

Judicial Performance Evaluation

Arizona

Scope. In 1992, Arizona voters approved a constitutional amendment creating a judicial performance evaluation program. The JPE program is limited to judges subject to the state's merit selection and retention system, which includes all appellate judges and trial judges in the three largest counties—Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal. Judges are evaluated midterm and prior to standing for retention.

Commission. The Commission on Judicial Performance Review consists of no more than thirty-four members, including public members, no more than six attorneys, and no more than six judges. All members are appointed by the Supreme Court and serve staggered, four-year terms. The Chief Justice appoints the commission chair.

Criteria. All judges are evaluated in five categories, including legal ability, integrity, communication skills, judicial temperament, and administrative performance. Trial judges are also evaluated on settlement activities.

Data collection. Surveys are distributed to people who have had contact with the judges during the evaluation period, including attorneys, jurors, litigants, witnesses, self-represented litigants, court staff, and other judges. The commission holds public hearings on judges in election years and accepts written comments from the public at any time. Judges also complete a self-evaluation form.

Dissemination. The commission votes in a public meeting on whether each judge “Meets” or “Does Not Meet” judicial performance standards. This determination, along with the evaluation results, is included in the Secretary of State's Voter Information Pamphlet.

Website. <http://www.azjudges.info/>