

CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
GENERAL ORDER 21

The following procedures shall govern the nomination by the Chief Judge of a public member of an electoral board pursuant to Section 10-9 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/10-9).

A. The Chief Judge hereby delegates concurrent authority to appoint public members of electoral boards to the Presiding Judge of the County Division.

B. A member of the electoral board, an officer of the local election official with whom the petitions are filed, or a party to a case before the board, shall notify the Presiding Judge of the County Division of the need to appoint a public member. The notification shall be in writing, be signed and may be in the form of a letter. The written notification may be sent by email to the Presiding Judge of the County Division at cj.cal3@cookcountyl.gov. All public members, by virtue of their appointment, shall be considered officers of the court.

C. The written notification shall include:

1. The name, address, phone number(s) and email address of the objector(s), and the objector's attorney, if known;
2. The name, address, phone number(s) and email address of the respondent candidate(s) or respondent referendum proponents, and of the respondent's attorney, if known;
3. The name, address, phone number(s) and email address of: (a) the attorney for the governmental body involved and (b) of the attorney for the electoral board, if known;
4. The substance of the referendum or title of the office sought by the candidate, the applicable governmental district and the date of the election;
5. A copy of the ballot of certification which was or soon will be filed with the Cook County Clerk;
6. The names and titles of the three persons (or more in case of a seniority tie) who would normally constitute the electoral board if there were no statutory disqualifications necessitating the appointment of a public member;
7. If the public members are requested to hear more than one objector's petition, the number of separate objections to be considered by each respective electoral board;
8. The date and time scheduled in the Call for the first electoral board meeting and the place thereof, if known; and

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9. The name, address, telephone and email address of a contact person to receive the appointment by the court.

D. As set forth in 10 ILCS 5/10-9, when one member of the normally constituted electoral board is recused, is not eligible to serve on that board, or has a disqualification on any grounds the vacancy shall be filled by a currently serving public official as designated by statute. If no such currently serving public official is eligible to fill the vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled by a public member pursuant to this order.

E. The court has the authority to disqualify a member of an electoral board. A request to disqualify a member shall be presented to the court in the form of a complaint for declaratory judgment and injunctive relief, filed in the County Division as a COEL case, accompanied by a motion to be heard as an emergency. By way of example and not limitation, an electoral board member can be disqualified on due process grounds if the member has a personal or direct pecuniary interest in the outcome of a case, if the member would properly be called as a necessary witness in a case and therefore required to judge his or her own testimony, or on other grounds as granted by the Court. After a full hearing, electoral board members may also be disqualified if the court determines, based upon the totality of the circumstances, that disqualification is warranted on due process and/or an unacceptable risk of bias grounds.

F. The Presiding Judge of the County Division shall maintain a written list of persons willing to serve as public members of electoral boards. This list may be changed or updated as needed. The Presiding Judge shall include only those persons known to be knowledgeable in election law.

G. The Presiding Judge of the County Division shall email copies of the written order of appointment to the person requesting the election of a public member and to the appointee. The order shall be entered on the records of the court and published.

H. The governmental body for which the electoral board serves (i.e., the municipality, township, or other body) shall pay the public member an hourly fee of TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$225.00). Actual mileage expenses shall be reimbursed to the public member for travel to and from said meeting(s) at the rate currently set by the State Travel Control Board. As of January 1, 2025, the rate is \$0.70/mile. The public member shall submit an invoice to the governmental body and the governmental body shall pay the invoice within thirty (30) days from the date of its receipt. Billing for time shall be set forth in tenths of hours.

I. In the absence of proposed local rules for the conduct of electoral board proceedings, the public members shall present a proposed set of rules for the electoral board and a final set of rules shall be adopted at the first meeting. A public member who is appointed as chair of an electoral board has the responsibility to convene the board in the manner required by the Open Meetings Act.

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J. All persons appointed as public members shall sign an oath acknowledging that they have no interest in the proceedings in which they are appointed to serve. Public members shall be governed by the Illinois Code of Judicial Conduct to the extent applicable.

Amended, effective September 3, 2025.