



Judging the Judges: Ratings for Those Running for Judicial Seats or to Retain Seats

The following organizations rate those who are running for judicial seats or are seeking to retain currently held judicial seats. Each organization (or in some cases collaborations of organizations) provides explanations for their rating system and their recommendations. Courts Matter Illinois suggests you look at more than one organization and compare ratings.

If you have questions and want to join our mailing list, contact:

CourtsMatterIllinois@gmail.com

Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screenings: This alliance includes the following bar associations working together to evaluate judicial candidates and retention candidates: Arab American Bar Association(AABA); Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Chicago Area (AABA); Black Women Lawyers’ Association of Greater Chicago (BWL); Chicago Council of Lawyers (CCL); Cook County Bar Association (CCBA); Decalogue Society of Lawyers (DSL); Hellenic Bar Association of Illinois (HBA); Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois (HLAI); Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA); Chicago’s LGBTQ+ Bar Association (LAGBAC); Puerto Rican Bar Association (PRBA); Women’s Bar Association of Illinois (WBAI).

<https://www.voteforjudges.org>

Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts: A volunteer-led, collaborative non-profit organization advocating for fair, accessible, and anti-racist courts in Chicago, Cook County, and across the state of Illinois. This organization works [in partnership](#) with direct service providers, community organizations, and the court system itself to identify and remove the systemic barriers to justice that make courts inaccessible. They are a nonpartisan research and advocacy organization that has built long-standing connections with community members, journalists, academics, and justice system actors to create systemic change.

<https://www.chicagoappleseed.org/>

Chicago Bar Association Judicial Voter’s Guide: Vote Smart: The Chicago Bar Association ranks candidates as Highly Qualified (HQ), Qualified (Q), or Not Qualified (NQ) and uses a Yes or No rating on the Retention Ballot. You can find their ratings for Cook County at:

https://www.chicagobar.org/CBA/Committees_Groups/Judicial_Evaluation/CBA/JEC/About_the_JEC.aspx?hkey=9ad9f426-153b-4e56-9f2b-5f75f3c24352

Chicago Council of Lawyers: The Chicago Council of Lawyers evaluates candidates for open judicial seats as well as for retention seats. Their assessment criteria are available in their report (the second link) and a summary of their recommendations is found in the first link.

<https://chicagocouncil.org/state-judicial-evaluations/>

Illinois State Bar Association: The Illinois State Bar Association Standing Committee for Judicial Evaluation – Cook County provides a full list of their ratings for all of the candidates and judges seeking retention. Their ratings are available at the link below.

<https://www.isba.org/judicial-elections>

Injustice Watch: This is an independent award-winning publication that focuses on our courts and our justice system. They, too, put out a rating system for those running for judicial seats and seeking retention seats. They ask for community input from those who have experience with the judicial system as they develop their rankings. We have found their ranking system to be one of the easiest to navigate and extremely comprehensive in terms of the information that it provides.

<https://interactives.injusticewatch.org/judicial-election-guide/2024-primary/en/>

Lake County Bar Association: The Lake County Bar Association is the only Bar Association outside of Cook County that rates candidates for judicial seats and for retention of judicial seats.

https://www.lakebar.org/page/Judicial_Ratings.

Vote For Judges VoteForJudges.org provides nonpartisan judicial voter education to people electing judges in Cook County. We report information on judicial candidates from 14 bar associations in Cook County (the Alliance of Bar Associations and the Chicago Bar Association), and the judicial endorsements of local media outlets. We hope to go live with the results on February 20th or as soon as the bar associations report their findings to us. <https://www.voteforjudges.org/>

Courts Matter Illinois is grateful for the many partners that we work with in gathering this information and providing these resources. We recommend that you visit www.voteforjudges.org and check out their FAQ page.