



Guidelines for Judicial and Executive Candidates Seeking Endorsement from the WBA

Revised December 2020

The following Guidelines are designed to provide candidates for judicial and executive positions who are seeking endorsement by the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia (WBA or "Association") information regarding the WBA's process in evaluating candidates, the selection criteria used by the WBA, and the information that the WBA requires from candidates.

Any questions regarding the information contained in these Guidelines or the WBA's endorsement process may be directed to WBA's Executive Director, Carol Montoya, at carol@wbadc.org or 202-639-8880.

The Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee of the WBA (the Committee) will complete an investigation of each candidate seeking endorsement by the WBA. This investigation may involve interviews with the candidate, interviews with persons listed as references for the candidate, a review of information provided by or on behalf of the candidate, and a review of additional information and interviews with additional persons that the Committee deems appropriate to properly evaluate the candidate. Upon completion of the Committee's investigation, the Committee will make a recommendation to the WBA Board regarding candidates for endorsement. The WBA Board will make the ultimate decision regarding endorsement.

There will be no levels of ratings of candidates (e.g., qualified, very qualified, etc.). The WBA will endorse only those executive and judicial candidates about whom it is genuinely enthusiastic and only those judicial candidates whom it believes will be excellent judges and executive candidates whom it believes will be excellent appointees.

Goals of the WBA with respect to Judicial and Executive Endorsements

The WBA's principal goal in endorsing candidates for judgeships and executive appointments is to ensure that qualified judges and executive-branch political appointees serve in local and federal courts in the District of Columbia, and throughout the federal executive agencies. Consistent with that goal, the WBA also seeks to increase the number of people occupying judgeships in the District of Columbia and federal courts and federal executive appointments who support the mission of the WBA. The WBA endorses candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to equality of all litigants before the courts and who have been responsive to women's needs and concerns.

Criteria for Evaluating Judicial Candidates

- WBA Membership. WBA membership is not required for endorsement; however, membership is a factor to be considered in deciding whether to endorse men and women who practice in the District of Columbia.
- Qualifications. The WBA will give priority to courtroom experience as a factor favoring endorsement and will also consider the following factors and any other factors that the WBA deems appropriate in light of the appointment sought:
 - administrative skills;
 - areas of practice;
 - commitment to the advancement of women in the legal profession (e.g. as an advocate, mentor, etc.)
 - commitment to equal justice under the law;
 - common sense;
 - communication skills (oral and written);
 - demonstrated commitment to the community;
 - demonstrated commitment to the concept of equal opportunity;
 - demonstrated freedom from bias;
 - integrity;
 - judicial temperament;
 - practice before the court in question;
 - prior adjudicative experience;
 - professional experience;
 - scholarship;
 - stamina; and
 - ties to the District of Columbia.

The order of the above-listed factors is alphabetical and does not indicate priority.

- Satisfaction of Statutory Requirements. The Board will only endorse those candidates who demonstrate that they satisfy the statutory requirements for the positions they seek.

Criteria for Evaluating Executive Candidates

- WBA Membership. WBA membership is not required for endorsement; however, membership is a factor to be considered in deciding whether to endorse men and women who practice in the District of Columbia.
- Qualifications. The Board will consider the following factors and any other factors that the WBA deems appropriate in light of the appointment sought:
 - areas of practice;
 - commitment to equal justice under the law;

- commitment to the advancement of women in the legal profession (e.g. as an advocate, mentor, etc.)
- common sense;
- communication skills (oral and written);
- demonstrated commitment to the community;
- demonstrated commitment to the concept of equal opportunity;
- demonstrated freedom from bias;
- integrity;
- professional experience;
- scholarship; and
- stamina.

The order of the above-listed factors is alphabetical and does not indicate priority.

- Political Affiliation. WBA endorsement will not be based on, or rejected due to, affiliation with any particular political party, unless such affiliation is a specified requirement for a position.
- Attorneys. Endorsements will be primarily of attorneys, but endorsements will not be limited to attorneys. A non-attorney may be endorsed for a position in which the candidate would have the opportunity to promote the interests of women in the legal profession.

Initiating the Process

Before the Committee will initiate its investigation process, the candidate seeking endorsement must inform the WBA Executive Director, via the WBA's application process, of her or his intent to seek endorsement from the WBA. Persons seeking an endorsement for another must provide the Committee with confirmation from the candidate that she or he desires the endorsement and must ensure compliance on behalf of the candidate with the instructions set forth in these Guidelines. The candidate should provide the WBA with at least thirty (30) calendar days notice for completion of the endorsement process.

The following information and materials must be sent by or on behalf of the candidate seeking endorsement:

- Completed WBA Candidate Application Form, which includes:
 - the name of the position sought with a brief description of the position;
 - the date by which the endorsement for the appointment must be received in order to be considered;
 - the name, title, and address of the person to whom an endorsement letter should be sent;
 - the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references, two professional and one personal. Note that the Committee will contact the references prior to making any recommendations; and

- Notarized Release Letter (can be e-notarized; can be sent soft copy).
- Resume of the candidate seeking the endorsement.
- If not included in the resume, any information pertinent to the criteria set forth above under the sections of these Guidelines entitled “Criteria for Evaluating Judicial Candidates” and “Criteria for Evaluating Executive Candidates,” as applicable.
- A draft letter of endorsement. The letter should highlight the candidate’s qualifications for the appointment sought. WBA reserves the right to alter the draft.
- *Judicial Endorsement Candidates only*: a list of three recent significant cases in which the candidate participated, including the case name and number, presiding judge and name(s) of opposing counsel.
- Articles by or about the candidate (optional).
- Letters in support of the endorsement (optional).

The above information and materials should be sent, *in electronic format*, to the WBA Executive Director at carol@wbadc.org.

WBA’s Process

The Endorsements Committee will review the materials submitted and contact the candidate’s references. The Committee may request additional information from the candidate and/or from other sources that it deems useful in determining whether to recommend endorsement of the candidate.

The Endorsements Committee will prepare a memorandum, wherein they will recommend whether to endorse, for the Board of Director’s consideration. The Board of Directors will review this memorandum, as well as the full package of information and materials submitted by the candidate. At a regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board will vote to accept or reject the Endorsements Committee’s recommendation.

Concluding the Process

A WBA representative will inform the candidate of the WBA’s decision regarding endorsement.

All documents assembled during the consideration of a candidate remain the property of the WBA and will be maintained in the custody of the Association and co-chairs. The information so assembled and all deliberations and discussions will not be disclosed except to members of the WBA Board and the Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee, unless such disclosure is warranted by the preparation of an endorsement letter or required under compulsion of law.