



the lgbt bar association of greater new york

LeGaL JUDICIARY COMMITTEE SCREENING PANEL RULES (the “Rules”) Approved by LeGaL Board June 12, 2013

1. The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York (“LeGaL”) will evaluate any candidate for judicial office (whether elected or appointed) who affirmatively seeks LeGaL’s evaluation. In addition, LeGaL will issue a written invitation, together with a copy of these Rules, to all candidates for New York City Civil Court, New York State Supreme Court and Surrogate’s Court. LeGaL will announce its annual screening process by sending a press release to the New York Law Journal, with the goal of insuring that any interested candidates will know that LeGaL evaluates judicial candidates.
2. The evaluation will be performed by a Judicial Screening Panel (“the Panel”) appointed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Judiciary Committee. All members of the Panel must be LeGaL members in good standing. Members of the Panel who have more than a professional acquaintance with a candidate or who are affiliated with a candidate’s campaign shall be recused, to the extent the Committee deems appropriate. The Panel will act by majority vote.
3. All candidates who seek LeGaL’s evaluation will be asked to submit a completed copy of their Uniform Judicial Questionnaire. The Committee will accept forms that are substantially similar to the Uniform Judicial Questionnaire.
4. The Panel may solicit comments from the general membership of LeGaL about each of the candidates.
5. The Panel will interview each candidate. The evaluation process, including but not limited to all materials, deliberations, proceedings and comments from LeGaL members shall be kept confidential.
6. Following the Panel’s evaluation, candidates will be rated as “Highly Approved,” “Approved,” “Not Approved,” or “Failed to Appear.”

In order to obtain an “Approved” rating, the Panel must be satisfied that the candidate, once on the bench, will:

- 1) demonstrate a commitment to the equality of rights for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people;
- 2) possess the integrity, intellect, experience and temperament required of judicial office; and
- 3) perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice against or in favor of any person and will not permit discrimination against any minority in his/her courtroom.

In order to obtain a rating of “Highly Approved,” the candidate must possess all of the characteristics required for an “Approved” rating to an outstanding degree and in addition must have demonstrated a commitment to the equality of rights for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

7. The Panel will notify all candidates of the result of its evaluation by letter and publish that result by issuing a press release of its ratings to the New York Law Journal. In the event that a candidate receives a “Not Approved” rating, the candidate will be notified of the rating by overnight mail.

8. Candidates may appeal a “Not Approved” rating to the Board of Directors of LeGaL. Candidates may not appeal an “Approved” rating. Appeals must be initiated within four days of the postmark date of notification, and shall consist of a concise statement of the grounds for the appeal. The Board shall not re-interview the candidate, but shall make any other investigation it deems appropriate. If the Board believes an error has been committed, it shall direct the Chair and Vice Chair of the Judiciary Committee to interview the candidate, and then report on the interview to the Board, which shall render a decision. There shall be no time limitation placed on the Board’s consideration of an appeal, notwithstanding the time exigencies of any particular judicial selection process.

9. Ratings are valid for the current election cycle and the following year’s election cycle and applicable only to the judicial office originally sought. Candidates may not seek a re-evaluation for the same judicial position within that two-year period.