



TENNESSEE JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION

Summary of the Nomination Process and Instructions for Application Questionnaire

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY QUALIFICATIONS FOR JUDICIAL POSITIONS:

The Judicial Nominating Commission nominates individuals to fill vacancies in the appellate and trial courts. T.C.A. § 17-4-101, *et. seq.* The residency requirements for these positions are both constitutional and statutory.

Supreme Court judges must be residents of the state for five years before their election. Tenn. Const., Art. VI, Sec. 3; T.C.A. § 16-3-101(c). No more than two members of the Supreme Court may reside in any one of the grand divisions of the state. Tenn. Const., Art. VI, Sec. 2; T.C.A. § 16-3-101. Each candidate shall reside in the grand division for which the candidate is elected and the two at large judges cannot reside in the same grand division. T.C.A. § 16-3-101(b). A judge of the Supreme Court shall be thirty-five (35) years of age. T.C.A. § 17-1-101.

Judges of inferior courts, which include the intermediate appellate courts and state trial courts, must have been residents of the state for five years before their election and of the circuit or district for one year before their election. Tenn. Const., Art. VI, Sec. 4; T.C.A. § 16-4-102; T.C.A. § 16-5-102. Of the twelve judges of the Court of Appeals and Court of Criminal Appeals, no more than four may reside in one grand division. T.C.A. § 16-4-102 and T.C.A. § 16-5-102. Each state court judge and chancellor must reside in the judicial district for which the judge or chancellor is elected. T.C.A. § 17-1-102. Each judge shall be at least thirty (30) years of age. T.C.A. § 17-1-101. Each judge shall be licensed to practice law. T.C.A. §§ 16-4-102 and 16-5-102.

2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING APPLICATION FORM

a. Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-4-101 charges the Judicial Nominating Commission with assisting the Governor and the People of Tennessee in finding and appointing the best qualified candidates for judicial offices in this State. Please consider the Commission's responsibility in answering the questions in this application questionnaire.

b. Please read the introduction and instructions on the first page of the application questionnaire.

c. Please type all answers. The application is available in word processing format on the Administrative Office of the Courts' website: <http://www.tncourts.gov/>

d. Please answer all application questions completely. If a question does not apply, type "Not applicable" in the space provided. If information is not available, type "Not available" and state your reason(s) for the unavailability.

e. The original application form should be unbound and printed only on one side of the paper. Any attachments should be copied front and back. You must submit nine (9) paper copies of the application and these copies should be submitted stapled or bound, including any supplemental pages, and copied front and back, including all attached pages. (Please make sure you attach any supplemental information to each copy of the application form.) You must also submit one (1) electronic copy of the complete application, preferably in Portable Document Format (.pdf) or TIFF format.

f. Applications and questions must be submitted to:

Judicial Nominating Commission
c/o Administrative Office of the Courts
ATTN: Sarah Bradley
Suite 600, Nashville City Center
511 Union Street
Nashville, TN 37219
(615) 741-2687

g. Application packages are public record once they are filed with the Administrative Office of the Courts.

3. SUMMARY OF THE NOMINATION PROCESS

a. Tenn. Code Ann. § 17-4-101 et seq. requires at least one public meeting/hearing at which the Judicial Nominating Commission considers the applicants for the judicial nominations to the Governor. The date, time, and location of the public meeting of the Commission will normally be given in the notice of the vacancy, but may be given in a separate notice. You may visit the website of the Administrative Office of the Courts or call Sarah Bradley at the Administrative Office of the Courts to check the time and location of the public meeting. The meeting is open to the public and the public may arrange through the Administrative Office of the Courts to submit oral or written statements concerning individual applicants.

b. Applicants and those supporting the applicants may contact the Judicial Nominating Commission members personally. The contact information for the members of the Judicial Nominating Commission may be found at:

<http://www.tsc.state.tn.us/GENINFO/boards/Judicial%20Nominating%20Commission.pdf>

c. Applicants are notified of the date, time, location, and format of the interview by the Administrative Office of the Courts.

d. Applicants are evaluated in order to fulfill the purposes set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated Title 17, Chapter 4, Part 1, and the Commission has determined that an integral part of fulfilling its statutory duties includes consideration of at least the following criteria: integrity, impartiality, industry, legal knowledge and ability, legal experience, temperament, and public service. This list is not exhaustive. Each applicant should take care to inform the Commission of the individual items that applicant feels best demonstrate the applicant's qualification for the judicial position sought.

e. Applicants eliminated from consideration for nomination are notified as soon as possible after that decision is made.

f. Normally, the names of three (3) nominees are submitted to the Governor for each vacancy. The nominees are listed in alphabetical order without any indication of preference by the commissioners and without any matching between candidates and vacancies if there are multiple vacancies.

g. The names of nominees forwarded to the Governor are made public by the Judicial Nominating Commission. The application packages of those nominees are also forwarded to the Governor for review by the Governor and the Governor's staff.