

Judicial Performance Evaluation

Colorado

Scope. Colorado's JPE program was established by statute in 1988. All judges and justices are evaluated midterm and prior to standing for retention.

Commission. The State Commission on Judicial Performance administers evaluations of appellate judges. It also oversees 22 local district commissions that evaluate trial judges within each judicial district. Each commission has ten members, six of whom must be non-attorneys and four of whom must be attorneys. The governor and the chief justice each appoint one attorney member and two non-attorney members, and speaker of the house and the president of the senate each appoint one attorney member and one non-attorney member. Commission members serve staggered, four-year terms.

Criteria. Judges are evaluated on six criteria, including integrity, legal knowledge, communication skills, judicial temperament, administrative performance, and service to the legal profession and the public.

Data collection. For appellate judges, surveys are sent to attorneys, court staff, other appellate judges, and district judges. For trial judges, surveys are sent to attorneys, jurors, witnesses, litigants, court staff, court interpreters, law enforcement personnel, crime victims, social service case workers, and appellate judges. Commissions also consider judges' self-evaluations, courtroom observation by commission members, case management data, interviews with judges, and reviews of decisions/opinions.

Dissemination. Mid-term evaluations are for self-improvement. For end-of-term evaluations, the appropriate state or district commission provides survey results and a narrative for each judge, as well as a recommendation as to whether the judge should be retained. The narratives, which offer a summary of survey results, are included in a voter guide (the Colorado Blue Book). Narratives, survey results without the confidential comments, and interim survey results without the confidential comments are also posted on the Office of Judicial Performance Evaluations' website.

Website. <http://www.coloradojudicialperformance.gov/>