

Rules and Procedures Governing the Wyoming Judicial Council

Rule 1. Supreme Court.

In accordance with the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration's Order of November 1, 2022, the superintending authority vested in the Wyoming Supreme Court by Article 5, Section 2 of the Wyoming Constitution is delegated to the Wyoming Judicial Council.

Rule 2. District Courts.

In accordance with the resolution of the District Courts unanimously approved on April 24, 2000, and ratified on September 8, 2022 by the *Ratification of the District Judges' Conference April 24, 2000 Resolution Regarding the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration*, the Wyoming District Courts delegate their administrative authority as established by Article 5, Section 1 of the Wyoming Constitution and W.S. 5-3-102(b) and 9-2-1002(c), except for the submission of budgets, to the Wyoming Judicial Council.

Rule 3. Wyoming Judicial Council.

Pursuant to the Wyoming Constitution, the Order of the Wyoming Supreme Court and the resolution of the Wyoming District Courts, the Wyoming Judicial Council will exercise general superintending control over the Judicial Branch for administrative, policy making, and planning purposes.

Rule 4. Membership.

The Wyoming Judicial Council is composed of the following members:

1. The Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court and two justices of the Wyoming Supreme Court;
2. Three district court judges; and
3. Three circuit court judges.

All members enjoy voting rights. The Wyoming Judicial Council may appoint non-voting members to serve for specified terms to increase perspective of others in the Judicial Branch, including, but not limited to, judges, clerks of court, chief circuit clerks, court personnel, and staff of the State Court Administrator.

Rule 5. Terms of Members and Vacancies.

The Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court shall serve on the Wyoming Judicial Council during tenure in that office. The other members of the Wyoming Judicial Council

shall be elected by their respective judicial conferences, serving staggered terms of three years, with the exception of the Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court. Members may serve successive terms. Elections to fill vacancies shall be held in the spring. Vacancies may be declared by the Wyoming Judicial Council because of the death, retirement, resignation, or nonattendance of a member at three meetings during a calendar year. If necessary, a member may attend in person, by telephone, or by virtual means.

Rule 6. Responsibilities of Presiding Officer.

The Chief Justice is the presiding officer of the Wyoming Judicial Council. It is the responsibility of the presiding officer to preside at meetings and to serve as the chief spokesperson for the Wyoming Judicial Council.

Rule 7. Organization.

The presiding officer shall preside at any meeting. In the presiding officer's absence, the Executive Committee member with the most seniority on the Judicial Council shall act as the presiding officer. The presiding officer may appoint standing committees and advisory committees at any time to assist the Wyoming Judicial Council in carrying out its responsibilities. Standing and advisory committees shall have a designated chairperson as determined by the presiding officer. Existing Supreme Court committees may be designated as standing or advisory committees by order of the Chief Justice.

Rule 8. Executive Committee.

There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court, one district court member of the Judicial Council, and one circuit court member of the Judicial Council. The district court and the circuit court member of the Executive Committee shall be designated by the other members of the Judicial Council from that judicial conference. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to act between Judicial Council meetings. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported at the next Judicial Council meeting to be voted on by the Judicial Council.

Rule 9. Committees.

The Wyoming Judicial Council may establish standing committees and ad hoc committees as necessary to assist the Judicial Council in carrying out its responsibilities. Committees serve in an advisory capacity unless otherwise authorized by the Judicial Council. Policies or policy amendments recommended by a committee shall follow the procedure set forth in *Appendix A – Policy Development and Review Process*.

Rule 10. Meetings.

The Wyoming Judicial Council shall act only at a meeting, unless agreed upon unanimously by the Wyoming Judicial Council, in which case action may be taken or a vote by email or other means may be taken. The Wyoming Judicial Council shall meet at least quarterly as determined by the presiding officer. Standing or advisory committee meetings may be called at the discretion of the committee chairperson. The Wyoming Public Meetings Act, W.S. 16-4-401, et seq., by its terms, does not apply to the judiciary. Meetings of the Wyoming Judicial Council are open to all sitting circuit and district court judges and Supreme Court justices but are not public unless, in its discretion, the Judicial Council determines a particular meeting or agenda item should be open to the public.

Rule 11. Reporter for the Wyoming Judicial Council and Minutes.

The State Court Administrator shall be the executive secretary and a non-voting member for the Wyoming Judicial Council. It shall be the duty of the executive secretary to prepare and keep the minutes of all meetings. In the absence of the executive secretary, the executive secretary shall choose another member of court administration to record the minutes. The executive secretary shall record the names of the members present, all actions taken, and any other matters that the Wyoming Judicial Council may deem appropriate. Copies of the minutes shall be distributed as deemed appropriate by the Wyoming Judicial Council and shall be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

Rule 12. Actions and Voting.

Six members of the Wyoming Judicial Council shall constitute a quorum. Once a quorum has been established, that quorum shall carry throughout the duration of the meeting. Approval of a majority of those voting shall constitute an action. The presiding officer is a voting member of the Wyoming Judicial Council. A tie vote means that the matter voted on has failed adoption. A member may vote on specific issues by written proxy delivered to the presiding officer. A motion to reconsider can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side of an issue.

Rule 13. Staff.

Under the direction of the Chief Justice of the Wyoming Supreme Court, the State Court Administrator's Office shall provide staff for support for the Wyoming Judicial Council and any committees established by the Judicial Council.

Rule 14. Authorized Actions of the Wyoming Judicial Council.

The Wyoming Judicial Council shall be the administrative policy-making body of the

Wyoming Judicial Branch. All administrative policies shall be binding on all Judicial Branch judges and employees. County employees and elected officials serving the Wyoming Judicial Branch, pursuant to law, shall also adhere to administrative policies which are relevant to them, and are adopted by the Wyoming Judicial Council. The administrative policy-making authority of the Wyoming Judicial Council shall continuously study the organization, rules, procedures, work accomplished, results, and uniformity of the state courts and methods for their improvement including, but not limited to the following:

1. Development and implementation of the mission statement and strategic plan of the Wyoming Judicial Branch;
2. Determination of budget priorities;
3. Development and support of legislative initiatives as permitted by the Code of Judicial Conduct;
4. Human Resources functions;
5. Technology and infrastructure for the effective operation of the Judicial Branch;
6. Education and organizational development for judicial officers and staff;
7. Programs including jury, interpreter, specialty courts; and
8. Core services, court performance measures and accountability.

Adopted this 30th day of June 2026.

BY THE WYOMING JUDICIAL COUNCIL:



Lynne Boomgaarden, Chief Justice
Chair, Wyoming Judicial Council

APPENDIX A

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PROCESS

Within the Wyoming Judicial Branch, policy development is a collaborative, iterative process that relies on the subject-matter expertise of committees and the governance role of the Wyoming Judicial Council. This bidirectional flow ensures that policies are well-informed, operationally sound, fiscally responsible, and aligned with the constitutional, strategic, and administrative responsibilities of the Branch.

1. Initiation of Policy Matters

Policy issues may arise from a variety of sources, including:

- The Executive Committee when acting within the scope of the Wyoming Judicial Branch strategic and operational plans;
- Committees acting within the scope of the Wyoming Judicial Branch strategic and operational plans;
- Judicial officers, Judicial Branch staff, clerks of district court, attorneys, legislators, and Executive Branch agencies;
- Statutory changes or legislative activity;
- Operational challenges, audits, or strategic initiatives; and
- Others that bring issues implicating Branchwide policy.

When a matter falls within the purpose of a committee, the issue is typically referred to that committee for review and development. The Judicial Council or the Executive Committee may also directly task a committee with studying a particular issue or developing a policy recommendation.

2. Role of Committees

Committees serve as the primary forums for detailed policy development and analysis. Their role includes:

- Evaluating legal, procedural, operational, fiscal, and technological impacts;
- Reviewing national standards, best practices, and approaches used in comparable jurisdictions;
- Engaging affected judges, court staff, and justice partners as appropriate; and

- Assessing consistency with the Judicial Branch strategic plan, Wyoming statutes, court rules, and existing Branch policies.

Committees may establish subcommittees or working groups to address complex issues and typically work in coordination with AOC staff for research, drafting, legal review, and fiscal analysis.

3. Advancement of Committee Recommendations

Once a Committee has completed its work and reached consensus, it advances a formal recommendation to the Judicial Council. Submissions generally include (either written or orally at a Judicial Council meeting):

- Proposed policy, rule, or administrative language;
- A clear statement of purpose and need;
- A recitation of the appropriate Judicial Branch Strategic Plan pillar and goal of the recommendation;
- Summary of committee discussion, research, and stakeholder input;
- Identification of fiscal or resource impacts; and
- Implementation considerations and timelines.

This ensures that matters presented to the Council reflect a mature, fully vetted recommendation rather than a preliminary concept.

4. Wyoming Judicial Council Review

The Judicial Council functions as the primary policy-setting and oversight body for the Judicial Branch. In reviewing advisory committee recommendations, the Council considers:

- Alignment with Branch-wide strategic priorities;
- Operational feasibility;
- Fiscal sustainability and resource implications;
- Legal sufficiency and institutional risk; and
- Interaction with existing rules, policies, and administrative structures.

The Council's review focuses on Branchwide impacts rather than revisiting detailed Committee analysis.

5. Council Action Options

After review, the Judicial Council may:

- Approve the Recommendation – The policy advances to implementation.
- Approve with Modifications – The Council may adopt with revisions.
- Refer the Matter Back to the Committee – Additional research, clarification, stakeholder engagement, or redrafting may be requested.
- Table the Item – Used when questions require further consideration.
- Decline the Recommendation – Typically accompanied by guidance or rationale to inform future work.

6. Return Flow to Committees

When matters are referred back, Committees resume work to address Council feedback. This may include:

- Revising policy language;
- Conducting additional analysis or consultation;
- Clarifying fiscal or operational impacts; and
- Exploring alternative approaches.

This iterative exchange strengthens policy quality and ensures alignment between subject-matter expertise and Branchwide governance considerations.

7. Continuous Review and Feedback

Policy development within the Wyoming Judicial Branch is a dynamic exercise. Policies go through a regularly scheduled review after implementation, which involves:

- Committees monitoring effectiveness and operational impact;
- Reviewing data and feedback as available; and
- Tracking statutory or rule changes that affect the Policy.

When revisions or refinements are warranted, Committees may bring recommendations back to the Judicial Council, continuing the established policy flow.

