



**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**  
**JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE**

**FROM: KRYSTLE TADESSE, CHAIRPERSON**

**RE: JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Judicial Nominating Commission (“Commission”) solicits and reviews applications from candidates for judgeships in Rhode Island. Pursuant to *R.I. Gen. Laws* § 8-16.1-2, the Commission is directed to submit to the Governor a list of three to five highly qualified candidates for each vacancy. The Governor then nominates a candidate from this list, subject to the advice and consent of the legislature.

**A. APPLICATION PROCESS**

The application process is as follows:

- When the Governor notifies the Commission of a judicial vacancy (or prospective vacancy), we advertise the opening in the *Providence Journal*, *Rhode Island Lawyers’ Weekly*, *Nuevos Horizontes* and online for *Providence En Español* as well as with the Rhode Island Bar Association, to solicit inquiries from prospective candidates.
- The initial public notice directs interested candidates to the Commission website ([www.jnc.ri.gov](http://www.jnc.ri.gov)) and the link “Begin Application Process”. There a prospective candidate will submit contact information so that the Commission can forward a secure link to be used to upload the completed application materials.
- The application materials consist of a Personal Data Questionnaire, Personal Financial Statement, Curriculum Vitae, Federal and State Income Tax Returns for the most recent three years and the MCLE Record. The Personal Data Questionnaire and form of Financial Statement are available on the Commission website.
- Once a candidate has submitted all required application materials, **they must notify the Commission Legal Assistant by email**. Candidates should note that they can access their folder to confirm that all of their application materials have been uploaded properly and placed into the correct file after they are uploaded. A candidate’s application will not be considered until the Commission Legal Assistant has received the confirmation email from the candidate.

**NOTE: Applications must be submitted electronically. No paper application materials will be accepted. The Commission also strongly prefers that all Letters of Recommendation are submitted via email.**

**B. SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES**

After the application period closes and the Commission members have had the opportunity to review the submissions, the Commission will meet to consider the applications and decide which candidates it will interview. A portion of this meeting is typically conducted in closed session, for any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of the applicants. *See R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)*. Any candidate who prefers that all discussion about their application be held in open session must notify the Commission in writing. After the meeting, the Commission will notify the chosen interviewees of the date and time of their interviews. All interviews are conducted in open session, however, to the extent that confidential information will be discussed, the Commission may hold those portions of the interview in closed session at the discretion of the Commission or at the request of the interviewee. *See Judicial Nominating Commission Uniform Rule of Procedures 1.3(B)*.

Once the Commission has compiled a list of interviewees, a copy of this list is forwarded to the Rhode Island State Police, the Rhode Island Ethics Commission, the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, each of which conducts a background check and reports the results of those checks to the Commission. After receiving completed background checks, the Commission may meet again in closed session, for any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of the applicants. *See R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1)*.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT AND INTERVIEWS**

Prior to the interviews, the Commission schedules a public meeting to receive comment about the applicants under consideration. This public meeting is noticed in accordance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Law and each applicant is notified in writing of the date and time of the meeting. The Commission also welcomes the submission of written comment concerning the applicants.

After the completion of the public comment session, the Commission conducts the interviews in open session. As previously noted, pursuant to *Judicial Nominating Commission Uniform Rule of Procedures 1.3(B)*, portions of the interview where confidential information would be discussed may be held in closed session at the discretion of the Commission or at the request of the interviewee. Following the interviews, the Commission may deliberate in closed session to discuss the various candidates. Thereafter, the Commission votes in open session on the candidates under consideration. At the completion of the vote, the Commission transmits to the Governor's office a list of three to five highly qualified candidates for the vacancy.

**D. DIVERSITY DATA**

***Rhode Island General Laws § 8-16.1-4(b) provides in relevant part that the Commission shall report to the General Assembly and to the Governor on (i) the statistics regarding the race, ethnicity and gender of applicants considered by the Commission.***

The Judicial Nomination Commission has a legal opinion that it must request diversity data on a voluntary basis from the applicants and this data must be collected anonymously.

The relevant statute requires that the Commission produce an annual report on its efforts to encourage diversity within the judiciary in Rhode Island. This report will be sent to the Governor and the General Assembly and will be made available to the public on the Commission's website. If you wish to voluntarily participate in the collection of this data, which is strongly encouraged, please answer the questions on the Voluntary Supplement to the Personal Data Questionnaire on the Commission's website and return it to the Commission: Rhode Island Judicial Nominating Commission, c/o Laura Jeanne Verdecchia, Locke Lord LLP, 2800 Financial Plaza, Providence, Rhode Island 02903.

If you have any additional questions about the application and selection process, please contact the Legal Assistant for the Judicial Nominating Commission, **Laura Jeanne Verdecchia at (401) 455-7611.**