

# Advisory Groups to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

In addition to the boards and committees that aid the Supreme Court in carrying out its constitutional supervisory and administrative authority over courts, judges and lawyers, the Court is assisted by several other volunteer panels that carry out specific assigned tasks for the court and provide counsel in those areas.

## Pennsylvania Commission on Judicial Independence

The Pennsylvania Commission on Judicial Independence is dedicated to fostering a better understanding of the role of the courts. Created in response to a nationwide pattern of attacks on the courts and judicial rulings, the Commission raises public awareness of the importance of a strong, independent judiciary in a free society. It promotes the teaching of civics and monitors threats on judicial independence in Pennsylvania and around the nation. The commission is comprised of 10 members who are appointed by the Supreme Court. Current members include state and federal judges, law professors, lawyers and the public.

## Investment Advisory Board

The Investment Advisory Board (IAB) coordinates the investment policy for four court-related boards that do not receive support from tax dollars: the Disciplinary Board, the Continuing Legal Education Board, the Pennsylvania Lawyers Fund for Client Security and the Board of Law Examiners. The IAB is charged with pursuing an investment strategy that will yield the maximum profit while minimizing the risk to these entities' funds. The panel is appointed by the Supreme Court and is composed of up to eight members who are experienced in areas of finance and investment.

## Continuing Judicial Education Board of Judges

The Continuing Judicial Education Board of Judges was instituted by the Supreme Court in 2016 to help oversee new judicial education requirements for judges and justices. Since 2017, jurists have been required to complete at least twelve credit hours of continuing judicial education per year, including at least three hours of education in judicial ethics and nine hours of education in judicial practice and related areas. The Board of Judges makes decisions on educational content and accreditation, grants waivers and deferrals, and hears non-compliance appeals. The Board is comprised of ten judges representing a diverse cross-section of the Pennsylvania judiciary, along with two law professors.

## Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts

The Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts was established to advise the Office of Elder Justice in the Courts on implementing the recommendations issued by the Supreme Court's Elder Law Task Force in 2014. Task Force recommended changes in the way the court system interacts with the elderly, including relating to issues of elder abuse, guardianships, and access to justice for elders – who represent an increasing proportion of the population.. The Advisory Council collaborates with the executive and legislative branches of state government and communicates with the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts and the Supreme Court. The Advisory Council is made up of 24 members with a wide range of expertise in elder justice, including judges, lawyers and representatives of advocacy groups.

## Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness

The mission of the Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness is to ensure that people of every race, gender and ethnic background are treated fairly and respectfully throughout all offices of state government. The Interbranch Commission is made up of 24 racially and ethnically diverse members, eight of whom are appointed by the Supreme Court, eight by the governor and eight by the legislature. Members include judges, lawyers, legislators and community advocates.

