Bylaws of the Judicial Council of Georgia

Adopted June 17, 2015; Amended by Judicial Council April 29, 2016; Amended by Supreme Court Order September 20, 2018; Amended by Supreme Court Order August 13, 2026

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Judicial Council is to establish policy for Georgia's judiciary, effectuate its statutory responsibilities, and improve the administration of Georgia's courts.

ARTICLE I: OFFICERS

Officers of the Council shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Chair

The Council Chair shall be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The Chair, or his or her designee, shall: serve as the presiding officer of the Council; call the meetings, affording written notice as hereinafter required; preside at Council meetings and control debate; serve as ex-officio member on all committees; and serve as the official spokesperson for the Council.[1] In the event the Chair, or Vice-Chair, is not present to preside at Council meetings, the Chair will appoint a presiding officer.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall be the Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair as needed and preside at meetings in the event the Chair is unable to do so.[2] The Vice-Chair shall serve as chair of designated committees.

Secretary

The Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts shall serve as Secretary for the Judicial Council. The Director, or his or her designee, shall be responsible for an accurate recordation and distribution of meeting minutes, for updating and distributing Judicial Council Handbooks, and for providing a copy of the bylaws and other governing documents to all members. The Director shall not be considered a member of the Judicial Council for purposes of voting or determining a quorum.

ARTICLE II: COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Council Membership and Terms

Council members should be committed to improving justice through collaboration, innovation and information. Members of the Council and their terms shall be as provided by the Supreme Court of Georgia.[3]

Vacancies

A vacancy occurs when a Council member no longer serves in the capacity of representative for his or her respective group. The vacancy shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term as provided by Supreme Court order.

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[1] Supreme Court Order dated August 5, 1983.

[2] Supreme Court Order dated August 5, 1983.

[3] O.C.G.A. §15-5-20(b).

ARTICLE III: MEETINGS

Call to Meetings/Notification
Council meetings may be called by the Chair at such times and with such frequency as the Chair deems necessary. A proposed schedule of future meetings shall be published at the last regular meeting of each fiscal year.

Notice of meetings, including time, location, and format shall be provided to Council members at least thirty days in advance by sending electronic notice to the members and posting on the Judicial Council website.

Special or emergency meetings may be called by the Chair at such time and place as the Chair may determine. If feasible, notice shall be provided to members at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

Quorum
A quorum consisting of a majority of Council members is required for voting and conducting business. All binding action of the Council shall be by a majority vote of the members present.

Meetings Format
Meetings may be held in person or by electronic means as determined by the Chair.

Rules
Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Voting
All members shall be entitled to vote; however, the presiding officer shall vote only in the event of a tie.[4] A member who is unable to attend a meeting for good cause may designate a representative to cast their vote. The absent member shall provide written notice to the Chair identifying the designated representative, who must be a judge or senior judge of the same class of court as the member. The designated representative shall be entitled to participate in discussion, cast votes, and be counted toward quorum for the meeting.

When a quorum is present at a Judicial Council or committee meeting, a simple majority of the votes cast will approve an item, unless specified by Supreme Court order, Council policy, or the Chair. When a vote is called and a member or their designated representative takes no position, the vote will not be counted either for or against the item under consideration.

Any member, or designated representative, has the right to dissent from or abstain on any official action and may request that their vote be reflected in the minutes.

[4] Supreme Court Order dated August 5, 1983.

ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES

Standing Committees
Standing Committees exist to address issues of ongoing, long-term importance to the Council. Standing Committees and their memberships shall be determined by Supreme Court order. Committee membership may include advisory members appointed, as needed, by each Standing Committee Chair. Advisory members may be heard but shall not be entitled to vote.

Ad-Hoc Committees
Ad-Hoc Committees exist to address issues of limited scope and duration. The Council Chair shall create and charge ad-hoc committees as are necessary to conduct the business of the Council.[5] Committee membership may include advisory members appointed, as needed, by each Ad-Hoc Committee Chair. Advisory members may be heard but shall not be entitled to vote.

ARTICLE V: DUTIES

The Council shall effectuate its duties as defined by statute and Supreme Court order. In addition, the Council shall engage in ongoing strategic planning.

The Council shall issue, publish, and distribute official opinions or policies concerning matters of court administration.

The Council shall appoint a Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.[6] The appointment of a Director shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the Council. Duties of the Director shall be defined by law and as directed by the Council.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

The Council shall vote on any proposed bylaw amendments during its final regular meeting of the fiscal year. Proposed amendments shall be sent to the Chair no later than December 31. Council members shall receive at least sixty (60) days' notice of proposed amendments prior to the date of the meeting. Proposed amendments may be accepted by the Chair after December 31 if received within such period of time that the Council members may be afforded at least sixty (60) days' notice prior to the final regular meeting of the fiscal year. The bylaws shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Council. The bylaws may also be amended at any time as a result of a Supreme Court order.

[5] Supreme Court Order dated August 5, 1983.

[6] O.C.G.A. §15-5-23.