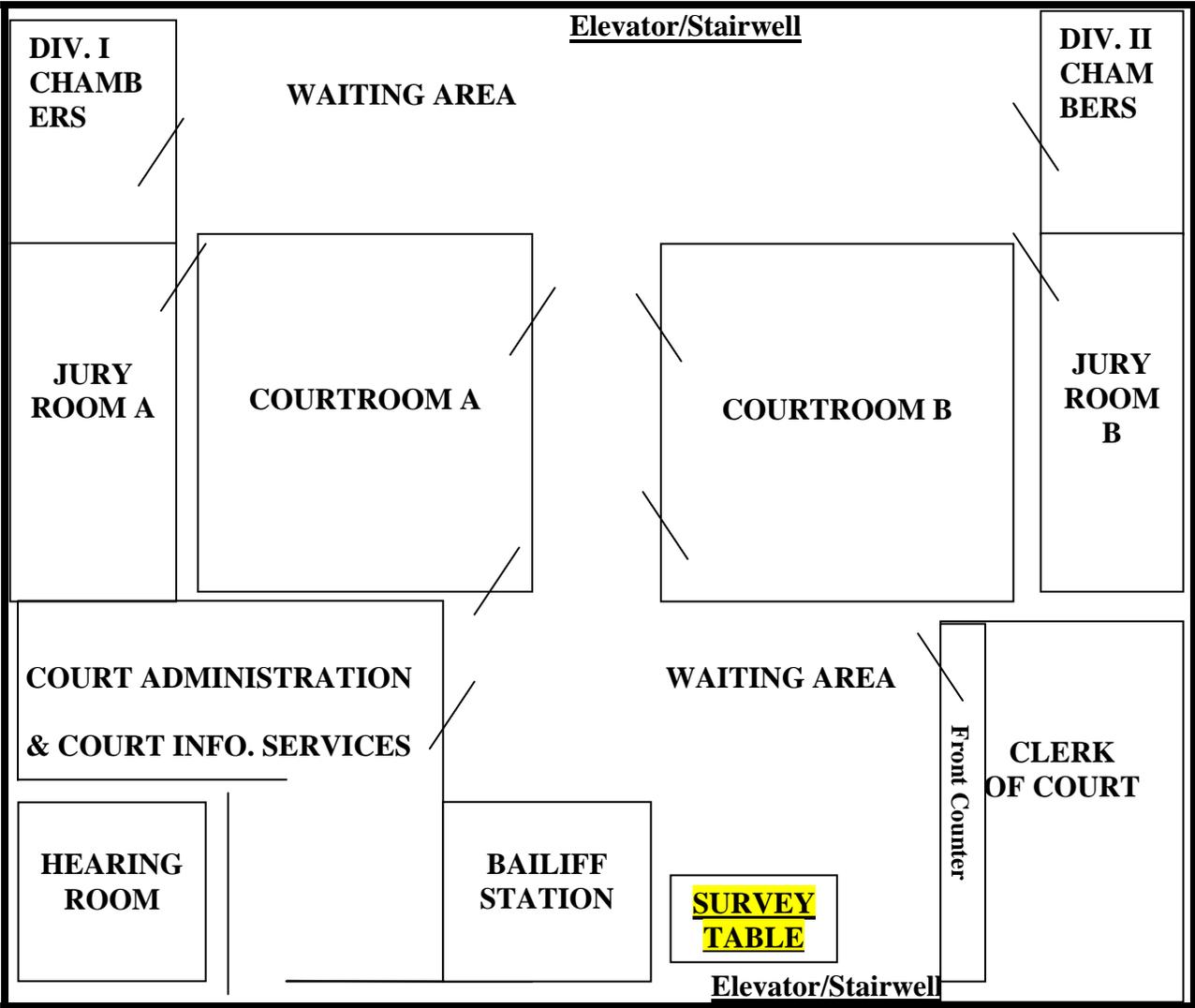
- K. How often are you typically in this courthouse?**
- Once a week or more
- Once a month or more
- Several times a year
- Once a year or less

**L. Please bubble in your zip code here**



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**Globe Courthouse Diagram  
Gila County Superior Court – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**



Appendix C

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3. I felt safe in the courthouse.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
9. The court's Web site was useful.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

**If you are a party to a legal matter and appeared before a judicial officer today, complete questions 11-15:**

**Section II: Fairness**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15. As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥





# YOU BE THE JUDGE





## Access and Fairness Survey

The intent is to survey everyone who uses the court. The survey does not request any identifying information and should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. Your participation will help us become more user-friendly.

This survey measures court user satisfaction in relation to accessibility and the treatment of customers. It is administered during regular court business hours and taken by court users (anyone utilizing the court, excluding court employees) as they exit the court building. The questions concentrate on topics such as: how easy it was to find the courthouse and how fairly court users were treated by both judges and court staff. The goal is to analyze court performance by evaluating the court in its entirety. The survey provides an opportunity for courts to identify the areas of performance in which they excel and examine improvements which could benefit the court.

If you have questions, please contact:

Jacque Durbin  
928-402-8672



## Access and Fairness Survey

The intent is to survey everyone who uses the court. The survey does not request any identifying information and should not take more than 5 minutes to complete. Your participation will help us become more user-friendly.

This survey measures court user satisfaction in relation to accessibility and the treatment of customers. It is taken by previous court users (anyone utilizing the court, excluding court employees within the past 5 years). The questions concentrate on topics such as: how easy it was to find the courthouse and how fairly court users were treated by both judges and court staff. The goal is to analyze court performance by evaluating the court in its entirety. The survey provides an opportunity for courts to identify the areas of performance in which they excel and examine improvements which could benefit the court.

If you have questions, please contact:

Jacque Durbin  
928-402-8672



**Access and Fairness Survey**

Have you had any contact at the Gila County Superior Court in the past 5 years? Yes or No  
 If yes, what floor did you visit? \_\_\_\_\_ floor. If no, thank you and have a nice day.

**Section I: Access to the Court**

Based on your recent experience, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I felt safe in the courthouse.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. The court's Web site was useful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you were a party to a legal matter and appeared before a judicial officer, complete questions 11-15:

**Section II: Fairness**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. When I left the court, I knew what to do next about my case.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Section III: Background Information**

- A. Your gender:
  - Female
  - Male
  
- B. Your primary language:
  - English
  - Spanish
  - Other
  
- C. Your age:
  - 20 years old or less
  - 21 to 35 years old
  - 36 to 50 years old
  - 51 to 65 years old
  - More than 65 years old
  
- D. Which of the following best describes you?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Other
  
- Would you describe yourself as Hispanic/Latino
  - Yes
  - No
  
- E. Your education:
  - Never attended college
  - Some college/trade school
  - College/trade school graduate
  - Some post-graduate college
  
- F. Your household approximate annual income?
  - Other Less than \$10,000
  - \$10,001 to \$20,000
  - \$20,001 to \$30,000
  - \$30,001 to \$50,000
  - \$50,001 or more
  
- G. If you have a disability, check all that apply:
  - Physical handicap or disability
  - Hard of hearing or hearing impairment
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- H. Are you comfortable using a computer?
  - Yes
  - No

- I. Type of court case or court business that brought you to court:
  - General**
    - Order of protection or injunction against harassment
    - Wanted court documents, information or to file court papers
  - Superior Court Case**
    - Family: Divorce, child support, child custody, paternity, conciliation, or
    - Criminal: General or meeting with probation office
    - Civil: General, commercial or business matter
    - Juvenile: Delinquency or Dependency
    - Probate: Will, inheritance, guardianship
    - Other
  - Justice of the Peace Court Case**
    - Traffic
    - Landlord/Tenant
    - Criminal
    - Small Claims: General Civil
    - Small Claims: Commercial or business
    - Other
  
- J. Your role in court :
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> A party to a court case</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Came with a friend or family member</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Jury Duty</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Witness in a court case</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Lawyer</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other _____</li> </ul>	If then, is a lawyer representing you in court? Yes No
---	--
  
- K. How often are you typically in this courthouse?
  - Once a week or more
  - Once a month or more
  - Several times a year
  - Once a year or less

L. Please bubble in your zip code here

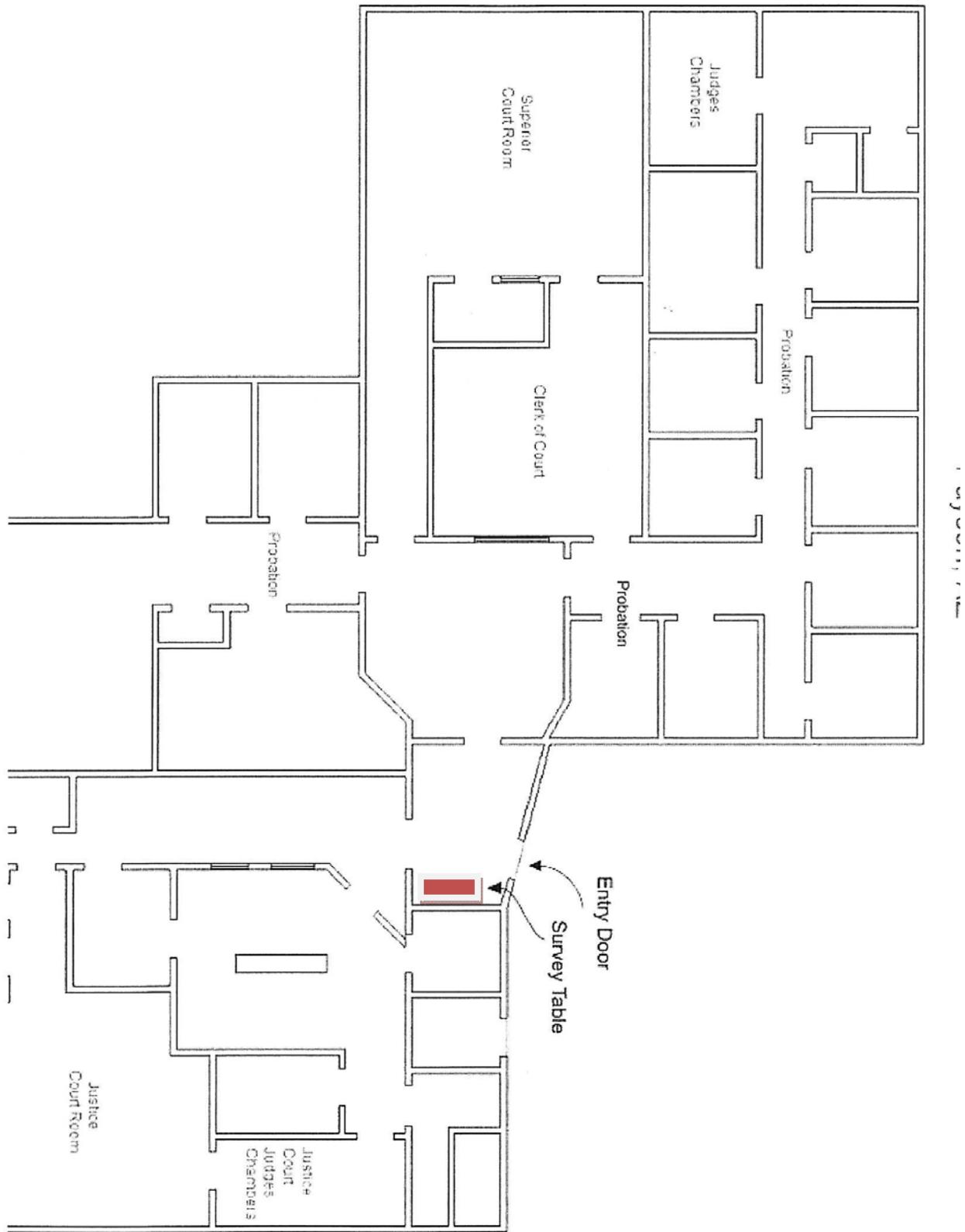


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Appendix H

Questions	Globe		Payson and Globe combined scores				Worse/Better than last year
	General Public (Administered outside courthouse)		Gila County's 2008 survey (Administered inside courthouse)		Gila County's AOC 2007 Administered Survey		
	%Disagree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Agree	%Disagree	%Agree	
1. Finding the courthouse was easy.	0	100	5	90	9	91	1% worse
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand	23	77	12	76	8	82	6% worse
3. I felt safe in the courthouse.	40	40	16	73	14	77	4% worse
4. The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	8	67	19	71	9	81	10% worse
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	47	53	19	70	17	74	4% worse
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	33	54	10	77	8	82	5% worse
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect.	40	53	12	85	8	92	7% worse
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	0	87	5	84	5	90	6% worse
9. The court's website was useful.	27	33	8	34	10	47	13% worse
10. The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	13	74	7	82	7	83	1% worse
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	22	67	19	68	11	75	7% worse
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	33	67	10	71	11	75	4% worse
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	25	62	20	70	13	75	5% worse
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	33	44	20	75	11	72	3% better
15. As I leave the court I know what to do next about my case.	45	55	11	86	11	80	6% better

Appendix I  
Pavson Facilities



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