

Judicial Development Process in Hennepin County

(62 Judges)

Each year approximately 15-20 judges are selected for development assessments. Judges that are not assessed until they have been on bench at least three years and will be part of the assessment every 3-4 years. Judges within two years of retirement can opt out.

There are three components that provide data to the **development process**:

1) **External survey** of a randomly selected group of 150 attorneys who have appeared in front of each judge. Surveys are sent out in late summer based on appearances during the first six months of the year.

2) **Internal survey of superiors** (Chief Judge, Assistant Chief Judge and Presiding Judge(s) of the area in which they currently work), **peer judges** (the judge can select 5 peer judges that know about their work in the courtroom or on committees), **court personnel** (District administrator, Deputy administrator, Senior Manager(s), Court Manager(s), Court supervisor(s), court reporter, law clerk, judicial clerk(s) who work in the judge's courtroom), and **up to 8 key stakeholders** that the judge can select (police officers, sheriff's deputies, social workers, psychologists, probation officers, case workers, or other non-case related court personnel that work on committees with the judge). Those who work directly with the judges (court reporters, law clerks, judicial clerks, peer judges, and key stakeholders) receive the full version of the survey, while those who do not (court administrators, court managers/supervisors, and division presiding judges) receive a shorter version. Results are provided for each judge as well as the combined results for all judges so that each individual judge can compare their own results to the overall results.

3) **Self survey** – just as it sounds, each judge fills out a survey on themselves. The facilitators compare this to the overall results from both the internal and external surveys.

Survey process: We use on-line surveys through email to ease the burden on the survey responder but it also eases our processing burden too since the data is immediately available as soon as the responder clicks SUBMIT. However, gathering current email addresses can be burdensome. Our internal rule is that we will not send to an email address unless it is going to only the person we are trying to reach. Some small law firms have a general email address that an office manager administers. In these cases, we will send a paper survey that we add to our data files.

Selecting and Training Facilitators: We have settled on using **prior or current judges** (from other levels like federal judges) as our facilitators. All facilitators sign a confidentiality form prior to them agreeing to work with us. Each judge is asked to sign one as well.

We provide a **facilitator training session** that includes a short methodology class explaining how to interpret the data that they have in front of them for each judge. These are very simple statistics that provide a fairly well rounded picture of the judge and the bench as a whole. Included in this training session of the facilitators is information on how to pick out high points (things to be continued and fostered) as well as focus on low points (areas to work on and improve). Human resource personnel are at this training as well to help with how to broach difficult subjects and to provide training material if needed to the facilitators.

Facilitated Session: Facilitators are given the individual judge's data and they then spend time going through it so that they understand it and have a good idea of what they will discuss with the judge. The facilitator then calls a private meeting with the judge and goes through the data. The two then put together an Individual Development Plan that is kept by the judge. The facilitators report back to Court Administration HR/Training any broad areas that they deem need overall judicial training.