

# Judicial Excellence



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## RECRUITMENT

The recruitment and retention of highly-qualified judges is essential to the Court's constitutional mission to provide timely, fair, and impartial justice.

Selecting the most qualified applicants for the bench starts with having a large number of exceptional choices. The Idaho Courts continue to experience recruitment challenges for all levels of judgeships. Applicant pools in FY2021 ranged from 26 applicants for two magistrate judge positions in Kootenai County, to five applicants for a magistrate position in Elmore County. Eight people applied for one vacant Supreme Court position.

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

A cornerstone of judicial service involves learning throughout a judge's time on the bench. Judges must stay current on changes to substantive law, procedures, and rules. They must also receive and reflect on feedback on their fairness and impartial decision-making, legal skills, listening and communication skills, leadership and teamwork skills, and case management strategies.

For several years, the Court and the Judicial Council have been working to strengthen the performance of Idaho's judges through evaluation and education. Under the **Judicial Performance Evaluation Program**:

- Attorneys and court professionals complete anonymous feedback surveys about a judge's work.
- The results are compiled into reports for the judge to use in evaluating his or her need for self-improvement, education and well-being.
- Trained facilitator judges conduct courtroom observation, discuss each report's results and identify education resources.
- Three to five judges a month benefit from this program.

In late FY2020, the Idaho Supreme Court temporarily suspended these performance evaluations due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Court began them again at the start of FY2021 for magistrate judges in their 18-month probationary periods; 22 evaluations were conducted for such judges.

All performance evaluations have resumed as of September 2021.

11  
applications  
for each of the 3  
district judges appointed

14  
applications  
for each of the 7  
magistrate judges appointed

