



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Candidates for Probate Judge

FROM: Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas
Probate Court Administrator

DATE: July 17, 2020

RE: November 3, 2020 Special Election

This memo is to inform you, as a candidate for probate judge in the upcoming Tuesday, November 3, 2020 election, of the basic requirements for this position and important rules of ethics that govern candidates for the office. In an effort to inform you of the basic requirements for this position, we have posted the following materials on the Probate Court website, ctprobate.gov:

1. *Minimum Standards for Probate Judges* adopted by the Connecticut Probate Assembly and the Probate Court Administrator
2. *The Code of Probate Judicial Conduct*
3. Connecticut General Statutes section 45a-18 (e), which requires that a candidate for probate judge be a member of the Connecticut bar
4. Connecticut General Statutes section 45a-27 and Regulation 26, outlining the training program required for newly elected judges, together with the continuing education requirements for all probate judges
5. Connecticut General Statutes sections 45a-25 and 45a-26 limiting the practice of judges, and the judge's partners and associates, respectively, before Probate Courts
6. Seminar materials from a seminar on campaign ethics, presented by the Connecticut Probate Assembly Ethics Committee
7. User Guides about various areas of Probate Court jurisdiction

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In deciding to run for probate judge, candidates need to be aware of the demanding nature of the position. As identified in the *Minimum Standards for Probate Judges*, the judge needs to devote the necessary time and attention to judicial functions and court operations to ensure effective, efficient and expeditious service.

All courts are required to be open 40 hours per week. While judges are not prohibited from outside employment, candidates should plan to commit the majority of the workweek to court duties. Canon 2 of the Code of Probate Judicial Conduct obligates the judge to perform all the duties of the office in a diligent and prompt manner. The Code further provides that a judge's judicial duties must take precedence over all other activities.

Newly elected judges are required to participate in an intensive 40-hour training program. The schedule is as follows: the first educational program has been scheduled for 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, November 6, 2020. Five additional all-day seminars will be scheduled early in 2021 before the judge takes office. All of these seminars are conducted at this office. Attendance at these seminars is mandatory for newly elected judges.

In addition, the continuing judicial education requirements under the statutes and Regulation 26 mandate that the judges maintain their skills by earning 15 hours of credit each year. All 15 hours must be earned by the personal attendance of the judge at courses of approved continuing education instruction. Eight of these hours must be sponsored by the Probate Court Administrator or the Connecticut Probate Assembly.

Lastly, candidates should pay particular attention during the election process to Canon 4 of the Code, which relates to political activities and campaign fundraising. The campaign ethics seminar on the website provides further guidance on these rules.

We would be pleased to answer more specific questions about the role and the responsibilities of a judge of probate. Feel free to contact me or Chief Counsel Bonnie Bennet.