

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

CourtFunds helps jurors receive money faster, easier

Mohave County, AZ Clerk of the Superior Court saves 90% in costs to disburse juror payments with CourtFunds



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mohave County, Arizona, Clerk of the Superior Court's office is responsible for all of the civil and criminal court records for the Mohave County Superior Court. Mohave is the second largest county in Arizona, and it averages three to four jury trials per week.

Clerk of the Superior Court, Christina Spurlock, says switching from issuing paper checks for jury payments to CourtFunds electronic disbursements has resulted in both time and cost savings for the county.

THE CHALLENGE

In her 15 years at the Superior Court for Mohave County — currently as Clerk and previously as Deputy Director — Christina Spurlock has seen many office processes evolve, including the procedure for jury payments. Mohave is the second largest county in Arizona, and it averages three to four jury trials per week.

"We probably pay at least 300 jurors a month," Spurlock says. "And I've been here since we had to write and sign all those checks by hand!"

Even in more recent times, the process was cumbersome. Every Friday, the office would have to run a report of all the

\$40K

Mohave County's operational savings in the first 15 months of using CourtFunds for jury payments

90%

Mohave County's cost savings after switching to electronic disbursements

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jurors who needed to be paid, print and sign the checks (which might require multiple signers depending on the amount), and finally label, stuff, affix postage and mail the envelopes. The entire process could take up to four people a full day each week, not to mention the costs; in addition to the expensive magnetic ink required to print the checks, the office had to pay for the blank checks themselves, the envelopes, and the postage.

“**This past escheatment process was the last one, since we no longer have any checks left to track.** On the rare occasions that someone still wants a check, we just explain to them that there’s a phone number that they can call to either set up the money to go straight to their bank account, or they can contact CourtFunds to issue them a check.”

— Christina Spurlock, Clerk of Court, Mohave County Superior Court, Arizona

And the process didn’t always end when the check was mailed. Since it could take days for the checks to make it to recipients, the office often received calls from jurors asking about the status of their payments. Others would call to request replacement checks after the originals had been lost or accidentally thrown out.

“When that happened, we’d have to void the first check and issue a new one — basically the entire process all over again,” Spurlock says.

Spurlock says that the escheatment process was another hurdle. Escheatment is the process by which the state claims and becomes the owner of unclaimed assets. The Clerk’s office is required by law to make every effort to make sure jurors claim their payments.

“We had to track all those checks, and at the end of the year, we’d see that there were hundreds of checks that had never been cashed,” Spurlock explains. “So, we would have to send letters to all of those people notifying them that they hadn’t cashed their checks and asking if they still had the originals and, if not, how to get them new ones.”

“We’re pretty proactive in improving how things are done, and we try to be very fiscally responsible with our budgets. Juror payments seemed like an area we could make more efficient and cut down on costs. **The process only involves two people now, not four, and it only takes an hour or two. That’s a huge time savings, as well as cutting back on the cost of all the supplies and postage.**”

— Christina Spurlock, Clerk of Court, Mohave County Superior Court, Arizona

■ ELECTRONIC DISBURSEMENTS: A PROACTIVE SOLUTION

In 2019, Spurlock and her predecessor as Clerk of Court, Virlynn Tinnell, decided it was time for a change in how the office handled juror payments.

"We're pretty proactive in improving how things are done, and we try to be very fiscally responsible with our budgets," Spurlock says. "Juror payments seemed like an area we could make more efficient and cut down on costs."

Spurlock said that the CourtFunds team made the decision to switch from paper checks to electronic disbursements an easy one.

"I remember having the first meeting with the CourtFunds team and light bulbs just went off in our heads," she says. "We realized it was going to save us so much money and so much time that we couldn't justify *not* doing it." CourtFunds worked with the Clerk of Superior Court's IT team to set up the system and troubleshoot any initial issues, as well as offer training to the accounting team. Since then, Spurlock says it's been smooth sailing.

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The Clerk's office gives Mohave County jurors their CourtFunds debit cards when they check in for jury selection, explaining that their payments will be available by the following Monday (since they run payroll on Fridays). When the office runs payroll, the Jury Clerk pulls a report of any jurors who need to be paid for that week, reports it to the office's Finance Manager, and then the money is loaded onto the cards and made available to the recipients.

"The process only involves two people now, not four, and it only takes an hour or two," says Spurlock. "That's a huge time savings, as well as cutting back on the cost of all the supplies and postage."

It's also made the yearly escheatment process obsolete.

"This past escheatment process was the last one, since we no longer have any checks left to track," Spurlock says. "On the rare occasions that someone still wants a check, we just explain to them that there's a phone number that they can call to either set up the money to go straight to their bank account, or they can contact CourtFunds to issue them a check."

“Our Jury Clerk has been able to allocate more of her time to cross-training in other departments. And she’s been able to spend more time answering juror questions since we have fewer phone calls coming in about payments. In addition to the cost and time savings, the team at CourtFunds has been a dream to work with. **I would tell anyone considering CourtFunds to do it.**”

— Christina Spurlock, Clerk of Court, Mohave County Superior Court, Arizona

MAJOR COST AND TIME SAVINGS

Spurlock estimates that in the first 15 months, CourtFunds saved her office nearly \$40,000 in costs to disburse juror payments, a savings of more than 90%. And she expects those savings to grow as the cost of postage increases.

They’ve been able to channel those savings into their employees.

“We’ve been able to go to our board of supervisors and show them the savings and get raises for our employees over the past two years,” Spurlock says. “That’s been one of the best things about it for us.”

CourtFunds has also freed up time for Spurlock’s office to focus on larger goals.

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LEARN MORE ABOUT COURTFUNDS

From municipal and county, to state and federal courts, CourtFunds is the contactless way to disburse payments to everyone accurately and on time, no matter what part of the transaction they play a part in — jury payments, restitution, child support, bonds, witnesses, and more.

Learn more about how CourtFunds can help your state, county, or municipality solve its most complex pay disbursement challenges by scheduling a call with one of our payment technology experts.