

Judicial Performance Evaluation

Missouri

Scope. The Missouri Bar has evaluated judges standing for retention since 1948. A more comprehensive program was established by Supreme Court rule in 2008. Appellate judges, and trial judges subject to the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan, are evaluated prior to standing for retention.

Commission. There is an Appellate Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee, and a Circuit Judicial Performance Evaluation Committee for each of the six judicial circuits subject to the Non-Partisan Court Plan. Each committee consists of six attorneys and six non-attorneys who serve staggered six-year terms. Members are appointed by the Missouri Bar, based on nominations from local and regional bar associations, members of the Board of Governors, and non-attorney citizens.

Criteria. Judges are evaluated according to five performance standards, including administering justice fairly and impartially; making decisions based on competent legal analysis and proper application of law; issuing decisions and rulings that are clearly understood; effectively and efficiently managing his/her courtroom and the administrative responsibilities of office, including issuance of decisions in a prompt manner; and acting ethically and with dignity, integrity and patience.

Data collection. Appellate judges' evaluations are based on attorney surveys, the committee's review of five written opinions, public comment, personal observation of judges in the courtroom and/or interviews with the judge, and (effective in 2012) a peer review survey completed by other judges on the same court. Trial judges' evaluations are based on surveys of attorneys and jurors, the committee's review of three written opinions, public comment, personal observation of judges in the courtroom and/or interviews with the judge, reversal rates on appeal, and (effective in 2012) a peer review survey completed by other judges on the same court.

Dissemination. Evaluation results are posted on the Missouri Bar's website.

Website. <http://www.showmecourts.org/>