

Boards of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Under the Pennsylvania Constitution, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has general supervisory and administrative authority over the court system and the practice of law in the Commonwealth.

To assist and advise the Court with respect to these constitutional obligations, the Court appoints members to standing Boards, each of which is dedicated to a particular area. Board openings are advertised on the Court website along with an application, to aid parties interested in serving on a board.

Board members are volunteers who donate their time and expertise. They are typically appointed for a total of six years. Each year, the Supreme Court appoints a Chair and Vice-Chair for each Board.

Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court

The Disciplinary Board is the Supreme Court's largest board, with responsibility for enforcing the Rules of Professional Conduct for the more than 70,000 lawyers admitted to practice in Pennsylvania. The Board's goals are to protect the general public and maintain a high standard of integrity in the legal profession. The Board adjudicates matters subsequent to recommendations by a three-member hearing committee. Attorney discipline can range from a private admonition to disbarment. Board recommendations for more significant discipline (probation, public censure, suspension, or disbarment) are submitted to the Supreme Court. The Board also makes recommendations regarding disciplinary rules and procedures. The Disciplinary Board is composed of 13 members, 11 lawyers and 2 non-lawyers.

Minor Judiciary Education Board

The Minor Judicial Education Board (MJEB) administers certification and ongoing education programs for magisterial district judges (MDJs) and Philadelphia arraignment court magistrates (ACMs), and for candidates seeking those positions. The program for candidates educates those individuals to meet the required standards; the MJEB approves the curriculum, appoints and evaluates instructors, establishes course content, reviews the tests, and issues certificates to successful participants. The programs for incumbent judicial officers assure that those officers maintain their proficiency. The MJEB also conducts a one-week orientation course for new MDJs. The MJEB has seven members: three judges from magisterial district courts or the Traffic Division of Philadelphia Municipal Court, three members of the Pennsylvania bar, and one lay person.

The Judicial Ethics Advisory Board

The Pennsylvania Judicial Ethics Advisory Board (JEAB) is a new board instituted by the Supreme Court to provide ethical advice to judicial officers and candidates at all levels of the Pennsylvania judicial system. Judicial officers who obtain advice from the JEAB will be able to rely on that advice in any disciplinary proceedings arising from the conduct that complies with that advice. The JEAB will also provide general guidance, which will be available to the public, on topics of recurring interest, and will provide a compilation of redacted ethical advisory opinions as a resource for judicial officers. The JEAB consists of nine members drawn from the Superior and Commonwealth Courts, the Courts of Common Pleas, the magisterial district courts and Philadelphia Municipal Court, and one lawyer who is not a judicial officer.

Board of Law Examiners

The Pennsylvania Board of Law Examiners (BLE) is responsible for determining who should be recommended for admission to the practice of law in the Commonwealth. The BLE administers the bar examination to Pennsylvania applicants and evaluates each applicant's character and fitness to become a member of the profession. In addition, the BLE makes recommendations on rules pertaining to bar admission and practice. The Board consists of seven members of the Pennsylvania bar.

Pennsylvania Lawyers Fund for Client Security Board

The Pennsylvania Lawyers Fund for Client Security reimburses clients who have suffered a loss as a result of dishonesty by Pennsylvania lawyers, and to thereby promote public confidence in the legal system and the administration of justice in Pennsylvania. The Fund's board reviews and evaluates claims involving attorneys' misappropriation of funds, and issues reimbursements up to a maximum of \$100,000. All Pennsylvania lawyers contribute to the Fund through a designated portion of the annual attorney registration fee. The Fund is comprised of a seven-member board made up of both lawyers and non-lawyers.

Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts Board

The Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Board issues grants to support the provision of civil legal services to the Commonwealth's poor and disadvantaged. The funding for IOLTA's grants comes in part from the interest generated on the accounts in which lawyers must hold client funds; other funding is derived from filing fees under the Access to Justice Act, fees paid by out-of-state lawyers permitted to appear pro hac vice in Pennsylvania, and residual class action funds. The IOLTA Board evaluates grant applications submitted by legal aid providers across the Commonwealth, and by each of the Commonwealth's law schools, and makes recommendations to the Supreme Court. The Board consists of nine members who are lawyers or judges.

Continuing Legal Education Board

After being admitted to practice in Pennsylvania, lawyers are required to complete at least twelve hours per year of continuing legal education (CLE) courses, including at least two credits in the area of legal ethics. These CLE requirements enable lawyers to maintain the knowledge and skill necessary to fulfill their professional responsibilities. The CLE Board administers CLE programs, sets quality standards that CLE programming must meet in order to qualify for CLE credit, and tracks lawyers' compliance with the CLE requirements. The Board also makes rule recommendations regarding CLE requirements. The Board consists of ten members who must be Pennsylvania lawyers residing in the Commonwealth.

