



# Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Reestablishment Guidelines Issued for Shaping State's Magisterial Districts**

**HARRISBURG, February 12, 2002** — The process of reshaping Pennsylvania's minor court boundaries is underway to enhance the effective administration of justice for all of the Commonwealth's citizens.

President judges in each of the state's 60 judicial districts — with the exception of Philadelphia — must recommend whether to maintain, change, add or delete magisterial districts based on guidelines approved by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Those parameters were posted today on the judiciary's web site: [www.courts.state.pa.us](http://www.courts.state.pa.us)

The goal is to determine how — geographically and in what number — Pennsylvania's district justices can best serve the state given shifts in population over the last decade. Population changes combined with the number and types of cases in each magisterial district are key factors to be considered in drawing up a reestablishment plan. The public will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reestablishment plan in each county.

"More than any other segment of our judiciary, the magisterial system affects our citizens pervasively," Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Stephen A. Zappala said. "The approach to this complex endeavor will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the effective administration of justice for the next 10 years or more."

A general review of each plan will take place at the AOPC in April to make sure the proposal contains the required information, correct computations and procedural consistency. Final plans must be submitted to the Supreme Court no later than June 30, 2002. The Supreme Court then will review the proposals and enter an order, setting the magisterial districts in place.

The Supreme Court must reestablish magisterial districts every 10 years once the federal government completes a new census. The court last year created the Intergovernmental Task Force to Study the District Justice System, which provided guidance on how to enhance the administration of justice at the minor court level. The task force's complete report also is available on the judiciary's web site.

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