

JUDICIAL TOOLS FOR AUDITOR EVALUATIONS

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WHERE I COME FROM

- I am not a District Judge.
- I have broad experience in judicial administration and helping judges in their administrative roles.
- Because I am not a District Judge, I can only give you best practices, not a quotable “But Nate Jensen said...”
- Please remember YMMV (Your Mileage May Vary)

AUDITOR – JUDGE RELATIONSHIP

- Managers have different
- philosophies



- Hands off vs. micromanagement vs. somewhere in between
- What is your judge or judges' management style?
- Answer may drive current evaluation practice;
- Best practice may dictate different paradigm.

AUDITOR-JUDGE RELATIONSHIP

Office of Court Administration Court Financial Management Handbook (CFMH), Page I-24:

- “Evaluating auditor performance is important to give District Judges a sound basis for making reappointment decisions.”

www.txcourts.gov/media/478287/2005_county_fm_handbook.pdf

WHO ARE YOU?



WHO ARE YOU?

- The only way to honestly evaluate your performance is for the judge or judges to have a good idea of who you are, or more simply, what part you play in the County.
- An evaluation is only good if the evaluator understands what you do as the County Auditor.
- **DO NOT ASSUME** that the District Judge or Judges have any semblance of the scope of your duties.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool# 1: Get Organized

- Develop a plan for the following:
 - How often will the Auditor be evaluated?
 - Who will conduct the evaluation?
 - Who will the Evaluator consult with externally regarding Auditor performance?
 - If one District Judge in a multi court jurisdiction is conducting the evaluation, what will the roles of the other District Judge or Judges be?



EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool #2: Create the written evaluation

- Use the resources from CFMH, Pages I-28 through I-39 to construct an evaluation that accurately reflects the priorities of the District Judges when it comes to the duties of the County Auditor.
- If there are questions about what may or may not be applicable, ask the Auditor directly.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool#3: Conduct an interview with the County Auditor.



This does not have to be a formal process, but the purposes must be made clear. Topics should include aspects of the position that will be evaluated.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool#4: Consult with external parties.

- CFMH cautions that “similar to a law enforcement officer, a county auditor’s evaluation should not be based on popularity. By the nature of their work, the auditor is going to rub some people the wrong way...**just as everyone will not always agree with your judicial decisions, everyone will not always agree with what the auditor does**” [emphasis preserved].

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool#4 (cont.):

- It is important to consult with department heads and other officials, including the county's outside auditor.
- Auditor performance measurement should be based on accomplishment of tasks, not necessarily whether the external consultant agreed with the outcome.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool #5: Write the evaluation



- The interview and consulting processes should inform answers to the evaluation.
- Use the evaluation agreed to and constructed in Judge Tool #2.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool #6a: Meet as District Judges

- Go over the written evaluation as a group
- If there are parts that need to be clarified or defined, alter them as necessary.

Judge Tool #6b: Invite Auditor in to meet and review

- Generally review the written evaluation. Remember 2 praises for every critique.

EVALUATION TOOLS

Judge Tool #7: Keep Doing and Keep Improving



- Evaluation policies can become stagnant. Review them regularly as Auditor and District Judges.

CONCLUSION

- Evaluations help inform the reappointment process
- District Judges should know “who you are”
- The District Judges should have a plan and stick to it
- The evaluation process is collaborative (District Judge/Auditor/External Stakeholders)
- Keep improving the process

CONCLUSION

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- http://www.mctx.org/departments_d-k/departments_l-p/office_of_court_administrationB/index.html
- www.txcourts.gov/media/478287/2005_county_fm_handbook.pdf