



**CO L O R A D O**

**Office of Judicial  
Performance Evaluation**

Judicial Branch

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The Honorable Judge Frances E. Simonet  
2020 Judicial Performance Survey Report  
County Court

Conducted by:



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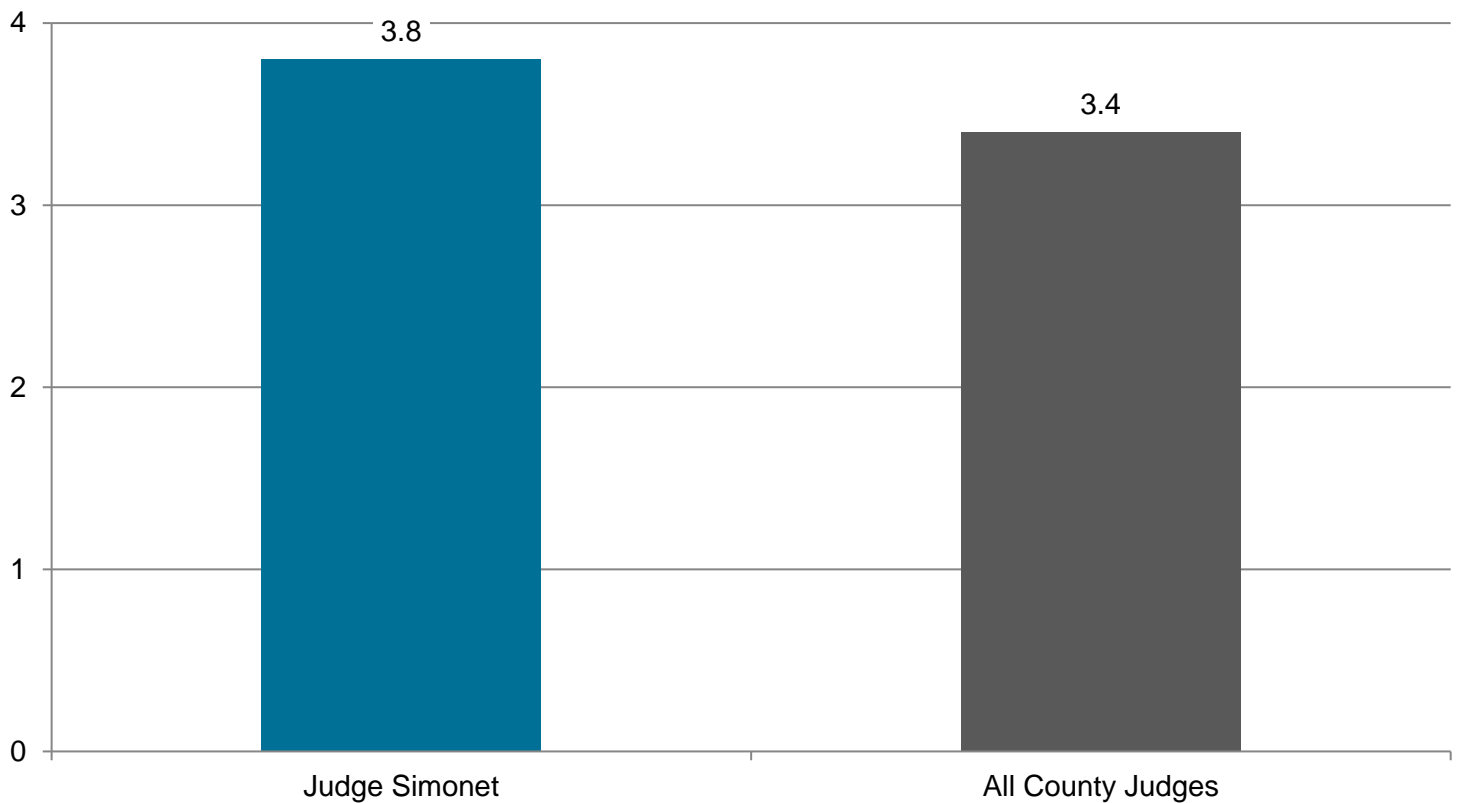
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# Summary of Results

For Judge Simonet, 39 individuals completed surveys with at least a single rating question answered. This report reflects these 39 responses.

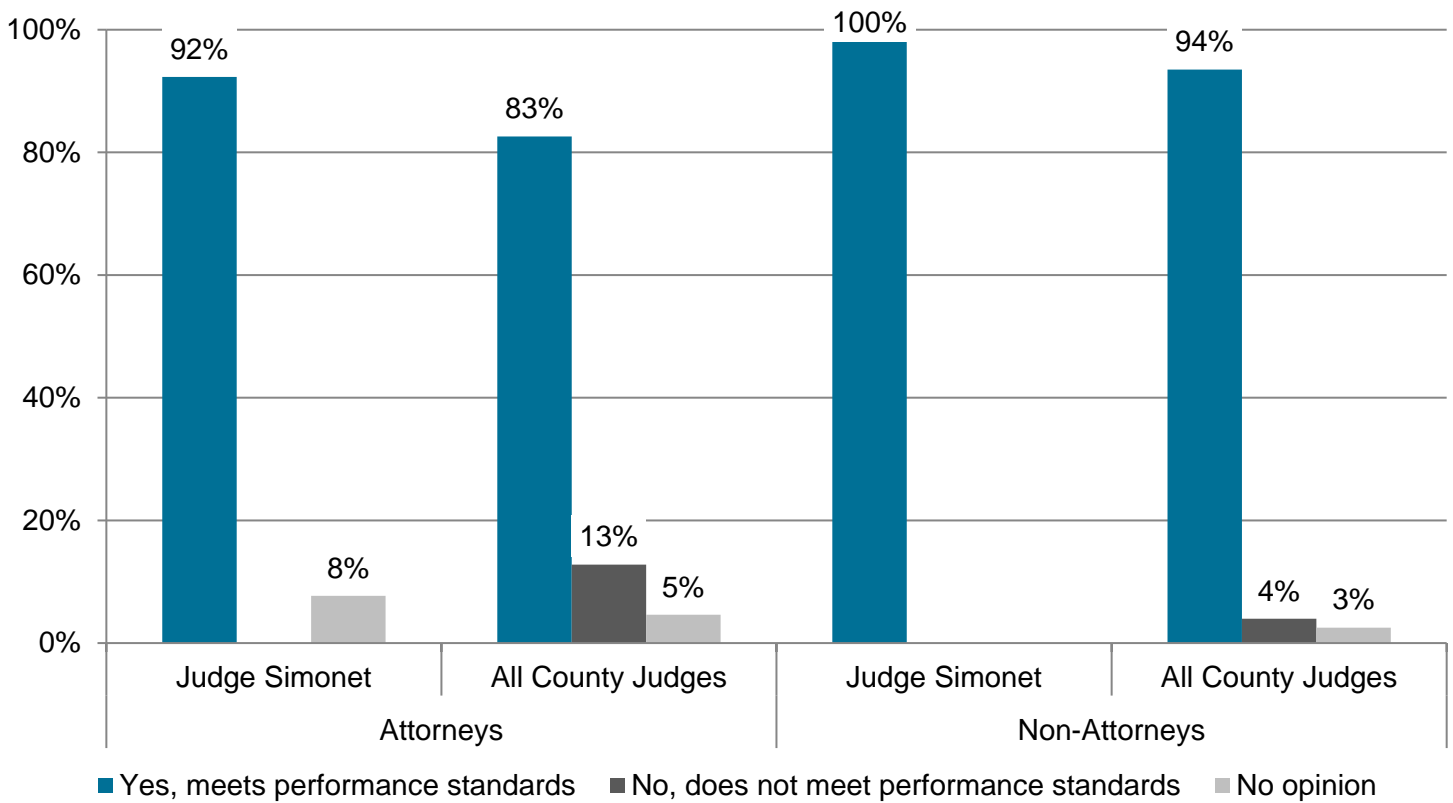
Respondents rated judges on various questions using an A to F scale, in which the grades were then converted to the following numerical scores: A= 4, B=3, C=2, D=1 and Fail=0. An average score of 4.0 is the highest possible score and a 0.0 is the lowest possible score.

## Overall Score



|               | Judge Simonet | All County Judges |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Overall Grade | 3.8           | 3.4               |

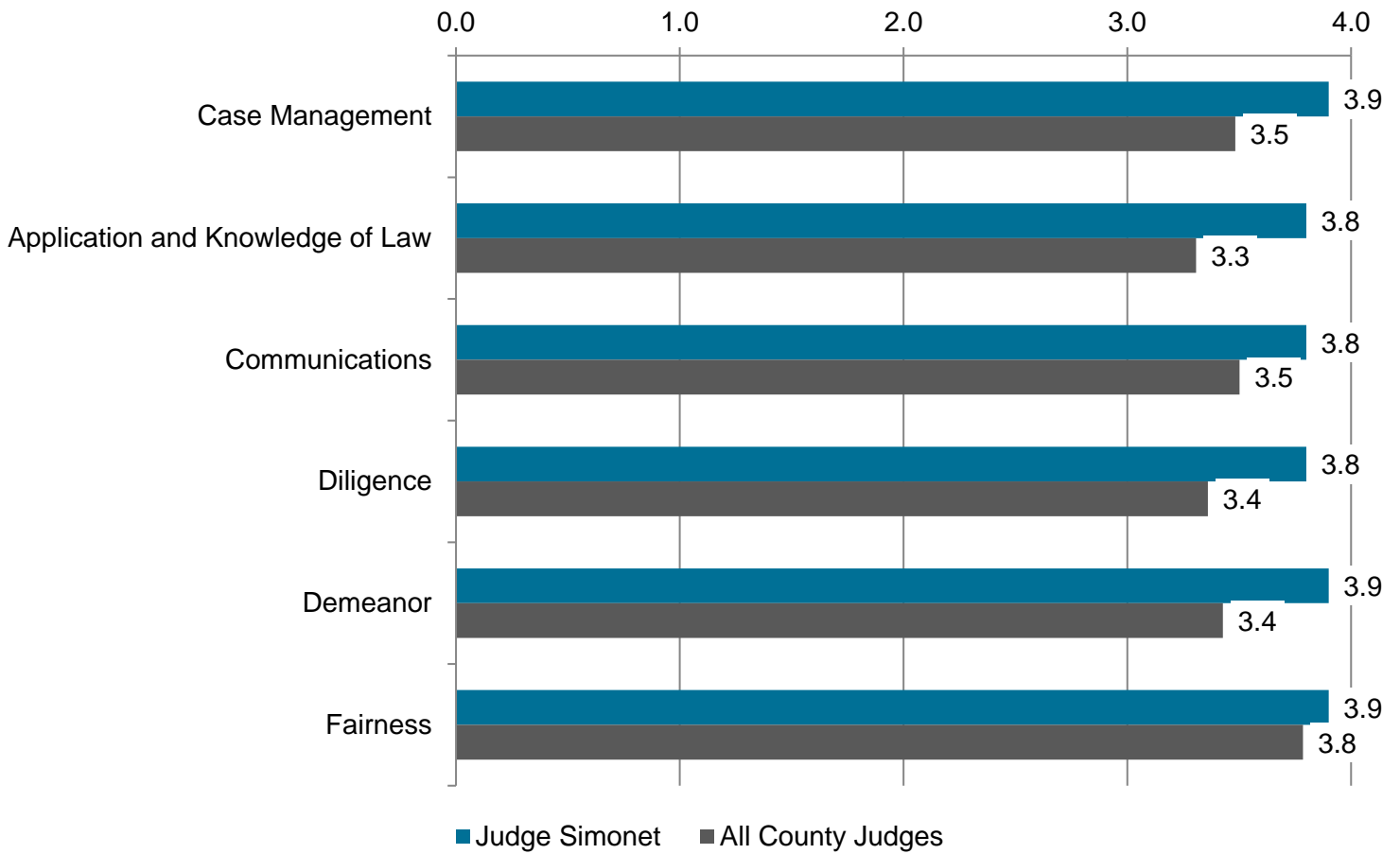
## Performance Scores



|   | Attorneys     |                   | Non-Attorneys |                   |
|---|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
|   | Judge Simonet | All County Judges | Judge Simonet | All County Judges |
| Yes, meets performance standards        | 92%           | 83%               | 100%          | 94%               |
| No, does not meet performance standards | 0%            | 13%               | 0%            | 4%                |
| No opinion                              | 8%            | 5%                | 0%            | 3%                |

Note: All percentages in this report are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

## Individual Category Scores



|                                  | Judge Simonet | All County Judges |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Case Management                  | 3.9           | 3.5               |
| Application and Knowledge of Law | 3.8           | 3.3               |
| Communications                   | 3.8           | 3.5               |
| Diligence                        | 3.8           | 3.4               |
| Demeanor                         | 3.9           | 3.4               |
| Fairness                         | 3.9           | 3.8               |

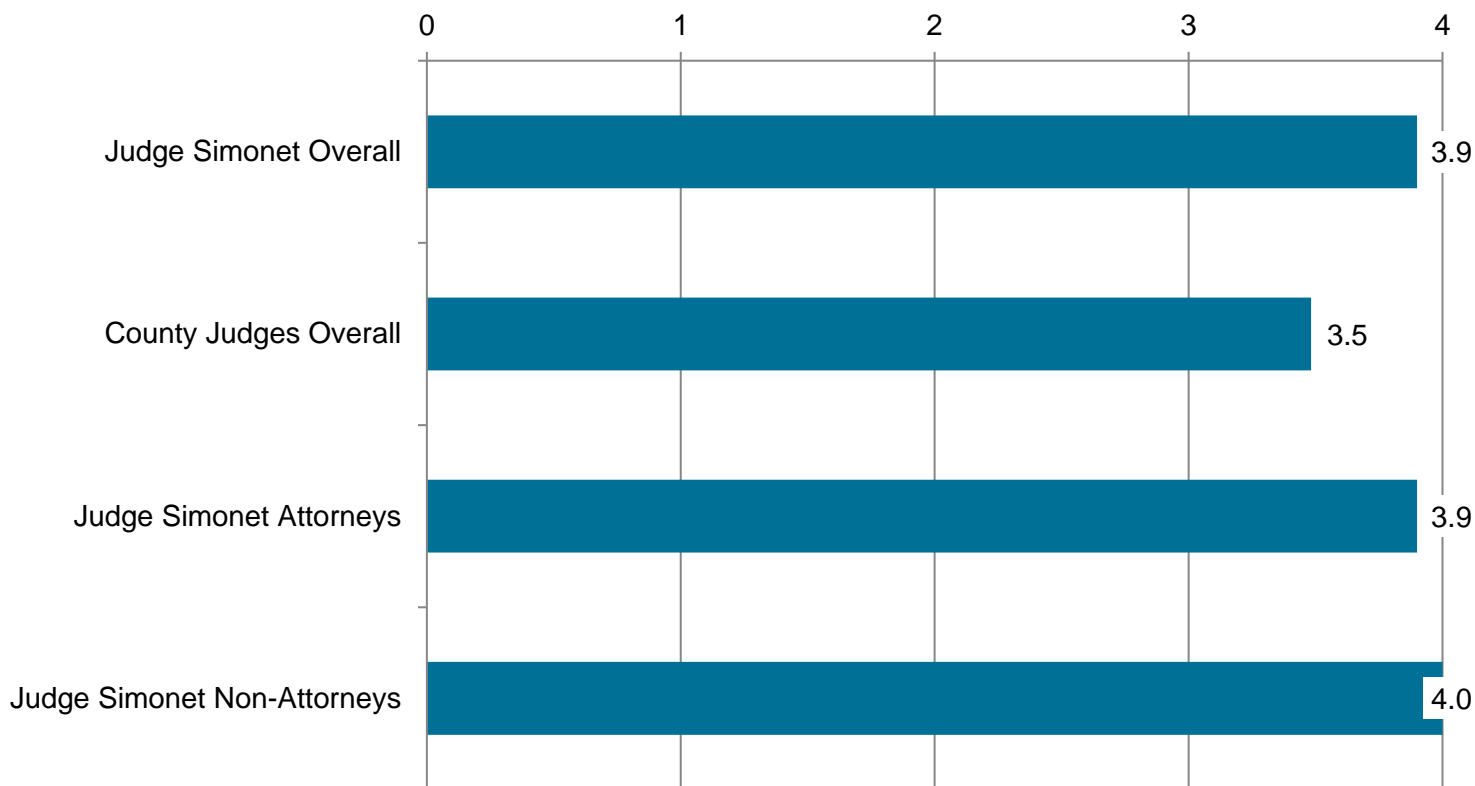
## Summary of Responses

| Group         | Responses | Response Rate | Percent with Sufficient Knowledge | Number with Sufficient Knowledge |
|---------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Attorneys     | 33        | 28%           | 82%                               | 27                               |
| Non-Attorneys | 69        | 11%           | 17%                               | 12                               |

In addition to the responses above, Judge Simonet received 0 response(s) via the open Citizen Feedback survey. Those responses are included with non-attorney results wherever applicable. However, due to the nature of data collection, they are not included in response rates.

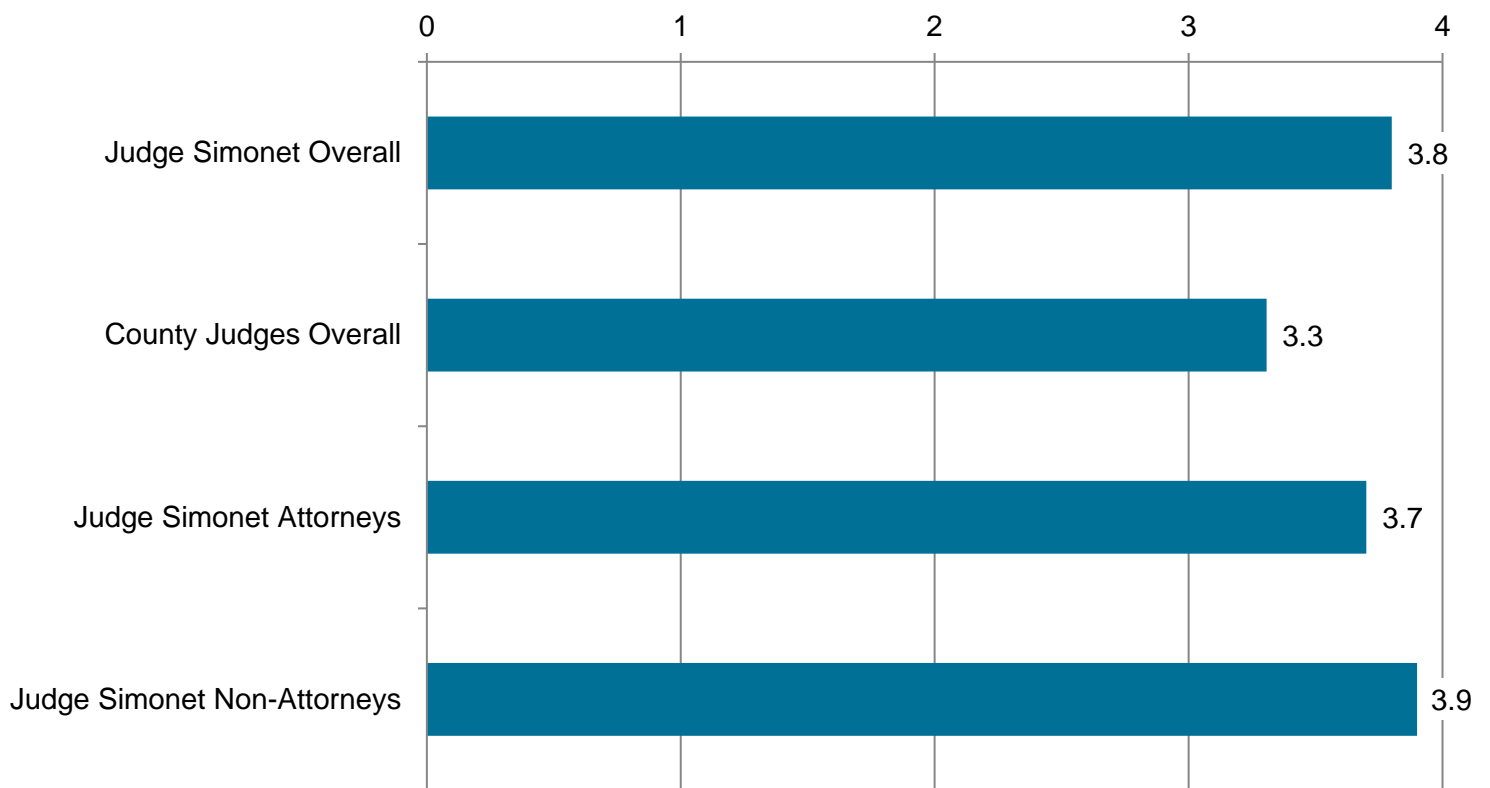
# Detailed Report

## Case Management



|   | Judge Simonet Overall | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Promptly issuing a decision on the case after trial | 3.9                   | 3.6                   | 3.8                     | 4.0                         | 17                  |
| Maintaining appropriate control over proceedings    | 3.9                   | 3.5                   | 3.9                     | 4.0                         | 31                  |
| Promptly ruling on pre-trial motions                | 4                     | 3.5                   | 4                       | 4.0                         | 21                  |
| Setting reasonable schedules for cases              | 4                     | 3.4                   | 4                       | 4.0                         | 31                  |

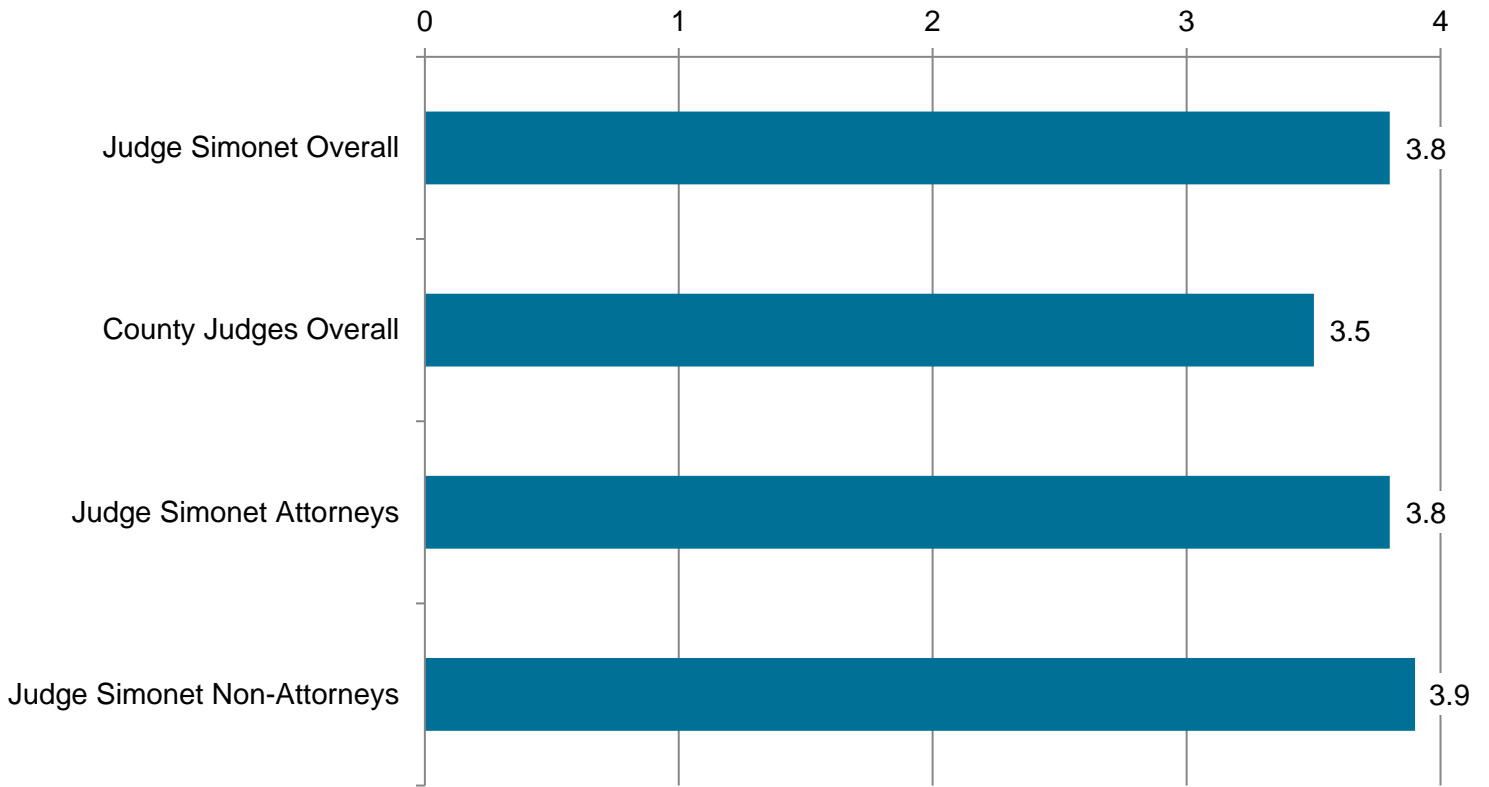
## Application and Knowledge of Law



|  | Judge Simonet Overall | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Being able to identify and analyze relevant facts                    | 3.8                   | 3.4                   | 3.7                     | 3.9                         | 38                  |
| Basing decisions on evidence and arguments                           | 3.7                   | 3.2                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 26                  |
| Issuing consistent sentences when the circumstances are similar      | 3.8                   | 3.3                   | 3.8                     | N/A                         | 22                  |
| Being fair and impartial to both sides of the case                   | 3.7                   | 3.1                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 26                  |
| Consistently applying laws and rules                                 | 3.7                   | 3.2                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 26                  |
| Giving reasons for rulings   | 3.8                   | 3.7                   | N/A                     | 3.8                         | 12                  |
| Willing to make decision without regard to possible outside pressure | 3.9                   | 3.7                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |

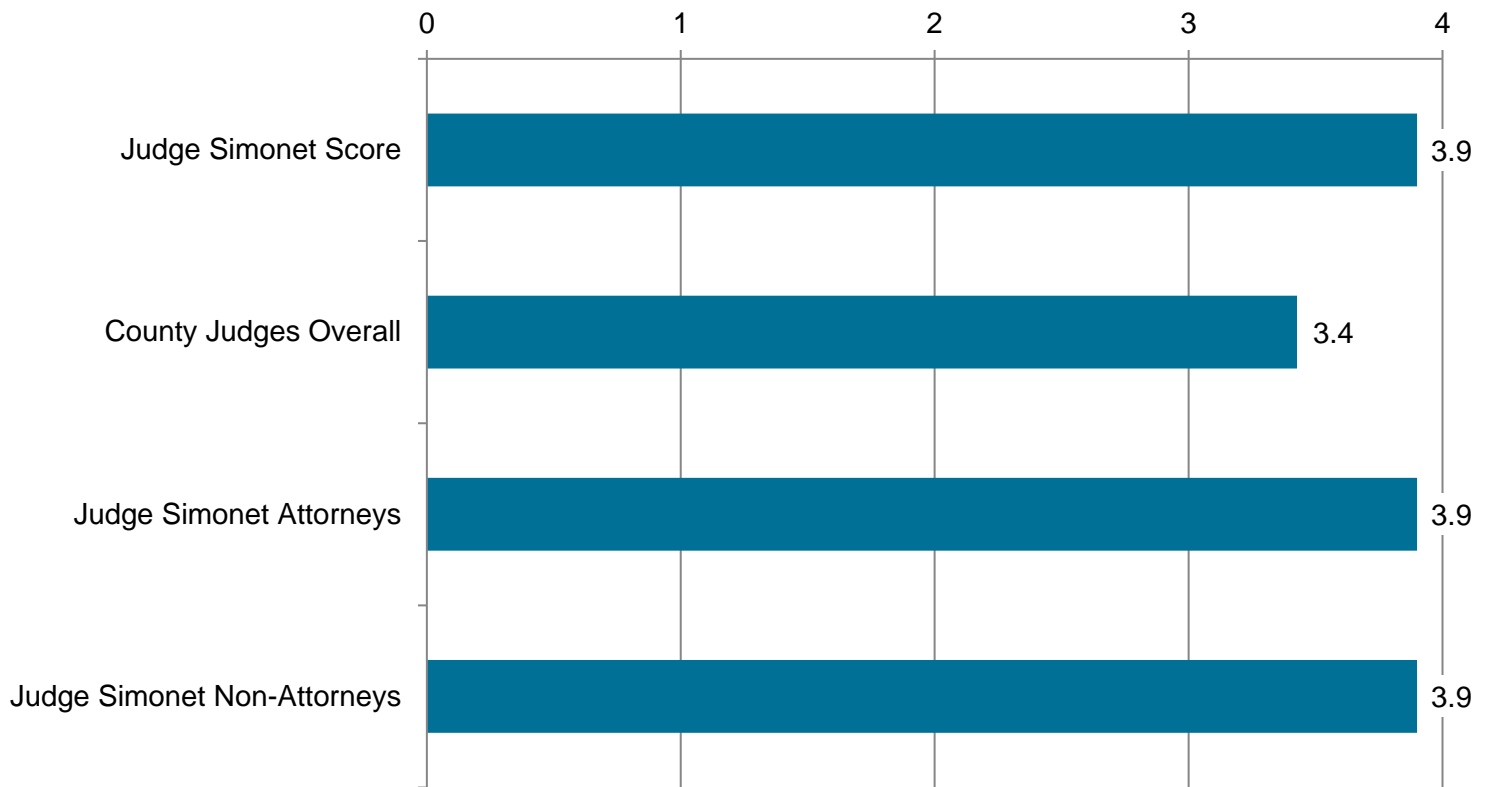


## Communications



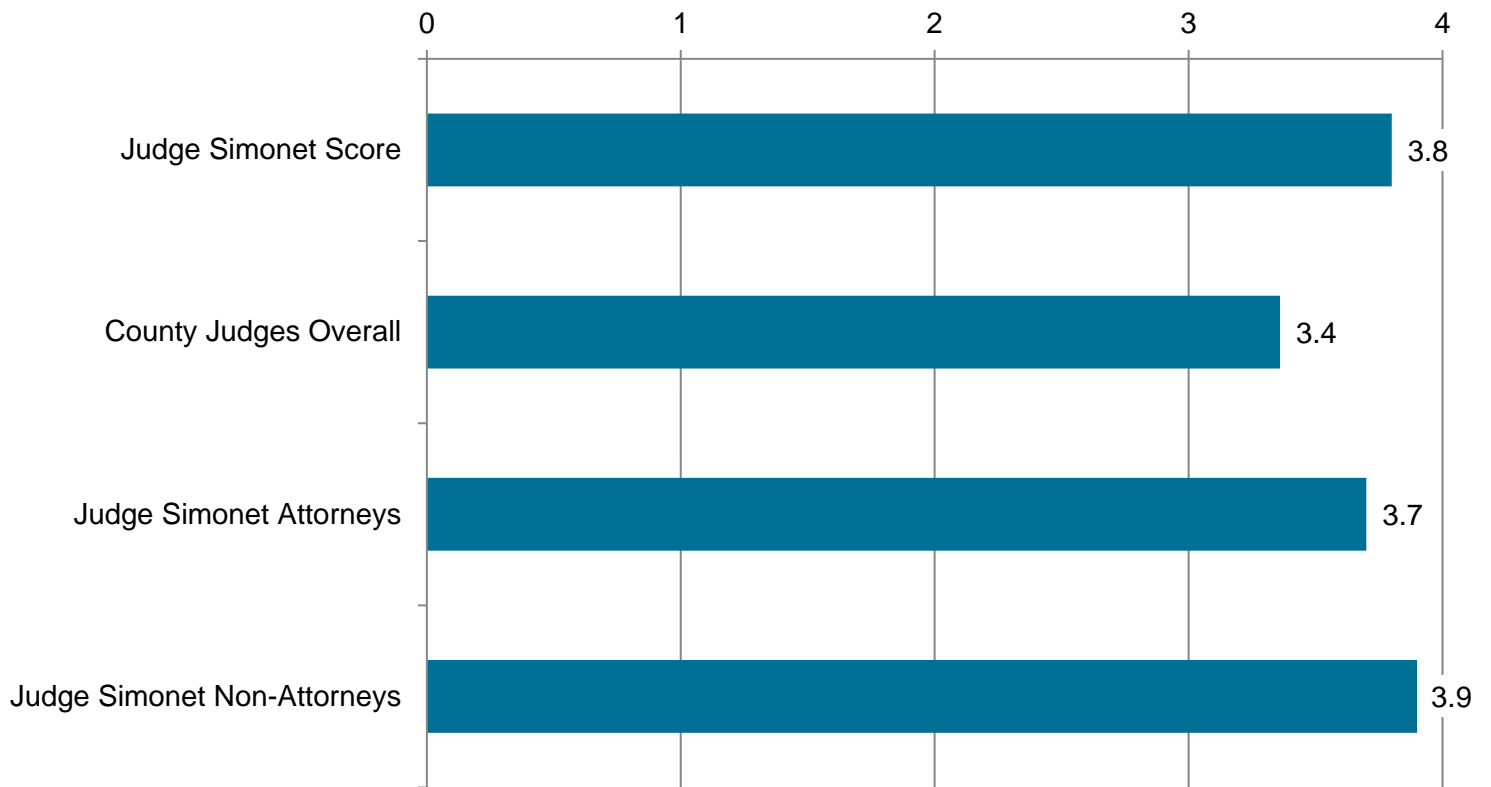
|   | Judge Simonet Overall | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Making sure all participants understand the proceedings                     | 3.9                   | 3.6                   | 3.9                     | 3.9                         | 37                  |
| Providing written communications that are clear, thorough and well reasoned | 3.7                   | 3.3                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 16                  |
| Using language that everyone can understand                                 | 3.9                   | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 12                  |
| Speaking clearly so everyone in the courtroom can hear what's being said    | 3.9                   | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 12                  |

## Demeanor



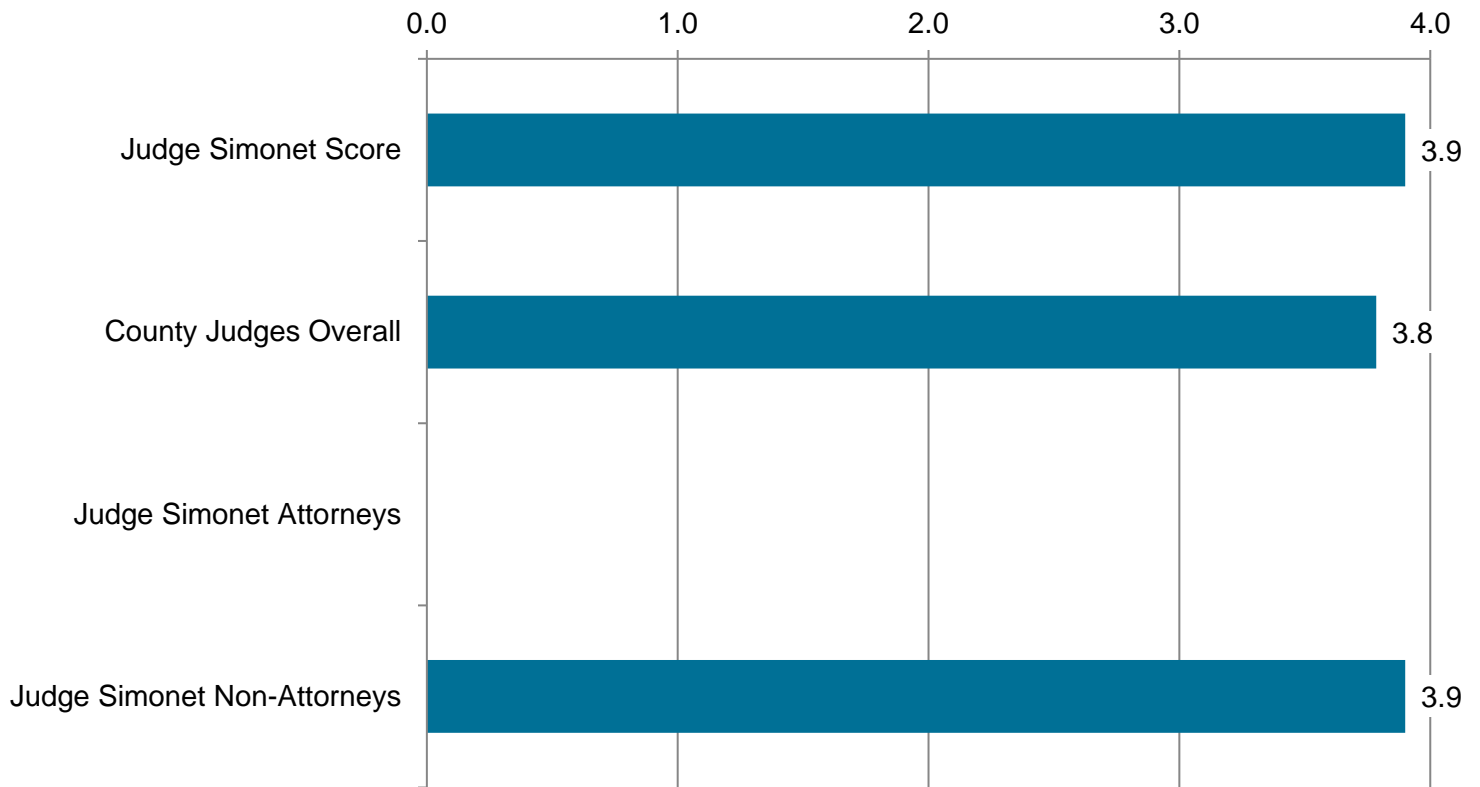
|  | Judge Simonet Score | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Giving proceedings a sense of dignity  | 3.9                 | 3.5                   | 3.9                     | 3.9                         | 37                  |
| Treating participants with respect   | 3.9                 | 3.5                   | 3.9                     | 3.9                         | 37                  |
| Conducting his/her courtroom in a neutral manner   | 3.8                 | 3.3                   | 3.8                     | 3.9                         | 37                  |
| Having a sense of compassion and human understanding for those who appear before him/her | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |

## Diligence



|   | Judge Simonet Score | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Using good judgment in application of relevant law and rules                                  | 3.7                 | 3.2                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 25                  |
| Being willing to handle cases on the docket even when they are complicated and time consuming | 3.7                 | 3.3                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 22                  |
| Doing the necessary “homework” and being prepared for cases                                   | 3.7                 | 3.3                   | 3.7                     | N/A                         | 22                  |
| Being willing to handle cases on the docket even when they are complicated and time consuming | 3.9                 | 3.6                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Beginning court on time   | 3.9                 | 3.7                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Maintaining appropriate control over proceedings  | 3.9                 | 3.7                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Setting reasonable schedules for cases  | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Managing court proceedings so that there is little wasted time                                | 3.9                 | 3.6                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |

## Fairness



|   | Judge Simonet Score | County Judges Overall | Judge Simonet Attorneys | Judge Simonet Non-Attorneys | Number of Responses |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Giving participants an opportunity to be heard          | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Treating those involved in the case without bias        | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |
| Treating fairly people who represent themselves         | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 10                  |
| Giving each side enough time to present his or her case | 3.9                 | 3.8                   | N/A                     | 3.9                         | 11                  |

# Appendix 1. Survey Methods – Attorney and Non-attorney

## Methodology and How to Read Results

For Judge Simonet, 39 individuals completed surveys with at least a single rating question answered. This report reflects these 39 responses. The survey results are divided into eight sections: Retention, Case Management, Application and Knowledge of Law, Communications, Demeanor, Diligence, Fairness, Strengths, and Weaknesses.

### a. Response rates

#### Attorneys

During the 2020 administration, a total of 57,819 survey invitations were sent to 9,958 attorneys inviting them to evaluate judges and justices receiving retention reports in 2020. On average, each attorney was asked to evaluate 5.8 judges. In total 10,433 surveys were completed with an additional 6,536 responses where the attorney indicated that they did not have enough experience with the judge to be comfortable evaluating him or her. The response rate for the survey was 18% and the survey completion rate (the number of those familiar enough to evaluate the judge divided by the total number of attorney responses including those indicating they did not have sufficient familiarity to evaluate the judge) was 29%.

#### Non-attorneys

The 2020 administration was a year of transition for the non-attorney survey. The bulk mailing of invitation letters and survey booklets was ceased and replaced with several other methods on a trial basis. During the 2020 cycle non-attorneys were invited through email, SMS messages, push to web handout cards, and push to web letters. Contact methods varied by the type of respondent and contact information available. In total through these methods 1520 surveys were completed with an additional 761 responses where the respondent indicated that they did not have enough experience with the judge to be comfortable evaluating him or her. The response rate for the survey was 13% and the survey completion rate (the number of those familiar enough to evaluate the judge divided by the total number of attorney responses including those indicating they did not have sufficient familiarity to evaluate the judge) was 7%.

### b. Methodology

The 2020 attorney survey was conducted in 3 cycles online beginning on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Attorneys with appearances in front of judges during the first and second quarters of 2019 were sent a series of email invitations beginning on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Reminders were sent on September 24<sup>th</sup> and October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

This process was repeated among attorneys with appearances in the third quarter of 2019 with email invitations sent beginning November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Reminders were sent on December 4<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. To further increase the amount of data collected, an additional cycle of data collection took place in January and February 2020. Invitations were emailed to attorneys with appearances during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2020. This cycle included email invitations sent on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Reminders were sent on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020. A final email informing respondents of the cycle closing was sent on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. invitations and reminders were sent out on request throughout the data collection process.

Data collection among non-attorneys transitioned away from bulk mailings and toward electronic invitations during the 2020 cycle. Due to this transition, non-attorney responses are down from the 2019 cycle.

Data collection for non-attorneys began on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 and ran through the response deadline of February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Survey invitations were sent by four different methods on a trial basis: Email, SMS message, push to web hand out, and push to web letter. Details on the responses from each method are detailed in the table below.

**Table 1: Non-Attorney completes by invitation method**

| <b>Invitation Method</b> | <b>Invites Sent</b> | <b>Completes</b> | <b>Response Rate</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Email                    | 10,609              | 1300             | 12%                  |
| SMS/Text Message         | 49                  | 19               | 39%                  |
| Push to web hand out     | Unknown             | 89               | N/A                  |
| Push to web letter       | 334                 | 60               | 18%                  |
| Citizen Feedback         | Unknown             | 52               | N/A                  |

In addition to the main non-attorney survey where respondents were invited to participate, there was also a citizen feedback survey available to all citizens on the OJPE website. This survey was open for the entire data collection period and data was downloaded for analysis on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. During this period 52 valid responses were received. The survey remained open and any responses received after February 20<sup>th</sup> or for judges not receiving an evaluation in 2020 were held over for the 2021 interim evaluation cycle.

### **c. Questions**

In the core of the survey, attorneys evaluated district and county judges on 17 aspects of judicial performance and appellate judges on 12 aspects of judicial performance using a grade scale of A, B, C, D, or F. These aspects were grouped by topic into different categories, five for district and county judges and two for appellate judges. The district and county categories were: Case Management, Application and Knowledge of Law, Communications, Demeanor, and Diligence. Questions regarding appellate judges were divided into two categories, one for general questions and one specific to their writing (only asked of those who indicated they had experience with the judge or justice’s written opinions).

In a final question, respondents were asked if they thought whether the judge met judicial performance standards

The question wording for the core of the survey was carried over from the 2019 administration. The questions were originally developed in 1998 to meet the criteria outlined in statute 13-5.5-101 et seq.

Non-attorney respondents evaluated judges on 19 aspects of judicial performance using the same grade scale of A, B, C, D, or Fail. In a final question, respondents were asked if they thought whether the judge met judicial performance standards. The overall structure of the survey was similar to the attorney survey, but the individual rating questions were tailored to aspects that could be rated by those without specific legal experience.

### **d. Analysis and Reporting**

Letter grades were converted to a numerical score where A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1 and Fail = 0 for analysis. The results include an overall grade, a grade for each category, as well as a grade for each question. The overall score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorneys. This score will have the same numerical range as the individual questions from zero to four.

Each category score is calculated by averaging the responses to all questions answered by the attorney within each category. This score will have the same zero to four numerical range as the individual questions. Similarly, an average score is calculated for each individual question with the exception of the final question on meeting performance standards.

The overall average and category scores will be reported for each judge along with the average scores for the judge’s peers. The average score (with the exception noted above) will also be reported for each question along

with the peer group score. In addition, the report will include the distribution of responses for each question, i.e. the percentage of attorneys that assigned a rating of A, B, C, D, and F. The distribution of responses is also reported for the question on retention.

**e. Comments**

At the end of each group of questions respondents had the option of leaving comments about the judge's performance in that area. By statute, these comments are confidential and only provided to the judge and the District Commission on Judicial Performance. They are not released to the public when the rest of the report is released.



## Appendix 2: Judge Response Counts by Type of Respondent

| Respondent Type            | Total Sent | Number of Responses | Undeliverable/ Not Applicable | Completes* | Cooperation Rate |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Attorney                   | 116        | 33                  | 0                             | 27         | 82%              |
| Staff                      | 413        | 43                  | 0                             | 5          | -                |
| Others                     | 231        | 26                  | 0                             | 7          | -                |
| <b>Total Non-Attorneys</b> | 644        | 69                  | 0                             | 12         | 17%              |
| <b>Total Respondents</b>   | 760        | 102                 | 0                             | 39         | 38%              |

\*Completed surveys include respondents who said that they have sufficient experience to evaluate the judge.