

# Senior Judges

## What are senior judges?

The Pennsylvania Constitution requires that judges must retire at age 75, but retired judges may, with the approval of the state court administrator, continue to serve the Commonwealth as senior judges.

This judicial service helps ease court backlogs by targeting areas that specifically need help, whether it be from an increased caseload, an unexpected judicial vacancy or a case in which a county needs an outside judge because judges in a county have a conflict of interest. Senior judges bring a wealth of experience and understanding of the system and have the flexibility to be used for short-or-long-term assignments anywhere in the state cost effectively. Because of compensation and service limits, senior judges often hear cases without pay, providing pro bono work to the Commonwealth. It is estimated that in fiscal year 2014-15, the use of senior judges in the Courts of Common Pleas alone saved taxpayers more than \$5.3 million.

To be eligible for senior certification, a jurist must meet the following requirements:

- have served as a magisterial district judge, judge or justice, whether or not continuously or on the same court, by election or appointment for an aggregate period equaling 10 years
- be at least 65 years of age on the date he or she begins senior service or have a combination of years of judicial service plus age that totals at least 70 for magisterial district judges or at least 80 for judges and justices.

*Revised January 2017*



---

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS  
OFFICE of COMMUNICATIONS