

Judicial Merit Selection: Current Status



© The American Judicature Society, 2010
AJS Stock Number 294

American Judicature Society
at Drake University
2700 University Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50311
(515) 271-2281

Table 1: Characteristics of merit selection plans: Scope of the plans

State/Jurisdiction	Year established	Level of court	Legal basis of plan	Type of vacancy	Number of commissions	Number of commissioners
Alabama						
Baldwin County	1999	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 1L; 3N; 1J
Jefferson County ¹	1950	Circuit Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 2L; 2N; 1J
Lauderdale County	2008	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 2L; 3E
Madison County	1974, revised 1996	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	9: 2L; 6N; 1J
Mobile County	1982	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 2L; 2N; 1J
Shelby County	2008	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 2L; 2N; 1J
Talladega County	1996	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	5: 1L; 3N; 1J
Tuscaloosa County	1990, revised 2002	Circuit Court District Court	CA	Interim	1	9: 5L; 3NL; 1J
Alaska						
	1959	Supreme Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	7: 3L; 3N; 1J
	1959	Superior Court	C	Initial and Interim		
	1980, amended 1985	Court of Appeals	S	Initial and Interim		
	1959	District Courts and Magistrates	S	Initial and Interim		
Arizona						
	1974, amended 1992	Supreme Court Court of Appeals	C	Initial and Interim	1	16: 5L, 10NL, 1J
		Maricopa County Superior Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	
		Pima County Superior Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	
Colorado						
	1967	Supreme Court Court of Appeals District Court	C C	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim	1 22	14: 6L, 7NL, 1J 8: 1J; at least 4NL; no more than 3L ²
		County Court Denver Juvenile Court Denver Probate Court	S	Initial and Interim		
Connecticut						
	1986	Supreme Court Appellate Court Superior Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	12: 6L, 6NL, 0J
Delaware						
	1977; revised 1978 , 1985, 2001, 2009	All Courts, including Magistrates	EO	Initial and Interim	1	11: 5L, 4NL, 2E
D.C.						
	1973, amended 1977, 1984, 1986, 1996	Court of Appeals Superior Court	HR	Initial and Interim	1	7: 2NL, 2L, 2E, 1J
Florida						
	1972; amended 1976, 1984, 1996, 1998	Supreme Court District Court of Appeal Circuit Court County Court	C C C	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim Interim	1 5 20	9: 6L, 3E, 0J
Georgia						
	1972 to present	Supreme Court Court of Appeals Superior Court State Court	EO	Interim	1	18

Table 1: Characteristics of merit selection plans: Scope of the plans

State/Jurisdiction	Year established	Level of court	Legal basis of plan	Type of vacancy	Number of commissions	Number of commissioners
Hawaii	1959, amended 1978, 1994	Supreme Court Intermediate Court of Appeals Circuit Court District Court ³	C	Initial, Interim, and Retention	1	9: 4L, 5NL, 0J
Idaho	1967; amended 1985, 1990	Supreme Court Court of Appeals District Court	S	Interim Interim Interim	1	7:2L, 3NL, 2J
Indiana	1970	Supreme Court Court of Appeals	C	Initial and Interim	1	7: 1J, 3L, 3NL
Allen County Lake County St. Joseph County	1985	Tax Court	S	Initial and Interim		
	1983	Superior Court	S	Interim	1	7: 3L, 3NL, 1J
	1973	Superior Court	S	Initial and Interim	1	9: 4L, 4NL, 1J ⁴
	1973	Superior Court	S	Initial and Interim	1	7: 3L, 3NL, 1J
Iowa	1962, 1963; amended 1976, 1983	Supreme Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	15: 7L, 7NL, 1J ⁵
	1962, 1963; amended 1976, 1983	Court of Appeals	S	Initial and Interim		
	1962, 1963; amended 1976, 1983	District Court	C	Initial and Interim	14	11: 5L, 5NL, 1J ⁵
	1983, amended 1986	District Associate Judges ⁵	S	Initial and Interim	99	6: 2L, 3NL, 1J
	1983; amended 1989, 1990, 1998	Magistrate Judges ⁵	S	Initial and Interim		
Kansas	1958 1975 1972	Supreme Court Court of Appeals District Court (optional)	C S C	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim Initial and Interim	1 17	9: 5L, 4NL, 0J # of L's / NL's varies according to judicial district; ⁷ 1J
Kentucky	1976	Supreme Court Court of Appeals Circuit Court District Court	C C	Interim Interim	1 56	7: 2L, 4NL, 1J
Maine⁸	2003	Supreme Judicial Court Superior Court		Initial and Interim	1	14L
Maryland	1970, revised 1974, 1979, 1982, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007	Court of Appeals Court of Special Appeals District Court Circuit Court	EO EO	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim	1 16	17 9
Massachusetts	1970 to present	Appeals Court Trial Court	EO	Initial and Interim	1	21
Minnesota	1983, revised 1990, 1992	District Court Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals	S	Interim	1	13: up to 8L, at least 5NL, 0J ⁹

Table 1: Characteristics of merit selection plans: Scope of the plans

State/Jurisdiction	Year established	Level of court	Legal basis of plan	Type of vacancy	Number of commissions	Number of commissioners
Missouri	1940, revised 1976	Supreme Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	7: 3L, 3NL, 1J
City of St. Louis	1940, revised 1976	Court of Appeals	C	Initial and Interim	1	5: 2L, 2NL, 1J
Greene County	2008	Circuit Judge	C	Initial and Interim	1	
Jackson County	1940, revised 1976	Associate Circuit Judge	C	Initial and Interim	1	
St. Louis County	1976	Circuit Judge	C	Initial and Interim	1	
Clay & Platte Counties	1976	Associate Circuit Judge	C	Initial and Interim	2	
Montana	1973, amended 1977, 1979, 1987, 1991, 1992	Supreme Court	C	Interim	1	7: 2L, 4NL, 1J
	1991	District Court	S	Initial and Interim		
	1987	Worker's Compensation Judge	S	Initial and Interim		
		Chief Water Judge	S	Initial and Interim		
Nebraska	1962, amended 1972	Supreme Court	C	Initial and Interim	7	9: 4L, 4NL, 1J
		Court of Appeals	S	Initial and Interim	6	
		District Court	C	Initial and Interim	12	
		County Court	S	Initial and Interim	4 ¹⁰	
		Juvenile Court	S	Initial and Interim	3	
		Worker's Compensation Court	S	Initial and Interim	1	
Nevada	1976	Supreme Court	C	Interim	1	7:3L, 3NL, 1J
		District Court			1 ¹¹	9:4L, 4NL, 1J
New Hampshire	2000, 2005	Supreme Court	EO	Initial and Interim	1	11: 6L, 5NL
		Superior Court				
		District Court				
		Probate Court				
New Jersey	2006, amended 2010	Supreme Court	EO	Initial and Interim	1	7 ¹²
New Mexico	1988	Supreme Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	14: 8L, 3NL, 3J ¹³
	1988	Court of Appeals	C	Initial and Interim	13	14: 8L, 3NL, 3J ¹³
		District Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	14: 8L, 3NL, 3J ¹³
		Metropolitan Court (Bernalillo County)				
New York	1977	Court of Appeals	C	Initial and Interim	1	12: 4L, 4NL, 4E, 0J
	1975 to present	Appellate Div. of the Supreme Court	EO	Initial and Interim	4	13
		Supreme Court		Interim		
		Court of Claims	EO	Initial and Interim	1	13
		County Court	EO	Interim	4	14
		Surrogate's Court				
New York City	1978 to present	Family Court	EO	Initial and Interim	1	19
		Criminal Court				
		Family Court				
		Civil Court		Interim		
North Dakota	1976; amended 1998	Supreme Court	C	Interim	1	6: 3L/J, 3NL
		District Court			1	9: 3L/J, 3NL, 3E ¹⁴

Table 1: Characteristics of merit selection plans: Scope of the plans

State/Jurisdiction	Year established	Level of court	Legal basis of plan	Type of vacancy	Number of commissions	Number of commissioners
Ohio¹⁵	2007	Supreme Court Court of Appeals Court of Common Pleas		Interim	1	11
Oklahoma	1967 1987, amended 1996 1980, amended 2001 1977	Supreme Court Court of Criminal Appeals Court of Civil Appeals District Court Workers' Compensation Court	C S S S	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim Interim Initial and Interim	1	13: 6L, 7NL, 0J
Rhode Island	1994	Supreme Court Superior Court Family Court District Court Worker's Compensation Court Administrative Adjudication Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	9: 4L, 4NL, 1E 0J
South Dakota	1980	Supreme Court Circuit Court	C	Initial and Interim Interim	1	7: 3L, 2NL, 2J
Tennessee	1971; amended 1974, 1986, 1994, 1999, 2001 1994	Supreme Court Court of Criminal Appeals Court of Appeals Trial Courts	S S	Initial and Interim Interim	1	17: At least 10L; at least 1N
Utah	1967, amended 1985, 1992, 1994, 2010	Supreme Court Court of Appeals District Court Juvenile Court	C C	Initial and Interim Initial and Interim	1 8	7: 2L, 2NL, 2E, 1J 7: 2L, 2NL, 2E, 1J
Vermont	1967; amended 1969, 1971, 1975, 1979, 1985	Supreme Court Superior Court District Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	11: 3L, 6NL, 2E
West Virginia	2010	Supreme Court of Appeals Circuit Court Family Court	S	Interim	1	11: 6L, 4NL, 1E ¹⁵
Wisconsin¹⁷	2003	Supreme Court Court of Appeals Circuit Court	EO	Interim	1	9L
Wyoming	1973	Supreme Court District Court Circuit Court	C	Initial and Interim	1	7: 3L, 3NL, 1J ¹⁸

C = Constitutional
 S = Statutory
 EO = Executive Order
 HR = Home Rule
 L = Lawyer
 NL = Non-lawyer
 E = Either Lawyer or Non-lawyer
 J = Judge

Table 1: Characteristics of merit selection plans: Scope of the plans

1. **Alabama (Jefferson County).** The Jefferson County Commission nominates candidates for vacancies in the Birmingham Division only.
2. **Colorado.** In judicial districts with populations greater than 35,000, there must be three lawyer and four non-lawyer members. In judicial districts with populations of 35,000 or less, there must be at least four non-lawyer members; a majority vote of the governor, the attorney general, and the chief justice determines how many of the remaining three members must be lawyers.
3. **Hawaii.** The chief justice makes appointments to the district courts.
4. **Indiana (Lake County).** Two lawyer and two non-lawyer members must be men; two lawyer and two non-lawyer members must be women; at least one lawyer and one non-lawyer member must be a minority.
5. **Iowa.** The mandatory ratio of lawyers to non-lawyers is not specified; traditionally, the governor appoints only non-lawyers and the bar elects only lawyers. No more than a simple majority of members appointed by the governor may be of the same gender, and the bar must alternate between electing male and female members.
6. **Iowa.** District judges appoint district associate judges from lists of nominees recommended by the county magistrate appointing commission. The county magistrate appointing commission appoints magistrates.
7. **Kansas.** The number of commission members varies with the number of counties in each judicial district; however, there must be an equal number of lawyers and non-lawyers on each commission.
8. **Maine.** Governor Baldacci established the Judicial Selection Committee to “advise [him] about matters related to judicial appointments and recommend candidates to fill vacancies.” Members include a representative from the attorney general's office and practicing attorneys.
9. **Minnesota.** There are nine commission members who serve “at-large” to fill any district court or workers’ compensation court of appeals vacancies. In addition, there are four commission members—two lawyers and two non-lawyers—appointed from the district in which the vacancy exists.
10. **Nebraska.** The district court judicial nominating commissions also nominate county court judges, except in Districts 1, 3, 4, and 10, in which there are separate county and district judicial nominating commissions.
11. **Nevada.** Nominations for district court vacancies are made by temporary commissions that are assembled as each vacancy occurs and exist only until nominations have been submitted to the governor. These temporary commissions consist of members of the permanent commission and one lawyer and one non-lawyer resident of the judicial district in which the vacancy occurs.
12. **New Jersey.** Governor Christie’s Judicial Advisory Panel consists of up to seven members, including five or more retired judges and up to two public members who are either non-lawyers or non-practicing lawyers.
13. **New Mexico.** The president of the state bar and the judges on the commission are authorized to make the minimum number of additional appointments of members of the state bar as is necessary for equal representation on the commission of the two largest political parties.
14. **North Dakota.** When a vacancy occurs on the district court, the governor, chief judge, and president of the state bar each appoint an additional temporary member, who may or may not be a lawyer, from the judicial district in which the vacancy occurs; these members serve until the vacancy is filled.
15. **Ohio.** Governor Strickland’s Judicial Appointments Recommendation Panel evaluates the qualifications of applicants for judicial vacancies and makes non-binding recommendations for appointment.
16. **West Virginia:** The governor (or the governor’s designee), the President of the West Virginia State Bar, and the Dean of the West Virginia University College of Law serve *ex officio*.
17. **Wisconsin.** Governor Doyle’s Advisory Council on Judicial Selection screens applicants for interim judicial vacancies and recommends qualified candidates. The governor is not bound by the council’s recommendations.
18. **Wyoming.** When a vacancy occurs on a district or circuit court, and that district or county is not represented on the commission, one lawyer and one non-lawyer from that district or county are appointed as temporary, nonvoting advisors to the commission.

Table 2: Composition of nominating commission

State/Court	Term of service	Chair appointed/elected by	Lawyers appointed/elected by	Non-lawyers appointed/elected by	Judges appointed/elected by
Alabama					
Baldwin County	6 years	Judge serves ex officio	Baldwin County Bar Association	Baldwin County Commission/ Baldwin County Mayor's Association/Baldwin County legislative delegation	Presiding circuit judge serves
Jefferson County	6 years	No regular chair	Birmingham Bar Association	Jefferson County legislative delegation	Birmingham circuit court judges
Lauderdale County	6 years	Chief justice	Lauderdale County Bar Association	Lauderdale County Commission	N/A
Madison County	6 years	Judge serves ex officio	Madison County Bar Association	Madison County legislative delegation	Madison County circuit court judges
Mobile County	6 years	N/I	Mobile County Bar Association	Mobile County legislative delegation	Mobile County circuit court judges
Shelby County	6 years	Judge serves ex officio	Shelby County Bar Association	Shelby County legislators	Presiding circuit judge serves ex officio
Talladega County	4 years	Judge serves ex officio	Not appointed or elected	Talladega County legislative delegation	Presiding circuit judge serves ex officio
Tuscaloosa County	6 years	Commission members	Tuscaloosa County Bar Association	Tuscaloosa County legislative delegation	Presiding circuit judge serves ex officio
Alaska					
Supreme Court	6 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	State bar association	Governor/ State legislature	Chief justice serves ex officio
Arizona					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	State bar association/ Governor/ Senate	Governor/ Senate	Chief justice serves ex officio
Maricopa County Superior Court and Pima County Superior Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	State bar association/ Governor/ Senate	Nominating commission/ Governor/Senate ¹	Chief justice serves ex officio
Colorado					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	6 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	Governor/ Attorney general/ Chief justice	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio
District Court, County Court, Juvenile Court of Denver and Probate Court of Denver County	6 years	Supreme court justice serves ex officio	Governor/ Attorney general/ Chief justice	Governor	Supreme court justice serves ex officio
Connecticut					
Supreme Court, Appellate Court and Superior Court	3 years	Commission members ²	Governor	Legislative leaders	N/A
Delaware					
All Courts, including Magistrates	3 years	Governor	Governor/ State bar president	Governor	N/A
D.C.					
All Courts	6 years ³	Commission members	President/ Mayor/ Board of governors of DC bar	President/ Mayor/ DC city council	Chief judge of the US District Court for DC
Florida					
Supreme Court, District Court of Appeal, Circuit Court, County Court	4 years	Commission members	Board of governors of Florida bar/ Governor ⁴	Governor	N/A

Table 2: Composition of nominating commission

State/Court	Term of service	Chair appointed/elected by	Lawyers appointed/elected by	Non-lawyers appointed/elected by	Judges appointed/elected by
Georgia					
Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, Superior Court, and State Court	At Governor's discretion	Governor	Governor	Governor	N/A
Hawaii					
Supreme Court, Intermediate Court of Appeals, Circuit Court and District Court	6 years	Commission members	State bar association/ Governor/ Senate president/ Speaker of the house/ Chief justice	Governor/ Chief justice/ Senate president/ Speaker of the house	N/A
Idaho					
Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and District Court	6 years	Chief justice serves	Board of commissioners of the state bar with senate consent	Governor with senate consent	State bar with senate consent/ Chief justice serves
Indiana					
Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and Tax Court	3 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	State bar members in each district	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio
Allen County Superior Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio (or designee on the court of appeals or supreme court)	Lawyers residing in Allen County	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio (or designee on the court of appeals or supreme court)
Lake County Superior Court and County Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio (or designee on the court of appeals or supreme court)	Lawyers residing in Lake County	County board of commissioners	Chief justice serves ex officio (or designee on the court of appeals or supreme court)
St Joseph County Superior Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	Lawyers residing or practicing law in St. Joseph County	Selection committee ⁵	Chief justice serves ex officio
Iowa					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	6 years	Senior supreme court justice serves ex officio	Resident members of the bar from each congressional district	Governor with senate consent	Senior supreme court justice serves ex officio
District Court	6 years	Senior district court judge serves ex officio	Resident members of the bar of each judicial election district	Governor with senate consent	Senior district court judge serves ex officio
District Associate Judges and Magistrate Judges	6 years	N/I	Attorneys in the county	County board of supervisors	Chief judge of the judicial district serves ex officio
Kansas					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	4 years	Lawyers residing in and licensed in Kansas	Lawyers of each congressional district	Governor	N/A
District Court	4 years	Supreme court justice serves ex officio	Lawyers of the judicial district	Board of county commissioners	Supreme court justice serves ex officio
Kentucky					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	State bar	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio
Circuit Court and District Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex officio	Local members of the state bar	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio

Table 2: Composition of nominating commission

State/Court	Term of service	Chair appointed/elected by	Lawyers appointed/elected by	Non-lawyers appointed/elected by	Judges appointed/elected by
Maryland					
Court of Appeals and Court of Special Appeals	Coextensive with governor	Governor	State bar association/ Governor	Governor	N/A
District Court and Circuit Court	Coextensive with governor	Governor	State bar association/ Governor	Governor	N/A
Massachusetts					
Appeals Court and Trial Court	At governor's discretion	Governor	Governor	Governor	N/A
Minnesota					
District Court and Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals	At governor's discretion/ 4 years	Governor	Governor/ Supreme court justices	Governor/ Supreme court justices	Governor/ Supreme court justices
Missouri					
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	6 years	Commission members	Lawyers residing in each court of appeals district	Governor	Supreme court justice serves ex officio
Circuit Courts	6 years	Commission members	Lawyers residing in the judicial circuit	Governor	Chief judge of court of appeals serves ex officio
Montana					
Supreme Court, District Court, Worker's Compensation Judge and Chief Water Judge	4 years	Commission members	Supreme court	Governor	District court judges
Nebraska					
Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, District Court, County Court, Juvenile Court, Worker's Compensation Court	4 years	Supreme court justice serves ex officio	Lawyers residing in judicial election districts	Governor	Supreme court justice serves ex officio
Nevada					
Supreme Court	4 years	Commission members	State bar	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio
District Court	Until nominations given to governor	Commission members	State bar	Governor	Chief justice serves ex officio
New Hampshire					
Supreme Court, Superior Court, District Court, Probate Court	Up to 3 years	Governor	Governor	Governor	N/A

Table 2: Composition of nominating commission

State/Court	Term of service	Chair appointed/elected by	Lawyers appointed/elected by	Non-lawyers appointed/elected by	Judges appointed/elected by
New Mexico					
Supreme Court & Court of Appeals	N/I	Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law serves ex officio	Judges on committee and state bar president/ Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Chief justice of the supreme court/ Chief judge of the court of appeals
District Court	N/I	Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law serves ex officio	Judges on committee and state bar president/ Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Chief justice of the supreme court/ Chief judge of the court of appeals/ Chief judge of the district court
Metropolitan Court	N/I	Dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law serves ex officio	Judges on committee and state bar president/ Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Governor/ Speaker of the house/ Senate president	Chief justice of the supreme court/ Chief judge of the court of appeals/Chief judge of the metropolitan court
New York					
Court of Appeals	4 years	Commission members	Governor/ Chief judge of court of appeals/ Legislative leaders	Governor/ Chief judge of court of appeals/ Legislative leaders	N/A
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Supreme Court	3 years	Governor	Governor/ Judicial and legislative leaders/ Attorney general/ State bar association	Governor/ Judicial and legislative leaders/ Attorney general/ State bar association	N/A
Court of Claims	3 years	Governor	Governor/ Chairs of departmental committees serve ex officio ⁶	Governor/ Chairs of departmental committees serve ex officio ⁶	N/A
County Court, Surrogate's Court, and Family Court (outside of NYC)	3 years	Chair of departmental screening committee serves ex officio ⁶	County executive	County executive	N/A
New York City Criminal Court, Family Court, and Civil Court	2 years	Mayor	Mayor/ Presiding judges/ Law school deans	Mayor/ Presiding judges/ Law school deans	N/A
North Dakota					
Supreme Court and District Court	3 years	Governor	Governor/ Chief judge/ State bar president	Governor/ Chief judge/ State bar president	Governor/ Chief judge/ State bar president
Oklahoma					
Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, Court of Civil Appeals, District Court, Workers' Compensation Court	6 years	Commission members	Lawyers from each congressional district	Governor/ Commission members	N/A
Rhode Island					
Supreme Court, Superior Court, Family Court, District Court, Worker's Compensation Court, Administrative Adjudication Court	4 years	Governor	Governor/ Legislative leadership ⁷	Governor/ Legislative leadership ⁷	N/A

Table 2: Composition of nominating commission

State/Court	Term of service	Chair appointed/elected by	Lawyers appointed/elected by	Non-lawyers appointed/elected by	Judges appointed/elected by
South Dakota Supreme Court and Circuit Court	4 years	Commission members	State bar president	Governor	Judicial conference
Tennessee Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, Court of Appeals, Trial Courts	6 years	Commission members	Speaker of the house/ Speaker of the senate	Speaker of the house/ Speaker of the senate	N/A
Utah Supreme Court and Court of Appeals District Court and Juvenile Court	4 years 4 years	Governor Governor	State bar association/Governor State bar association/Governor	Governor Governor	Supreme court chief justice ⁸ Supreme court chief justice ⁸
Vermont Supreme Court, Superior Court and District Court	2 years	Commission members	Vermont lawyers/ Legislature	Governor/ Legislature	N/A
West Virginia Supreme Court, Circuit Court and Family Court	6 years	Commission members	Board of governors of West Virginia Bar/Governor	Governor	N/A
Wyoming Supreme Court, District Court and Circuit Court	4 years	Chief justice serves ex-officio	State bar	Governor	N/A

1. **Arizona.** Maricopa and Pima Counties are each divided into five supervisory districts. Each district has a seven member nominating committee for the purpose of recommending prospective non-lawyer members of the superior court nominating commission to the senate.

2. **Connecticut.** The commission members elect the chair from among the six lawyer members appointed by the governor.

3. **D.C.** All members serve six year terms, except the member appointed by the president, who serves a five year term.

4. **Florida.** The board of governors of the Florida bar submits three recommended nominees for each position. The governor may reject all of the nominees and request a new list of nominees.

5. **Indiana (St. Joseph County).** The non-lawyer members are appointed by a selection committee consisting of the judges of the St. Joseph circuit court, the president of the board of St. Joseph County commissioners, and the mayors in each of the two most populous cities in St. Joseph County.

6. **New York.** The departmental screening committees identify nominees for the supreme court.

7. **Rhode Island.** The governor appoints three lawyers and one non-lawyer of his or her choice. The governor also appoints five additional commission members, one from each of the following lists: a list of at least three lawyers submitted by the speaker of the house; a list of at least three lawyers and/or non-lawyers submitted by the senate majority leader; a list of four non-lawyers submitted jointly by the speaker and the senate majority leader; a list of at least three non-lawyers submitted by the minority leader of the house; and a list of at least three non-lawyers submitted by the minority leader of the senate.

8. **Utah.** The chief justice of the supreme court appoints another member of the Judicial Council to serve as an ex officio, nonvoting member of each commission.

Table 3: Rules governing submission of list of nominees

State/Court	Days allowed to submit list	Number of names submitted	Order names are submitted	Add'l info. sent to appointing authority	Governor bound by recommendation	Legislative confirmation required	Nominees names made public
Alabama							
Baldwin County	30	3	Alpha	No	Yes	No	Yes
Jefferson County	N/I	3	Alpha	No	Yes	No	Yes
Lauderdale County	30	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	Yes
Madison County	N/I	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	Yes
Mobile County	N/I	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	N/I
Shelby County	N/I	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	N/I
Talladega County	N/I	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	N/I
Tuscaloosa County	45	3	N/I	No	Yes ¹	No	Yes
Alaska	90 ²	2 or more	Alpha	Applicant questionnaires, Voting record, Bar survey, Letters of recommendation	Yes	No	Yes
Arizona	60	3 or more	Alpha	Commission file	Yes	No	Yes
Colorado							
Appellate Courts	30	3	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire	Yes	No	Yes
Trial Courts	30	2-3	Varies by judicial district ³	Varies by judicial district ³	Yes	No	Yes ⁴
Connecticut	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	Yes	Yes ⁵	N/I
Delaware	60	3	Alpha	None	Yes ⁶	Yes	No
D.C.	60	3	N/I	N/I	Yes (President)	Yes	Yes
Florida							
Supreme Court	30	3-6	Alpha	Investigative file	Yes	No	Yes
District Court of Appeal	30	3	Alpha	Investigative file	Yes	No	Yes
Trial Courts	30	3 or more	Alpha	Investigative file	Yes	No	Yes
Georgia	N/I	5 at most	N/I	N/I	No	No	N/I
Hawaii	N/I	4-6	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire	Yes	Yes	No
Idaho	N/I	2-4	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	Yes
Indiana							
Appellate Courts and Tax Court	70	3	N/I	Nominee evaluations	Yes	No	Yes
Allen County	60	3	N/I	Nominee evaluations	Yes	No	Yes
Lake County	60	3	N/I	Nominee evaluations	Yes	No	Yes
St Joseph County	60	5	N/I	Nominee evaluations	Yes	No	Yes
Iowa							
Supreme Court	60	3	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire	Yes	No	Yes
Court of Appeals	60	3	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire	Yes	No	Yes
District Court	60	2	Alpha	N/I	Yes	No	Yes ⁷
District Associate Judges	15-30	3	N/I	N/I	Yes ⁸	No	N/I
Magistrate Judges	15-30	1	N/I	N/I	N/A ⁸	No	N/I

Table 3: Rules governing submission of list of nominees

State/Court	Days allowed to submit list	Number of names submitted	Order names are submitted	Add'l info. sent to appointing authority	Governor bound by recommendation	Legislative confirmation required	Nominees names made public
Kansas							
Appellate Courts	60	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	N/I
District Court	30	2-3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	N/I
Kentucky	N/I	3	Alpha	N/I	Yes	No	Yes
Maryland							
Appellate Courts	85	at least 3	Alpha	N/I	Yes ⁹	Yes	Yes
Trial Courts	85	at least 3	Alpha	N/I	Yes ⁹	No	Yes
Massachusetts	N/I	3-6	Alpha	N/I	No ¹⁰	No ¹¹	No
Minnesota	60	3-5	N/I	N/I	No	No	Yes
Missouri	N/I	3	N/I	N/I	Yes	No	Yes
Montana	90	3-5	N/I	Entire applicant file, Commission voting record and recommendations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	90	3 or more	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire, Investigative file	Yes	No	Yes
Nevada	N/I	3	Alpha	Entire file	Yes	No	Yes
New Hampshire	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I	Yes ¹²	No ¹³	
New Mexico	30	2 or more	Alpha	N/I	Yes ¹⁴	No	Yes
New York							
Court of Appeals	120 ¹⁵	3-7	N/I	Entire file, including: commission recommendations, applicant financial statements	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and Supreme Court; Trial Courts (outside New York City)	N/I	N/I	N/I	Written evaluation, Entire file	Yes	Yes	No
New York City	90	3	N/I	Information re: qualifications	Yes (Mayor)	No	No
North Dakota	60	2-7	Alpha	N/I	No	No	Yes
Oklahoma	N/I	3	Random	Applicant questionnaire, Writing sample, Investigative file	Yes	No	Yes
Rhode Island	90	3-5	Alpha	Entire file	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Rules governing submission of list of nominees

State/Court	Days allowed to submit list	Number of names submitted	Order names are submitted	Add'l info. sent to appointing authority	Governor bound by recommendation	Legislative confirmation required	Nominees names made public
<i>South Dakota</i>	N/I	2 or more	Alpha	Investigative file	Yes	No	N/I
<i>Tennessee</i>	60	2-3 ¹⁶	N/I	N/I	Yes ¹⁷	No	Yes
<i>Utah</i>							
Appellate Courts	45	7	Alpha	Investigative file, Applicant questionnaire	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trial Courts	45	5	Alpha	Investigative file, Applicant questionnaire	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Vermont</i>	N/I	Open	Alpha	Applicant questionnaire	Yes	Yes	No
<i>West Virginia</i>	90	2-5	Alpha	N/I	No	No	Yes
<i>Wyoming</i>	60	3	Alpha	Entire file	Yes	No	N/I

1. **Alabama (Tuscaloosa County).** If the governor does not select from the list within 60 days, the commission is required to submit a new list.

2. **Alaska.** Time may be extended by the judicial council with the concurrence of the supreme court.

3. **Colorado.** Each of Colorado's twenty-two district judicial nominating commissions has developed its own rules of procedure.

4. **Colorado.** The judicial nominating commissions of two districts do not indicate whether nominees' names are made public.

5. **Connecticut.** The governor selects a nominee from the commission's list, sends the name to the general assembly, and the general assembly makes the appointment.

6. **Delaware.** The governor may refuse to appoint from the first list and may require the commission to submit one supplementary list.

7. **Iowa.** According to Iowa's sample procedures for district judicial nominating commissions, the names of nominees are announced in a press release. However, these sample procedures have not been formally adopted by all of Iowa's 14 judicial districts.

8. **Iowa.** District judges appoint district associate judges from lists of nominees recommended by the county magistrate appointing commission. The county magistrate appointing commission appoints magistrates.

9. **Maryland.** The governor may also fill the vacancy by selecting a person from any list submitted by the appropriate commission for a vacancy on the same court, provided the previous list was submitted within two years of the current vacancy and information on the nominee is updated.

10. **Massachusetts.** The governor may decline to nominate any applicant and seek further recommendations from the commission.

11. **Massachusetts.** Appointment requires advice and consent of the governor's council.

12. **New Hampshire.** The governor may request that the commission engage in a further search for qualified applicants.

13. **New Hampshire.** The governor's nominees must be confirmed by the executive council.

14. **New Mexico.** The governor may make one request to the commission for additional names, and the commission shall comply if a majority of the commission finds that additional persons would be qualified and recommends those persons for appointment.

15. **New York.** For unexpected vacancies, the commission has 120 days to submit a list of nominees. For vacancies that occur through expiration of terms on December 31, the commission has a fixed deadline of December 1, except for terms that expire during non-election years when the deadline is October 15.

16. **Tennessee.** For trial courts, if the vacancy exists in one of the five smallest judicial districts, the commission may submit 2 names to the governor.

17. **Tennessee.** For appellate court vacancies, the governor may require the commission to submit a panel of 3 additional nominees.

Table 4: Rules of confidentiality

State/Court	Identity of applicants	Records	Interviews	External communications to commissioners	Deliberations	Voting	Communications with appointing authority
Alabama							
Baldwin County	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lauderdale County							
Jefferson County	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madison County							
Mobile County							
Shelby County							
Tuscaloosa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alaska							
	No	No	Yes ¹	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Arizona							
	No	Yes	No	Yes	No ²	No	
Colorado³							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connecticut							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Delaware							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
D.C.							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida							
	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴
Georgia							
Hawaii							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Idaho							
	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indiana							
Appellate Courts and Tax Court	No	No	No	No	Yes		No
Allen County	No						
Lake County	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
St Joseph County	No						No
Iowa							
Supreme Court and Court of Appeals	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Court	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District Associate and Magistrate Judges							
Kansas							
Kentucky							
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland							
	No	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	
Massachusetts							
	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Minnesota							
Missouri							
	Yes ⁵	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁶	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montana⁷							
	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Nebraska							
	No	No	Yes	No	Yes		

Yes = Data/procedure confidential
 No = Data/procedure not confidential
 no entry = Not indicated in commission rules

Table 4: Rules of confidentiality

State/Court	Identity of applicants	Records	Interviews	External communications to commissioners	Deliberations	Voting	Communications with appointing authority
Nevada	No	No ⁸	No ⁹	Yes	No ⁹	No ⁹	No
New Hampshire	Yes	Yes			Yes		
New Mexico	No		No	No	Yes	No	
New York							
Court of Appeals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and Supreme Court; Trial Courts (outside New York City)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ¹⁰
New York City	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
North Dakota	No	No			No	No	
Oklahoma	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Rhode Island	No		No	No	Yes	No	
South Dakota	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	No	No	No	No ¹¹	No	Yes	Yes
Utah	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vermont	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	Yes	Yes					No
Wyoming							

Yes = Data/procedure confidential

No = Data/procedure not confidential

no entry = Not indicated in commission rules

1. **Alaska.** Applicant interviews are conducted in executive session unless the applicant requests an interview in public session.
2. **Arizona.** Deliberations may be held in executive session upon a two-thirds vote of commission members.
3. **Colorado.** The rules for two of Colorado's district judicial nominating commissions do not contain complete information on rules of confidentiality.
4. **Florida.** Communications between the governor and the judicial nominating commission for the district court of appeal are not confidential.
5. **Missouri.** The commission releases the names of the applicants it selects to interview.
6. **Missouri.** All communications between a commission member and a non-commission member must be summarized in writing and provided to all other commission members.
7. **Montana.** All meetings, proceedings of the commission, and documents shall be open to the public except when a majority of the commission votes that the demand of individual privacy exceeds the merits of public disclosure.
8. **Nevada.** Information that is ordinarily sensitive and confidential and that proves to be of little or no relevance to a candidate's qualifications is confidential.
9. **Nevada.** The commission may meet in executive session with the approval of a majority of members if it is deemed necessary or appropriate because of the sensitive nature of the matters or information to be discussed.
10. **New York.** The report relating to the governor's appointee is made publicly available upon announcement of the appointment.
11. **Tennessee.** After one public meeting where any member of the public may suggest possible nominees or express approval or disapproval of proposed nominees, the commission may hold such additional public or private meetings as it deems necessary.

Table 5: Nominating commission procedures

State	Disqualification provision	Ethics provisions	Oath of office	Political activity prohibition	External recruitment provision	Provision for diversity	Rule against discrimination	Judicial performance evaluation available to commission
<i>Alabama</i>				X ¹	X ²			
<i>Alaska</i>	X		X		X			X
<i>Arizona</i>	X				X	Applicants Commissioners		X
<i>Colorado</i>			X ³		X ⁴		X	
<i>Connecticut</i>				X				X
<i>Delaware</i>	X				X		X	
<i>D.C.</i>								X
<i>Florida</i>	X	X			X			
<i>Georgia</i>		X				Commissioners		
<i>Hawaii</i>	X	X		X	X		X	X
<i>Idaho</i>			X					
<i>Indiana</i>	X ⁵			X	X ⁵	Applicants Commissioners ⁶		
<i>Iowa</i>	X ⁷				X ⁸	Applicants ⁸	X ⁹	
<i>Kansas</i>			X	X ¹⁰	X			
<i>Kentucky</i>				X	X			
<i>Maryland</i>	X			X	X	Applicants		
<i>Massachusetts</i>	X	X		X		Commissioners		
<i>Minnesota</i>					X	Applicants		
<i>Missouri</i>	X		X	X	X	Applicants		
<i>Montana</i>								
<i>Nebraska</i>	X		X		X		X	
<i>Nevada</i>	X				X		X	
<i>New Hampshire</i>	X							
<i>New Mexico</i>	X		X		X			
<i>New York</i> New York City				X	X X		X ¹¹	
<i>North Dakota</i>					X			
<i>Oklahoma</i>	X	X	X	X	X		X	

Table 5: Nominating commission procedures

State	Disqualification provision	Ethics provisions	Oath of office	Political activity prohibition	External recruitment provision	Provision for diversity	Rule against discrimination	Judicial performance evaluation available to commission
<i>Rhode Island</i>	X	X	X		X	Applicants Commissioners		
<i>South Dakota</i>	X	X			X			
<i>Tennessee</i>				X		Commissioners		
<i>Utah</i>	X				X	Applicants	X	X
<i>Vermont</i>	X				X		X	
<i>West Virginia</i>		X			X			
<i>Wyoming</i>				X	X			

1. **Alabama.** Lauderdale, Shelby, and Tuscaloosa Counties prohibit commission members from holding elective offices or official positions within political parties.
2. **Alabama.** Unlike other jurisdictions with external recruitment provisions that allow or encourage recruitment, Baldwin, Jefferson, and Tuscaloosa Counties forbid commission members from soliciting applicants.
3. **Colorado.** The rules of the nominating commission for the 11th judicial district require commission members to take an oath of secrecy.
4. **Colorado.** There is no external recruitment provision for the supreme court nominating commission, but a majority of the district nominating commissions have such provisions.
5. **Indiana.** The Indiana judicial nominating commission has a disqualification provision and an external recruitment provision.
6. **Indiana.** The nominating commission for Lake County has diversity provisions regarding both commission members and applicants.
7. **Iowa.** A disqualification provision is included in Iowa's sample procedures for district judicial nominating commissions. Although many judicial districts have not yet formally adopted these procedures, most districts utilize them as general guidelines.
8. **Iowa.** The internal rules of the state judicial nominating commission include an external recruitment provision and a diversity provision, as do the sample procedures for district judicial nominating commissions.
9. **Iowa.** The magistrate appointing commission handbook contains rules against discrimination in the nomination of candidates as district associate and magistrate judges.
10. **Kansas.** The Kansas constitution contains a prohibition on political activity for members of the supreme court nominating commission.
11. **New York.** Rules for the appellate division of the supreme court and the trial courts include a rule against discrimination.