



## Administrative Office of the Courts

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### New state law helps senior citizens summoned to jury duty

SANTA FE – A new state law will make it easier for senior citizens to permanently excuse themselves from jury service.

The new law applies to state residents 75-years-old or older who have been summoned to jury duty. They no longer will be required to submit an affidavit – a sworn, notarized statement – if they want to be excused from jury service. Starting June 18 when the new law takes effect, those qualifying New Mexicans can request an excusal online through the state court system’s [jury website](#). Another option is to call the local court for more information.

“New Mexico courts sought the change in law to offer more convenience for our senior citizens and allow courts to operate more efficiently. We anticipate this will be useful especially for those senior citizens who are hesitant about jury service during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Vigil said today.

According to Census Bureau population estimates, 7% of New Mexicans are 75 years or older — about 153,000 residents.

Particularly in rural areas, qualifying New Mexicans might otherwise need to travel a long distance to pick up the affidavit form to request a jury service exemption, pay a fee for the affidavit to be notarized and then return it to their local court.

A statewide computer system used by courts for jury management since 2017 can automatically verify an individual’s date of birth. The computer database is updated twice annually from income tax, voter registration and driving records.

“Technology enables courts to more efficiently meet the needs of New Mexicans,” said Artie Pepin, director of the Administrative Office of the Courts. “Without this change in law, it could

be difficult for senior citizens to obtain and submit the form necessary for a jury exemption. The affidavit requirement also added work for courts because of the time to process the paperwork of an excusal request.”

A person aged 75 or older can seek the jury exemption only if they have received a summons for jury duty. State law has long allowed individuals to request a permanent excusal from jury service once they reach age 75, but that was permitted only by submitting a notarized affidavit.

“New Mexicans 75 and older can continue to serve on juries if they wish,” said Pepin. “The Legislature amended the law to remove an unnecessary affidavit requirement that was a source of inconvenience for some residents of our state. The Judiciary thanks the Legislature and the governor for recognizing the need for this change in law.”

Rep. Matthew McQueen of Santa Fe and Sen. Elizabeth "Liz" Stefanics of Cerrillos sponsored the legislation (House Bill 185), which was signed into law Tuesday by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

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