



HRD | HUMAN
RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT



Municipal Court Judge Appointments

Presentation to Public Safety Committee | July 2021

Purpose



- December 31, 2021 – Term expiration of current judges within Municipal Court
 - Presiding Judge
 - Associate Judges
 - Judge of the Downtown Community Court
 - Substitute Judges
- Presentation outlines the steps in reappointing or appointing Municipal Court Judges

Qualifications



- Judges must:
 - Live in the city limits the two (2) years prior to application
 - Have two (2) years' experience in the practice of law in the State of Texas
 - Be in good standing with the state bar
 - Be a U.S. Citizen

Process



- Ask sitting judges for a letter of interest
 - Confirm judges continue to meet qualifications for the position
 - Judges indicate which position they prefer – Associate, Substitute, Night Magistrate
- Evaluate potential vacancies
- Presiding Judge identifies members of a Judicial Review Panel to recommend to the PSC
- Human Resources Department posts vacancies
- Judicial Review Panel reviews letters of interest from sitting judges and applications for vacant positions
- Judicial Review Panel recommends judges to the Public Safety Committee
- Public Safety Committee recommends judges to the City Council
- City Council appoints judges to a four year term – January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2025

Judicial Review Panel

- Judicial Review Panel contacted by presiding Judge and confirmed by the Public Safety Committee
- Include individuals from:
 - Misdemeanor prosecutor (City or County Attorney)
 - Local Attorney criminal Justice reform advocate(s)
 - Staff Attorney, Travis County Courts at Law
- Potential members from Attorney Member/Board:
 - Austin Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
 - Capital Area Private Defender's Service
 - Travis County Women Lawyers Association
 - Travis Council Bail Bond Board
 - Austin Asian Bar Association
 - Austin Black Lawyers' Association
 - Hispanic Bar Association of Austin
 - LGBT Section of Austin Bar Association
 - Criminal law section of Austin Bar Association
 - Austin Young Lawyers' Association



Timeline 2021



Week/Date	Task
July 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal Court/Human Resources Department (HRD) updates Public Safety Committee (PSC) on the Judicial process• Reviews the Judicial Review Panel with the PSC
July 26 – August 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal Court collects letters of intent from current judges, compile mid- and end- of term evaluations; creates files for each judge including evaluations and other pertinent information• Assemble Judicial Review Panel (JRP)
August 9 – September 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRD begin formal advertisement• Positions posted on niche websites, social media, and with local bar and criminal defense organizations
September 8 – 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRD screens applications• Meeting with JRP is scheduled to review applications and letters of intent

Timeline 2021 Continued



Week/Date	Task
Week of September 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HRD hosts screening session with JRP<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JRP screens and ranks the top qualified applicants• JRP recommends the individuals to meet with the panel• HRD coordinates scheduling all candidates, including current Judges
Week of October 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JRP conducts interviews and recommends top candidates for Public Safety Committee approval
November 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PSC reviews hiring recommendation from JRP;• PSC can offer to meet with any sitting Judge not recommended for appointment who requests to meet• Select JRP members are available to discuss recommendations with PSC• PSC recommends candidates to the City Council for approval
November 18 or December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City Council approves judges for new term• Law drafts ordinance



Applicant Screening



- The Judicial Review Panel will designate candidates as
 - Not Qualified
 - Qualified
 - Highly Qualified
- Qualified and Highly Qualified will move forward to the Interview Panel
- Public Safety Committee will receive copies of applications and comments from the Judicial Review Panel

Interview Panel



- Judicial Review Panel will serve as the interview panel
- Interview panel will use a matrix to rank candidates based on:
 - Legal Knowledge
 - Fairness
 - Preparation, attentiveness, and potential judicial temperament
- The panel will rank the candidates and provide comments and recommendations to the Public Safety Committee

Public Safety Committee Recommendation



- Public Safety Committee will review the recommendation from the Judicial Review Panel
- The Public Safety Committee may accept the recommendation or conduct additional interviews



HRD

HUMAN
RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT

Questions?

