



Administrative Policies  
And Procedures  
Tennessee Supreme Court  
Administrative Office of the Courts

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Approved by: Chief Justice Sharon G. Lee and Deborah Taylor Tate, AOC director

Subject: Continuing Legal Education for Trial and Appellate Court Judges

- I. Authority: T.C.A. § 16-3-502, 16-3-803(f), Supreme Court Rule 21
- II. Purpose: To establish guidelines for authorizing and paying for Continuing Legal Education (hereinafter referred to as "CLE") for trial and appellate court judges.
- III. Application: All trial and appellate judges of courts of record whose salary is paid in whole out of the state treasury.
- IV. Definitions: None.
- V. Policy: All trial and appellate court judges shall complete CLE requirements in compliance with the regulations and guidelines of this administrative policy.
- VI. Procedures:
  - A. General Provisions
    1. Under T.C.A. §17-3-105, it is the official duty of each member of the Tennessee Judicial Conference (hereinafter referred to as "TJC") to attend its annual meetings unless otherwise officially engaged, or for other good and sufficient reasons. Every member shall be entitled to have the member's expenses paid pursuant to policies and guidelines promulgated by the Supreme Court. It is anticipated that all conference members will obtain all of their required CLE hours through attendance at regular conferences produced by the Administrative Office of the Courts (hereinafter referred to "AOC").
    2. In the event a judge is deficient in annual CLE credits at year-end and is unable to complete the mandatory CLE requirements by attending the AOC-produced TJC conferences, the judge should first view sessions available on the AOC website to earn the required credits. If the judge views the maximum hours allowed for distance learning and is still deficient, the judge may attend a seminar nearest his/her residence to fulfill the annual CLE requirements. The judge will not be reimbursed travel expenses for attendance to in-state programs not sponsored by the AOC unless prior approval has been obtained from the AOC.
    3. Prior approval is required for all out-of-state CLE or training programs. Within two (2) years of initial election or appointment for a term exceeding three (3) years, judges shall be given the opportunity to attend judicial training

programs approved by the AOC director. Preference for out-of-state travel will be granted to new judges attending the general jurisdiction course at the National Judicial College (hereinafter referred to as "NJC") in Reno, Nevada or the equivalent appellate course at either NJC or New York University. Judges shall always apply for scholarships or for any reduced tuition opportunities if available and shall document efforts to do so.

4. Judges may contact the education manager at the AOC for information about these courses. NOTE: To obtain CLE credit for these courses, the judge must contact the CLE Commission directly for CLE approval procedures and policies.
5. A judge may receive approval to travel on a more frequent basis if the judge secures partial funding from a source other than the AOC.
6. Requests to travel to a conference that does not offer CLE must be submitted to the AOC director for prior approval. The AOC director may grant exemptions and allow exceptions from these policies and guidelines when deemed appropriate and necessary.

**B. Application Process**

1. Prior Written Request – A judge requesting to travel to an education conference not produced by the AOC must make prior written request at least six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the course to the education manager at the AOC for approval by the AOC Director.
2. Approval – The AOC will notify the judge in writing whether the request has been approved or denied. If approved, the judge will be given an additional packet of information to complete regarding registration and travel arrangements. Travel shall be at the least expensive rates and at no time will there be reimbursement for first class flights.
3. Any appeal of the AOC Director's decision shall be to the Chief Justice.
4. Reimbursement Procedure for Approved CLE Programs - Requests for reimbursement must be submitted for approval can be emailed to the Education Manager or mailed to the Education Manager at the following address:

Administrative Office of the Courts:  
Attn: Education Manager  
Nashville City Center, Suite 600  
511 Union Street  
Nashville, TN 37219