

2026 Report on the Jury System
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

In March of 2025, the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New York ("Office") produced a report ("[2025 Report](#)") on the steps taken since 2023 to ensure that each of our jury pools represents a fair cross section of the communities served by the court. This report describes steps we have taken since the issuance of the 2025 Report.

Background

As described in the 2025 Report, we have determined that the racial demographics of the Master Wheels are very close to the demographics of the citizen voting age population. There is a substantial variation by race, however, among groups that return the Juror Qualification Questionnaires ("JQQ") from which our Qualified Wheels are built. Potential jurors who were Black and Hispanic persons returned JQQs at a lower rate than White persons.

While the determination regarding the Qualified Wheels was based on a study of data that preceded changes we began in early 2024 to improve the response rate, we nonetheless decided to study whether we should supplement the Master Wheels with additional source lists. The Jury Selection and Service Act requires courts to use voter lists when assembling master jury wheels and allows them to supplement with other source lists when necessary to ensure a fair cross section of the community.

Our Master Wheels use one source list: lists of registered voters ("Voters"). As the 2025 Report indicates, we decided to retain an expert to analyze the demographics of two potential supplemental source lists: the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles database ("DMV") and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance database ("Tax"). We hoped that the analysis would help us to decide whether adding names from either or both sources will be likely to improve or to detract from representativeness. As our experts have warned, and experience has shown, caution should be used in deciding which additional sources should be used to supplement a Master

Wheel since a source may detract from rather than improve representativeness.¹

Supplementing Master Wheels

We again retained Maxwell Palmer, Ph.D., Professor of Political Science at Boston University. As described in the 2025 Report, Professor Palmer analyzed the racial demographics of the Master and Qualified Wheels in connection with the 2025 Report.

Professor Palmer has now conducted demographic analyses of three source lists: Voters, DMV and Tax. After analyzing the demographics of each list, he examined the demographics of three combinations of merged lists: the Voter and DMV lists; the Voter and Tax lists; and the three lists combined.

Professor Palmer's analysis shows the following:

- None of the combinations of the merged lists resulted in any significant difference to the percentage of Black persons in the pool.
- The differences from adding the DMV and Tax lists to the Voter lists were substantially similar to adding just the DMV list to the Voter list.
- Adding the DMV list and/or Tax list to the Voter list reduces the percentage of White persons and increases the percentage of Hispanic and Asian persons.

Professor Palmer also found it likely that a significant share of the individuals who would be added to the source list if either the DMV or Tax lists were combined with the Voter lists would be non-citizens. Among other things, Professor Palmer determined that there are many non-citizens on the merged lists and that there is a strong correlation between the share of non-citizens in each zip code and the share of non-voters in the merged lists in each of those zip codes.

These findings suggest that supplementation would substantially increase the size of the source pool but would not result in a corresponding improvement in representativeness.

¹ The addition of motor vehicle records decreased the representativeness of the Master Wheel in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Thomas J. Clewley, Management of the Master Jury Wheel and the Jury System in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, NCSC, at 28-40 (April 8, 1998).

Because the cost of eliminating non-citizens from the Qualified Wheels would be significant, and likely would not increase representativeness, we do not recommend adding any source list to the Voter list when creating our Master Wheels. Professor Palmer's recent analysis has confirmed the advisability of our continued focus on improvements to the juror qualification process.

Conclusion

Providing litigants with juries selected from a fair cross section of the communities served by the court remains a critical exercise. As the court's most recent review has again demonstrated, that exercise is not a straightforward one. The Clerk's Office and the Clerk's Office Committee of the Board of Judges will continue to assess the court's jury selection process and to gather information to help make informed decisions to ensure that any future changes will improve the representativeness of our Qualified Wheels.

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