

STATE OF ILLINOIS
CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

ASSOCIATE JUDGE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans
Presiding Judge Paul P. Biebel, Jr.
Presiding Judge Mary Ellen Coghlan
Administrative Presiding Judge Sophia H. Hall
Presiding Judge Moshe Jacobius



Presiding Judge Raymond L. Jagielski
Presiding Judge Marjorie C. Laws
Presiding Judge William O. Maki
Presiding Judge Edmund Ponce de León
Presiding Judge Shelley Sutker-Dermer
Presiding Judge E. Kenneth Wright, Jr.

FACT SHEET ON ASSOCIATE JUDGE SELECTION PROCESS

- The circuit courts in Illinois have circuit judges and associate judges. Circuit judges are elected by voters in general primaries and elections; associate judges are “appointed” by a vote of the circuit judges within a circuit.
- The associate judge selection process is conducted according to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 39 (b), “Appointment of Associate Judges,” which explains how all Illinois circuit courts must fill vacancies in the office of associate judge.
- After five consecutive vacancies in the office of associate judge have accumulated in a circuit, the Chief Judge is required to begin the associate judge selection process to fill vacancies. It is not an option.
- A Nominating Committee is selected by the Chief Judge and is made up of the Chief Judge and at least two but no more than 10 judges.
- In the Circuit Court of Cook County, the Chief Judge selects the committee members and then submits their names to the circuit judges for approval.
- The Committee selects the candidates from among the lawyers who submitted applications.
- The Nominating Committee must select twice as many qualified candidates as there are vacancies to be filled.
- The Chief Judge must then notify the Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts of the names of the candidates selected by the Committee and request the Director to begin the balloting process.
- Within 14 days after the Chief Judge’s notification, the AOIC Director mails a secret ballot with the names of the candidates to each circuit judge.
- The judges then vote for one candidate for each vacancy to be filled. There are currently 255 circuit judges eligible to vote.
- The judges must return the ballots to the AOIC Director within 14 days of the date the ballots were distributed.
- The AOIC Director then counts the ballots, which are accompanied by a signed card, tabulates the results and certifies them to the Chief Judge, at all times maintaining the secrecy of the ballots.
- The candidates receiving the most votes fill the vacancies.

Rule 39 can be found at http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/SupremeCourt/Rules/Art_I/ArtI.htm#39.