



THE COURTROOM TEAM

The courtroom team is comprised of the following members:

COURT CLERK

Court Clerks work in courtrooms or court clerical offices. They assist in the preparation and review of orders to ensure they are accurate and conform to administrative orders, statutes, rules and regulations, and judicial decisions. Court Clerks administer oaths, poll jurors and maintain custody of evidence.

JUDGE

Judges preside over the courtroom, decide issues of law, and ensure that justice is served. He or she listens to witnesses, examines evidence, and decides if the case has been proven. Judges are either elected or appointed to their positions depending on the level of the court involved.

WITNESS

Witnesses provide testimony, under oath, as to what they have seen, heard or otherwise observed regarding the case. They are examined and cross-examined by the attorneys and may be questioned by the judge.

COURT INTERPRETER

Court Interpreters provide translation between English and a foreign language or sign language, in courtrooms and other court settings. They may interpret for the defendant, plaintiff and/or witness, as well as those who come to public offices in the court. Court Interpreters may also provide sight translations of documents.

COURT REPORTER

Court reporters are responsible for recording and transcribing testimony at formal and informal court proceedings, including trials, hearings, conferences and arraignments. They are required to mark and maintain evidence and prepare transcripts. Their transcripts contain a word for word report of what is said throughout a proceeding.

COURT OFFICER

Court Officers are in charge of the overall security of the courtroom and environs. They are peace officers who are required to wear uniforms and may be authorized to carry firearms. Court Officers are also responsible for escorting persons in remand to and from the courtroom. They are also the liaison between the court and general public.



JUROR

Jurors are a group of people selected according to law and sworn to decide certain matters of fact in a court case. Jurors pay close attention to evidence presented by both sides, and decide on a verdict, which is the decision of whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty.

DEFENDANT

In a civil matter the defendant is the one being sued. In a criminal matter the defendant is the one charged with a crime.

RESPONDENT

In a family court proceeding the respondent is the person against whom a petition has been filed.

PETITIONER

In a family court proceeding the petitioner is the one who files suit against the respondent.

PLAINTIFF

In a civil matter the plaintiff is the one who files suit against the defendant. In a criminal matter it is the prosecution that files suit in the name of the State or the People.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

These lawyers represent defendants or respondents. They attempt to prove that the defendant is not guilty. Every defendant in a criminal matter is entitled to a defense attorney because they are innocent until proven guilty.

PROSECUTOR

These lawyers work for the district attorney's office on criminal cases, where they represent the interests of all of the people of the State. (*In civil cases the plaintiff will bring his or her own attorney; in Family court, the petitioner may be represented by a private attorney or assigned counsel.*) The prosecutor must prove beyond a "reasonable doubt" that the defendant is guilty of the crime being charged. The prosecutor proves the case by introducing evidence to show that the defendant actually committed the crime.