

633.20B Appointment and resignation of full-time associate probate judges.

1. Full-time associate probate judges shall be appointed by the district judges of the judicial election district from persons nominated by the county magistrate appointing commission. In the case of a full-time associate probate judge to be appointed to more than one county, the appointment shall be from persons nominated by the county magistrate appointing commissions acting jointly and in the case of a full-time associate probate judge to be appointed to more than one judicial election district of the same judicial district, the appointment shall be by a majority of the district judges in each judicial election district.

2. In November of any year in which an impending vacancy is created because a full-time associate probate judge is not retained in office pursuant to a judicial election, the county magistrate appointing commission shall publicize notice of the vacancy in at least two publications in the official county newspaper. The commission shall accept applications for consideration for nomination as full-time associate probate judge for a minimum of fifteen days prior to certifying nominations. The commission shall consider the applications and shall, by majority vote, certify to the chief judge of the judicial district not later than December 15 of that year the names of three applicants who are nominated by the commission for the vacancy. If there are three or fewer applicants, the commission shall certify all applicants who meet the statutory qualifications. Nominees shall be chosen solely on the basis of the qualifications of the applicants, and political affiliation shall not be considered.

3. Within thirty days after a county magistrate appointing commission receives notification of an actual or impending vacancy in the office of full-time associate probate judge, other than a vacancy referred to in subsection 2, the commission shall certify to the chief judge of the judicial district the names of three applicants who are nominated by the commission for the vacancy. The commission shall publicize notice of the vacancy in at least two publications in the official county newspaper. The commission shall accept applications for consideration for nomination as full-time associate probate judge for a minimum of fifteen days prior to certifying nominations. The commission shall consider the applications and shall, by majority vote, certify to the chief judge of the judicial district the names of three applicants who are nominated by the commission for the vacancy. If there are three or fewer applicants, the commission shall certify all applicants who meet the statutory qualifications. Nominees shall be chosen solely on the basis of the qualifications of the applicants, and political affiliation shall not be considered. As used in this subsection, a vacancy is created by the death, retirement, resignation, or removal of a full-time associate probate judge, or by an increase in the number of positions authorized.

4. Within fifteen days after the chief judge of a judicial district has received the list of nominees to fill a vacancy in the office of full-time associate probate judge, the district judges in the judicial election district shall, by majority vote, appoint one of those nominees to fill the vacancy.

5. A full-time associate probate judge who seeks to resign from the office of full-time associate probate judge shall notify in writing the chief judge of the judicial district as to the full-time associate probate judge's intention to resign and the effective date of the resignation. The chief judge of the judicial district, upon receipt of the notice, shall notify the county magistrate appointing commission and the state court administrator of the actual or impending vacancy in the office of full-time associate probate judge due to resignation.

6. The supreme court may prescribe rules of procedure to be used by county magistrate appointing commissions when exercising the duties specified in this section.