

Judicial Performance Evaluation

Connecticut

Scope. Since 1984, trial judges have been evaluated for the purposes of self-improvement and reappointment or elevation to a higher court.

Commission. The Judicial Performance Evaluation Advisory Panel, a permanent standing committee established to review and implement the recommendations of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Program Committee, consists of twenty-three members who are appointed by the chief justice, and includes members of the bench, the bar, academia, and the Judicial Selection Commission.

Criteria. Attorneys are given an opportunity to rate judges as excellent, good, fair, or poor through a series of questions in the categories of comportment, legal ability, and management skills. Jurors are given an opportunity to rate judges on issues of equality and fairness through a series of “attitude toward” questions and on other topics including dignity of proceedings, attentiveness, patience, courtesy, explanation of proceedings, efficiency, and clarity of charge.

Data Collection. Surveys are distributed on an ongoing to attorneys and jurors who had a meaningful opportunity to directly observe and evaluate a judge’s performance. Surveys are sent to attorneys who appeared before judges in full trials, partial trials in which the case settled after evidence was presented, mistrials, and hearings which lasted one hour or longer. Surveys are also distributed to jurors who entered the deliberation stage of a trial or who participated in at least two days of a trial. Since 2012, electronic surveys have been made available semi-annually through a high volume JPE program to eligible attorneys when they appear before judges in certain types of criminal matters. Attorneys are eligible to participate in the high volume JPE program when they appeared in at least one case resulting in a judgment after trial disposition or when they appeared in at least three disposed cases during the preceding six-month period.

Dissemination. By statute, results are confidential and may only be provided to the members of the Judicial Selection Commission and the members of the General Assembly’s Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary when a trial court judge is nominated for reappointment or seeks elevation to the Appellate or Supreme Court.

Website. <http://www.jud.ct.gov/Committees/pst/jpe/default.htm>