

# THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT STATE OF COLORADO

## Overview

January 2014

### Population and Geographic Area

With an estimated district population of 922,597, the Courts of the Eighteenth District serve the most populated judicial district in Colorado. The District population includes Arapahoe County (595,546), Douglas County (298,215), Elbert County (23,383), and Lincoln County (5,453). For several years, Douglas County and Elbert County have been included as some of the fastest growing counties in the United States. Since 2000, the population in Douglas County has grown by 70%. Overall, the district population has increased by 232,905 since 2000. This represents an increase of 34%. This high growth in population has placed tremendous pressure on the courts to meet increasing demands for judicial services.

Arapahoe County contains much of the southern and eastern suburbs of the Denver metropolitan area. It has an urban concentration, consisting in part of the municipalities of Aurora, Centennial, Englewood, Greenwood Village, and Littleton. It also contains rural communities east of the metropolitan area such as Byers, Deer Trail, and Strasburg.

Douglas County contains a heavy south metropolitan area suburban population. The County includes the towns of Castle Rock, Franktown, Larkspur, Lone Tree, Parker, and Sedalia, and the major subdivisions of Highlands Ranch and Acres Green. The remainder of the county is rural.

Elbert and Lincoln Counties are primarily rural. The major communities in Elbert County are Elizabeth and Kiowa, and in Lincoln County, they are Hugo and Limon. A state prison is located near Limon in Lincoln County.

The Eighteenth Judicial District provides court services from five different courthouses in the district: Littleton and Centennial in Arapahoe County, Castle Rock in Douglas County, Kiowa in Elbert County, and Hugo in Lincoln County.

### Case Filings and Docket Assignments

In FY 2013, 34,500 new cases were filed in the district courts. There were 81,002 new cases filed in the county courts during this period. There were 272 trials in the District Courts and 524 trials in the County Courts.

District court cases include felony criminal matters, civil cases, domestic relations cases, juvenile matters, appeals from municipal and county courts, and probate and mental health cases. County court cases include misdemeanors, traffic cases, civil cases of value up to \$15,000, small claims cases, and preliminary hearings in felony cases.

The District has twenty-one district court judges and seven magistrates who currently hear district court cases. Fifteen of the district court judges and five of the magistrates sit in Arapahoe District Court. Six district court judges and two magistrates sit in Castle Rock and hear Douglas County cases. One judge covers all the cases in both Lincoln and Elbert Counties.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, the majority of district court judges and magistrates are assigned to specialized dockets. This means they are assigned to hear one or two case types. For example, some judges hear primarily domestic relations cases while others hear primarily criminal cases. However, to make the most

efficient use of courtrooms and judicial officer time, the judicial officers pick-up cases of any case type from others whenever their time allows. A cooperative system of docket management allows our very busy District to move cases along more efficiently than we otherwise could.

There are thirteen judges and four magistrates in the county courts. Two judges sit in Littleton; one magistrate hears small claims court cases in Littleton and Douglas; and six judges and two magistrates sit at the Arapahoe County Justice Center. Three judges and one magistrate sit in Douglas County; one part-time judge sits in Elbert County; and one part-time judge sits in Lincoln County.

In addition to the regular court dockets, the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District has several problem-solving courts. The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Problem Solving Courts, in collaboration with several agencies, has developed multiple programs to address the growing needs of persons with substance dependence and mental health disorders within the criminal justice system. Our Problem Solving Courts focus on reducing recidivism, promoting public safety, ensuring participant accountability, supporting recovery and improving quality of life for participants and their families with a cost effective, integrated continuum of care through community resources. Our Adult Mental Health Court (Wellness Court) has been ground breaking in program structure and the services provided: housing, transportation, intensive case management, contingency management and individualized treatment plans. The Wellness Court has been in operation for over two years and it has experienced a great deal of success. Our Adult Drug Court (Recovery Court) began accepting clients in November of 2011. Modeled after well-established and successful drug courts, this court includes the newest research-based approaches, and we anticipate quantifiable success for this program. Our Truancy Court has been helping keep students in the classroom for several years. It has been met with a great deal of success. In 2013, we began accepting cases in our Veteran's Court. The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District is committed to bringing proven and cost-effective approaches to the criminal justice system.

The judicial officers in the Eighteenth Judicial District carry heavy caseloads. These caseloads have risen steadily and are expected to continue to increase as the population continues to grow. In some court locations alternative dispute resolution options such as mediation, settlement planning, and settlement conferences are offered to assist the public in resolving disputes.

### **Staff**

The judges and magistrates are supported by approximately 203 trial court employees consisting of administrative staff, judicial assistants, and court reporters. The district employs an additional 152 staff in the probation department.

### **Probation**

In FY 2013, the probation department conducted 896 adult and juvenile offender investigations and prepared pre-sentence, assessment, screening, drug screen, or other reports after those investigations. The department also did 3,671 alcohol evaluations. The department received 6,391 new cases for probation supervision and terminated 7,808. As of June 30, 2013, there were 12,827 active adult and juvenile cases being supervised in the district including those cases supervised by the private provider.

All courts are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on regular business days. The Clerk's Offices in Arapahoe and Douglas Counties are open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on regular business days. The Clerk's Offices in Lincoln and Elbert Counties are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on regular business days. Most court proceedings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. For further information or to plan a court visit, please contact Laurie McKager, District Administrator, 7325 South Potomac Street, Centennial, Colorado 80112, telephone (303) 649-6380, or Chief Judge William Sylvester, telephone 720-568-4862.

# **Eighteenth Judicial District Nominating Commission**

(Lincoln, Elbert, Douglas, and Arapahoe Counties)  
Updated: March, 2014

<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Atty. or Non-Atty</b>	<b>Term of Office</b>		<b>County of Residence</b>
			<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Ending</b>	
Christine Njemann	R	Non-Atty	01/06/11	12/31/16	Elbert
Suzan Boyd	D	Non-Atty	01/06/11	12/31/16	Arapahoe
Fay Matsukage	D	Attorney	01/01/10	12/31/15	Douglas
Stanton Dodge	U	Attorney	01/01/13	12/31/18	Arapahoe
Jerry Monks	R	Non-Atty	01/06/11	12/31/16	Lincoln
Richard Suder	U	Non-Atty	05/05/10	12/31/15	Elbert
Candace Figa	R	Attorney	01/01/14	12/31/19	Arapahoe

# Rules of Procedure for Eighteenth Judicial District Nominating Commission

Adopted October 1, 1968  
(Amended August 30, 1994)  
(Amended June 23, 1995)

Scope Note: These rules are intended to state simple, minimum guides for the nominating commission.

## **I. Notification and Proposals of Names.**

- A. When a judicial vacancy occurs, the commission chairman shall notify each commission member of the vacancy and shall call a meeting of the commission.

Nothing herein shall prevent the chairman or commission from acting before actual occurrence of a vacancy where an impending resignation becomes known.)

- B. The chairman shall issue a press release containing the following information:

1. That a vacancy has occurred or is imminent.
2. That persons may submit to any member of the commission their own names or the names of others by letter filed by a given date.

## **II. Commission Procedures.**

- A. The commission shall elect one of its members as secretary. The secretary's term shall be for one year or until a successor is elected.
- B. A quorum for the commission shall be four voting members. The commission may act by majority vote of voting members present except in the selection of nominees, when it must act by a majority of all voting members, and in interviewing, when it may act through subcommittees of two or more.
- C. Every proposed nominee shall receive and submit a questionnaire substantially in the form prescribed by the commission.
- D. The commission may conduct investigations of the personal and professional qualifications of the proposed nominees.
- E. The Secretary shall keep a record of the commission's official actions and shall maintain a list of names considered for each vacancy. The record shall show when and where meetings were held and persons present at each meeting.
- F. After nominations to fill a vacancy are presented to the Governor, the secretary shall seal and forward to the Clerk of the Supreme Court the record required by paragraph (E) above. The Clerk shall maintain these materials as a confidential record, to be opened only upon order of the Eighteenth Judicial District Nominating Commission and then only after approval of a majority of the voting members. Five years after the Governor's appointment to fill a vacancy, the record of proceedings for that vacancy may be destroyed.

- G. When selecting nominees, the commission shall give consideration to the following factors and questions, among others, with respect to each proposed nominee:
1. His or her integrity and moral courage.
  2. His or her legal ability and experience.
  3. His or her intelligence and wisdom.
  4. Will he or she be deliberate and fair minded in reaching decisions?
  5. Will he or she be industrious and prompt in performing his or her duties as a judge?
  6. Are his or her personal habits and outside activities compatible with judicial office?
  7. Will he or she be courteous and considerate on the bench?
- H. All commission records, proceedings and business shall be confidential and may not be discussed outside commission meetings except among commission members or as made necessary by II D above, II I below, or as provided in III C below.
- I. The names of the nominees, listed in alphabetical order, shall be made public when forwarded to the Governor.

### **III. Transmittal to the Governor.**

- A. Within thirty days after a vacancy occurs, the commission shall submit to the Governor the names of nominees for such vacancy in the number required by the Constitution.
- B. The names of the nominees, listed in alphabetical or preferential order, shall be hand delivered to the Governor or sent to him by registered or certified mail.
- C. Copies of the nominees' questionnaires and other information gathered by the Commission shall be hand-delivered to the Governor at the same time as the names of the nominees are submitted to the Governor.
- D. No other information shall be forwarded to the Governor, except that the commission, through a majority of its voting members, may consult with the Governor about any nominee at the Governor's request.

### **IV. Amendment to Rules.**

- A. These rules may be amended at any meeting of the Commission upon oral motion, duly seconded and passed by a vote of a majority of the voting members provided, however, that an amendment may not be considered when a bare majority of the commission is present.