

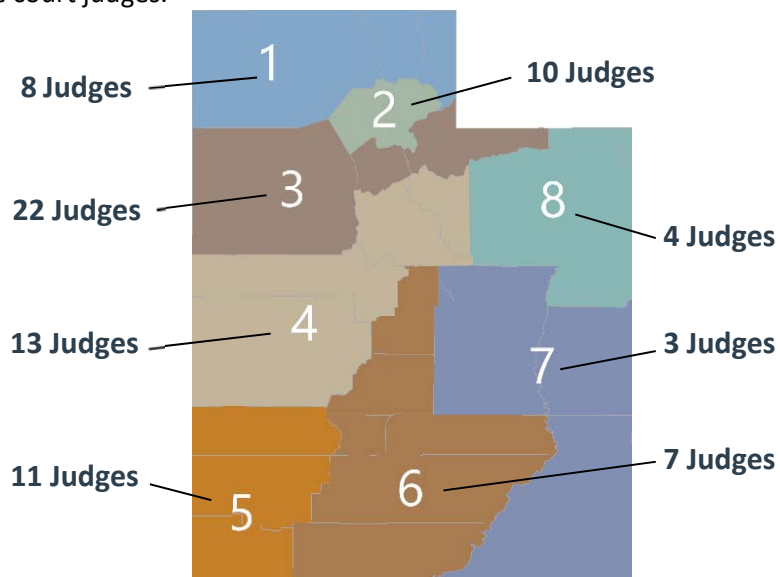
## JPEC 2020 Report to the Community

### What are Justice Court Judges?

Justice court judges are municipal or county judges in Utah. Historically, they were known as justices of the peace. Some, but not all of them, are lawyers. Justice court judges preside over limited jurisdiction courts, which hear the following cases:

- traffic cases, infractions, and violations of ordinances;
- Class B and C misdemeanor cases; and
- small claims cases.

Justice court judges are appointed through a merit selection process conducted by the municipality or county. Appointees must complete training and be certified by the Utah Judicial Council. Justice court judges serve six-year terms of office and stand for retention elections in a process similar to state court judges.



Justice Court Judges by Utah Judicial District

### Did you know?

Information about the Utah Justice Courts may be found on the Utah State Courts website, <https://www.utcourts.gov/courts/just/>.

### JPEC Evaluates Justice Courts

For evaluation purposes, the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) divides justice court judges into three groups based on the number of attorneys who appear in their courts and their approximate caseload size.

- *Full evaluation judges* have at least 50 attorneys appearing with at least one trial appearance or three total appearances. Full evaluation judges receive the same evaluation as state court judges.
- *Mid-level evaluation judges* have fewer than 50 attorneys appearing in their courts and a medium-sized caseload. Usually these judges work part time.
- *Basic evaluation judges* do not qualify for a full evaluation and have the smallest caseloads in the state.

More information about justice court evaluations may be found at: <https://judges.utah.gov/process/>

Evaluation Level	Full	Midlevel	Basic
Attorney Surveys	✓		
Court Staff Surveys	✓		
Juror Surveys	✓		
Courtroom Observation	✓		
Judicial Council Certification	✓	✓	✓
Public Comment	✓	✓	✓
Judicial Discipline	✓	✓	✓
Court User Interviews		✓	



## Pilot Project: Basic Evaluation Judges

JPEC is conducting a pilot project to provide an evaluation of judges presiding over courts with the lowest caseloads, having previously launched full evaluations in 2011 and midlevel evaluations in 2016.

- Basic evaluation challenges
  - Low numbers of attorney appearances make surveying unreliable.
  - Low caseloads make on-site visits unreliable.
  - Distances can make on-site visits prohibitively expensive.
- The project tests video and audio courtroom observation techniques, comparing them to the in-person evaluation currently conducted for full evaluation judges.
- The project requires the installation of video recording devices in pilot courtrooms.

District	Counties	Full	Midlevel	Basic
1 <sup>st</sup> District	Box Elder, Cache, Rich	1	2	5
2 <sup>nd</sup> District	Davis, Morgan, Weber	4	5	1
3 <sup>rd</sup> District	Salt Lake, Summit, Tooele	17	3	2
4 <sup>th</sup> District	Juab, Millard, Utah, Wasatch	6	6	1
5 <sup>th</sup> District	Beaver, Iron, Washington	2	6	3
6 <sup>th</sup> District	Garfield, Kane, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne	0	2	5
7 <sup>th</sup> District	Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan	0	3	0
8 <sup>th</sup> District	Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah	0	3	1
<b>Totals</b>	State of Utah	30	30	18

### Did you know?

Many justice court judges, who receive a basic evaluation from JPEC, have other full-time occupations. JPEC research shows they welcome feedback and additional training to help them be better judges.

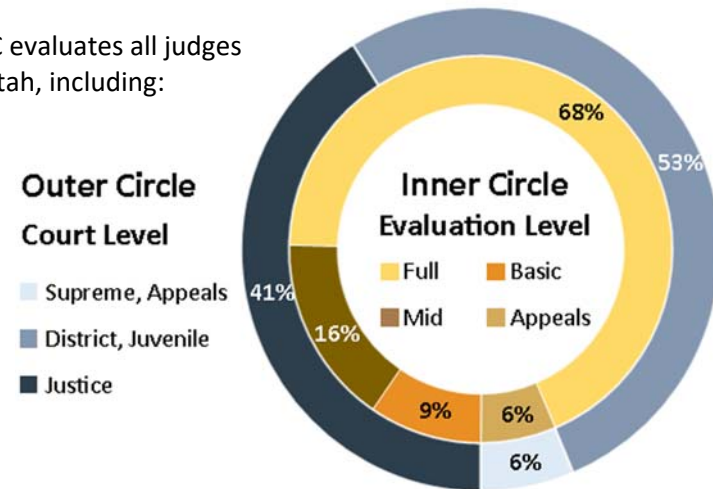


## What is JPEC?

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission was established by state statute in 2008. Its goals are:

- ✓ To provide voters with valid information about each judge's performance so they may make informed decisions in judicial retention elections;
- ✓ To provide judges with useful feedback about their performance so they may become better judges and thereby improve the quality of the judiciary; and
- ✓ To promote public accountability of the judiciary while ensuring that it continues to operate as an independent branch of government.

JPEC evaluates all judges in Utah, including:



### Who are the JPEC commissioners?

- ✓ JPEC's 13 volunteer commissioners are social workers, accountants, retired educators, lawyers, and community leaders who donate their time to a careful evaluation of the data collected on each judge.
- ✓ Commissioners are appointed by Governor Gary R. Herbert, the Utah Legislature, and the Utah Supreme Court.
- ✓ By law, half of the appointments may be attorneys. Partisan balance is required.

Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission  
 P.O. Box 142330  
 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114  
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