

## HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

- Volunteer to serve on nominating and performance commissions at [www.ojpe.org](http://www.ojpe.org).
- Educate yourself about the Colorado retention process and the judges on the ballot.
- Review the blue book that you receive in the mail.
- Vote!

## OUR COURTS MISSION

Our Courts provides nonpartisan information programs to further public knowledge and understanding of the state and federal courts in Colorado.

### More Information:

[www.ourcourtscolorado.org](http://www.ourcourtscolorado.org)

To schedule a presentation or to learn more:  
303-860-1115 or [ourcourts@cobar.org](mailto:ourcourts@cobar.org)



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OUR COURTS  
*Colorado*

**Colorado's Judicial  
Merit Selection System**





## COLORADO'S JUDICIAL MERIT SELECTION SYSTEM

*Over 50 years of choosing judges based on merit. Not Money. Not politics.*

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Three important steps keep us focused on qualifications, not politics.

- 1. Judicial Nominating Commissions—** Nonpartisan, citizen commissions with a majority of non-lawyers review applications and nominate candidates to the governor. The governor selects one of them.

- 2. Judicial Performance and Retention Commissions—** Nonpartisan, citizen commissions with a majority of non-lawyers conduct reviews of each judge's performance, including surveys, interviews, and direct observation. They assess whether the judge treats people fairly, applies the law impartially, and meets performance standards.

- 3. Retention Elections—** After a two-year period of service, and thereafter at regular intervals, each judge stands for retention. This is a nonpartisan election in which the judges do not campaign. The public votes on whether the judge should continue to serve the people of Colorado.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. Who reviews trial court candidates?**
  - In each judicial district, one nonpartisan nominating commission comprised of non-lawyers and lawyers reviews trial court candidates.
- 2. Who reviews Court of Appeals and Supreme Court candidates?**
  - One nonpartisan statewide nominating commission comprised of non-lawyers and lawyers reviews candidates for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.
- 3. What makes a good judge?**
  - Knowledge, experience, skills, character, personality, and other attributes.
- 4. What does the Governor's office do?**
  - Checks state and federal agency records to ensure no law violations.
  - Solicits and receives information about each applicant.
  - Interviews candidates.
  - Appoints one.
- 5. Who gathers information about judges' performance?**
  - Nonpartisan judicial performance commissions comprised of non-lawyers and lawyers evaluate the performance of all Colorado judges.
- 6. How often does each judge appear on a ballot after his or her two-year provisional term?**
  - County Court judges every four years.
  - District Court judges every six years.
  - Court of Appeals judges every eight years.
  - Supreme Court justices every ten years.
- 7. When do we vote on retaining judges?**
  - November of even numbered years.