

ILLINOIS

Rule 799. Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism

(a) Purpose

The Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism is hereby established in order to promote among the lawyers and judges of Illinois principles of integrity, professionalism and civility; to foster commitment to the elimination of bias and divisiveness within the legal and judicial systems; and to ensure that those systems provide equitable, effective and efficient resolution of problems and disputes for the people of Illinois.

(b) Membership and Terms

(1) The Court shall appoint a Chair and ~~13~~ 14 additional members to the Commission. These members shall include three individuals who are faculty members at accredited Illinois law schools, two judges engaged in active service in the trial courts of Illinois, one judge engaged in active service in the appellate courts of Illinois, six practicing lawyers who are active members in good standing of the Illinois bar, one member of the Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Board, and two nonlawyers who are active in public affairs in Illinois. The Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission shall serve as an *ex-officio* member in addition to the Chair and the ~~13~~ 14 members appointed by the Court but shall have no vote.

(2) In addition to the members described above, the Chief Justice may invite to serve on the Commission a judge of the United States District Courts located in Illinois.

(3) The appointed members of the Commission shall be selected with regard to their reputations for professionalism, and for their past contributions to the bar and to their communities, to the extent feasible, the appointees should reflect a diversity of geography, practice areas, race, ethnicity, and gender.

(4) Members of the Commission shall be appointed for terms of three years, except that in making initial appointments to the Commission, the Court may limit appointments to ensure that the terms of the Commission's members are staggered, so that no more than one third of the members' terms expire in any given year. The MCLE Board member shall be appointed to a term concurrent with his or her term on the Board.

(5) None of the members of the Commission shall receive compensation for their service, but all members shall be reimbursed for their necessary expenses.

(c) Duties

The Commission's duties shall include:

(1) Creating and promoting an awareness of professionalism by all members of the Illinois bar and bench;

(2) Gathering and maintaining information to serve as a resource on professionalism for lawyers, judges, court personnel, and members of the public;

(3) Developing public statements on principles of ethical and professional responsibility for distribution to the bench and bar for purposes of encouraging, guiding and assisting individual lawyers, law firms and bar associations on the ethical and professional tenets of the profession;

(4) Assisting CLE providers with the development of courses and activities offered to fulfill the professional responsibility requirement for minimum continuing legal education under Rule 794(d)(1);

(5) Determining and publishing criteria for, monitoring, coordinating, and approving, courses and activities offered to fulfill the professional responsibility requirement for minimum continuing legal education under Rule 794(d)(1);

(6) Reviewing and approving the content of courses and activities offered to fulfill the professional responsibility requirement for minimum continuing legal education under Rule 794(d)(1) and forwarding the Commission's determination to the Minimum Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) Board;

(7) Monitoring activities related to professionalism outside the State of Illinois;

(8) Collaborating with law schools in the development and presentation of professionalism programs for law student orientation and other events as coordinated with law school faculty;

(9) Facilitating cooperation among practitioners, bar associations, law schools, courts, civic and lay organizations and others in addressing matters of professionalism, ethics, and public understanding of the legal profession; and

(10) Recommending to the Court other methods and means of improving the profession and accomplishing the purposes of this Commission.

The Commission shall have no authority to impose discipline upon any member of the Illinois bar or bench, or to exercise any duties or responsibilities belonging to either the Judicial Inquiry Board, the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, the Board of Admissions to the Bar, or the MCLE Board.

(d) Administration

(1) The Commission shall have the authority to appoint, with the approval of the Supreme Court, an Executive Director, who shall be an attorney who is an active member in good standing of the Illinois bar. The Executive Director shall have the authority to hire such additional staff as necessary to perform the Commission's responsibilities.

(2) The Commission shall meet at least twice a year and at other times at the call of the Chair. A majority of its members shall constitute a quorum for any action. Meetings may be held at any place within the state and may also be held by means of telecommunication that permits reasonably accurate and contemporaneous participation by the members attending by such means.

(3) The Chair may appoint committees of members and assign them to such responsibilities, consistent with the purposes, powers and duties of the Commission, as the Chair may deem appropriate.

(4) The Commission shall file annually with the Court an accounting of the monies received and expended for its activities, and there shall be an annual independent audit of the funds as directed by the court, the expenses of which shall be paid out of the fund.

(5) The Commission shall submit an annual report to the Court describing and evaluating the effectiveness of its activities.

(6) Approving CLE Programs.

(i) The Commission shall receive from the MCLE Board applications for accreditation of those courses and activities offered to fulfill the professional responsibility requirement for minimum continuing legal education under Rule 794(d)(1). The Commission shall establish procedures for approval of such courses or activities consistent with the criteria published under paragraph (c)(5) of this rule. Professional responsibility courses and activities, the content of which is approved by the Commission, shall be forwarded to the MCLE Board for accreditation. Absent Commission approval, such courses and activities are not eligible for CLE accreditation. The Commission shall complete its review as expeditiously as possible and with regard to the applicable time lines contained in Rule 795.

(ii) Providers that have been designated “Accredited Continuing Legal Education Providers” under Rule 795(b) must, in addition to that accreditation, obtain Commission approval of any course or activity offered to fulfill the professional responsibility requirement of Rule 794(d)(1), but will not be required to pay an accreditation fee in addition to the fee the provider has paid to the Minimum Continuing Legal Education Board.

(e) Funding

The Commission shall be funded by an annual assessment as provided in Rule 756.

Adopted September 29, 2005, effective immediately; amended December 6, 2005, effective immediately; amended June 5, 2007, effective immediately.