



STATE OF MINNESOTA

OFFICE OF GOVERNOR TIM PAWLENTY

Commission on Judicial Selection

130 State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Saint Paul, MN 55155

APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

An attorney may become a judge by being elected or appointed by the Governor. Appointed judges must stand for election district-wide in the next general election that is more than one year after the swearing-in date (Minnesota Constitution Article VI, Section 8). An elected judge's term is six years.

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI, Section 8 also directs the Governor to fill all judicial seats that are vacated prior to the completion of a judge's elected term. Minnesota Statutes 480B.01 (1990) created the Commission on Judicial Selection (also called the Commission).

The Commission on Judicial Selection solicits candidates, evaluates and makes recommendations to the Governor for vacancies that occur on the District Court bench and on the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. The Commission is not mandated to make recommendations to the Governor for vacancies on the Appellate Courts or the Tax Court.

The procedure the Commission will use in recommending judicial candidates is set forth below:

- I. The Commission will announce all judicial vacancies after they are certified by the Supreme Court and specify a deadline for application. Announced vacancies will be posted on the Governor's website, www.governor.state.mn.us.
- A. An attorney wishing to apply may request an application by writing to Ronald J. Schutz, Chair of the Commission on Judicial Selection, at 130 State Capitol, St. Paul, MN 55155, by calling John Hultquist, Director of Judicial Appointments at 651-296-0019, or via e-mail at john.hultquist@state.mn.us.
- B. The application is five (5) pages. Also included in the application packet of materials are four authorization release forms that are used to make inquiries should the applicant become a finalist. These are made with the Department of Revenue, Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Lawyer's Professional Responsibility Board, and Clerk of the Supreme Court. Applicants who are, or have been a judicial officer, such as a court referee, are also sent an authorization release form for the Board on Judicial Standards. A Demographic Data Sheet is also included with the application materials to be completed by the applicant for statistical purposes (M.S. § 480B.01, subd.12).
- C. Applications and letters of recommendations are kept on file for two years. Each vacancy for which an applicant wishes to be considered, the applicant must submit an application.

- D. All judicial applicant data is classified as private.
- II. The Commission is directed to search out likely candidates for judicial appointment.
 - A. The Commission shall actively seek and encourage qualified individuals, including women and minorities, to apply for judicial offices. (M.S. § 480B.01, subd. 7). The Commission shall evaluate the extent to which candidates have the following qualifications for judicial office: integrity, maturity, health (if job related), judicial temperament, legal knowledge, ability, experience, and community service.
 - B. An applicant must be a resident of the judicial district for which she or he applies. There are ten judicial districts made up of the 87 Minnesota counties, as shown on the attached map.
- III. The Commission receives and reviews judicial applications and letters of recommendation written on behalf of those applicants.
 - A. All candidates must complete an application. Applicants may include attachments or a résumé with the application. Applicants submit an original application plus 13 copies of the application and any attachments on or prior to the application deadline date for the vacancy. Attachments should be stapled to the application. While not mandatory, it is helpful for Commission members for applicants to attach a photograph of the applicant to the original and the copies of the application. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged.
 - B. The signed authorization release forms must be submitted at the time of application. Release forms should be stapled to the back of the original application. Applicants should NOT copy the release forms as they are only submitted to the investigating agencies in the event that an applicant becomes a finalist. The completed demographic data form may be included with the original application or may be sent under separate cover anonymously. Applicants should NOT attach copies of the demographic data form to copies of the application.
 - C. All recommendations for judicial applicants should be made in writing and directed to the attention of the Chair and sent via U.S. Mail to the Governor's office address, or via e-mail to john.hultquist@state.mn.us. The Commission asks for **no more than 12-15 letters of recommendation per candidate**. Letters of recommendation will be made available to the members of the Commission on Judicial Selection.
 - D. The Commission will review the applications and letters of recommendation and determine which applicants will be semi-finalists and afforded personal interviews.

- IV. Individual Commission members are not to meet with applicants for the purpose of a telephone or personal interview prior to the actual meeting of the Commission.
- A. Interviews of the semi-finalists will be conducted on the day of the Commission meeting. The applicants who are selected to interview will meet with the nine at-large members of the Commission and the four district members from the judicial district in which the vacancy will be filled.
- B. The members of the Commission include four district members who serve where there is a vacancy in their judicial district, plus the nine at-large members. Membership includes attorneys and non-attorneys. A list of Commission members is available upon request, or can be found on the Governor's website at www.governor.state.mn.us.
- C. On the day of the meeting the Commission will:
1. Personally interview semi-finalists.
 2. Discuss each semi-finalist.
 3. Vote by secret ballot on three to five finalists for each judicial vacancy to be recommended to the Governor.
- V. The Commission will publish the list of finalists, which will also be posted on the Governor's website.
- VI. After the confidential inquiries are completed, the Chair of the Commission on Judicial Selection and the Judicial Appointments Coordinator present the finalists to the Governor. The Governor has the option to personally interview finalists. The Governor may fill the vacancy from the nominees presented by the Commission. If the Governor declines to select a nominee to fill the vacancy from the list of nominees, the Governor may select a person to fill the vacancy without regard to the Commission's recommendation.
- VII. No applicant or individual on behalf of or in opposition to any applicant should make direct personal, telephonic or written contact with members of the Commission regarding any judicial application during the period between the announcement of a judicial vacancy and the Governor's announcement of appointment. All inquiries or communication with the Commission should be in writing to Ronald J. Schutz, Chair of the Commission on Judicial Selection, 130 State Capitol, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155, by telephone to John Hultquist, Director of Judicial Appointments, at 651-296-0019, or by e-mail to john.hultquist@state.mn.us.

