

WHO JUDGES THE JUDGES?

HOW ARE JUDGES ELECTED?

Arizona uses a judicial merit selection and retention system for judges in the Arizona Supreme Court and the Arizona Court of Appeals.

A nonpartisan commissions investigate and examine applicants for judgeship before submitting at least three of the most qualified applicants' names to the Governor for review.

The Governor appoints trial court judges in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties as well as appellate court judges throughout Arizona.

Even though the Governor appoints the judges to their positions, the public has the chance to decide if they remain in office; this is called retention.

Court Levels

Supreme Court:

- Merit selection (Retention election after 6 years)
- Hears appeals of decisions from the Court of Appeals and appeals in Superior Court special cases.

Courts of Appeal:

- Merit selection (Retention election after 6 years)
- Hears and decides cases appealed in Superior Court in three-judge panels.

Superior Court:

- Merit selection or Nonpartisan election of judges (4 year terms)
- Trial courts of general jurisdiction in Arizona

Justices of the Peace:

- Partisan election of judges (4 year terms)
- Trial courts of limited jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases

Judicial Performance Review (JPR)

***JPR is based on general public interaction while on the bench and not a reflection on rulings in domestic or sexual violence cases.*

The JPR is used as an evaluation process to determine if judges who are up for election (retention) meet standards necessary to be a fair and effective judge.

The Arizona Commission on Judicial Performance Review is made up of 34 individuals who are members of the community, attorneys, and judges.

The JPR Commission uses information from the public to decide whether judges on the ballot **"Meets"** or **"Does Not Meet"** judicial performance standards.



Two-Part Process Review

Surveys are confidentially sent from an independent data center to attorneys, jurors, litigants, witnesses, court staff, and other judges. The Commission also accepts written comments from the public that can be sent



Judges complete self-evaluations on their own performance in the same categories on the survey forms.



Each judge meets with a one public volunteer, one attorney volunteer, and one judge volunteer to create a Conference Team. The Conference Team meets with the judge to review their results in order to improve the judge's performance.

JPR Category Standards

On the surveys, judges are rated and scored as:
Superior-4 points, Very Good-3 points, Satisfactory=2 points,
Poor-1 point, and Unacceptable-0 points in each category.

- ✓ **Legal Ability:** Knowledgeable in deciding cases based on law and legal analysis.
- ✓ **Integrity:** Decisions are not biased. Judge decides cases in a prompt, ethical, and effective manner.
- ✓ **Communication Skills:** Prompt decisions that are clear and understood.
- ✓ **Judicial Temperament:** Judge acts with dignity, courtesy, and patience.
- ✓ **Administrative Performance:** Manages their courtrooms and their office efficiently.

An average score of 2 or less for any category means the judge does not meet the JPR standard. If 25% or more of respondents rate the judge or justice as "unacceptable" or "poor" in any category, the judge does not meet the JPR standard.

The JPR can be found in the AZ 2018 General Election Publicity Pamphlet

<https://azsos.gov/elections/2018-publicity-pamphlet>

Judicial Performance Review Location in Pamphlet

JPR Information.....p. 163

Arizona Supreme Court & Courts of Appeal:

Appellate Courts.....p.164

Trial Courts by County:

Pinal County Superior Court.....p. 167

Pima County Superior Court.....p. 170

Maricopa County Superior Court.....p. 175

**For more information on the JPR Process, visit <https://www.azcourts.gov/jpr/>