



# THE SELECTION, APPOINTMENT, AND REAPPOINTMENT OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGES

THE SELECTION,  
APPOINTMENT,  
AND  
REAPPOINTMENT  
OF UNITED STATES  
MAGISTRATE  
JUDGES

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# INTRODUCTION

The Judicial Services Office (JSO) of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) produced this publication to assist district courts and members of merit selection panels in carrying out their responsibilities in the selection, appointment, and reappointment of United States magistrate judges. The publication aims to familiarize panel members with the role of magistrate judges in the federal court system; explains the statute and regulations governing the selection, appointment, and reappointment of magistrate judges; suggests procedures the panel might follow in performing its duties; and offers advice to courts undergoing the selection, appointment, and reappointment processes. The Judicial Conference Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System (the Magistrate Judges Committee) has reviewed and provided feedback to the AO on the advice and recommendations provided.

The Federal Magistrate Act of 1979 (Pub. L. No. 96-82; 93 Stat. 643) established certain minimum standards and procedures for the selection, appointment, and reappointment of United States magistrate judges, which are codified at [28 U.S.C. § 631](#). In accordance with § 631(b)(5), the Judicial Conference of the United States has promulgated the Regulations of the Judicial Conference of the United States Establishing Standards and Procedures for the Appointment and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges (hereinafter, the regulations). The regulations are contained in the [Guide to Judiciary Policy \(Guide\), Vol. 3, Ch. 4](#) (reproduced at Appendix K and available on the judiciary's intranet site (JNet)).<sup>1</sup>

While the statute and regulations set out the basic rules for courts and panels to follow, they nonetheless extend a large degree of freedom and discretion to the district courts and to the merit selection panels to carry out their missions. This publication delineates the rules and procedures that must be followed, and also provides guidance on those areas where the courts and panels retain discretion. In many instances, the court itself is in the best position to determine the best approach, and members of the panels should heed any instructions and suggestions from the court.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the sources hyperlinked in the electronic version of this publication are only available on a device connected to the judiciary's private network. Where possible, links are to publicly available materials.

Many factors influence the selection, appointment, or reappointment methods a court may choose to employ. The roles and duties of magistrate judges vary considerably from court to court, and vary within courts depending on whether the position is for a part-time magistrate judge or a full-time magistrate judge. As such, each district court and merit selection panel should gear the selection process to the specific magistrate judge position under consideration and should focus on the nature and volume of work to be performed by the magistrate judge. **Throughout the publication, requirements and suggestions pertaining solely to part-time magistrate judge positions are in bold.**

The procedures for the appointment of a new magistrate judge and the reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge also differ considerably. For appointment of a new magistrate judge, the panel must identify five members of the bar who are the best qualified for appointment by the court as magistrate judge. For reappointment, the panel's role is to appraise the performance of the incumbent magistrate judge and to recommend whether the court should reappoint the judge to a new term of office.

The procedures for the reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge are discussed in [Chapter 13](#). A court or panel considering a reappointment should not restrict itself to review of that chapter alone, however, since the other chapters may help inform deliberations.

The Magistrate Judges Committee and the Judicial Resources Committee encourage all courts to continue efforts to promote diversity in all aspects of the magistrate judge recruitment and selection process. This includes selection of diverse merit selections panels, wide dissemination of vacancy notices and other efforts to reach a broad array of applicants, especially those from underrepresented groups, and ensuring that panel members are aware of their responsibilities to "make an affirmative effort to identify and give due consideration to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, age (40 and over), gender, religion, national origin or disability."

*Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.30.30(d).

Questions about the policies and procedures for magistrate judge selection, appointment, and reappointment may be directed to JSO staff by calling 202-502-1800 or emailing [AOdb\\_AO\\_Duty\\_Attorney@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:AOdb_AO_Duty_Attorney@ao.uscourts.gov).

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# CHAPTER 1

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## The Office of United States Magistrate Judge

A United States magistrate judge is a judicial officer of the district court, appointed by majority vote of the district judges of the court. A full-time magistrate judge is appointed for a term of eight years; **a part-time magistrate judge is appointed for a term of four years.**

28 U.S.C. § 631(e).

Full-time magistrate judges are entitled to office space, access to a courtroom, and support staff. *See Guide*, Vol. 16, Ch. 2; *Guide*, Vol. 12, § 615.50. **Office space and courtroom access may be provided to part-time magistrate judges if it is available and if the part-time magistrate judge's caseload is sufficient to justify obtaining such space.** *See Guide*, Vol. 16, Ch. 2. Part-time magistrate judges generally are not provided with support staff, but they may be reimbursed for hiring their own staff and other office expenses incurred in connection with their magistrate judge duties, or they may elect to receive clerk's office support through the district clerk's staffing allocation. *Guide*, Vol. 3, Ch. 13.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The office of United States magistrate judge traces its roots to the United States commissioner system—dating back to 1793. The federal courts used commissioners to try petty offense cases committed on federal property, to issue search warrants and arrest warrants, to determine bail for federal defendants, and to conduct other initial proceedings in federal criminal cases. In 1968, Congress passed the

Federal Magistrates Act<sup>2</sup> to create a new federal judicial officer who would (1) assume all the former duties of the commissioners and (2) conduct a wide range of judicial proceedings to expedite the disposition of the civil and criminal caseloads of the United States district courts. These duties are discussed more fully in [Chapter 2](#), “The Authority of Magistrate Judges.”

In creating the office of magistrate judge, Congress designed a generalist position to supplement the judicial resources of the district courts and to help courts attract top-quality candidates with broad substantive knowledge and skills. Congress set forth the powers and responsibilities that could be delegated by district court judges to magistrate judges. To achieve maximum flexibility in meeting the needs of each court, however, Congress left the determination of which duties to assign to magistrate judges to the individual courts. As a result of the discretion granted to the courts in utilizing magistrate judges, their duties and responsibilities vary widely from court to court.<sup>3</sup>

The statutes governing the magistrate judges system have been amended on several occasions to improve the administration of the system, to confer greater judicial authority on magistrate judges, and to change the title of the office from “United States magistrate” to “United States magistrate judge.” For additional information, see [A Guide to the Legislative History of the Federal Magistrate Judges System](#) (AO, Sept. 2009).

## CREATION OF MAGISTRATE JUDGE POSITIONS AND FILLING VACANCIES

The Judicial Conference of the United States determines the number and locations of magistrate judge positions, based on recommendations of the appropriate district court, the pertinent circuit judicial council, and the Magistrate Judges Committee. See [28 U.S.C. § 631\(a\)](#). The

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<sup>2</sup> Pub. L. No. 90-578, 82 Stat. 1107 (1968) (codified as amended at 28 U.S.C. §§ 604, 631-639 and 18 U.S.C. §§ 3401-3402).

<sup>3</sup> The Magistrate Judges Committee has recommended certain utilization policies and principles to assist courts in assigning duties to magistrate judges that promote effectiveness, efficiency, and good stewardship of magistrate judge resources while maintaining the hallmark flexibility of the system. The Committee’s [Policies and Principles for Magistrate Judge Utilization](#) are available on JNet.

Judicial Conference may designate a magistrate judge position for service in one or more districts adjoining the district for which the position is authorized. *Id.* Also, upon the concurrence of the chief judges of the districts involved, a magistrate judge may be assigned temporarily to serve in any other district court during an emergency. *Id.* at § 631(f); *see also Guide*, Vol. 3, Ch. 7.

The judges of the district court for the district in which the magistrate judge serves may remove a magistrate judge from office during the term for which he or she is appointed only for incompetency, misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental disability. 28 U.S.C. § 631(i).

When a vacancy is created by removal, retirement, resignation, or death, the court must obtain the approval of both the judicial council of the relevant circuit and the Magistrate Judges Committee before filling the vacancy.<sup>4</sup> Under Judicial Conference policy, all magistrate judge position vacancies are subject to review by the full Magistrate Judges Committee unless the Committee chair decides, based on a recent survey of the relevant district, that the vacancy may be filled without full Committee involvement. If full Committee review is required, a court's request to fill a vacancy will be placed on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting. If the Committee recommends a change in the number, location, arrangements of magistrate judges, or, a change in the salary of a part-time magistrate judge, the position cannot be filled until the Conference takes action.

If a magistrate judge dies or leaves office before the end of his or her term, once the court has received approval to fill the vacancy, the court appoints a successor for a term of eight years (full-time) or four years (part-time), not simply for the remainder of the prior magistrate judge's term. An incumbent magistrate judge may remain in office past the expiration of the term, by a majority vote of the district judges of the appointing court and with the approval of the circuit judicial council, until 180 days after expiration of the term or the date of appointment of a successor, whichever is earlier. 28 U.S.C. § 631(f).

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<sup>4</sup> To assist courts and panels with the process, a suggested timeline for appointment of new magistrate judges is included at Appendix C and on JNet.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As judicial officers of the district courts, United States magistrate judges are subject to the Code of Conduct for United States Judges. *Guide*, Vol. 2A, Ch. 2. Newly appointed judges must arrange their affairs as soon as reasonably possible to comply with the Code and should do so in any event within one year of appointment. **A part-time magistrate judge is also subject to the Code of Conduct for United States Judges but is not required to comply with Canons 4A(4), 4A(5), 4D(2), 4E, 4F, and 4H(3).**

Full-time magistrate judges may not practice law. **Part-time magistrate judges may practice law, but they may not serve as counsel in any criminal action in any federal court. Nor may they serve as counsel in any civil action in the district court for which they are appointed if they are assigned certain civil case duties. They may engage in any other business or employment that does not conflict with the impartial and effective performance of their duties for the court.** The Judicial Conference has adopted Conflict-of-Interest Rules for Part-time Magistrate Judges to specify permissible and prohibited conduct. *Guide*, Vol. 2C, Ch. 11.

*Note: The [Code of Conduct for United States Judges](#) is publicly available on [uscourts.gov](#), and the [Conflict-of-Interest Rules for Part-time Magistrate Judges](#) are available on JNet.*

# CHAPTER 2

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## The Authority of Magistrate Judges

Magistrate judges exercise authority under the jurisdiction of the district court, as delegated by the court's district judges under governing statutory authority and local rules of court. The statutory authority of magistrate judges is found at [28 U.S.C. § 636](#) and [18 U.S.C. § 3401](#). See Appendix J. Other statutory grants of authority to magistrate judges appear throughout the United States Code.

A magistrate judge's duties generally fall into the following categories:

### INITIAL PROCEEDINGS IN CRIMINAL CASES

In criminal proceedings, a magistrate judge may:

1. Accept criminal complaints.
2. Issue arrest warrants and summonses.
3. Issue search warrants.
4. Conduct initial appearance proceedings and detention hearings for criminal defendants, informing them of the charges against them and of their rights.
5. Set bail or other conditions of release or order detention under the Bail Reform Act.
6. Appoint attorneys for defendants who are unable to afford or obtain counsel.

7. Hold preliminary hearings, or “probable cause” hearings.
8. Administer oaths and take bail, acknowledgments, affidavits, and depositions.
9. Conduct extradition proceedings.

## **PRETRIAL MATTERS REFERRED BY DISTRICT JUDGES**

District judges may delegate a wide variety of duties to magistrate judges that will assist the district judges in the speedy and just disposition of civil and criminal cases, including:

1. Hearing and determining any non-dispositive pretrial matter, such as procedural and discovery motions.
2. Hearing dispositive motions (e.g., motions to dismiss, motions for summary judgment, motions for suppression of evidence) and submitting findings and recommended dispositions to a district judge.
3. Reviewing and recommending disposition of social security appeals and prisoner litigation and conducting necessary evidentiary hearings in prisoner cases.
4. Conducting calendar calls, pretrial conferences, and other pretrial case management duties.
5. Conducting settlement conferences and other alternative dispute resolution proceedings.

## **MISDEMEANOR TRIALS**

Federal misdemeanor cases are divided by statute into four categories: Class A misdemeanors, Class B misdemeanors, Class C misdemeanors, and infractions.

A Class A misdemeanor is an offense where the punishment by imprisonment is more than six months but no more than one year. In Class A misdemeanor cases, a magistrate judge may conduct the trial, either with or without a jury, and impose the sentence only with the

defendant's consent and where the defendant has waived the right to adjudication by a district judge. The defendant's consent and waiver may be made in writing or orally on the record.

In Class B misdemeanors, Class C misdemeanors, and infractions—also known as petty offense cases—the maximum punishment by imprisonment varies but may not exceed six months. In all petty offense cases, including cases involving juvenile defendants, a magistrate judge may conduct the trial and impose the sentence without the defendant's consent.

A magistrate judge who is designated to dispose of a misdemeanor case has the authority to invoke federal probation and supervised release laws. A magistrate judge has the power to grant probation and to revoke, modify, or reinstate the probation of any person granted probation by a magistrate judge. 18 U.S.C. § 3401(d). A magistrate judge also has the power to modify, revoke, or terminate supervised release of any person sentenced to a term of supervised release by a magistrate judge. *Id.* at § 3401(h).

## CIVIL TRIALS

All district courts have designated their full-time magistrate judges to exercise civil consent authority. With the litigants' consent and where the case has been referred to a magistrate judge by a district judge, a full-time magistrate judge may conduct the trial, either with or without a jury, and dispose of any federal civil case. In such cases, a magistrate judge presides over the case in lieu of a district judge. In this capacity, a magistrate judge exercises authority to dispose of the case and may order the entry of a final judgment, as well as enter all necessary case related orders that a district judge can enter.

**Section 636(c)(1) of Title 28, United States Code, places restrictions on the ability of parties and courts to allow part-time magistrate judges to exercise consent authority in civil cases. Part-time magistrate judges may try civil cases only where (1) the parties specifically request in writing that a part-time magistrate judge exercise authority in the case, (2) the chief judge has certified that a full-time magistrate judge is not reasonably available, and (3) the judicial council of the circuit has established guidelines for the exercise of civil consent authority by part-time magistrate judges.**

## OTHER DUTIES

A magistrate judge may also be assigned any “additional duties as are not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States.” 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3). District judges rely on this statutory language to refer various matters to magistrate judges that are not specified in other provisions of the statute. For example, many courts use this provision to authorize magistrate judges to conduct guilty plea proceedings in felony cases and jury selection in civil and criminal cases with the defendant’s consent. A magistrate judge may also be called upon to assist the district court in performing administrative duties. The specific duties referred to magistrate judges are often enumerated in standing orders or in the local rules of the district court.

# CHAPTER 3

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## The Qualifications of Magistrate Judges

The qualifications required for appointment or reappointment as a United States magistrate judge are provided in [28 U.S.C. § 631](#) (see Appendix J) and in *Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.10 (see Appendix K).

### BAR MEMBERSHIP

To be eligible for appointment as a magistrate judge, an applicant must be, and have been for at least five years, a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands of the United States. The term “member in good standing” is not defined by statute or by the regulations applicable to magistrate judges. Instead, what constitutes “member in good standing” is governed by the requirements of state law. Several state bars have ruled that “inactive” status qualifies as membership “in good standing.”

**The bar requirements may be waived for a part-time magistrate judge if the appointing court and the Judicial Conference of the United States determine that no qualified individual who is a member of the bar is available to serve at a specific location.**

**28 U.S.C. § 631(b)(1).**

## **EXPERIENCE AS AN ATTORNEY**

An applicant must have actively practiced law for at least five years. The court may consider the following substitute experience, including any combination thereof:

- Experience as a judge of a state court of record or other state judicial officer.
- Experience as a United States magistrate judge, bankruptcy judge, or other federal judicial officer.
- Experience as an attorney for a federal or state agency.
- No more than two years of experience as a law clerk to any judge or judicial officer, or as a staff attorney, or pro se law clerk in a court.
- Other types of substantial legal experience (subsequent to receipt of a law degree or license to practice law) suitable as a substitute in the opinion of the majority of the district judges of the court.

## **AGE**

To be qualified for initial appointment as magistrate judge, an applicant must not be 70 years of age or older at the time of appointment. An incumbent magistrate judge, however, may continue to serve and be reappointed after age 70 upon a majority vote of all district judges of the court, “which is taken upon the magistrate judge’s attaining age seventy and upon each subsequent anniversary thereof.” A magistrate judge already serving in a full-time or part-time position may be appointed to a different full-time or part-time position in the same district after age 70.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO DISTRICT JUDGES**

At the time of the initial appointment, an appointee to a magistrate judge position may not be related by blood or marriage to a judge of the appointing district court within the degree of relationship specified in [28 U.S.C. § 458](#), i.e., “by affinity or consanguinity within the degree of first cousin.”

## RESIDENCY

Magistrate judges are not legally required to reside within the district in which they are appointed. However, by statute, an individual appointed to serve in a national park must reside “within the exterior boundaries of that park, or at some place reasonably adjacent thereto.” 28 U.S.C. § 631(b)(3).

## PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

An appointee to a magistrate judge position must be:

- Competent to perform the duties of the office
- Of good moral character
- Emotionally stable and mature
- Committed to equal justice under the law
- In good health
- Patient
- Courteous
- Capable of deliberation and decisiveness when required to act on his or her own reason and judgment.

## ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A district court may establish additional qualification standards appropriate for a particular magistrate judge position, taking into account the specific responsibilities anticipated for that position. Any additional qualifications, however, may not be inconsistent with the court’s policy as an equal opportunity employer.

## CITIZENSHIP

Federal law requires that all federal employees, including judges, must either be U.S. citizens or fall within certain statutory exceptions. The citizenship requirements of judges and judiciary employees are detailed in *Guide*, Vol. 12, § 515. No law prohibits the appointment of a person with dual citizenship as a magistrate judge.



# CHAPTER 4

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## Public Notice

Whether for an initial appointment of a magistrate judge or reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge, the Judicial Conference regulations require publication of a public notice that will reach a wide audience of qualified applicants or invite comments on the reappointment. *See Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.20.10. The court has substantial discretion regarding where notices are published and for how long. The Committee does recommend, however, that the court consider methods that will attract the greatest number of applicants with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, and encourage applications from all qualified persons without regard to race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age (40 years and over), or disability.

### TIMING OF PUBLICATION

The regulations do not prescribe the minimum amount of time a public notice should be published. The notice should be published for a reasonable time, as determined by the discretion of the court.

Since the regulations specify that the merit selection panel normally must submit its report containing the names of the best-qualified applicants to the court within 90 days of its creation, the court should issue the required public notice before or at the same time it appoints the panel.

## METHOD OF PUBLICATION

As noted above, the public notice must reach a “wide audience.” The court may choose how best to accomplish this objective. Publication through print advertisements is not required. Instead, courts may consider electronic publication of notices, given their ready availability and low cost.

Resources for publication may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a general local newspaper;
- a newspaper with statewide circulation;
- a widely circulated local legal periodical;
- the court’s website;
- state and local bar association websites, including special and affinity bar associations;
- government websites;
- national legal journal websites; or
- other resources relied upon by legal professionals.

The public notice on the court’s website should be easily located and include links to all relevant selection, appointment, and reappointment documents and should highlight all relevant deadlines. In addition, the court is encouraged to send a link to the full public notice to the court’s registered CM/ECF users or to all lawyers authorized to practice in the district.

To encourage applications from all qualified individuals, including those from underrepresented groups, the court is encouraged to transmit the public notice to state and local bar associations and interest groups and should also consider utilizing national publications, such as the judiciary’s public Careers website at <https://www.uscourts.gov/careers> and the [Job Vacancies](#) section of JNet. In addition, after a magistrate judge position vacancy has been announced, members of the court are encouraged to contact bar groups, the United States attorney’s office, the public defender’s office, and individual attorneys, especially

those from diverse backgrounds, to announce the available position and to invite all qualified candidates to consider applying.

Regardless of the resources the court uses to distribute the public notice, a copy of the public notice must be filed and posted in the office of the clerk of court. The court must also provide a copy to the Director of the Administrative Office through the Judicial Services Office.

## **CONTENTS OF NOTICE**

The full public notice must describe the duties of the position to be filled, the qualification standards, and the application procedures, including the name and address of the person to whom applications should be submitted (usually, the clerk of court or court human resources officer). The notice should also state the authorized salary and the term of office. It must specify that applications should be submitted only by the applicant, personally demonstrating that person's willingness to serve if selected by the court. Finally, the notice must include a statement that the magistrate judge selectee must comply with the financial disclosure requirements of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, as amended.

Since potential applicants may wish to obtain additional information about the magistrate judge position to be filled, the court should consider designating the clerk of the court (or other court employee) to respond to all inquiries from the bar and the press concerning the advertised position.

A sample public notice for appointment of a new magistrate judge is included in Appendix A. A sample public notice for a reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge is provided in Appendix E.

In order to publicize more fully the vacancy or reappointment, many courts also post an abbreviated public notice specifying the magistrate judge position and the location of the full public notice. Appendix B contains a sample abbreviated public notice for a vacant or new magistrate judge position, and Appendix F is a sample abbreviated public notice for the reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge.

## COST OF PUBLISHING THE PUBLIC NOTICE

Expenses for publication of public notices of magistrate judge positions should be paid using local court funds. The budget object code for publication of notices/advertising (BOC 2544) is funded as part of the aggregate formula. Because there are no additional allotments to BOC 2544, requirements should be addressed through local reprogramming of funds. Courts with questions about budgeting for public notices should contact their circuit's assigned Budget Analyst or the AO's Budget Division.<sup>5</sup>

## APPLICATION FORM

The public notice should provide information on where to obtain the application form and/or a link to an online application form. The court should use an application form that will elicit information from applicants relating to the qualifications prescribed for the office, but the court is permitted to consider a resume as an alternative. Applicants should be requested to submit copies of their application or resume in sufficient number to provide one for each panel member.

A sample application form is provided at Appendix G and is available for download on the [Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of Magistrate Judges](#) page of JNet.

<sup>5</sup> Contact information is available on JNet at <https://jnet.ao.dcn/resources/service-finder/budget-resources-and-policy-contacts>.

# CHAPTER 5

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## Appointment of the Merit Selection Panel

The court must appoint a merit selection panel for both initial appointments and to consider reappointments of magistrate judges. The district judges of the court must appoint the merit selection panel by a majority vote of the district judges.

To further efforts to achieve diversity in all aspects of the magistrate judge selection process, courts are encouraged to appoint a diverse merit selection panel.

### COMPOSITION OF THE PANEL

The panel must consist of lawyers and other members of the community. Each member must either be a resident of the district or, if a nonresident, have significant ties to the community of the district within which the magistrate judge is to serve.

No active, senior, or recalled federal judges; or retired Article III judges; or other current district court officers or employees may be members of the merit selection panel, **except as set forth below as pertains to the alternative procedures for the appointment and reappointment of part-time magistrate judges whose salaries are less than one-third of a full-time magistrate judge's salary.** This prohibition, however, does not preclude a federal judge or other court officer or employee from advising the panel on procedural matters, the duties of the position, or the qualifications the court is seeking in a magistrate judge candidate. *See also Chapter 7, "Panel Meetings."*

Retired magistrate judges and bankruptcy judges not serving on recall, as well as state judges, may be appointed as members of the panel. United States attorneys, assistant United States attorneys, and federal defenders (including community defenders) and their assistants likewise are not prohibited from serving on panels. While some district courts exclude federal prosecutors and defenders from membership on the merit selection panel, the Magistrate Judges Committee has expressed the view that the matter is best left to local courts' determinations.

The panel must consist of at least seven members—a chair, who exercises duties as assigned by the court, and six other members. As a practical matter, courts should appoint a panel of an odd number of persons to avoid the possibility of tie votes. In the event one or more members of a panel withdraw or become unable to serve, leaving a panel of less than seven members, the court may either replace the member(s) or proceed with a panel of less than seven members.

The panel must include lawyers and at least two non-lawyers. The Magistrate Judges Committee has stated that a lawyer is defined as one who is licensed to practice law. Questions often arise regarding whether a former lawyer or an “inactive” member of the bar is considered a lawyer. Typically, the court is in the best position to determine whether an individual is a lawyer or non-lawyer based on considerations such as whether the person ever practiced law and how long it has been since they left the legal profession, among others.

**In the event that the court is appointing or reappointing a part-time magistrate judge whose salary is less than one-third of a full-time magistrate judge’s salary, alternative procedures apply. In these circumstances, the court may appoint a panel of no fewer than three members. At least two of the panel members must be from outside of the federal judiciary, but federal judges and other district court officers or employees may serve on the panel.**

## ORDER APPOINTING THE PANEL

The panel must be established by an order of the district court. The order must specify the names of the members, whether each individual is a lawyer or a non-lawyer, and the effective date of the panel’s appointment. The Judicial Conference regulations also require that

the order appointing the panel indicate that the panel members have received written notice of a one-year restriction on their ability to qualify for selection as a magistrate judge. *See Chapter 9, “Evaluating the Applicants”* for additional information on the one-year restriction.

The court must send a copy of the order appointing the merit selection panel to the Director of the Administrative Office through the Judicial Services Office at the time it is issued.

The court’s order containing the names of the members of the merit selection panel and whether each is a lawyer or a nonlawyer is a public document and should be made available for inspection upon request. Additional publication of the panel members’ names falls within the discretion of the court. Some district courts post the order establishing the panel on the court’s public website, while others list the members of the merit selection panel by name in the public notice.

## **PANELS TO FILL MULTIPLE POSITIONS AND STANDING PANELS**

Courts may use the same panel to consider applicants for more than one position or for multiple reappointments. Courts may also appoint a standing panel to assist with filling vacant positions and with reappointments as they occur.



# CHAPTER 6

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## Panel Expenses and Support

Panel members are not compensated for their services. They may, however, be reimbursed for travel expenses, including transportation (mileage, tolls, parking fees, etc.), lodging, meals and incidental expenses, incurred while transacting official business at the request of the court. Panel members are treated as “invitational travelers” under the Judiciary Staff Travel Regulations. *Guide*, Vol. 19, § 455.25. Invitational travelers must be reimbursed on an actual expense basis, and reimbursement generally should not exceed the allowances that would be reimbursable if the travel were performed by a judiciary employee.

The Judicial Services Office (JSO) maintains a fund to cover travel costs of panel members traveling to interview applicants. In advance of incurring travel expenses for applicant interviews, the clerk of court (or a designee) may request authorization from JSO to cover these travel costs by submitting an itemized estimate. If authorized, JSO will provide written authorization and accounting information to the court.

All other travel-related expenses for merit selection panel meetings that do not include applicant interviews must be paid using local funds.

Meals and light refreshments provided to the panel during meetings and/or interviews must be paid using only non-appropriated funds. A court may opt to use local attorney admission funds or other non-appropriated funds to pay for meals and light refreshments for panel members. *See Guide*, Vol. 4, § 670.20.

The statute and regulations do not provide clerical assistance for the panel. The panel chair and the chief judge or clerk of court should agree on the extent to which the facilities and personnel of the district court are available to assist the panel. If mailings are necessary, the panel may use postage-paid envelopes supplied by the court.

# CHAPTER 7

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## Panel Meetings

The merit selection panel may hold an organizational meeting before applications have been received or may wait until all applications have been received, enabling it to begin the process of reviewing the applications at the time of its first meeting.

At its initial meeting, the panel should discuss the nature of the particular magistrate judge position to be filled and the criteria to be applied in screening applicants, and establish the procedures and rules to be followed during its deliberations. A district judge, a magistrate judge, the clerk of court, or other district court employee might be invited to the meeting to acquaint the members of the panel with the work of the district court and the nature of the duties to be assigned to a magistrate judge. Judges or court employees, however, should be mindful to advise on general topics and not attempt to exert influence over the panel regarding the specific individuals the panel recommends for the position.

Although the regulations provide the panel with a large degree of discretion in the review of applications and the selection of individuals to recommend to the court, the panel members must nonetheless abide by specific rules. For example, the regulations provide that all decisions of the panel will be by majority vote of all members. Also, the Magistrate Judges Committee is of the view that each panel member must disclose to all other panel members any personal or professional relationships with any applicants for the position.

If the district court has not already established rules of procedure for the panel to follow, the panel should do so at its first meeting. The panel should address such matters as open voting versus secret ballots, attendance requirements, absentee ballots, and quorum rules. The panel should also decide on the appropriate applicant screening procedures it will follow. Depending on the actual or anticipated number of applications submitted, the panel may consider whether to delegate the task of screening applications to the chair, to a subcommittee, or to individual members of the panel. Delegation of this first step might be appropriate when a large number of applications has been submitted or is anticipated.

Following the initial screening of applications, the panel in its discretion may choose to conduct personal interviews of some or all applicants. Interviews may be necessary in those situations where members of the panel have no personal knowledge of the applicants or their legal abilities. The panel should take care, however, to assure fairness in the interviewing process. The panel members should determine the types of questions that should be asked, and the same general questions and areas of inquiry normally should be addressed to each interviewee.

# CHAPTER 8

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## Confidentiality Requirements

To encourage the greatest number of applicants and to protect their privacy, the regulations impose a requirement of strict confidentiality on the panel and the court. Generally, neither the names of the applicants nor the identities of those individuals recommended by the panel to the court may be disclosed other than as a necessary part of the panel's report to the court. Panel members should keep confidential all information, written and oral, obtained in the course of performing their duties. The panel's deliberations also should remain confidential. The regulations provide, however, that the applicants may, upon request, waive the confidentiality requirements to allow the panel or the court "to publicize the applicants' names in order to solicit comments from the bar and the public." *Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.30.30(b).

The court may wish to include in its public notice and/or application form a confidentiality statement that all applications will be kept confidential unless the applicant consents to disclosure. The confidentiality statement included at the end of the sample full public notice (see Appendix A) states, "All applications will be kept confidential, unless the applicant consents to disclosure, and all applications will be examined only by members of the merit selection panel and the judges of the district court. The panel's deliberations will remain confidential." The confidentiality statement included at the end of the sample application form (see Appendix G) states that the panel may contact individuals listed as references by the applicant, but that no other employers, colleagues, or other individuals will be contacted without prior approval of the applicant.

During the panel's deliberations, it may be necessary to verify or augment the written information provided by the applicant on the application form. To avoid possible embarrassment to the applicant and breach of the pledge of confidentiality, the panel should seek the applicant's approval and waiver of confidentiality before contacting present or past employers or colleagues, or seeking the views of other individuals who have material knowledge of the applicant's abilities, other than references provided by the applicant. A sample waiver of confidentiality is provided (*see* Appendix H) that specifically authorizes such contacts regarding the candidate's qualifications.

To protect the privacy of the applicants, the panel should make inquiries of employers and others only after the initial screening process is completed and limit inquiries to those applicants being considered seriously for the position, such as those whom the panel has decided to interview.

The panel should not conduct full background investigations on applicants, as the person selected by the court for appointment must undergo the required FBI and IRS background investigations. Applicants should be granted ample opportunity to disclose any ethical or other issues that they may have with appointment to the position, and to withdraw from the selection process if necessary.

The regulations do not address whether the names of applicants, other than those recommended by the merit selection panel, may be made available to individual judges of the court. The Magistrate Judges Committee has adopted a resolution stating that it was the sense of the Committee that nothing in the regulations prohibits disclosure of the names of the applicants to the judges of the court selecting the magistrate judge.

# CHAPTER 9

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## Evaluating the Applicants

The regulations do not prescribe how the panel should evaluate the applicants. The evaluation process generally is left to the discretion of the individual courts and panels. The following suggestions are offered as a guide.

### IN GENERAL

Failure to meet any one of the statutory or regulatory requirements will result in automatic rejection of an applicant. A district court may establish additional qualification standards appropriate for a particular magistrate judge position, taking into account the specific responsibilities anticipated for the position. These additional qualification standards, however, must be consistent with the court's policy as an equal opportunity employer.

The range of duties delegated to magistrate judges by district judges varies substantially from one district to another. The panel's objective is to recommend individuals most suited to the needs of the particular district court. Emphasis should be placed on those qualities and professional skills demanded for the range of duties to be assigned. Accordingly, the members of the panel should acquaint themselves with the range of duties that the successful applicant will be assigned by the district judges. The panel may refer to the Federal Magistrates Act ([28 U.S.C. §§ 631–39](#)) and the local rules or standing orders of the district court for guidance in this regard.

Since full-time magistrate judges generally have a broader range of duties than part-time magistrate judges, the panel may require greater pertinent experience from applicants for a full-time magistrate judge position than from applicants for a part-time magistrate judge position. The difference is manifest in those situations where the part-time magistrate judge is located in a remote region and the range of duties is limited.

During their deliberations, the members should bear in mind the judicial nature of the office of United States magistrate judge. A considerable number of former United States magistrate judges have been appointed and are now serving as United States district judges and court of appeals judges. The position of magistrate judge is viewed by many as a proving ground that can provide invaluable practical experience for future judgeship appointments under Article III of the Constitution. Thus, the panel should recommend individuals who possess the same types of personal and professional qualities expected of district judges.

## **SCHOLARSHIP**

Panel members should consider each applicant's academic record and related achievements in law school and college. Special attention might be given to class standing, quality of the schools attended, membership on the law review board, and membership in other associations.

## **ACTIVE PRACTICE OF LAW**

The panel should consider how long the applicant has practiced law and the type of legal practice. The applicant should have demonstrated professional competence, including an ability to deal with complicated legal problems, an aptitude for legal scholarship, and effective writing. The applicant also should be well regarded professionally by other lawyers. The members of the panel should also consider whether the applicant has been recently involved in any pro bono or public service activity and has demonstrated a commitment to equal justice. The panel should not confine its considerations to persons with any one type of legal work. It should consider candidates from all segments of the bar, including government service, private practice, law school faculties, legal aid associations, public interest establishments, and state courts.

## **KNOWLEDGE OF THE COURT SYSTEM**

Because the rules of procedure in the federal judicial system differ from those in the various state court systems, the panel might consider the applicant's familiarity with the federal court system. Recent litigation before the federal bench may indicate familiarity with the rules and procedures of the federal courts. Successful completion of legal courses in the Federal Rules of Evidence and the Federal Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure also shows familiarity. However, applicants with substantial litigation experience should not be excluded from consideration simply because their practice has been primarily in state courts.

## **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

The regulations require that a magistrate judge be competent to perform the duties of the office; of good moral character; emotionally stable and mature; committed to equal justice under the law; in good health; patient; courteous; and capable of deliberateness and decisiveness. *Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.10.10(c). These characteristics, by their nature, are subjective and not readily quantified. Yet they may ultimately be the most important qualities necessary for the successful performance of judicial duties.

## **MEASUREMENT OF THE QUALIFICATIONS**

It is impossible to formalize a comprehensive or objective evaluation procedure. Nonetheless, some degree of uniformity is essential to the selection process. The panel may consider the following checklist of relevant qualities to be applied to all applicants. The panel might assign a weight to each factor, signifying the degree of importance attached to each.

The panel should also bear in mind that the essential roles of a magistrate judge are to dispense justice and to assist the judges of the district courts in disposing of the court's caseload effectively and efficiently. Thus, great weight should be accorded to those personal qualities, pertinent experience, and practical knowledge desired by the judges in the person who is selected to fill the magistrate judge position.

## ***Personal Characteristics***

- Intelligence
- Honesty and morality
- Maturity and stability
- Demeanor and temperament
- Reasonableness and objectivity
- Ability to communicate with, work with, and understand others, including individuals from different backgrounds
- Compassion
- Fairness and commitment to equal justice for all people
- Decisiveness and deliberateness
- Industriousness
- Immunity from undue influences
- Mental and physical health
- Activity in civic and community affairs

## ***Legal Skills and Professional Background***

- Professional reputation among bar members
- Reputation for fairness
- Reputation for propriety and integrity
- Reputation for being well prepared
- Experience with complex problems
- Previous service as attorney, judge, or public official
- Writing skills
- Courtroom experience

- Knowledge of legal procedures
- Familiarity with federal rules and procedures
- Participation in professional associations and activities
- Pro bono and public service activities
- Publications

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

The Judicial Resources Committee's diversity subcommittee has articulated the following mission statement reflecting its commitment to a diverse workforce:

The essential function of the federal courts is to administer justice. The recruitment, development, and retention of highly competent and diverse judges and staff are indispensable to this function. The mission of the Committee on Judicial Resources Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Diversity is to encourage and support:

- The recruitment, development, and promotion of individuals with a range of characteristics reflective of the community served by the judiciary;
- The creation of a culture of inclusivity in which employees are encouraged to participate and contribute to their fullest potential; and
- The identification and removal of barriers that may impede equal access to opportunity.

The Judicial Conference Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System fully supports this principle, particularly as it applies to the selection of magistrate judges. The merit selection panel is obligated, under the Judicial Conference's selection and appointment regulations, to give due consideration to all qualified applicants for a magistrate judge position, including those from underrepresented groups.

## ONE-YEAR RESTRICTION ON PANEL MEMBERS

No person may be considered for selection by the court for a magistrate judge position while serving as a member of a panel. For a former panel member to be considered for a subsequent magistrate judge position, § 420.30.20(d) of the selection and appointment regulations provides that one year must elapse between the earlier of when a former merit selection panel submitted its report to the court or when the member of that panel seeking a position resigned, and the date by which applications for a subsequent vacancy are due to be submitted to the court. The Magistrate Judges Committee may waive this provision, on an individual case basis.

Merit selection panel members must be notified in writing of the one-year restriction. The order appointing the panel must indicate that the panel members have received written notice of the restriction.

The clerk of court or other compiler of applications should identify any applicants for a magistrate judge position whose previous service on a merit selection panel falls into the restricted one-year period and then identify those applicants to the merit selection panel. This restriction applies to a former member of a merit selection panel for the appointment or reappointment of a United States magistrate judge.

The clerk or other compiler should advise the panel that, if the panel wishes to recommend any of the identified applicants to the court, the Magistrate Judges Committee must waive the restriction for each identified applicant who is recommended. Typically, the panel will request a waiver if it intends to recommend the applicant to the court in the list of five candidates.

Consistent with the purpose of the regulation to guard against a former merit selection panel member having a real or perceived insider's advantage with respect to a magistrate judge position, the views of the district court or its chief judge should not be included on a request for a waiver of § 420.30.20(d) to the Magistrate Judges Committee. Further, since the waiver process is to be independent of the court, the court and its chief judge should not advise the merit selection panel members or the magistrate judge position applicant of their perspective on the waiver request.

# CHAPTER 10

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## The Panel's Report to the Court

After all written information has been obtained, all interviews have been completed, and all follow-up information has been gathered, members of the panel should determine collectively which individuals among the applicants meet all the standards and appear qualified for appointment as a United States magistrate judge.

### **DELIBERATIONS AND DESIGNATION OF FINALISTS**

The members may now consider it appropriate to conduct a full and candid discussion of the qualifications of the various applicants. Each member should be free to contribute personal views as to the qualifications of each applicant.

Following these discussions, the panel should designate those five applicants that it finds most qualified to serve as a United States magistrate judge. If the panel believes, however, that either the number or the caliber of applicants is inadequate, the panel chair should promptly consult with the court and consider whether other steps should be taken to attract additional qualified candidates. The court might publish a second notice, for example, or solicit the assistance of bar association officials, law school faculties, and community leaders in obtaining additional applications.

Such measures should begin promptly, however, as the regulations specify that the panel must submit its report within 90 days of its establishment, unless the court directs a different duration.

The panel's report to the court should specify the total number of individuals who applied for the position and the names of the five persons it has determined to be most qualified. All written information received or prepared by the panel concerning the recommended applicants must accompany the panel's report. The panel should take adequate measures to protect the confidentiality of these records during their transmittal to the court. One recommended method is that the chair of the panel submit the report directly to the chief judge of the court.

No individual should be included on the list of recommended applicants unless a majority of all the members of the panel deem that person fully qualified to serve as a United States magistrate judge. The panel may wish to note which characteristics or qualities it considered important in its deliberations. It may also wish to note how these characteristics or qualities were manifested in the recommended applicants, if not otherwise apparent in the written materials submitted by the applicants.

The panel should consider the order in which the names of the recommended applicants appear in the report. The regulations are silent as to whether the individuals recommended should be ranked. The panel may choose to list the recommended individuals without preference, or to rank them, especially where the quality varies substantially among the individuals recommended. The panel chair may wish to explore this issue with the court before submitting the panel's report.

The panel may submit to the court a list containing fewer than five names, but only for good cause shown. The panel, for example, might specify in its report that it simply has not found five individuals among those who applied who meet all the high standards required.

**In the case of the appointment of a part-time magistrate judge whose authorized annual salary is less than one-third of the maximum salary authorized for a full-time magistrate judge, the court may give the panel discretion to submit a list of less than five names to the court.**

## FILLING MULTIPLE VACANCIES

In a situation where a merit selection panel is recommending applicants for more than one magistrate judge position, the court should direct the panel to recommend more than five individuals. For example, if the court is filling two vacancies, the court could request a list of at least six names so that once one name is selected for one position, five names would remain from which to select for the other position. Alternatively, a court could require the panel to submit a list of 10 names from which the court would select two.

When filling multiple vacancies in this manner, the court should consider the best approach, accounting for factors such as whether the positions are in different divisions, whether the applicant pools for the positions differ greatly, and whether applicants have applied for one or more of the vacant positions.



# CHAPTER 11

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## Selection by the Court

After receiving the report of the merit selection panel, the court should review the qualifications of the individuals recommended by the panel. At its discretion, the court may accept the findings contained in the panel report, or it may conduct an additional inquiry into the qualifications of the recommended individuals. The court may also wish to conduct its own interviews with the recommended applicants. The court may reimburse travel expenses for applicants when invited by a judge or court for an interview. *See Guide*, Vol. 19, § 455.25.10.

Thereafter, all the district judges must determine, by majority vote, a final selectee for appointment from the list provided by the panel. Under [28 U.S.C. § 296](#), those senior judges with at least a 50 percent workload in the preceding calendar year may participate in court governance activities generally, including magistrate judge appointments.

If the district court, by majority vote, does not select an individual from the five names on the list, the court must request a second list of five names from the panel. The district court must then choose a final selectee from either list. If, again, no recommended applicant receives a majority vote, the chief judge must make the selection for the court from either list.

Once the court has selected a new magistrate judge, it should notify and obtain the acceptance of the selected applicant. It should then inform panel members of its choice. The court may notify the other applicants that a selection has been made and thank them for their interest in

applying. The court should respect the confidentiality of the names of the other applicants.

The name of the applicant selected must be submitted to the Director of the Administrative Office through the Judicial Services Office (JSO). JSO will then request the necessary background reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The applicant selected for appointment to either a full-time or part-time magistrate judge position must undergo an FBI full-field investigation, with a 15-year scope, and an IRS tax compliance check. A part-time magistrate judge, who was the subject of a full-field FBI investigation before appointment to the part-time position, is required to undergo a second full-field investigation and tax compliance check before appointment to a full-time position. The Magistrate Judges Committee is authorized to grant waivers to the requirement for full-field background investigations by the FBI, on an individual case basis, in circumstances involving high-turnover and recruitment problems due to isolated locations of certain part-time magistrate judge positions.

The results of the FBI and IRS investigations are forwarded to JSO, which, in turn, transmits the results to the chief judge of the district court. After the district court has reviewed (and determined its satisfaction with) the complete investigation reports from the FBI and the IRS, the court may issue an order of appointment. If, in the judgment of the court, the IRS report has not been completed in a timely manner, the court may waive that report, provided it has taken steps to assure itself that the applicant selected has properly filed tax returns. The FBI report may not be waived, except as noted above for isolated locations. The court should consider the timing and manner of any public announcement to account for the possible discovery of unfavorable information in the FBI or IRS investigations.

Before entering on duty as a magistrate judge, the appointee is required to take the judicial oath or affirmation prescribed by [28 U.S.C. § 453](#) and the constitutional oath of office prescribed by [5 U.S.C. § 3331](#). Usually, the oath is administered in person by the chief district judge, but it may be administered by any official authorized by federal or state law to administer oaths and affirmations, including another federal judge or clerk of court. No national policy prohibits administering the oath by videoconference or telephone; however, an in-person oath is more in keeping with the importance of the proceeding.

Procedures for swearing in the new magistrate judge are determined at the discretion of the district court. There is no requirement for a formal swearing-in ceremony. Nevertheless, it would be entirely appropriate for the court to arrange for a formal swearing-in ceremony for the new magistrate judge. Such a ceremony may be an effective way to acquaint the bar and the public with the new judge. Court funds may be used to pay for certain expenses, such as invitations and postage, relating to a swearing-in ceremony.

The appointment of the magistrate judge must be entered of record in the district court on or before the effective date of appointment. The court must also execute [AO Form 79A](#) (Appointment of United States Magistrate Judge) (Appendix I). The court must submit both Form 79A and the order of appointment to the Director of the Administrative Office through JSO. Once JSO receives the order of appointment and Form 79A, the Administate Office prepares a certificate of appointment and forwards it to the chief judge of the district court for signature.



# CHAPTER 12

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## Disposition of Records

To maintain the confidentiality of the identities of the applicants, the panel and the court should exercise care in handling and disposing of the application forms and all other written materials collected during their deliberations. This pertains to all records, regardless of format (paper or electronic).

All material other than that which pertains to the five individuals who are recommended to the court, which must be forwarded to the court along with the panel's report, should be retained by the chair until the actual appointment of a magistrate judge. Retention of these materials is recommended because the court may decide not to select from among the five names submitted by the panel, or it may subsequently revoke its selection after reviewing the background reports prepared by the FBI and the IRS on the applicant selected for appointment. In such events, the court may require that the panel reconvene, and the information previously assembled on the remaining applicants would be needed.

Immediately after a magistrate judge is appointed, the chair of the panel should either return all materials to the respective applicants or clerk of court, or dispose of the materials (i.e., by shredding or deletion) in accordance with the court's instructions. The clerk of court should retain the panel's report and the materials relating to the recommended applicants as confidential records for at least three years. The materials are classified as job vacancy files and are subject to Records Disposition Schedule 2, C.10. *Guide*, Vol. 10, Ch. 6, Appx. 6B, Part C.10.



# CHAPTER 13

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## Reappointment of a Magistrate Judge to a New Term

In most instances, an incumbent magistrate judge who has performed well in the position should be reappointed to another term of office. Magistrate judges have relinquished law practices or forgone other career choices in order to serve the court. Accordingly, the court should be sensitive to the consequences of the professional and career choice an incumbent made to accept the position of United States magistrate judge.

### PERFORMANCE REVIEWS OF AN INCUMBENT BY THE COURT

During the magistrate judge's term, the court should periodically assess the performance of the magistrate judge and meet with the incumbent to discuss the court's evaluation. If the court believes that the magistrate judge's performance is not satisfactory, or if there are problems with the magistrate judge's relationship with any of the district judges or with the bar, the court should discuss its concerns with the magistrate judge. The incumbent should be informed of these concerns well in advance of the expiration of the term of office. Such procedures:

- help to identify deficiencies or problems with the job performance of the magistrate judge;
- give the magistrate judge an opportunity to discuss the court's concerns;

- let the incumbent know where he or she stands with regard to reappointment; and
- give the magistrate judge an opportunity to make other career plans well in advance of the expiration of the term of office if reappointment is in question.

In any event, not less than one year before the expiration of an incumbent magistrate judge's term of office, the court should determine whether it wishes to consider the reappointment of the incumbent. The court should then choose the appropriate procedure based on its determination. *Guide*, Vol. 3, §§ 420.60.20 and 420.60.30 outline the procedures the court must follow.

To assist the district courts through the reappointment process, the Magistrate Judges Committee has approved a Timeline for Reappointment of Magistrate Judges, contained in Appendix D and available on JNet.

## **IF THE COURT DETERMINES NOT TO REAPPOINT THE INCUMBENT**

If the court determines not to reappoint the incumbent, it must so notify the incumbent. Before the vacancy in the magistrate judge position may be filled, the court must first obtain the approval of the judicial council of the relevant circuit. In addition, the vacancy is subject to review by the full Magistrate Judges Committee unless the Committee chair decides, based on a recent survey of the relevant district, that the vacancy may be filled without full Committee involvement. If full Committee review is required, a court's request to fill a vacancy will be placed on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting. Upon approval that the vacancy may be filled, the court must follow the initial selection procedures set forth in the regulations. Under these procedures, no comments may be sought on the incumbent magistrate judge's performance or reappointment, and the incumbent magistrate judge may not apply for the position.

Before the expiration of the incumbent's current term, the Administrative Office provides the incumbent with a form entitled Notice of Willingness to Accept Reappointment (AO Form PER 74). This form is not part of the reappointment procedure but is meant to

protect a full-time magistrate judge's retirement annuity pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 377, if the judge is under age 65 and not reappointed. Form PER 74 does not need to be submitted if the judge is not willing to accept reappointment.

## IF THE COURT DECIDES TO CONSIDER REAPPOINTING THE INCUMBENT

If the court decides to consider the reappointment of the incumbent, it must follow the selection procedures set forth in § 420.60.30 of the regulations (which provides for public notice of consideration of reappointment, comments from the bar and public, and review of the incumbent's performance by a merit selection panel as follows).

### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF AN INCUMBENT

The court first issues a public notice that it is considering reappointment of the incumbent magistrate judge. The court should publish the public notice well before (ideally at least six months before) the expiration of the incumbent's term of office. The public notice must describe the duties of the position, state the expiration of the incumbent's terms, and invite the public to send comments to the merit selection panel in care of the clerk of court or directly to the chair of the panel. *Guide*, Vol. 3, § 420.60.30(a)(2). A sample public notice is included as Appendix E and available on JNet.

The regulations do not prescribe the minimum amount of time public notice should be published. Like the public notice for the appointment of new magistrate judge (*see* Chapter 4, "Public Notice"), the court should publish full public notice in sources that will reach a wide audience of members of the public qualified to comment. Sources may include but are not limited to a general local newspaper; a newspaper with statewide circulation; a widely circulated local legal periodical; the court's website; state and local bar association web sites; government websites; national legal journals websites; and other resources relied upon by legal professionals. In addition, it is recommended that a link to the full public notice be sent to the court's CM/ECF users.

Although not required by the regulations, an abbreviated announcement (*see* Appendix F) that notes the consideration of

reappointment of a magistrate judge and refers specifically to the location where the full public notice is published, should be published in any of the sources mentioned above for a reasonable time in the discretion of the court. The abbreviated announcement should also indicate that interested persons may contact the clerk of court for information and material.

A copy of the public notice must be filed and posted in the office of the clerk of court. The court must also provide a copy to the Director of the Administrative Office through the Judicial Services Office (JSO).

## **MERIT SELECTION PANEL FOR REAPPOINTMENT**

The court must establish a merit selection panel to assist the district judges in their determination to reappoint the incumbent. The composition of the panel is the same as in the case of a panel appointed to assist in selecting a new magistrate judge. For additional information about the requirements of the order establishing the panel and the member compositions, see Chapter 5, “Appointment of the Merit Selection Panel.”

When the court has determined that it desires to consider the reappointment of the incumbent and the public notice has been published, the panel does not seek applications for the position. It merely reviews the incumbent’s performance in office as a magistrate judge, and considers comments received from members of the bar and the public, and any other pertinent evidence as to the incumbent’s good character, judgment, legal ability, temperament, and commitment to equal justice under the law.

The panel and the court itself should determine how the panel should appraise the incumbent’s performance. All written comments should be considered carefully. An interview with the incumbent would generally be useful. Also, the panel might want to interview selected individuals who have actual and reliable knowledge of the incumbent’s performance. To encourage candor, the panel should assure individuals who comment on the incumbent’s performance that their names will not be disclosed. As a matter of fairness, however, the magistrate judge should be given an opportunity to appear personally before the panel to respond to any negative comments that have been received and to answer any questions regarding his or her performance.

After considering this information, the panel, within 90 days, unless otherwise directed by the court, must report to the court whether it recommends the incumbent for reappointment to an additional term of office. The report may contain written reasons substantiating the panel's decision. Due to the strict requirement of confidentiality, the panel's recommendation presumably will not be known to the incumbent. Furthermore, all information received by the panel as a result of this process should be included as part of the record submitted to the court.

## DETERMINATION BY THE COURT

Upon receipt of the panel's report, the court must decide whether to reappoint the incumbent. At this stage, the court may wish to interview the incumbent to address any of the court's concerns, particularly if the panel has recommended not to reappoint the magistrate judge. The court must then determine, by a majority vote, whether to reappoint the incumbent.

If the court decides to reappoint the incumbent to a new term, the court must execute AO Form 79A (Appointment of United States Magistrate Judge) (Appendix I), which includes the required judicial oath or affirmation prescribed by [28 U.S.C. § 453](#), as well as the constitutional oath of office prescribed by [5 U.S.C. § 3331](#). The reappointment of the magistrate judge must be entered of record in the district court on or before the effective date of appointment. Both Form 79A and the order of appointment must be submitted by the clerk of the district court to the Director of the Administrative Office through JSO. New FBI and IRS investigations are not required for the reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge.

If, after following the selection procedures set forth in § 420.60.30 of the regulations, the court decides not to reappoint the incumbent magistrate judge, it must notify the incumbent, seek the required approvals to fill the upcoming vacancy, and follow the initial selection procedures for the appointment of a new magistrate judge set forth in the regulations. The same panel may be reconvened, or a new panel established, to consider applicants for the vacancy.



# APPENDIX A

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## Sample Full Public Notice for Appointment of New Magistrate Judge

The Judicial Conference of the United States has authorized the appointment of a [full-time] [part-time] United States magistrate judge for the [District Court name] at [location]. The essential function of courts is to dispense justice. An important component of this function is the creation and maintenance of diversity in the court system. A community's belief that a court dispenses justice is heightened when the court reflects the community's racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

The duties of the position are demanding and wide-ranging: [Give a brief description, such as (1) conduct of most preliminary proceedings in criminal cases; (2) trial and disposition of misdemeanor cases; (3) conduct of various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings on delegation from a district judge; and (4) trial and disposition of civil cases upon consent of the litigants.] The basic authority of a United States magistrate judge is specified in 28 U.S.C. § 636.

To be qualified for appointment an applicant must

1. Be, and have been for at least five years, a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands of the United States;
2. Have been engaged in the active practice of law for a period of at least five years (with some substitutes authorized);
3. Be competent to perform all the duties of the office, of good moral character, emotionally stable and mature, committed to equal justice under the law, in good health, patient, courteous, and capable of deliberation and decisiveness;

4. Be less than 70 years old; and
5. Not be related to a judge of the district court.

A merit selection panel composed of attorneys and other members of the community will review all applicants and recommend to the district judges in confidence the five persons it considers best qualified. The court will make the appointment following an FBI full-field investigation and an IRS tax check of the applicant selected by the court for appointment. The individual selected must comply with the financial disclosure requirements pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-521, 92 Stat. 1824 (1978) (as amended) (codified at 5 U.S.C. app. §§ 101-111) as implemented by the Judicial Conference of the United States. An affirmative effort will be made to give due consideration to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, age (40 and over), gender, religion, national origin, or disability. The current annual salary of the position is [insert current salary]. The term of office is [eight years] [four years].

Application forms and more information on the magistrate judge position in this court may be obtained from [give name and address of the clerk of court or other designee.] [The application form is also available on the court's website at [insert web address].] Applications must be submitted by applicants personally and **must be received by [date]**.

All applications will be kept confidential, unless the applicant consents to disclosure, and all applications will be examined only by members of the merit selection panel and the judges of the district court. The panel's deliberations will remain confidential.

# APPENDIX B

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## Sample Abbreviated Public Notice for Appointment of New Magistrate Judge

The Judicial Conference of the United States has authorized the appointment of a full-time part-time United States magistrate judge for the District Court name at location.

The current annual salary of the position is insert current salary. The term of office is eight years four years.

A full public notice for the magistrate judge position is posted in the office of the clerk of the district court at give exact location. The notice is also available on the court's website at insert web address.

Interested persons may contact the clerk of the district court or other designee for additional information and application forms. The application form is also available on the court's website [insert web address].

Applications must be submitted by applicants personally and must be received by date.



# APPENDIX C

## Timeline for Selection and Appointment of New Magistrate Judges

Event/Time	Action
The district court learns of a magistrate judge position vacancy or upcoming vacancy	The court should notify the Judicial Services Office of a vacancy or upcoming vacancy.
The Judicial Services Office is notified of a new magistrate judge position, magistrate judge position vacancy, or upcoming vacancy	The Judicial Services Office sends a letter to the chief judge of the district court (with a copy to the circuit chief judge, circuit executive, and clerk of court) outlining the procedures to follow to fill the new position or to request approval to fill the magistrate judge position vacancy.  The letter regarding the procedures for requesting approval to fill a vacancy includes the <a href="#">criteria</a> used by the Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System (Magistrate Judges Committee or Committee) to evaluate a court's request to fill a vacancy.
The district court requests approval to fill a vacancy or upcoming vacancy	The Judicial Conference requires that for all magistrate judge position vacancies the district court must obtain the recommendation of the judicial council of the relevant circuit before a position may be filled.  The court sends a request to fill the position to the circuit judicial council. The court should send a copy of the request to the Judicial Services Office.  If possible, to account for the time needed to obtain circuit judicial council and Committee approval, and to accommodate the selection and appointment process, and complete a background investigation, courts should submit requests at least 12 months, but no sooner than 15 months, prior to a judge's retirement or leaving the bench.

Event/Time	Action
<p>Following approval to fill the vacancy by the circuit judicial council</p>	<p>The Judicial Conference requires that the Magistrate Judges Committee review all magistrate judge position vacancies, unless the Committee chair decides, based on a recent survey of the relevant district, that the vacancy may be filled without full Committee involvement.</p> <p>The Judicial Services Office prepares materials for the Committee chair, or for the full Committee, that include the most recent survey report, the relevant district and circuit judicial council correspondence, the district and national judicial caseload profiles, and magistrate judge workload statistics for each magistrate judge position in the district for the past year. If full Committee involvement is required, the request to fill the vacancy will be placed on the agenda at the next Committee meeting (held in June and December each year).</p> <p>The Judicial Services Office will notify the court of the action taken by the Committee or Committee chair. If the position is approved to be filled, the Judicial Services Office will provide a letter highlighting the procedures to follow and some of the resources available to assist in appointing a new magistrate judge.</p>
<p>Following approval by the Magistrate Judges Committee chair or Committee</p>	<p>The court publishes public notice of the position. The notice must describe the duties of the position, the qualification standards, the authorized salary, the term of office, the application procedures including the name and address of the person to whom the applications should be submitted, and a statement that the individual selected must comply with the financial disclosure requirements of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-521, 92 Stat. 1824 (1978) (as amended) (codified at 5 U.S.C. app. §§ 101-111).</p> <p>Sample full and abbreviated public notices and a sample application form can be found at Appendices A, B, and G of <i>The Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges</i> and on <a href="#">JNet</a>.</p> <p>Notice of the magistrate judge position vacancy should be disseminated as broadly as possible to reach a wide audience, including those from underrepresented groups, in sources such as local newspapers or legal periodicals and electronic publications such as bar association websites and other sites relied upon by legal professionals. Courts should also consider posting the notice on the judiciary's public "Careers" website at <a href="https://www.uscourts.gov/careers">https://www.uscourts.gov/careers</a>.</p> <p>The public notice should be sent to the Judicial Services Office at the time it is issued (along with a description of all sources in which the notice was published).</p>

Event/Time	Action
Contemporaneously with publication of the public notice of the position vacancy	<p>The court appoints, by majority vote of the district judges, a merit selection panel consisting of a chairperson and at least six other members, including two non-attorneys.</p> <p>Merit selection panel members must be notified in writing that panel members are restricted from being considered for a magistrate judge position for one year following their service on the merit selection panel.</p> <p>The court must enter an order appointing the panel that specifies: the names of the members, whether each is a lawyer or a non-lawyer, and the effective date of the panel's appointment. The order must also indicate that the panel members have received written notice of the one-year restriction referenced above.</p> <p>The court's order establishing the merit selection panel should be sent to the Judicial Services Office at the time it is issued.</p>
After the merit selection panel has been appointed	<p>The merit selection panel meets. A district judge or magistrate judge may be invited to the first meeting of the panel to explain the work of the district court and duties assigned to magistrate judges. The merit selection panel reviews the applications submitted and, in its discretion, chooses to conduct personal interviews of some or all applicants. The panel and the court must maintain confidentiality to protect the privacy of the applicants.</p>
Within 90 days of appointment of the merit selection panel, unless otherwise directed by the court	<p>The panel designates the five most qualified applicants and provides the names of those applicants to the court in a report. The panel should take adequate measures to protect the confidentiality of these records during their transmittal to the court.</p>
After the court's receipt of the merit selection panel's report	<p>After considering the merit selection panel report, the district court decides, by majority vote of the district judges, a final selectee for appointment from the panel's list. (Senior judges with a 50 percent workload may elect to participate in the magistrate judge selection process.)</p> <p>If a court does not select an individual from the list, the court must request a second list of five names from the panel. The court is then free to select from either list. If no applicant receives a majority vote, the chief judge must make the selection for the court from either list.</p> <p>Once the court has made its selection, it should notify and obtain the acceptance of the selected applicant.</p>

<b>Event/Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
Immediately following the court's selection of an individual to fill the magistrate judge position	<p>The court submits the name and contact information of the magistrate judge selectee to the Judicial Services Office.</p> <p>The Judicial Services Office provides the FBI and IRS investigative forms to the selectee for completion. Once the completed forms are returned to the Judicial Services Office, it requests the required background reports from the FBI and IRS. Investigations generally take 12-14 weeks to be completed.</p> <p>The court may wish to announce publicly the name of the selectee. Courts should consider the timing of any announcement to account for the possible discovery of unfavorable information in the FBI or IRS reports.</p>
Following receipt of the completed FBI and IRS reports	<p>The Judicial Services Office forwards the completed FBI and IRS reports to the chief judge of the district court for review.</p> <p>The FBI has requested that no dissemination be made of the contents of the reports to anyone other than the appointing authorities and that FBI sources be protected at all times. The court should return the FBI and IRS reports to the Judicial Services Office after the review is complete.</p> <p>If the court decides to move forward with the appointment, the court must execute <a href="#">AO Form 79A</a> (Appointment of United States Magistrate Judge), which includes the required oath, and prepare the district court's Order of Appointment. The court must send both documents to the Judicial Services Office for initial processing.</p>
Once the judge has been appointed	<p>The Administrative Office issues identification cards to new judges. The Judges Compensation and Retirement Division sends instructions to the new judge to complete and return an ID credential form and to provide an appropriate photograph.</p> <p>Upon return of the form and photograph, the Director of the Administrative Office signs the ID card, and it is laminated and provided to the judge.</p>

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

All documents provided to the Judicial Services Office should be emailed to [Magistrate\\_Judges\\_Judicial\\_Services\\_Office@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:Magistrate_Judges_Judicial_Services_Office@ao.uscourts.gov).

The Judicial Conference Regulations on the Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of Magistrate Judges are found at [Guide to Judiciary Policy, Vol. 3, Ch. 4](#).

# APPENDIX D

## Timeline for Reappointment of Magistrate Judges

Time	Action
13 months before term expires	The Judicial Services Office sends a letter to the chief judge of the district court (with a copy to the incumbent magistrate judge and clerk of court) outlining the procedures to follow to reappoint a magistrate judge.
Not later than 12 months before term expires	The district court decides, by majority vote of the district judges, if the court wishes to consider reappointment of the incumbent. The court, in its reappointment deliberations, should give due consideration to the professional and career status of a magistrate judge.
Not later than 11 months before term expires	<p>The district court notifies the incumbent in writing whether or not the court will consider the incumbent for reappointment.</p> <p>If the court decides to consider reappointment of incumbent, it must follow procedures for reappointment set forth in the Judicial Conference regulations.</p> <p>If the court decides not to reappoint the incumbent, no comments may be sought on the incumbent's performance or reappointment. The court will begin the process for the selection and appointment of a new magistrate judge. The incumbent may not apply for the position.</p>
Not earlier than 9 months and not later than 6 months before term expires	<p>If a full-time magistrate judge desires to be reappointed and is under age 65, he or she should submit to the chief judge <a href="#">Form PER 74</a> (Notice of Willingness to Accept Reappointment). The form must be dated by both the magistrate judge and chief judge at least six months, but no earlier than nine months, before the expiration of the current term. This form is not part of the formal reappointment procedure but is necessary to ensure a full-time magistrate judge's eligibility for a retirement annuity, if under age 65 and not reappointed.</p> <p>The completed form must be sent to the Judges Compensation and Retirement Division with a copy sent to the Judicial Services Office.</p> <p>Form PER 74 applies to full-time magistrate judges only and need not be submitted if the judge is not willing to accept reappointment or the judge is age 65 or over.</p>

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
Not later than 8 months before term expires	<p>If the court decides to consider reappointment of incumbent, the court publishes public notice. The notice should describe the duties of the position, state date of expiration of the incumbent's current term, and invite written comments from members of the bar and the public. The notice should specify a date certain by which comments must be received.</p> <p>Sample full and abbreviated public notices can be found at Appendices E and F of <i>The Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of United States Magistrate Judges</i> and on <a href="#">INet</a>.</p> <p>The public notice should be disseminated in sources that will reach a wide audience of members of the public qualified to comment. These sources may include, but are not limited to, a general local newspaper, a widely-circulated local legal periodical, bar association websites, and other resources relied upon by legal professionals.</p> <p>The public notice should be sent to the Judicial Services Office at the time it issued (along with a description of all sources in which the notice was published).</p>
Not later than 8 months before term expires	<p>The court appoints, by majority vote of the district judges, a merit selection panel consisting of a chairperson and at least six other members, including two non-lawyers.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Merit selection panel members must be notified in writing that panel members are restricted from being considered for a magistrate judge position for one year following their service on the merit selection panel.</p> <p>The court must enter an order appointing the panel that specifies: the names of the members, whether each is a lawyer or a non-lawyer, and the effective date of the panel's appointment. The order must also indicate that the panel members have received written notice of the one-year restriction referenced above.</p> <p>The court's order establishing the merit selection panel should be sent to the Judicial Services Office at time it is issued.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> The court and magistrate judge should be aware of [Advisory Opinion 97](#) issued by the Judicial Conference Committee on Codes of Conduct in October 1999. This opinion discusses the ethical obligations of a magistrate judge arising out of the relationship between members of the merit selection panel and a magistrate judge during and following the reappointment process.

<b>Time</b>	<b>Action</b>
Within 90 days of appointment of merit selection panel, unless otherwise directed by the court	<p>The merit selection panel meets and reviews the incumbent's performance in office as a magistrate judge, and considers comments received from members of the bar and the public, and any other evidence as to the incumbent's good character, judgement, legal ability, temperament, and commitment to equal justice under the law.</p> <p>A district judge or magistrate judge may be invited to the first meeting of the panel to explain the work of the district court and duties assigned to magistrate judges.</p> <p>To encourage candor, the panel should assure individuals who comment that their names will not be disclosed. The incumbent should be given an opportunity to appear personally before the panel to respond to any negative comments received and to answer any questions regarding his or her performance.</p> <p>After considering this information, the panel reports in writing to the court whether it recommends that the incumbent be reappointed.</p>
Not later than 4 months before term expires	<p>If the panel's recommendation is not to reappoint, the court should arrange to interview the incumbent to allow the incumbent to address the court's concerns and reasons for non-appointment recommendation by the merit selection panel. (In a large court, the court may appoint a subcommittee of district judges to interview the incumbent.)</p>
Not later than 3 months before term expires	<p>After considering the panel's report, the court must decide, by majority vote of the district judges, whether or not to reappoint the incumbent. (Senior judges with a 50 percent workload may elect to participate in the magistrate judge reappointment process.)</p> <p>The chief judge promptly notifies the incumbent of the court's decision.</p> <p>If the court decides to reappoint the incumbent, the court must execute <a href="#">AO Form 79A</a> (Appointment of United States Magistrate Judge), which includes the required oath, and prepare an Order of Appointment. The court must send both documents to the Judicial Services Office for initial processing.</p> <p>If the court decides not to reappoint an incumbent, it begins the process for selection of a new magistrate judge (see Appendix C – Timeline for Appointment of New Magistrate Judges).</p>

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

All documents provided to the Judicial Services Office should be emailed to [Magistrate\\_Judges\\_Judicial\\_Services\\_Office@ao.uscourts.gov](mailto:Magistrate_Judges_Judicial_Services_Office@ao.uscourts.gov).

The Judicial Conference Regulations on the Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of Magistrate Judges are found at [Guide to Judiciary Policy, Vol. 3, Ch. 4](#).



# APPENDIX E

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## Sample Full Public Notice for Reappointment of Incumbent Magistrate Judge

The current term of office of United States Magistrate Judge [insert name] at [location] is due to expire on [date]. The United States District Court for the [district name] is required by law to establish a panel of citizens to consider the reappointment of the magistrate judge to a new [eight] [four]-year term.

The duties of a magistrate judge in this court include the following: [Give a brief description, such as (1) conduct of most preliminary proceedings in criminal cases; (2) trial and disposition of misdemeanor cases; (3) conduct of various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings on delegation from a district judge; and (4) trial and disposition of civil cases upon consent of the litigants.]

Comments from members of the bar and the public are invited as to whether the incumbent magistrate judge should be recommended by the panel for reappointment by the court and should be directed to [give name and address].

Comments must be received by [date].



# APPENDIX F

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## Sample Abbreviated Public Notice for Reappointment of Incumbent Magistrate Judge

The current term of office of United States Magistrate Judge [insert name] is due to expire on [date]. The United States District Court is required by law to establish a panel of citizens to consider the reappointment of the magistrate judge to a new [eight] [four]-year term. Comments from members of the bar and the public are invited as to whether the incumbent magistrate judge should be recommended for reappointment by the court. Comments should be directed to [give name and address] and must be received by [date].

A full public notice is available in the office of the clerk of the district court at [give exact location and the court's website address, if applicable].



# APPENDIX G

## Sample Application Form

*(This is a comprehensive list of questions that may be asked of applicants. The court should select those questions that it believes are appropriate for inclusion in its application form.)*

### APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Please answer all questions. If a question is not applicable, indicate this by marking "N/A." Return completed form to the Clerk of Court.

#### General

1. Full name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. All other names by which you have been known: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Office address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Residential address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Length of residence in state: \_\_\_\_\_
7. If you are a naturalized citizen, state the date and place of naturalization: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Military Service:  
Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rank or Rate at Discharge: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Discharge: \_\_\_\_\_  
If still a Reserve or National Guard Member, give service, branch, unit, and present rank. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you related by blood or marriage to any judges of this court?  
Yes        No        If yes, give name(s) and relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Health

10. What is the present state of your health?

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11. Do you have any mental or physical impairment that would affect your ability to perform the duties of a magistrate judge with or without reasonable accommodation?

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## Education

12. Colleges and universities attended, dates, and degrees: \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Continuing legal education courses completed within the last 10 years: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Honors

14. Were you a member of law review? Yes        No        . If yes, describe role: \_\_\_\_\_

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15. If you have published any legal books or articles, list them, giving citations and dates. \_\_\_\_\_

---

16. List any honors, prizes, or awards you have received.

---

## Professional Admissions

17. List all courts (including state bar admissions) and administrative bodies having special admission requirements in which you are presently admitted to practice, giving the dates of admission in each case:

Court or Administrative Body	Date of Admission

## Law Practice

18. State the names, addresses, and dates of employment for all law firms with which you have been associated in practice, all government agencies, and all private business organizations in which you have been employed. Also provide all dates during which you have practiced as a sole practitioner.

Organization	Address	Position	Dates

19. Describe the general nature of your current practice including any legal specialties and character of your typical clients; also, if your practice is substantially different now than previously, give details of prior practice. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you regularly appear in court? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

What percentage of your appearances in the last five years was in the following forums:

1. Federal courts..... \_\_\_\_\_ %
2. State or local courts of record..... \_\_\_\_\_ %
3. Administrative bodies..... \_\_\_\_\_ %
4. Other..... \_\_\_\_\_ %
- ..... \_\_\_\_\_ %
- ..... \_\_\_\_\_ %

21. During the past five years, what percentage of your practice has been trial practice? ..... %

22. How frequently have you appeared in court? ..... times/mo.

23. How frequently have you appeared at administrative hearings?  
..... times/mo.

24. What percentage of your practice involving litigation has been:

Civil ..... %

Criminal ..... %

Other ..... %

..... %

..... %

25. State the number of cases you have tried to conclusion in courts of record during the past five years, indicating whether you were sole, associate, or chief counsel. Give citations of any reported cases.

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26. Summarize your courtroom experience for the past five years.

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27. State the names and addresses of adversary counsel against whom you have litigated your primary cases over the past five years.

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## Public Office

28. Have you ever run for, or held, public office? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If yes, give details. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Prior Judicial Experience

29. a) Have you ever held judicial office or been a candidate for judicial office? If so, state the courts involved and the dates of service, or dates of candidacy. \_\_\_\_\_

b) If you have held judicial office, state the names and addresses of counsel who have appeared before you who would be knowledgeable of your work, temperament, and abilities. \_\_\_\_\_

c) Prior quasi-judicial service:

Name of agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Position held: \_\_\_\_\_

Hearings on what types of issues: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of cases adjudicated: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of service: \_\_\_\_\_

## Business Involvement

30. a) If you are now an officer, director, or otherwise engaged in the management of any business enterprise, state the name of such enterprise, the nature of the business, the nature of your duties, and whether you intend to resign such position immediately upon your appointment to judicial office. \_\_\_\_\_

b) Since being admitted to the Bar, have you ever engaged in any occupation, business, or profession other than the practice of law? Yes        No        If yes, give the details, including dates.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c) During the past five years have you received any fees or compensation of any kind, other than for legal services rendered, from any business enterprise, institution, organization, or association of any kind? Yes        No        If yes, identify the source of such compensation,

the nature of the business enterprise, institution, organization or association involved, and the dates such compensation was paid.

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31. a) Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted for violation of any federal law, state law, county or municipal law, regulation, or ordinance? Yes        No        If yes, give details. (Do not include traffic violations for which a fine of \$200 or less was imposed unless it also included a jail sentence.) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) Have you, to your knowledge, ever been under federal, state or local investigation for possible violation of a criminal statute? Yes        No        If yes, give particulars. \_\_\_\_\_

---

32. a) Have you ever been sued by a client? Yes        No        If yes, give particulars. \_\_\_\_\_

---

b) Have you or your professional liability insurance carrier ever settled a claim against you for professional malpractice? Yes        No        If yes, give particulars, including the amounts involved. \_\_\_\_\_

---

33. Have you ever been charged in any civil or criminal proceedings with conduct alleged to involve moral turpitude, dishonesty, or unethical conduct? Yes        No        If yes, give particulars. \_\_\_\_\_

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34. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by any court, administrative agency, bar association, or other professional group? Yes        No        If yes, give particulars. \_\_\_\_\_

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35. Have you filed appropriate tax returns as required by federal, state, local, and other government authorities? Yes        No        If no, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

---

36. Have any liens or claims ever been instituted against you by the federal, state, or local authorities? Yes        No        If yes, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **Professional and Other Activities**

37. a) List all bar associations and legal professional societies of which you are a member and give the titles and dates of any office you have held in such groups, and committees to which you belonged.

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b) List all organizations and clubs, other than bar associations and professional societies identified in response to Question No. 37.a), of which you have been a member during the past ten years, including the titles and dates of any offices you have held in each such organization.

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c) Have you ever served on a merit selection panel to consider the appointment or reappointment of a United States magistrate judge in this district? If yes, please provide date(s) or appointment(s).

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### **Supplemental Information**

38. State any achievements or actions you have accomplished, demonstrating your commitment to equal justice under the law.

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39. State any additional education or other experiences you believe would assist you in holding judicial office. \_\_\_\_\_

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40. State any other pertinent information reflecting positively or adversely on you, which you believe should be disclosed to the district court and the selection panel in connection with your possible selection as United States magistrate judge. \_\_\_\_\_

41. a) List three individuals as references who are familiar with your abilities.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

b) List three individuals as references who are familiar with your personal character.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### **Confidentiality Statement**

This form will be kept confidential and will be examined only by members of the merit selection panel and the judges of the district court. The individuals whom you have listed as references above may be contacted by the panel, but no other employers, colleagues, or other individuals will be contacted without your prior approval.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX H

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## Sample Waiver of Confidentiality (To be completed after initial screening of applicants)

The merit selection panel has completed its initial screening of applicants for the position of United States magistrate judge. The panel is now in need of additional information on your background and qualifications to determine whether to recommend you to the district court for appointment as a magistrate judge. Accordingly, we request your approval to consult with your current or past employers or colleagues, and other individuals who have material knowledge of your qualifications in order to verify and to supplement the information contained in your application. Any information obtained will be kept in strict confidence by the panel and the court. A "waiver of confidentiality" is printed immediately below for this purpose.

### **Waiver**

I hereby authorize the custodian of any records or information to permit the examination or receipt of such information, whether written or oral, by the merit selection panel and the district judges of the court. I also authorize the merit selection panel to consult with my former employers, my current employer, and my professional colleagues with regard to matters pertinent to my qualifications for the position of a United States magistrate judge.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX I

## Appointment of United States Magistrate Judge

AO 79A (Rev. 09/09)

<b>UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT</b>		<b>APPOINTMENT OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE</b>
<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Name of District)</i> <b>Appointment</b></p>		
<hr/> <i>(Name as it is signed below)</i>	<hr/> <i>(Full-time/Part-time/Recall)</i>	United States
magistrate judge at the following location: <hr/> <i>(Official Location)</i>		
<hr/> <i>(Effective Date of Appointment)</i>	<hr/> <i>(Vice</i>	<hr/> <i>(New position, Previous incumbent, Reappointment, or Recall)</i>
<p>I hereby certify that the above named individual was selected and appointed as a United States magistrate judge in accordance with the Federal Magistrates Act of 1968 (as amended), 28 U.S.C. §§ 631 <i>et seq.</i>, and the regulations promulgated by the Judicial Conference of the United States under authority of 28 U.S.C. § 631(b)(5).</p> <hr/> <i>(Signature of appointing officer)</i> <hr/> <i>(Title)</i> <hr/> <i>(Date)</i>		
I, <hr/> , do solemnly swear (or affirm) that:		
<b>A. OATH OF OFFICE AS UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE</b>		
I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as a United States magistrate judge under the Constitution and laws of the United States, and that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God. (Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 453 and 5 U.S.C. § 3331.)		
<b>B. AFFIDAVIT AS TO STRIKING AGAINST OR OVERTHROWING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT</b>		
I am not participating in any strike against the Government of the United States or any agency thereof, and I will not so participate while an employee of the Government of the United States or any agency thereof. Further, I do not advocate the overthrow of our constitutional form of government, nor am I a member of an organization which advocates either striking against or overthrowing the Government of the United States.		
<b>C. AFFIDAVIT AS TO PURCHASE AND SALE OF OFFICE</b>		
I have not, nor has anyone acting in my behalf, given, transferred, promised or paid any consideration for or in expectation or hope of receiving assistance in securing this appointment.		
<b>D. AFFIDAVIT AS TO EMBOLUMENT FROM FOREIGN STATE</b>		
I will not accept, nor am I accepting any present emolument, office or title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.		
<b>E. AFFIDAVIT AS TO PERSONAL HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENTS</b>		
The answers given in the Personal History and Experience and Qualifications Statements on the reverse of this form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.		
<hr/> <i>(Signature of appointee)</i> (Name will be carried on personnel and payroll records as signed)		
Subscribed and sworn (or affirmed) before me this <hr/> day of <hr/> 20 <hr/> at <hr/> <i>(City)</i> <hr/> <i>(State)</i>		
<hr/> <i>(Signature of officer)</i> <hr/> <i>(Title)</i>		
[SEAL]		
NOTE: The words "So help me God" in the oath and the word "swear" wherever it appears above should be stricken out when the appointee elects to affirm rather than swear to the affidavits; only these words may be stricken and only when the appointee elects to affirm the affidavits.		
<b>(BOTH PAGES OF THIS FORM ARE TO BE EXECUTED)</b>		

PERSONAL HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENTS																								
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO CHANGE FROM PRIOR SUBMISSION</b>																								
Name (Last - First - Middle Initial):		Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	Birth Date (Mo., Day, Year)																				
Present Home Address		Citizenship (Country)		Place of Birth																				
Other Names Previously Used for Employment Purposes				City: State: Country:																				
Do you have any relatives who are judges, officers, or employees of the United States Courts? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, give their names, positions, and relationship to you.																								
<b>EDUCATION</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Name and Location of colleges and universities attended</td> <td>Dates Attended</td> <td>Degree</td> <td>Date Received</td> </tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </table>					Name and Location of colleges and universities attended	Dates Attended	Degree	Date Received																
Name and Location of colleges and universities attended	Dates Attended	Degree	Date Received																					
<b>BAR MEMBERSHIP</b> Give the month and year of admission to the bar of the highest court of each state to which you are admitted. (Include the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands if appropriate)																								
STATE		MONTH AND YEAR ADMITTED																						
<b>PRIOR FEDERAL SERVICE OTHER THAN MILITARY SERVICE</b> (Information needed for consolidation of Federal personnel records and computation of retirement benefits.) Have you ever been employed by the Federal (or District of Columbia) Government? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, complete the following. (A) Are you now receiving severance pay? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (B) Are you transferring without a break in service? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (C) Are you presently enrolled under the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Act? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, Code Number _____; Carrier Control Number _____. (D) Have you ever before filed SF 176, "Election, Declination, or Waiver of Life Insurance Coverage"? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, did you <input type="checkbox"/> elect optional (in addition to regular) insurance; <input type="checkbox"/> decline optional (but not regular) insurance; <input type="checkbox"/> waive all life insurance coverage? (E) Are you now receiving an annuity based on prior Federal Service? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, furnish CSA No. _____.																								
Department or Agency	City and State	Position	Classification Grade	Date Appointed Month Year																				
<b>MILITARY SERVICE</b>																								
Have you ever served on active duty with the military? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, list dates, branch, and serial or service number of all active service, and attach a copy of DD 214, Notice of Separation.																								
From	To	Branch of Service	Serial or Service Number																					
Are you retired from military service? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>IN CASE OF EMERGENCY NOTIFY</b> Name _____ Address _____ Relationship _____ Telephone _____																								

# APPENDIX J

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## Federal Magistrates Act of 1968, as amended

### Provisions of Title 28, United States Code

#### § 631. Appointment and Tenure

**(a)** The judges of each United States district court and the district courts of the Virgin Islands, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands shall appoint United States magistrate judges in such numbers and to serve at such locations within the judicial districts as the Judicial Conference may determine under this chapter. In the case of a magistrate judge appointed by the district court of the Virgin Islands, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, this chapter shall apply as though the court appointing such a magistrate judge were a United States district court. Where there is more than one judge of a district court, the appointment, whether an original appointment or a reappointment, shall be by the concurrence of a majority of all the judges of such district court, and when there is no such concurrence, then by the chief judge. Where the conference deems it desirable, a magistrate judge may be designated to serve in one or more districts adjoining the district for which he is appointed. Such a designation shall be made by the concurrence of a majority of the judges of each of the district courts involved and shall specify the duties to be performed by the magistrate judge in the adjoining district or districts.

**(b)** No individual may be appointed or reappointed to serve as a magistrate judge under this chapter unless:

1. He has been for at least five years a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Virgin Islands of the United States, except that an individual who does not meet the bar membership requirements of this paragraph may be appointed and serve as a part-time magistrate judge if

- the appointing court or courts and the conference find that no qualified individual who is a member of the bar is available to serve at a specific location;
2. He is determined by the appointing district court or courts to be competent to perform the duties of the office;
  3. In the case of an individual appointed to serve in a national park, he resides within the exterior boundaries of that park, or at some place reasonably adjacent thereto;
  4. He is not related by blood or marriage to a judge of the appointing court or courts at the time of his initial appointment; and
  5. He is selected pursuant to standards and procedures promulgated by the Judicial Conference of the United States. Such standards and procedures shall contain provision for public notice of all vacancies in magistrate judge positions and for the establishment by the district courts of merit selection panels, composed of residents of the individual judicial districts, to assist the courts in identifying and recommending persons who are best qualified to fill such positions.

(c) A magistrate judge may hold no other civil or military office or employment under the United States: Provided, however, That, with the approval of the conference, a part-time referee in bankruptcy or a clerk or deputy clerk of a court of the United States may be appointed and serve as a part-time United States magistrate judge, but the conference shall fix the aggregate amount of compensation to be received for performing the duties of part-time magistrate judge and part-time referee in bankruptcy, clerk or deputy clerk: And provided further, That retired officers and retired enlisted personnel of the Regular and Reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, members of the Reserve components of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard<sup>1</sup> members of the Space Force, and members of the Army National Guard of the United States, the Air National Guard of the United States, and the Naval Militia and of the National Guard of a State, territory, or the District of Columbia, except the National Guard disbursing officers who are on a full-time salary basis, may be appointed and serve as United States magistrate judges.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in sections 375 and 636(h) of this title, no individual may serve under this chapter after having attained the age of seventy years: Provided, however, That upon a majority vote of all the judges of the appointing court or courts, which is taken upon the magistrate judge's attaining age seventy and upon each subsequent anniversary thereof, a magistrate judge who has attained the age of seventy years may continue to serve and may be reappointed under this chapter.

(e) The appointment of any individual as a full-time magistrate judge shall be for a term of eight years, and the appointment of any individuals as a part-time magistrate judge shall be for a term of four years, except that the term of a full-time or part-time magistrate judge appointed under subsection (k) shall expire upon—

1. the expiration of the absent magistrate judge's term,
2. the reinstatement of the absent magistrate judge in regular service in office as a magistrate judge,
3. the failure of the absent magistrate judge to make timely application under subsection (j) of this section for reinstatement in regular service in office as a magistrate judge after discharge or release from military service,
4. the death or resignation of the absent magistrate judge, or
5. the removal from office of the absent magistrate judge pursuant to subsection (i) of this section,

whichever may first occur.

(f) Upon the expiration of his term, a magistrate judge may, by a majority vote of the judges of the appointing district court or courts and with the approval of the judicial council of the circuit, continue to perform the duties of his office until his successor is appointed, or for 180 days after the date of the expiration of the magistrate judge's term, whichever is earlier.

(g) Each individual appointed as a magistrate judge under this section shall take the oath or affirmation prescribed by section 453 of this title before performing the duties of his office.

**(h)** Each appointment made by a judge or judges of a district court shall be entered of record in such court, and notice of such appointment shall be given at once by the clerk of that court to the Director.

**(i)** Removal of a magistrate judge during the term for which he is appointed shall be only for incompetency, misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental disability, but a magistrate judge's office shall be terminated if the conference determines that the services performed by his office are no longer needed. Removal shall be by the judges of the district court for the judicial district in which the magistrate judge serves; where there is more than one judge of a district court, removal shall not occur unless a majority of all the judges of such court concur in the order of removal; and when there is a tie vote of the judges of the district court on the question of the removal or retention in office of a magistrate judge, then removal shall be only by a concurrence of a majority of all the judges of the council. In the case of a magistrate judge appointed under the third sentence of subsection (a) of this section, removal shall not occur unless a majority of all the judges of the appointing district courts concur in the order of removal; and where there is a tie vote on the question of the removal or retention in office of a magistrate judge, then removal shall be only by a concurrence of a majority of all the judges of the council or councils. Before any order or removal shall be entered, a full specification of the charges shall be furnished to the magistrate judge, and he shall be accorded by the judge or judges of the removing court, courts, council, or councils an opportunity to be heard on the charges.

**(j)** Upon the grant by the appropriate district court or courts of a leave of absence to a magistrate judge entitled to such relief under chapter 43 of title 38, such court or courts may proceed to appoint, in the manner specified in subsection (a) of this section, another magistrate judge, qualified for appointment and service under subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section, who shall serve for the period specified in subsection (e) of this section.

**(k)** A United States magistrate judge appointed under this chapter shall be exempt from the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 63 of title 5.

## **§ 632. Character of service**

- (a)** Full-time United States magistrate judges may not engage in the practice of law, and may not engage in any other business, occupation, or employment inconsistent with the expeditious, proper, and impartial performance of their duties as judicial officers.
- (b)** Part-time United States magistrate judges shall render such service as judicial officers as is required by law. While so serving they may engage in the practice of law, but may not serve as counsel in any criminal action in any court of the United States, nor act in any capacity that is, under such regulations as the conference may establish, inconsistent with the proper discharge of their office. Within such restrictions, they may engage in any other business, occupation, or employment which is not inconsistent with the expeditious, proper, and impartial performance of their duties as judicial officers.

## **§ 633. Determination of number, locations, and salaries of magistrate judges**

### **(a) Surveys by the Director.-**

1. The Director shall, within one year immediately following the date of the enactment of the Federal Magistrates Act, make a careful survey of conditions in judicial districts to determine (A) the number of appointments of full-time magistrates and part-time magistrates required to be made under this chapter to provide for the expeditious and effective administration of justice, (B) the locations at which such officers shall serve, and (C) their respective salaries under section 634 of this title. Thereafter, the Director shall, from time to time, make such surveys, general or local, as the conference shall deem expedient.
2. In the course of any survey, the Director shall take into account local conditions in each judicial district, including the areas and the populations to be served, the transportation and communications facilities available, the amount and distribution of business of the type expected to arise before officers appointed under this chapter (including such matters as may be assigned under section 636(b) of this chapter), and any

other material factors. The Director shall give consideration to suggestions from any interested parties, including district judges, United States magistrate judges or officers appointed under this chapter, United States attorneys, bar associations, and other parties having relevant experience or information.

3. The surveys shall be made with a view toward creating and maintaining a system of full-time United States magistrate judges. However, should the Director find, as a result of any such surveys, areas in which the employment of a full-time magistrate judge would not be feasible or desirable, he shall recommend the appointment of part-time United States magistrate judges in such numbers and at such locations as may be required to permit prompt and efficient issuance of process and to permit individuals charged with criminal offenses against the United States to be brought before a judicial officer of the United States promptly after arrest.

**(b) Determination by the conference.**— Upon the completion of the initial surveys required by subsection (a) of this section, the Director shall report to the district courts, the councils, and the conference his recommendations concerning the number of full-time magistrates and part-time magistrates, their respective locations, and the amount of their respective salaries under section 634 of this title. The district courts shall advise their respective councils, stating their recommendations and the reasons therefor; the councils shall advise the conference, stating their recommendations and the reasons therefor, and shall also report to the conference the recommendations of the district courts. The conference shall determine, in the light of the recommendations of the Director, the district courts, and the councils, the number of full-time United States magistrates and part-time United States magistrates, the locations at which they shall serve, and their respective salaries. Such determinations shall take effect in each judicial district at such time as the district court for such judicial district shall determine, but in no event later than one year after they are promulgated.

**(c) Changes in number, locations, and salaries.**— Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the conference may, from time to time, in the light of the recommendations of the Director, the district courts, and the councils, change the number, locations, and salaries of full-time and

part-time magistrate judges, as the expeditious administration of justice may require.

## § 634. Compensation

**(a)** Officers appointed under this chapter shall receive, as full compensation for their services, salaries to be fixed by the conference pursuant to section 633, at rates for full-time United States magistrate judges up to an annual rate equal to 92 percent of the salary of a judge of the district court of the United States, as determined pursuant to section 135, and at rates for part-time magistrate judges of not less than an annual salary of \$100, nor more than one-half the maximum salary payable to a full-time magistrate judge. In fixing the amount of salary to be paid to any officer appointed under this chapter, consideration shall be given to the average number and the nature of matters that have arisen during the immediately preceding period of five years, and that may be expected thereafter to arise, over which such officer would have jurisdiction and to such other factors as may be material. Disbursement of salaries shall be made by or pursuant to the order of the Director.

**(b)** Except as provided by section 8344, title 5, relating to reductions of the salaries of reemployed annuitants under subchapter III of chapter 83 of such title and unless the office has been terminated as provided in this chapter, the salary of a full-time United States magistrate judge shall not be reduced, during the term in which he is serving, below the salary fixed for him at the beginning of that term.

**(c)** All United States magistrate judges, effective upon their taking the oath or affirmation of office, and all necessary legal, clerical, and secretarial assistants employed in the offices of full-time United States magistrate judges shall be deemed to be officers and employees in the judicial branch of the United States Government within the meaning of subchapter III (relating to civil service retirement) of chapter 83, chapter 87 (relating to Federal employees' group life insurance), and chapter 89 (relating to Federal employees' health benefits program) of title 5. Part-time magistrate judges shall not be excluded from coverage under these chapters solely for lack of a prearranged regular tour of duty. A legal assistant appointed under this section shall be exempt from the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 63 of title 5, unless specifically included by the appointing judge or by local rule of court.

## § 635. Expenses

**(a)** Full-time United States magistrate judges serving under this chapter shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, including the compensation of such legal assistants as the Judicial Conference, on the basis of the recommendations of the judicial councils of the circuits, considers necessary, and the compensation of necessary clerical and secretarial assistance. Such expenses and compensation shall be determined and paid by the Director under such regulations as the Director shall prescribe with the approval of the conference. The Administrator of General Services shall provide such magistrate judges with necessary courtrooms, office space, furniture and facilities within United States courthouses or office buildings owned or occupied by departments or agencies of the United States, or should suitable courtroom and office space not be available within any such courthouse or office building, the Administrator of General Services, at the request of the Director, shall procure and pay for suitable courtroom and office space, furniture and facilities for such magistrate judge in another building, but only if such request has been approved as necessary by the judicial council of the appropriate circuit.

**(b)** Under such regulations as the Director shall prescribe with the approval of the conference, the Director shall reimburse part-time magistrate judges for actual expenses necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties under this chapter. Such reimbursement may be made, at rates not exceeding those prescribed by such regulations, for expenses incurred by such part-time magistrate judges for clerical and secretarial assistance, stationery, telephone and other communications services, travel, and such other expenses as may be determined to be necessary for the proper performance of the duties of such officers: Provided, however, That no reimbursement shall be made for all or any portion of the expense incurred by such part-time magistrate judges for the procurement of office space.

## § 636. Jurisdiction, powers, and temporary assignment

**(a)** Each United States magistrate judge serving under this chapter shall have within the district in which sessions are held by the court that appointed the magistrate judge, at other places where that court may function, and elsewhere as authorized by law—

1. all powers and duties conferred or imposed upon United States commissioners by law or by the Rules of Criminal Procedure for the United States District Courts;
2. the power to administer oaths and affirmations, issue orders pursuant to section 3142 of title 18 concerning release or detention of persons pending trial, and take acknowledgements, affidavits, and depositions;
3. the power to conduct trials under section 3401, title 18, United States Code, in conformity with and subject to the limitations of that section;
4. the power to enter a sentence for a petty offense; and
5. the power to enter a sentence for a class A misdemeanor in a case in which the parties have consented.

**(b)**

1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary-
  - A. a judge may designate a magistrate judge to hear and determine any pretrial matter pending before the court, except a motion for injunctive relief, for judgment on the pleadings, for summary judgment, to dismiss or quash an indictment or information made by the defendant, to suppress evidence in a criminal case, to dismiss or to permit maintenance of a class action, to dismiss for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, and to involuntarily dismiss an action. A judge of the court may reconsider any pretrial matter under this subparagraph (A) where it has been shown that the magistrate judge's order is clearly erroneous or contrary to law.
  - B. a judge may also designate a magistrate judge to conduct hearings, including evidentiary hearings, and to submit to a judge of the court proposed findings of fact and recommendations for the disposition, by a judge of the court, of any motion excepted in subparagraph (A), of applications for posttrial relief made by individuals convicted of criminal offenses and of prisoner petitions challenging conditions of confinement.

- C. the magistrate judge shall file his proposed findings and recommendations under subparagraph (B) with the court and a copy shall forthwith be mailed to all parties.

Within fourteen days after being served with a copy, any party may serve and file written objections to such proposed findings and recommendations as provided by rules of court. A judge of the court shall make a de novo determination of those portions of the report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made. A judge of the court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made by the magistrate judge. The judge may also receive further evidence or recommit the matter to the magistrate judge with instructions.

- 2. A judge may designate a magistrate judge to serve as a special master pursuant to the applicable provisions of this title and the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for the United States district courts. A judge may designate a magistrate judge to serve as a special master in any civil case, upon consent of the parties, without regard to the provisions of rule 53(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for the United States district courts.
- 3. A magistrate judge may be assigned such additional duties as are not inconsistent with the Constitution and laws of the United States.
- 4. Each district court shall establish rules pursuant to which the magistrate judges shall discharge their duties.

(c) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary—

- 1. Upon the consent of the parties, a full-time United States magistrate judge or a part-time United States magistrate judge who serves as a full-time judicial officer may conduct any or all proceedings in a jury or nonjury civil matter and order the entry of judgment in the case, when specially designated to exercise such jurisdiction by the district court or courts he serves. Upon the consent of the parties, pursuant to their specific written request, any other part-time magistrate judge may exercise such jurisdiction, if such magistrate judge meets the bar membership requirements set forth in section 631(b)

- (1) and the chief judge of the district court certifies that a full-time magistrate judge is not reasonably available in accordance with guidelines established by the judicial council of the circuit. When there is more than one judge of a district court, designation under this paragraph shall be by the concurrence of a majority of all the judges of such district court, and when there is no such concurrence, then by the chief judge.
2. If a magistrate judge is designated to exercise civil jurisdiction under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the clerk of court shall, at the time the action is filed, notify the parties of the availability of a magistrate judge to exercise such jurisdiction. The decision of the parties shall be communicated to the clerk of court. Thereafter, either the district court judge or the magistrate judge may again advise the parties of the availability of the magistrate judge, but in so doing, shall also advise the parties that they are free to withhold consent without adverse substantive consequences. Rules of court for the reference of civil matters to magistrate judges shall include procedures to protect the voluntariness of the parties' consent.
  3. Upon entry of judgment in any case referred under paragraph (1) of this subsection, an aggrieved party may appeal directly to the appropriate United States court of appeals from the judgment of the magistrate judge in the same manner as an appeal from any other judgment of a district court. The consent of the parties allows a magistrate judge designated to exercise civil jurisdiction under paragraph (1) of this subsection to direct the entry of a judgment of the district court in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as a limitation of any party's right to seek review by the Supreme Court of the United States.
  4. The court may, for good cause shown on its own motion, or under extraordinary circumstances shown by any party, vacate a reference of a civil matter to a magistrate judge under this subsection.
  5. The magistrate judge shall, subject to guidelines of the Judicial Conference, determine whether the record taken pursuant to

this section shall be taken by electronic sound recording, by a court reporter, or by other means.

**(d)** The practice and procedure for the trial of cases before officers serving under this chapter shall conform to rules promulgated by the Supreme Court pursuant to section 2072 of this title.

**(e) Contempt authority. –**

- 1. In general.**– A United States magistrate judge serving under this chapter shall have within the territorial jurisdiction prescribed by the appointment of such magistrate judge the power to exercise contempt authority as set forth in this subsection.
- 2. Summary criminal contempt authority.**– A magistrate judge shall have the power to punish summarily by fine or imprisonment, or both, such contempt of the authority of such magistrate judge constituting misbehavior of any person in the magistrate judge's presence so as to obstruct the administration of justice. The order of contempt shall be issued under the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- 3. Additional criminal contempt authority in civil consent and misdemeanor cases.**– In any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, and in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, the magistrate judge shall have the power to punish, by fine or imprisonment, or both, criminal contempt constituting disobedience or resistance to the magistrate judge's lawful writ, process, order, rule, decree, or command. Disposition of such contempt shall be conducted upon notice and hearing under the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- 4. Civil contempt authority in civil consent and misdemeanor cases.**– In any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, and in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, the magistrate judge may exercise the civil contempt authority of the district court. This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the

authority of a magistrate judge to order sanctions under any other statute, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, or the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

5. **Criminal contempt penalties.**— The sentence imposed by a magistrate judge for any criminal contempt provided for in paragraphs (2) and (3) shall not exceed the penalties for a Class C misdemeanor as set forth in sections 3581(b)(8) and 3571(b)(6) of title 18.
6. **Certification of other contempt to the district court.**— Upon the commission of any such act—
  - A. in any case in which a United States magistrate judge presides with the consent of the parties under subsection (c) of this section, or in any misdemeanor case proceeding before a magistrate judge under section 3401 of title 18, that may, in the opinion of the magistrate judge, constitute a serious criminal contempt punishable by penalties exceeding those set forth in paragraph (5) of this subsection, or
  - B. in any other case or proceeding under subsection (a) or (b) of this section, or any other statute, where—
    - (i) the act committed in the magistrate judge's presence may, in the opinion of the magistrate judge, constitute a serious criminal contempt punishable by penalties exceeding those set forth in paragraph (5) of this subsection,
    - (ii) the act that constitutes a criminal contempt occurs outside the presence of the magistrate judge, or
    - (iii) the act constitutes a civil contempt,
    - (iv) the magistrate judge shall forthwith certify the facts to a district judge and may serve or cause to be served, upon any person whose behavior is brought into question under this paragraph, an order requiring such person to appear before a district judge upon a day certain to show cause why that person should not be adjudged in contempt by reason of the facts so certified. The district judge shall thereupon hear the evidence as to the act or conduct complained of and, if

it is such as to warrant punishment, punish such person in the same manner and to the same extent as for a contempt committed before a district judge.

**7. Appeals of magistrate judge contempt orders.**— The appeal of an order of contempt under this subsection shall be made to the court of appeals in cases proceeding under subsection (c) of this section. The appeal of any other order of contempt issued under this section shall be made to the district court.

(f) In an emergency and upon the concurrence of the chief judges of the districts involved, a United States magistrate judge may be temporarily assigned to perform any of the duties specified in subsection (a), (b), or (c) of this section in a judicial district other than the judicial district for which he has been appointed. No magistrate judge shall perform any of such duties in a district to which he has been temporarily assigned until an order has been issued by the chief judge of such district specifying (1) the emergency by reason of which he has been transferred, (2) the duration of his assignment, and (3) the duties which he is authorized to perform. A magistrate judge so assigned shall not be entitled to additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of his duties in accordance with section 635.

(g) A United States magistrate judge may perform the verification function required by section 4107 of title 18, United States Code. A magistrate judge may be assigned by a judge of any United States district court to perform the verification required by section 4108 and the appointment of counsel authorized by section 4109 of title 18, United States Code, and may perform such functions beyond the territorial limits of the United States. A magistrate judge assigned such functions shall have no authority to perform any other function within the territory of a foreign country.

(h) A United States magistrate judge who has retired may, upon the consent of the chief judge of the district involved, be recalled to serve as a magistrate judge in any judicial district by the judicial council of the circuit within which such district is located. Upon recall, a magistrate judge may receive a salary for such service in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Judicial Conference, subject to the restrictions on the payment of an annuity set forth in section 377

of this title or in subchapter III of chapter 83, and chapter 84, of title 5 which are applicable to such magistrate judge. The requirements set forth in subsections (a), (b)(3), and (d) of section 631, and paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of such section to the extent such paragraph requires membership of the bar of the location in which an individual is to serve as a magistrate judge, shall not apply to the recall of a retired magistrate judge under this subsection or section 375 of this title. Any other requirement set forth in section 631(b) shall apply to the recall of a retired magistrate judge under this subsection or section 375 of this title unless such retired magistrate judge met such requirement upon appointment or reappointment as a magistrate judge under section 631.

## **§ 637. Training**

The Federal Judicial Center shall conduct periodic training programs and seminars for both full-time and part-time United States magistrate judges, including an introductory training program for new magistrate judges, to be held within one year after initial appointment.

## **§ 638. Dockets and forms; United States Code; seals**

- (a)** The Director shall furnish to United States magistrate judges adequate docket books and forms prescribed by the Director. The Director shall also furnish to each such officer a copy of the current edition of the United States Code.
- (b)** All property furnished to any such officer shall remain the property of the United States and, upon the termination of his term of office, shall be transmitted to his successor in office or otherwise disposed of as the Director orders.
- (c)** The Director shall furnish to each United States magistrate judge appointed under this chapter an official impression seal in a form prescribed by the conference. Each such officer shall affix his seal to every jurat or certificate of his official acts without fee.

## § 639. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

1. “Conference” shall mean the Judicial Conference of the United States;
2. “Council” shall mean the Judicial Council of the Circuit;
3. “Director” shall mean the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts;
4. “Full-time magistrate judge” shall mean a full-time United States magistrate judge;
5. “Part-time magistrate judge” shall mean a part-time United States magistrate judge; and
6. “United States magistrate judge” and “magistrate judge” shall mean both full-time and part-time United States magistrate judges.

## Provisions of Title 18, United States Code

### § 3401. Misdemeanors; application of probation laws

- (a) When specially designated to exercise such jurisdiction by the district court or courts he serves, any United States magistrate judge shall have jurisdiction to try persons accused of, and sentence persons convicted of, misdemeanors committed within that judicial district.
- (b) Any person charged with a misdemeanor, other than a petty offense may elect, however, to be tried before a district judge for the district in which the offense was committed. The magistrate judge shall carefully explain to the defendant that he has a right to trial, judgment, and sentencing by a district judge and that he may have a right to trial by jury before a district judge or magistrate judge. The magistrate judge may not proceed to try the case unless the defendant, after such explanation, expressly consents to be tried before the magistrate judge and expressly and specifically waives trial, judgment, and sentencing by a district judge. Any such consent and waiver shall be made in writing or orally on the record.

- (c) A magistrate judge who exercises trial jurisdiction under this section, and before whom a person is convicted or pleads either guilty or nolo contendere, may, with the approval of a judge of the district court, direct the probation service of the court to conduct a presentence investigation on that person and render a report to the magistrate judge prior to the imposition of sentence.
- (d) The probation laws shall be applicable to persons tried by a magistrate judge under this section, and such officer shall have power to grant probation and to revoke, modify, or reinstate the probation of any person granted probation by a magistrate judge.
- (e) Proceedings before United States magistrate judges under this section shall be taken down by a court reporter or recorded by suitable sound recording equipment. For purposes of appeal a copy of the record of such proceedings shall be made available at the expense of the United States to a person who makes affidavit that he is unable to pay or give security therefor, and the expense of such copy shall be paid by the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.
- (f) The district court may order that proceedings in any misdemeanor case be conducted before a district judge rather than a United States magistrate judge upon the court's own motion or, for good cause shown, upon petition by the attorney for the Government. Such petition should note the novelty, importance, or complexity of the case, or other pertinent factors, and be filed in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Attorney General.
- (g) The magistrate judge may, in a petty offense case involving a juvenile, exercise all powers granted to the district court under chapter 403 of this title. The magistrate judge may, in the case of any misdemeanor, other than a petty offense, involving a juvenile in which consent to trial before a magistrate judge has been filed under subsection (b), exercise all powers granted to the district court under chapter 403 of this title. For purposes of this subsection, proceedings under chapter 403 of this title may be instituted against a juvenile by a violation notice or complaint, except that no such case may proceed unless the certification referred to in section 5032 of this title has been filed in open court at the arraignment.

- (h) The magistrate judge shall have power to modify, revoke, or terminate supervised release of any person sentenced to a term of supervised release by a magistrate judge.
- (i) A district judge may designate a magistrate judge to conduct hearings to modify, revoke, or terminate supervised release, including evidentiary hearings, and to submit to the judge proposed findings of fact and recommendations for such modification, revocation, or termination by the judge, including, in the case of revocation, a recommended disposition under section 3583(e) of this title. The magistrate judge shall file his or her proposed findings and recommendations.

## § 3402. Rules of procedure, practice and appeal

In all cases of conviction by a United States magistrate judge an appeal of right shall lie from the judgment of the magistrate judge to a judge of the district court of the district in which the offense was committed.

# APPENDIX K

## Guide to Judiciary Policy

### Vol. 3: Judges

#### Ch. 4: Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of Magistrate Judges

(Note: No unauthorized disclosure of this policy guidance outside the judiciary is permitted.)

##### § 410 Overview

##### § 420 Judicial Conference Regulations

- § 420.10 Qualifications of United States Magistrate Judges
  - § 420.20 Public Notice
  - § 420.30 Merit Selection Panel
  - § 420.40 New Appointments of Magistrate Judges
  - § 420.50 Selection of Part-Time Magistrate Judges
  - § 420.60 Reappointment of Magistrate Judges
  - § 420.70 Appointments to Combination Positions
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##### § 410 OVERVIEW

- a. The judges of each district court appoint magistrate judges in the number and at the locations determined by the Judicial Conference. See: 28 U.S.C. § 631(a). Magistrate judges must be selected by the district courts under standards and procedures promulgated by the Judicial Conference.  
See: 28 U.S.C. § 631(b)(5).
- b. The Judicial Conference first promulgated regulations establishing the standards and procedures for appointing and reappointing magistrate judges in 1980 (JCUS-MAR 1980, p. 32). The Conference later amended the regulations in 1981 (JCUS-MAR 1981, p. 29), 1982 (JCUS-SEP 1982, pp. 93-94), 1986 (JCUS-SEP 1986, p. 77), 1992 (JCUS-SEP 1992, p. 75), 1996 (JCUS-MAR 1996, p. 30), 1997 (JCUS-MAR 1997, p. 29),

- 1998 ([JCUS-SEP 1998](#), p. 82), 1999 ([JCUS-MAR 1999](#), p. 29), 2000 ([JCUS-SEP 2000](#), p. 60), 2001 ([JCUS-SEP/OCT 2001](#), p. 65), 2004 ([JCUS-MAR 2004](#), p. 23), 2006 ([JCUS-SEP 2006](#), p. 29), 2007 ([JCUS-SEP 2007](#), p. 29), 2008 ([JCUS-MAR 2008](#), p. 23 and [JCUS-SEP 2008](#), pp. 29-30), 2009 ([JCUS-SEP 2009](#), p. 25), 2010 ([JCUS-MAR 2010](#), pp. 21-22), 2011 ([JCUS-MAR 2011](#), pp. 30-31), 2013 ([JCUS-SEP 2013](#), p. 29), 2014 ([JCUS-SEP 2014](#), p. 25), 2015 ([JCUS-SEP 2015](#), p. 27), and 2016 ([JCUS-SEP 2016](#), p. 27).
- c. Full-time magistrate judges are appointed to eight-year terms of office by the judges of each respective United States district court. **See:** [28 U.S.C. § 631\(e\)](#). Part-time magistrate judges are appointed to four-year terms of office by the judges of the district court. **See:** [28 U.S.C. § 631\(e\)](#).

## § 420 JUDICIAL CONFERENCE REGULATIONS

These regulations refer in several places to the actions of a majority vote of the district judges. Under [28 U.S.C. § 296](#), those senior judges with a 50 percent workload may elect to participate in court governance activities generally, including magistrate judge appointments. Therefore, references to district judges in [§ 420.30.10](#), [§ 420.30.20\(a\)](#), [§ 420.40.10](#), [§ 420.60.20](#), and [§ 420.60.30\(c\)](#) include all active district judges and those senior judges who performed in the preceding calendar year an amount of work equal to or greater than the amount of work an average judge in active service on that court would perform in six months, and who elect to exercise such powers. **See:** [JCUS-MAR 11](#), p. 30.

### § 420.10 Qualifications of United States Magistrate Judges

#### *§ 420.10.10 Minimum Qualifications*

To be qualified for appointment or reappointment as a U.S. magistrate judge, a person must:

- a. Be, and have been for at least five years, a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the United States Virgin Islands.

- b. Have been engaged in the active practice of law for a period of at least five years. The court may consider as substitute experience for the active practice of law the following, including any combination thereof:
  - 1. Judge of a state court of record or other state judicial officer.
  - 2. U.S. magistrate judge, bankruptcy judge, or other federal judicial officer.
  - 3. Attorney for federal or state agencies.
  - 4. No more than two years as a law clerk to any judge or judicial officer or as a staff attorney or pro se law clerk in a court.
  - 5. Other types of substantial legal experience (subsequent to receipt of a law degree or license to practice law), not included in subparagraphs (1) through (4) above, which is suitable as a substitute in the opinion of the majority of the court.
- c. Be competent to perform the duties of the office, of good moral character, emotionally stable and mature, committed to equal justice under the law, in good health, patient, courteous, and capable of deliberation and decisiveness when required to act on his or her own reason and judgment.
- d. Not be related by blood or marriage to a judge of the appointing court or courts, within the degrees specified in [28 U.S.C. § 458](#), at the time of the initial appointment.
- e. In the case of an initial appointment, not be 70 years of age or older.

**(Note:** For information on continuation and reappointment of magistrate judges upon attaining age 70, **See:** [28 U.S.C. § 631\(d\)](#).)

#### ***§ 420.10.20 Additional Qualifications***

A district court may establish additional qualification standards appropriate for a particular magistrate judge position, taking into account the specific responsibilities anticipated for that position. In no event, however, may the additional qualification standards be inconsistent with the court's policy as an equal opportunity employer.

## § 420.20 Public Notice

### ***§ 420.20.10 Publication***

- a. Before the selection of a magistrate judge, whether a new appointment or a reappointment, a public notice must be published in sources that will reach a wide audience of qualified applicants.
- b. These sources may include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a general local newspaper,
  - a widely circulated local legal periodical,
  - bar association websites,
  - government websites, and
  - other resources relied upon by legal professionals.
- c. To encourage applications from all qualified individuals, the court is encouraged to transmit the public notice to state and local bar associations and interest groups that focus on women and minorities. The court should also consider utilizing national publications and other resources relied upon by legal professionals.

### ***§ 420.20.20 Contents of Notice***

- a. Except as provided in [§ 420.60.30](#), the public announcement must describe:
  1. the duties of the position,
  2. the pertinent qualification standards, and
  3. the procedures for submission of applications, including the name and address of the person to whom applications should be submitted.
- b. The notice must specify that applications are to be submitted only by the applicant personally, indicating the person's willingness to serve if selected.

- c. The notice must also include a statement that the individual selected must comply with the financial disclosure requirements pursuant to the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-521, 92 Stat. 1824 (1978) (as amended) (codified at [5 U.S.C. app. §§ 101-111](#)).

#### ***§ 420.20.30 Filing of Notice***

The public notice must be filed and posted in the office of the clerk of court and a copy must be provided to the Director of the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO).

### **§ 420.30 Merit Selection Panel**

#### ***§ 420.30.10 Establishment of Panel***

- a. Before the appointment or reappointment of a U.S. magistrate judge, the court, by majority vote of the district judges, must appoint a merit selection panel, which will recommend to the court for consideration individuals whose character, experience, ability, and commitment to equal justice under the law fully qualify them to serve as a U.S. magistrate judge.
- b. The panel must be established by an order of the court specifying:
  1. the names of the members,
  2. whether each is a lawyer or a non-lawyer, and
  3. the effective date of the panel's appointment.
- c. Merit selection panel members must be notified in writing of the restriction in § 420.30.20(d) below regarding their application for magistrate judge positions.
- d. The order appointing the merit selection panel must indicate that the panel members have received written notice of the restriction in § 420.30.20(d).
- e. A copy of the court's order appointing the merit selection panel must be submitted to the Director of the AO at the time the order is entered and prior to any action by the panel.

- f. For information on the participation of senior judges in the appointment of magistrate judges, see: [28 U.S.C. § 296; Guide, Vol. 3, § 420](#).

#### ***§ 420.30.20 Membership***

- a. The panel must be composed of a chairperson and other members appointed by majority vote of the district judges of the court. The panel must have no fewer than seven members, including the chairperson. For information on the participation of senior judges in the appointment of magistrate judges, see: [28 U.S.C. § 296; Guide, Vol. 3, § 420](#).
- b. Members of the panel may receive no compensation for their service, but may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law.  
**See: [Guide, Vol. 19, § 455.25 \(Invitational Travelers\)](#).**
- c. The panel must consist of lawyers and other members of the community.
  1. At least two members of the panel must be non-lawyers.
  2. Each member of the panel must be a resident of the district within which the appointment is to be made, or, if a non-resident, have significant ties to the community of the district.
  3. The following may not be appointed as panel members:
    - A. active, senior, or recalled federal judges;
    - B. retired Article III judges; or
    - C. other district court officers or employees.

This prohibition does not preclude the following from serving on the panel:

- U.S. attorneys,
- assistant U.S. attorneys,
- federal defenders, or
- assistant federal defenders.

- d. Restrictions on Merit Selection Panel Members
  - 1. In order for a former merit selection panel member to be considered for a magistrate judge position, one year must have elapsed between the application deadline for the position and the earlier of:
    - A. The date when the panel on which the former member served submitted its report to the court, or
    - B. The date when the former member resigned from the panel.
  - 2. This restriction applies to a former member of a merit selection panel for the appointment or reappointment of a U.S. magistrate judge.
  - 3. The Judicial Conference Committee on the Administration of the Magistrate Judges System (Magistrate Judges Committee) is authorized to grant waivers to this provision on an individual case basis.
    - A. Requests for waivers should be submitted to the Magistrate Judges Committee by the chair of the merit selection panel that is recommending candidates for the magistrate judge position for which the former panel member seeks to apply.
    - B. In its evaluation of a request for a waiver, the Magistrate Judges Committee may consider any factor it deems relevant, including, but not limited to:
      - (i) the foreseeability of a subsequent magistrate judge position at the time of the former merit selection panel member's service on the panel;
      - (ii) the size of the applicant pool for the subsequent position;
      - (iii) whether the panel member served on a standing panel;

- (iv) whether a waiver would advance the goal of achieving diversity in the applicant pool; and
  - (v) any geographical concerns.
- e. To further efforts to achieve diversity in all aspects of the magistrate judge selection process, the court is encouraged to appoint a diverse merit selection panel.

#### ***§ 420.30.30 Duties***

- a. The chairperson will have such duties as the court may assign.
- b. Except as provided in [§ 420.30.40](#), all information made available to the members of the panel in the performance of their duties, including the names of applicants and the identities of individuals recommended by the panel, must be kept in strict confidence by the panel and the court, provided, however, that applicants may, upon request, waive the confidentiality requirements to allow the court or the panel to publicize the applicants' names in order to solicit comments from the bar and the public.
- c. Decisions of the panel must be by majority vote of all the members.
- d. The panel must examine all applications and may, in its discretion, personally interview applicants. The panel must make an affirmative effort to identify and give due consideration to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, age (40 and over), gender, religion, national origin, or disability.
- e. The panel must:
  1. determine, from among the applicants, those individuals who meet all of the standards provided in these regulations for appointment as a U.S. magistrate judge; and
  2. designate those individuals whom the panel considers best qualified.
- f. The panel must submit a report to the court as provided in the following section.

#### **§ 420.30.40 Panel Report**

- a. If an appointment is to be made to a vacant or newly created position, the panel must report to the court the results of its activities within 90 days after its creation unless otherwise directed by the court.
- b. The report of the panel must specify the five applicants the panel has determined are best qualified and have attached to it all written information received by and prepared by the panel concerning the recommended applicants.
- c. The court may accept a list containing fewer than five names for good cause shown by the panel in its report.
- d. The court may direct the panel to recommend more than five applicants if the panel is recommending applicants for more than one magistrate judge position.
- e. The report must indicate whether any of the recommended applicants were former merit selection panel members who have been granted a waiver under [§ 420.30.20\(d\)](#).

#### **§ 420.40 New Appointments of Magistrate Judges**

##### ***§ 420.40.10 Selection from List and Majority Decision of Judges***

The district judges must select from the list provided by the panel. However, if no applicant receives a majority vote of the district judges, the court must request a second list of five names. The court is then free to select from either list. If, again, no applicant receives a majority vote, the chief judge must make the selection for the court from either list. For information on the participation of senior judges in the appointment of magistrate judges, see: [28 U.S.C. § 296](#); [Guide, Vol. 3, § 420](#).

##### ***§ 420.40.20 FBI and IRS Reports***

- a. The name of the person selected by the court for appointment to either a full-time or a part-time magistrate judge position must be submitted to the Director of the AO, who must request:
  1. reports of full-field background investigations, with a 15-year scope, by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and
  2. background checks by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

- b. A part-time magistrate judge, who was the subject of a full-field FBI investigation before appointment to the part-time position, is required to undergo a second full-field investigation before appointment to a full-time position.
- c. The Magistrate Judges Committee is authorized to grant waivers under this section, on an individual case basis, in circumstances involving high turnover and recruitment problems due to isolated locations of certain part-time magistrate judge positions.

#### ***§ 420.40.30 Order of Appointment***

- a. The district court may issue an order of appointment following receipt by the court of the information obtained from the FBI and the IRS.
- b. If, in the judgment of the court, the IRS report has not been completed in a timely manner, it may waive the report if it has taken steps to ensure that the applicant selected by the court for appointment has filed returns as required.
- c. The order of appointment of a magistrate judge must be entered into the record in the district court.
- d. The clerk of the district court must provide the AO Director with notice of the appointment.

#### ***§ 420.40.40 Oath of Office***

Prior to entering on duty as a magistrate judge, the appointee must take the oath or affirmation prescribed by [28 U.S.C. § 453](#) and the constitutional oath prescribed by [5 U.S.C. § 3331](#).

#### ***§ 420.40.50 [Reserved]***

### **§ 420.50 Selection of Part-Time Magistrate Judges**

#### ***§ 420.50.10 Alternative Procedures***

The provisions of §§ 420.10 through 420.40 will apply to the selection and appointment of a part-time magistrate judge; except that, in the case of the appointment or reappointment of a part-time magistrate

judge whose authorized annual salary is less than one-third of the maximum salary authorized for a full-time magistrate judge:

- a. The court may, in lieu of the requirements of [§ 420.30.20](#) concerning the membership of merit selection panels, appoint a panel of less than seven members, but not less than three members.
  1. The panel must be established by an order of the court specifying the names of the members, whether each is a lawyer or a non-lawyer, and the effective date of the panel's appointment.
  2. A copy of the court's order appointing the merit selection panel must be submitted to the Director of the AO at the time the order is entered and prior to any action by the panel.
  3. Federal judges, including circuit judges, senior, retired, and recalled judges, and other district court officers or district court employees may serve on the panel, although at least two members of the panel must be from outside the federal judiciary.
- b. The court may, in lieu of the requirement of [§ 420.30.40\(b\)](#) that the panel submit to the court a list of five names, authorize the panel to determine the size of the list submitted to the court.
- c. The court may waive the bar membership requirements of [§ 420.10.10](#) if the appointing court and the Judicial Conference have determined that no qualified individual who is a member of the bar is available to serve at a specific location as provided in [28 U.S.C. § 631\(b\)\(1\)](#).

## § 420.60 Reappointment of Magistrate Judges

### ***§ 420.60.10 Qualifications***

The provisions of [§ 420.10](#) apply to the reappointment of U.S. magistrate judges, except that the court may waive the bar membership requirement of [§ 420.10.10](#) for the reappointment of a part-time magistrate judge as provided in [28 U.S.C. § 631\(b\)\(1\)](#).

#### **§ 420.60.20 Alternative Selection Methods**

- a. Before the expiration of an incumbent magistrate judge's term of office, the court must determine, by majority vote of the district judges, whether it wishes to consider the reappointment of the incumbent.
- b. In the event that there is no concurrence of a majority of the judges of the court, the chief judge must make the determination, as provided in [28 U.S.C. § 631\(a\)](#). For information on the participation of senior judges in the appointment of magistrate judges, **see: [28 U.S.C. § 296; Guide, Vol. 3, § 420](#)**.
- c. The court should give due consideration to the professional and career status of the position of U.S. magistrate judge.
- d. If the court determines not to reappoint the incumbent, it must so notify the incumbent and must follow the initial selection procedures provided in §§ 420.20 through 420.50.
- e. If the court determines not to reappoint the incumbent under this section, no comments may be sought on the incumbent magistrate judge's performance or reappointment, and the incumbent magistrate judge may not apply for the position.
- f. If the court desires to consider the reappointment of the incumbent, it must follow the selection procedures set forth below in § 420.60.30.

#### **§ 420.60.30 Procedures**

If the court desires to consider the reappointment of an incumbent magistrate judge, it must follow the procedures in this section:

- a. Public Notice

The court must cause to be published a public notice stating that it is required by law to establish a panel of citizens to consider the reappointment of the incumbent magistrate judge to a new term of office.

1. The public notice must be published in sources that will reach a wide audience of members of the public qualified to comment. These sources may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a general local newspaper,
  - a widely circulated local legal periodical,
  - bar association websites,
  - government websites, and
  - other resources relied upon by legal professionals.
2. The notice must:
    - A. describe the duties of the position,
    - B. state the date of expiration of the incumbent's current term of office,
    - C. invite comments from members of the public, and
    - D. include the name and address of the person to whom comments should be submitted.
  3. A copy of the notice must be filed and posted in the office of the clerk of court, and a copy must be provided to the Director of the AO.
- b. Merit Selection Panel
    1. Before the reappointment of a magistrate judge, the court must establish a panel as prescribed in [§ 420.30.20](#), or [§ 420.50.10\(a\)](#), as the case may be.
    2. The panel must review:
      - A. the incumbent's current service as magistrate judge and other experience,
      - B. the comments from members of the bar and public, and
      - C. other evidence of the incumbent's good character, ability, and commitment to equal justice under the law.
    3. The panel must report to the court within 90 days after its creation, unless otherwise directed by the court, whether the incumbent is recommended for reappointment.
  - c. Decision of the Court

1. After due consideration of the report of the panel, the court must determine whether to reappoint the incumbent by majority vote of all district judges.
2. In the event that there is no concurrence of a majority of the judges of the court, the chief judge must make the determination, as provided in [28 U.S.C. § 631\(a\)](#). For information on the participation of senior judges in the appointment of magistrate judges, see: [28 U.S.C. § 296](#); [Guide, Vol. 3, § 420](#).
3. If the court decides not to reappoint the incumbent, it must so notify the incumbent and proceed anew with the selection procedures prescribed in §§ 420.20 through 420.50.

#### **§ 420.70 Appointments to Combination Positions**

The court may consider the selection of an incumbent clerk or deputy clerk of court to fill a combination magistrate judge/clerk or deputy clerk of court position, in the same manner as prescribed in [§ 420.60](#) for reappointment.



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