
Survey Methodology

APPENDIX A

This appendix describes our methodology for surveying judges, court administrators, and attorneys. Aggregate results are available at our web site: <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2001/pe0102.htm>.

Judges

We mailed surveys to 255 judges from a list provided by the State Court Administrator's Office. On the list were names of one judge who had died, one who had retired, and one who had not yet begun to serve. Additional judges appointed after we mailed our questionnaire did not receive it. We mailed the survey on September 7, 2000 and sent a follow-up survey on October 2, 2000 to those who had not responded. We received timely responses from 215 judges (85 percent). Response rates ranged from 93 percent in the Fifth Judicial District to 78 percent in the Tenth Judicial District. Three additional judge responses arrived too late to be included in the analysis.

Court Administrators

We mailed surveys to all 87 court administrators using a mailing list from the State Court Administrator's Office. Because St. Louis County has one court administrator in Duluth and two deputy court administrators for courthouses in Hibbing and Virginia, the two deputy court administrators also filled out surveys. We mailed the survey on September 11, 2000 and sent a follow-up to nonrespondents on October 4, 2000. Of the 87 court administrators and 2 deputy court administrators, 84 responded to the survey, for a response rate of 94 percent. Response rates ranged from 100 percent in the First, Second, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth Districts to 75 percent in the Tenth Judicial District.

Attorneys

We obtained the county attorney list from the Minnesota County Attorney Association. We obtained a list of 816 city attorneys from the League of Minnesota Cities. After removing incomplete names and duplicate names (individuals listed more than once because they served as city attorneys for more than one city), we randomly selected 200 names from the 444 remaining on the list. For public defenders, we randomly selected 200 of 506 names (reduced to 465 nonduplicates) that we obtained from the Board of Public Defense and Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Finally, for private attorneys, we received a randomly generated list from the State Court Administrator's Office of 484 names of attorneys who appeared before the district courts in 1999. After we removed duplicate names and names of attorneys who also served as county attorneys, city

attorneys, or public defenders, 364 private attorneys remained in the sample. Some city attorneys, county attorneys, and public defenders were part-time and may have had a private practice as well.

We mailed the survey to 851 attorneys on September 13, 2000 and sent a follow-up to nonrespondents on October 6, 2000. Twenty-two surveys (12 private attorneys, 9 public defenders, and 1 city attorney) were returned to us because of bad addresses, and we were unable to determine the correct address. In addition, 23 surveys (12 private attorneys, 7 city attorneys, and 4 public defenders) were not completed because the person or law firm that received it was not the appropriate subject for the survey. For example, a person on the list of city attorneys said he was not a city attorney. Finally, we found two instances of public defenders appearing on our list twice, under slightly different names.

After adjusting for these individuals, our revised attorney sample size was 804 including 87 county attorneys, 190 city attorneys, 187 public defenders, and 340 private attorneys. We received timely responses from 77 county attorneys (89 percent), 138 city attorneys (73 percent), 133 public defenders (71 percent), and 229 private attorneys (67 percent), for a total of 577 responses (72 percent). Fourteen additional attorney responses arrived too late to be included in the analysis.