

# Model Programs from the Nation's Counties ∞∞

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Jury duty: For some, the words might evoke a sense of civic obligation. Others, no doubt, find the words "root canal" more appealing.

In Macomb County, Mich., however, the county clerk and a library director have made jury service a little less painful by making library books available in the jury waiting room.

Would-be jurors can visit a county Web site, weeks ahead, and reserve library books that are delivered free to them at the courthouse on the day they report for jury duty.

"Jurors have a lot of down time; they have to wait a lot," says Donald Worrell, director of the Mount Clemens Public Library, a few blocks from the courthouse at the county seat. "What better to pass the time than reading a good book?"

County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh approached Worrell with the idea a few years ago, and since then, it's saved the clerk's office thousands of dollars. By making available books already owned by the library, Sabaugh was able to cancel several magazine subscriptions for the jury room. Before the program began, her office budgeted \$800 annually



Photo courtesy of Macomb County, Mich.

**Macomb County Clerk Carmella Sabaugh (l) and Mount Clemens Public Library Director Donald Worrell collaborated on a Jury Room Book Program. It allows people called for jury duty to have library books delivered to them at the courthouse.**

for periodicals for potential jurors — approximately 22,000 of whom are called each year. Now, she buys none.

"I can't control who gets picked for jury duty," says Sabaugh, "but

I can at least make it a little more pleasant for people who are picked to do their civic duty. Offering library books to jurors is a way we can improve customer service while at the same time cutting costs

## Library, clerk provide jurors a 'novel' way to pass the time

to the taxpayers."

No new clerk's office staff was needed to implement the program. Likewise, it's been a bargain for the library.

"The Juror Book Program requires no new acquisition of books, no new staff and no new storage, so there is no increased cost to the library," says Worrell.

The library benefits by exposing its collection to a wider audience. "We're always looking for ways to reach out to library users, and this is a very novel way," Worrell adds, no pun intended. If a juror gets engrossed in a real page-turner that they don't finish during their time at the courthouse, he or she can check it out later from one of the libraries.

When a potential juror receives a summons, it comes with a notice describing the Juror Book Program and how to reserve library materials online in advance at [www.macombcountymi.gov/clerksoffice/BookRequest.htm](http://www.macombcountymi.gov/clerksoffice/BookRequest.htm). They can search the holdings of any of the two dozen libraries in the county and request that up to three items be delivered to them.

On the Web site, prospective jurors input their name, phone number, first date of jury duty and the title and author of the items

they want. When the person reports for jury duty, the books are waiting for them in the jury room. No books leave the building; when jury duty is finished, the books are left in the jury room for return to the library.

In addition to the books-by-request, about 100 library paperbacks are permanently housed in the juror selection waiting room. New titles are rotated in and out periodically.

"It's been a really successful partnership between the county clerk and Mount Clemens Public Library," Worrell says.

Sabaugh concurs, adding, "It has worked out really well." An elected official since 1992, she's all about innovation. More recently, she made wireless Internet access available in the jury room. "I never get bored," she says, "because there's always some new things that we can do."

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