



**Guidelines for Judicial and Executive Candidates  
Seeking Endorsement from the WBA**  
*Revised & Approved March 2008*

The following Guidelines are designed to provide candidates for judicial and executive positions who are seeking endorsement by the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia (WBA) information regarding the WBA's process in evaluating candidates, the selection criteria used by the WBA, and the information that the WBA requires from candidates.

Any questions regarding the information contained in these Guidelines or the WBA's endorsement process may be directed to WBA's Executive Director:

Carol Montoya, [carol@wbadc.org](mailto:carol@wbadc.org), 202-639-8880

The Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee of the WBA (the Committee) will complete an investigation of each candidate seeking endorsement by the WBA. This investigation may involve interviews with the candidate, interviews with persons listed as references for the candidate, a review of information provided by or on behalf of the candidate, and a review of additional information and interviews with additional persons that the Committee deems appropriate to properly evaluate the candidate. Upon completion of the Committee's investigation, the Committee will make a recommendation to the WBA Board regarding candidates for endorsement. The WBA Board will make the ultimate decision regarding endorsement.

There will be no levels of ratings of candidates (e.g., qualified, very qualified, etc.). The WBA will endorse only those executive candidates about whom it is genuinely enthusiastic and only those judicial candidates whom it believes will be excellent judges.

The WBA will usually endorse only one candidate for each position. When more than one position is open on a Board, Commission, court, or elsewhere, the WBA may make one endorsement for each open position. Under appropriate circumstances, however, the WBA may endorse more than one candidate for a position. The determination of what are appropriate circumstances will be made on a case-by-case basis.

***Goals of the WBA with respect to Judicial and Executive Endorsements***

The WBA's principal goal in endorsing candidates for judgeships is to ensure the appointment of qualified judges to both local and federal courts in the District of Columbia. Consistent with that goal, the WBA also seeks to increase the number of people occupying judgeships in the

District of Columbia and federal courts who share the mission of the WBA. The WBA endorses candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to equality of all litigants before the courts and who have been responsive to women's needs and concerns.

The WBA's principal goal in endorsing candidates for executive positions in the District of Columbia and federal governments and in bar associations is to increase the number of qualified people in those positions who share the mission of the WBA. The WBA seeks to endorse candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to promoting women's advancement and opportunities and to responding to women's needs and concerns.

### ***Criteria for Evaluating Judicial Candidates***

- WBA Membership. WBA membership is not required for endorsement; however, membership is a factor to be considered in deciding whether to endorse men and women who practice in the District of Columbia.
- Qualifications. The WBA will give priority to trial experience as a factor favoring endorsement and will also consider the following factors and any other factors that the WBA deems appropriate in light of the appointment sought:
  - administrative skills;
  - areas of practice;
  - commitment to equal justice under the law;
  - common sense;
  - communication skills (oral and written);
  - demonstrated commitment to the community;
  - demonstrated commitment to the concept of equal opportunity;
  - demonstrated freedom from bias;
  - integrity;
  - judicial temperament;
  - practice before the court in question;
  - prior adjudicative experience;
  - professional experience;
  - scholarship;
  - stamina; and
  - ties to the District of Columbia.The order of the above-listed factors is alphabetical and does not indicate their priority.
- Satisfaction of Statutory Requirements. The Board will only endorse those candidates who demonstrate that they satisfy the statutory requirements for the positions they seek.

## *Criteria for Evaluating Executive Candidates*

- WBA Membership. WBA membership is not required for endorsement; however, membership is a factor to be considered in deciding whether to endorse men and women who practice in the District of Columbia.
- Qualifications. The Board will consider the following factors and any other factors that the WBA deems appropriate in light of the appointment sought:
  - areas of practice;
  - commitment to equal justice under the law;
  - common sense;
  - communication skills (oral and written);
  - demonstrated commitment to the community;
  - demonstrated commitment to the concept of equal opportunity;
  - demonstrated freedom from bias;
  - integrity;
  - professional experience;
  - scholarship; and
  - stamina.The order of the above-listed factors is alphabetical and does not indicate their priority.
- Political Affiliation. WBA endorsement will not be based on, or rejected due to, affiliation with any particular political party, unless such affiliation is a specified requirement for a position.
- Attorneys. Endorsements will be primarily of attorneys, but endorsements will not be limited to attorneys. A non-attorney may be endorsed for a position in which the candidate would have the opportunity to promote the interests of women in the legal profession.

## *Initiating the Process*

Before the Committee will initiate its investigation process, the candidate seeking endorsement must inform a co-chair of the Committee, with a copy to the Executive Director, of her or his intent to seek endorsement from the WBA. Persons seeking an endorsement for another must provide the Committee with confirmation from the candidate that she or he desires the endorsement and must ensure compliance on behalf of the candidate with the instructions set forth in these Guidelines. The candidate should provide the WBA with at least thirty (30) days notice for completion of the endorsement process.

Once a co-chair of the Committee has been contacted as set forth in the paragraph above, the following information and materials must be sent by or on behalf of the candidate seeking endorsement:

- Completed WBA Candidate Application Form, which includes:
  - the name of the position sought with a brief description of the position;
  - the date by which the endorsement for the appointment must be received in order to be considered;
  - the name, title, and address of person to whom an endorsement letter should be sent;
  - the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three references, two professional and one personal. Note that the Committee will contact the references prior to making any recommendations;
  - an executed Release Letter
- Resume of the candidate seeking the endorsement
- If not included in the resume, any information pertinent to the criteria set forth above under the sections of these Guidelines entitled “Criteria for Evaluating Judicial Candidates” and “Criteria for Evaluating Executive Candidates,” as applicable
- A draft letter of endorsement. The letter should highlight the candidate’s qualifications for the appointment sought. WBA reserves the right to alter the draft
- *Judicial Endorsement Candidates only*: a list of three recent significant cases in which the candidate participated, including the case name and number, presiding judge and name(s) of opposing counsel.
- Articles by or about the candidate (optional)
- Letters in support of the endorsement (optional)

Note that, in addition to the materials and information listed above, the Committee may request additional information from the candidate and/or from other sources that it deems useful in determining whether to recommend endorsement of the candidate.

The above information and materials should be sent, *in electronic format*, to the WBA Executive Director at [carol@wbadc.org](mailto:carol@wbadc.org).

A hard copy of the notarized Release Letter should be sent to:

Women’s Bar Association of the District of Columbia  
2020 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 446  
Washington, DC 20006

### ***Concluding the Process***

A Committee co-chair or WBA Board member will inform the candidate of the WBA's decision regarding endorsement.

All documents assembled during the consideration of a candidate remain the property of the WBA and will be maintained in the custody of the co-chairs. The information so assembled and all deliberations and discussions will not be disclosed except to members of the WBA Board and the Executive and Judicial Endorsements Committee, unless such disclosure is warranted by the preparation of an endorsement letter.