

CHIEF JUDGE DIRECTIVE  
25-01  
(ATTACHMENT)

**146. ROTATION OF JUDICIAL ASSIGNMENTS (AMENDED JANUARY 10, 2025)**

1. Factors Applicable to Judicial Rotation and Divisional Assignments

- a. Judicial Rotation shall occur on an annual basis as of August 1. Prior to rotation, the Chief Judge shall request that all judges who will have a minimum of two years in a present assignment as of August 1 submit their rotation requests for consideration.
- b. The standard length of service in a division shall normally be four years for a judge who has completed a full six-year term in office. The Chief Judge may approve a longer or shorter period of service in a division if in the best interests of the First Judicial District.
- c. To the extent possible, depending upon the needs of the First Judicial District, service in a division shall normally be for two to three years for a judge who has not yet completed a full six-year term in office in order to provide newer judges the opportunity to experience more divisional assignments.
- d. All divisional assignments are subject to the approval of the Chief Judge based on the best interests of the First Judicial District.
- e. In the exercise of discretion, the Chief Judge will take into consideration: seniority, background, expertise, judicial preferences, supervisory roles, available statistics, stakeholder feedback, and any other pertinent information in maintaining an efficient, effective, and just placement of the judiciary throughout the divisions.

2. Seniority

- a. A judicial seniority list shall be prepared and maintained by the Chief Judge. Placement on the list shall be determined by the overall length of continuous service as a trial judge, member of the Court of Appeals, or justice of the Supreme Court.
- b. Continuity of service shall not be lost for service in the military, sick leave, parental leave, or a period of suspension. However, no credit shall accrue for a period of suspension. The continuous service of a judge shall not be considered interrupted for purposes of this rule if the judge returns to the bench within three years after retirement, defeat in an election, or

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voluntary resignation from office. No credit will be given for any period of time out of office.

- c. Two or more persons commencing service as a circuit judge on the state payroll on the same day have equal seniority; however, if preference must be decided between two persons of equal seniority, it shall be determined by lot on the first such occasion, and subsequently by turn.

**3. Calendar Assignments Within Each Division**

- a. The Chief Judge shall determine and prepare the list of calendar assignments for each division.
- b. Judicial assignments to open calendars shall initially be made on the basis of overall seniority of the incoming judge(s) and subject to final approval of the Chief Judge.

**4. Problem-Solving Court Assignments**

- a. Problem-solving court is defined as a court that works collaboratively across multiple disciplines and uses various interventions to treat individuals while holding them accountable for their criminal actions.
- b. Problem-solving court assignments shall be designated by the Chief Judge based on the specialized knowledge, training, experience, and procedures required to effectively preside over those courts in the best interests of the First Judicial District.
- c. Problem-solving court assignments shall normally be for no less than two years. The Chief Judge may approve a longer or shorter period of service in the assignment if in the best interests of the First Judicial District.

**5. Small Claims Court**

- a. Assignment to the Small Claims Calendar shall normally be for a period one year. No judge should have to serve more than one year as the Small Claims judge unless that judge volunteers to do so and no other judge requests the assignment.

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- b. A judge who has served in Small Claims Court in the past should not be obligated to serve a second time if there is any judge in the Civil Division who has not been assigned to Small Claims Court. The "least overall seniority" provisions of this Rule (set forth in Section 2) apply if judges in the same rotation class with more seniority do not request the Small Claims assignment.
- c. At the time of rotation, the judge who is rotating into the Civil Division who has the least overall seniority as a judge and who has not previously served in Small Claims Court, shall be assigned to Small Claims Court. This position entails serving a one-year assignment to the civil branch designated as the Small Claims Judge.
- d. If no new judge rotates into the Civil Division who has not been previously assigned to the Small Claims Court, then the civil judges with three or more years of service in the division who have not been previously assigned to the Small Claims Court will be evaluated and the judge with the lowest seniority will be assigned as the Small Claims Judge. If all of the civil judges with three or more years of service in the division have previously been assigned to the Small Claims Court, then the civil judge in the division with the least seniority who has not previously been assigned to the Small Claims Court will be assigned as the Small Claims Judge. If there is no new or current judge in the Civil Division who has not been previously assigned to the Small Claims Court, the assignment shall be made by the Chief Judge in the best interests of the First Judicial District.
- e. In the alternative to the above, if a judge requests assignment to Small Claims only, as opposed to the Civil Division, the Chief Judge may approve that request if in the best interests of the First Judicial District. In this case, Small Claims Court would then be a two year assignment, subject to normal divisional reassignment thereafter.
- f. Assignment as the Small Claims Judge is subject to final approval of the Chief Judge.

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**6. Courtroom Assignments**

- a. Courtroom assignments generally follow calendar assignments.
- b. Courtroom assignments shall be made among vacant courtrooms taking into consideration the security needs of the First Judicial District, the grouping of similar calendars within a division, and the overall seniority of each judge. If a calendar requires the use of a particular courtroom, prioritization of courtroom assignment will be given to the specific calendar.
- c. It is the stated policy of the First Judicial District to discourage judges who are not subject to rotation from changing courtroom assignments.
- d. The Chief Judge shall approve all courtroom assignments in the best interests of the First Judicial District.

**7. Interim Vacancies**

- a. An interim vacancy is one that occurs at any time other than the August 1 Rotation. All interim vacancies will be filled by the Chief Judge in the best interests of the First Judicial District.
- b. To be eligible to rotate into an interim vacancy, whenever possible, a judge should have a minimum of two years in a present assignment.