



Administrative Policies
And Procedures
Tennessee Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts

SSL

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Effective Date: *5/1/2016*

Supersedes:
11/01/01

OST

Approved by: Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee and Deborah Taylor Tate, AOC director

Subject: Continuing Legal Education for Appellate Court Staff Attorneys, Law Clerks and Capital Case Attorneys

- I. Authority: T.C.A. § 16-3-502, 16-3-803, Supreme Court Rule 21
- II. Purpose: To establish guidelines for authorizing and paying for Continuing Legal Education (hereinafter referred to as "CLE") for appellate court staff attorneys, law clerks and capital case attorneys. It is the intent for CLE requirements to be obtained by law clerks and staff attorneys by first attending Administrative Office of the Courts (hereinafter referred to as "AOC") produced trainings either live or via pre-recorded sessions available online. It is also the intent that a maximum of 15 hours of CLE will be obtained each year, as required by Supreme Court Rule 21.
- III. Application: All appellate court staff attorneys, law clerks and capital case attorneys whose salary is paid in whole out of the state treasury.
- IV. Definitions: None.
- V. Policy: All appellate court staff attorneys, law clerks and capital case attorneys (hereinafter referred to as "attorney(s)") shall complete CLE requirements in compliance with the regulations and guidelines of this administrative policy.
- VI. Procedures:
 - A. Application Process
 1. Prior Written Request – Should the supervising judge determine that it is beneficial for an attorney to attend a CLE program that is not produced or sponsored by the AOC because it involves an extraordinary issue that is before the court or is expected to come before the court, the supervising judge shall make a written request for the attorney to travel to or attend an education conference at least six (6) weeks prior to the date of the course. Requests must be sent to the Education Manager at the AOC for approval by the AOC director.
 2. Approval – The AOC will notify the judge in writing whether the request has been approved or denied. If approved, the attorney will be given additional instructions regarding travel arrangements.

B. Reimbursement Procedure

1. The state will pay for required annual CLE requirements subject to available funds. Note: It is the intent for CLE requirements to be obtained by law clerks and staff attorneys by first attending AOC produced trainings either live or via pre-recorded sessions available online. It is also the intent that a maximum of 15 hours of CLE will be obtained each year, as required by Supreme Court Rule 21.
2. Local Programs: It is the primary intent of this program to afford attorneys the opportunity to attend AOC produced CLE programs or local CLE programs at state expense. These programs should be considered in order to reduce the total cost of such programs. The AOC will reimburse the attorney for his/her registration fees and pay his/her CLE fee charged by the Commission on Continuing Legal Education.
3. Out-of-Town Programs: When AOC produced or local programs are not available or upon written request of the supervising judge for good cause shown and with the prior approval of the AOC director, attorneys who travel to another city to attend CLE programs will be reimbursed for their registration fees for the CLE program. Attorneys shall apply for scholarships or for any reduced tuition opportunities if available and shall document efforts to do so. They also may be reimbursed for travel expenses, in keeping with the Judicial Travel Regulations in effect at the time the travel is incurred, and subject to the availability of funds. Travel shall be at the least expensive rates and at no time will there be reimbursement for first class flights.
4. Certification of Attendance & Reimbursement Procedures: Upon completion of the program, certification of attendance must be provided to the Education Manager at the AOC, along with any reimbursement claim. Expenses will not be paid without proof of course attendance.
5. The AOC director may grant exemptions and allow exceptions from these policies and guidelines when deemed appropriate and necessary. Any appeal of the AOC director's decision shall be to the Chief Justice.