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Public Perceptions of Court Performance

Hello, I'm _____, and I am doing a very brief survey about local courts. (Information from the study will help courts determine how to better serve the public. You need not be familiar with or have any experience with the court to answer the questions.)

SCREENERS: Are you over age 18?
 1. Yes (Continue) 2. No (Thank and Terminate)

Do you live in _____ (name of city or county):
1. Yes (Continue) 2. No (Thank and Terminate)

As you know, there are several different kinds of courts. We'd like your opinion on the State court in your area that handles major criminal cases such as robbery, rape, and murder, and major civil lawsuits involving large sums of money. The court in your area that handles these cases is the _____ (name of court) located on _____ (name of street) in _____ (name of city/county).

1. How familiar are you with the _____ Court? Are you: (Read choices)

- 1. Very Familiar 3. Slightly Familiar, or
- 2. Somewhat Familiar 4. Not at All Familiar?

2. In the past 4 years, have you participated in a _____ Court case as a witness, juror, plaintiff, defendant, or attorney; or have you been in the courthouse to conduct some other business or to observe a proceeding?

(Circle as many as mentioned)

- 01. No contact with court 07. Observe a proceeding
- 02. Witness 08. Court employee
- 03. Juror
- 04. Plaintiff/defendant
- 05. Attorney
- 06. On other business

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3. In general, based on whatever you know, have read, or have heard, is the _____ Court doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job?

4 - Excellent

3 - Good

2 - Fair

1 - Poor

For each question about the _____ Court, please answer either always, usually, sometimes, never, or don't know.

ROTATE	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know
4. Do you think court personnel treat people with respect?	1	2	3	4	9
5. Do you think the court responds to requests for information in a reasonable time?	1	2	3	4	9
6. Do you think the selection process for jury duty in the court is fair?	1	2	3	4	9
7. Do you think the court provides enough information about its procedures and services?	1	2	3	4	9
8. Do you think court proceedings are easy to understand and follow?	1	2	3	4	9
9. Do you think the court handles cases within a reasonable amount of time?	1	2	3	4	9
10. Do you think the court follows the law in performing its duties?	1	2	3	4	9

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	ROTATE	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know
11.	Do you think the court has adequate resources to do its job?	1	2	3	4	9
12.	Think now of the cost of taking something to court. Do you think the filing charges and other fees paid to the court are reasonable?	1	2	3	4	9
13.	Do you think court decisions are easy to understand?	1	2	3	4	9
14.	Would you feel safe going to the courthouse?	1	2	3	4	9
15.	Do you think the court's decisions are enforced?	1	2	3	4	9
16.	Do you think the court treats all people fairly?	1	2	3	4	9
17.	Do you think the court attempts to meet the special needs of people with physical or mental disabilities?	1	2	3	4	9
18.	Do you think the court works well with other components of the justice system (e.g., the police, attorneys, probation officers, and so forth)?	1	2	3	4	9

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In addition to the types of cases I've already mentioned, _____ Court handles problems with (give description of jurisdiction such as contracts over \$10,000; divorce proceedings with or without child support or custody determination; personal injury cases; name changes; traffic conviction appeals; probate, estate, or wills; appeals from Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and District Court).

19. Have you ever wanted to take something before the _____ Court, but didn't?

1. Yes 2. No (SKIP TO Q. 21)

20. What type of case did you have? (Read list only if needed)

- 01. A problem with a contract over \$10,000
- 02. Divorce with or without child support or custody determination
- 03. Personal injury
- 04. Name change
- 05. Appeal a traffic conviction
- 06. Probate, estate, or a will
- 07. Appeal a decision of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court
- 08. Appeal a decision of the District Court

XX. Something else? _____
.. (Specify)

21. Why didn't you go to court? (Don't read choices) (circle all that apply)

- 01. Circumstances of the case changed/decided not to pursue issue because of the merits of the case.
- 02. Court procedures too complex/confusing/runaround
- 03. Court services too expensive
- 04. Attorney's bill would be too high
- 05. Court decision would take too long
- 06. Court sanctions are ineffective
- 07. I didn't know how to go about suing/getting my case heard
- 08. Turned to someone else to handle (e.g., community group, service agency, civil rights group)
- 09. Thought nothing could be done

XX. Other: _____

(Specify)

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Now, I have a few questions for classifications purposes only.

22. Is your age group: (Read choices)

- | | | |
|-------------|----|----------------|
| 1. 18 to 19 | .. | 5. 45 to 54 |
| 2. 20 to 24 | .. | 6. 55 to 64 |
| 3. 25 to 34 | .. | 7. 65 or older |
| 4. 35 to 44 | | |

23. What was the last grade in school you completed? (Just stop me when I say it)

1. Didn't complete high school
2. High school diploma or GED
3. 1 to 3 years of college study (include. Assoc. degree)
4. 4-year college degree
5. Beyond a Bachelor's degree

24. Are you best described as: (Read choices)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. African American | 4. Hispanic |
| 2. White | 5. Native American |
| 3. Asian/Asian American/
Pacific Islander | 6. Other: _____
(Specify) |

25. Is your total yearly household income: (Just stop me when I say it)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Under \$15,000 per year | 5. \$60,000 to \$74,999 |
| 2. \$15,000 to \$29,999 | 6. \$75,000 to \$89,999 |
| 3. \$30,000 to \$44,999 | 7. \$90,000 or more |
| 4. \$45,000 to \$59,999 | |

26. Is your gender: 1. Male 2. Female

Thanks for helping with the survey today!