

## **SUPREME COURT OF COLORADO**

### **OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE**

#### **AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CHIEF JUDGES**

##### **PART A: TRIAL COURTS**

---

<b>I.</b>	<b>Authority.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>District Management .....</b>	<b>3</b>
	A. Management Teams .....	3
	B. Budget and Organization .....	3
	C. Facilities and Equipment.....	3
	D. Delegation of Authority .....	4
	E. Chief Judge Orders on Administrative Matters .....	4
	F. Courthouse Schedule .....	4
	G. Emergency Management Planning .....	5
	H. Virtual Proceedings and Livestreaming.....	5
	I. Assignment of Personnel, Supervision, Performance Evaluations, and Disciplinary Proceedings .....	5
	J. Implementation of New Legislation, Chief Justice Directives, Court Rules, Judicial Department Policies, and MVV .....	6
<b>III.</b>	<b>Docket Assignments .....</b>	<b>6</b>
	A. Case Assignment, Case Management, and Calendaring.....	6
	B. Chief Judge Assignment of District Court Judges, County Court Judges, and Magistrates...6	
	C. County Court, including Designating a Presiding Judge .....	7
	D. Additional Presiding Judicial Officers.....	7
	E. Chief Judge Docket Reduction Expectation .....	7

F.	Judicial Officer Leave.....	7
G.	Judicial Officer Availability .....	8
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Chief Judge Council.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Communication within the Judicial Department.....</b>	<b>9</b>
A.	Communication with the Judicial District .....	9
B.	Communication with the Chief Judge Council.....	10
C.	Communication with SCAO.....	10
D.	Communication with the Chief Justice .....	10
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Community and Stakeholder Engagement.....</b>	<b>10</b>
A.	Communication with County Officials.....	10
B.	Communication with Attorneys.....	10
C.	Communication with the Public.....	10
D.	Communication with the Judicial Performance Commission.....	11
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Strategic Vision .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A.	Strategic Planning .....	11
B.	Transition Planning.....	11
C.	Service on Statewide Committees .....	11
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Professionalism.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Leadership .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Chief Judge Performance Evaluations and Complaint Procedure .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Interpretation .....</b>	<b>12</b>

**I. Authority**

The chief judge is the administrative head of all district and county courts within a judicial district, unless otherwise noted in this Directive, as delegated by the chief justice pursuant to Article VI, Section 5(4) of the Colorado Constitution. The chief judge of the Second Judicial District shall not have administrative authority over the Denver County Court. The presiding judges of the Denver Probate and Juvenile courts shall have the same authority as a chief judge for their respective courts. The chief judge of each court has the authority and responsibility to manage the court consistent with this Directive and the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) of the Judicial Department.

Every district court or county court judge within the judicial district is an independent constitutional officer responsible for making decisions in the cases before them. The chief judge has no authority under this Directive or otherwise to modify, change, or influence decisions of other judicial officers outside of the procedures contained in the constitution, court rules, statutes, or directives. For purposes of this Directive, the term “judge” includes county court judges and district court judges. The term “judicial officers” includes all judges, magistrates, and water referees.

**II. District Management**

**A. Management Teams**

To facilitate the administration of the district, the chief judge shall appoint a management team in each district. It is recommended that the management team include at a minimum, the chief judge, court executive, and chief probation officer. The chief judge has the authority to appoint presiding judges and others to the management team as appropriate considering the needs of the district and the issues to be determined.

**B. Budget and Organization**

The chief judge shall exercise oversight of the district’s budget and regularly review the budgets with the court executive and chief probation officer. The chief judge shall set clear expectations that the district’s budget be managed in accordance with fiscal policies and procedures established by the State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO).

**C. Facilities and Equipment**

The chief judge is responsible for the assignment and management of all district facilities, including, but not limited to, courtrooms, chambers, clerks’ offices, probation offices, jury rooms, office space, and public spaces of courthouses and probation offices.

The chief judge is responsible for coordinating with county authorities those aspects of facility management that affect both county and state responsibilities, including the cleanliness, safety, security, and adequacy of the court and probation facilities. Use of court and probation facilities for non-judicial functions by outside groups or agencies shall be approved by the chief judge in consultation with county authorities.

The chief judge shall work with SCAO on technology needs, coordinate with the county on any upgrades to county facilities, and communicate additional security and furnishing needs to SCAO.

**D. Delegation of Authority**

The chief judge may delegate authority to the court executive, clerk(s) of court, chief probation officer, and other judicial officers as deemed appropriate. The chief judge maintains ultimate authority and responsibility despite delegation pursuant to this Directive. Delegation should be in writing and communicate appropriate expectations and parameters for the delegation.

The chief judge may enter a written order designating an acting chief judge during any absence of the chief judge. For any absence in excess of ten consecutive business days, the chief judge shall notify the chief justice, State Court Administrator, and the Chief Judge Council of the absence and designated acting chief judge.

**E. Chief Judge Orders on Administrative Matters**

The chief judge has the authority to enter an administrative order requiring compliance with an administrative decision of the chief judge. Judges, court employees, and probation employees have a duty to comply with all directives and administrative orders of the chief judge. Noncompliance with a directive or an administrative order may result in a personnel action, a report to the Office of Judicial Performance Evaluation, a report to the Commission on Judicial Discipline, mandated training, mediation, or other actions as appropriate.

**F. Courthouse Schedule**

Temporary Reduction of Courthouse Hours

If a chief judge determines that a courthouse cannot operate regularly during the hours required by Chief Justice Directive 08-04, the chief judge may request a temporary reduction of courthouse hours. The request shall include the reason the reduction is necessary, a plan for addressing the reason for the reduction in hours, and an end date for the reduction. The chief justice must approve any temporary reduction of courthouse hours. Any reduction in hours must be posted prominently at the courthouse and on the judicial district's webpage.

Communication Regarding Weather Delays and Closures

The chief judge shall develop a communication plan for weather delays and closures. The plan should include the process for notifying judges and employees, SCAO, attorneys and litigants, and the public about weather delays, closures, and options for filing or contacting court staff during the delay or closure.

**G. Emergency Management Planning**

The chief judge shall work with county officials and SCAO to develop an emergency management plan that includes district plans for emergency response, coordination, communication, and post-event actions. The emergency management plan for the district should be distributed to judges and employees, and the chief judge should ensure that judges and employees in each court location receive regular emergency response training in coordination with the county and SCAO.

**H. Virtual Proceedings and Livestreaming**

The chief judge shall ensure that any district policies regarding virtual participation and livestreaming for court proceedings are available and updated on the district's webpage. The chief judge shall communicate such policies to judges and employees in the district and ensure that livestreaming links are easily accessible on the district's webpage. The chief judge may implement chief judge orders to clarify or expand the district's practices for virtual participation or livestreaming.

**I. Assignment of Personnel, Supervision, Performance Evaluations, and Disciplinary Proceedings**

The chief judge may assign and reassign employees to meet the needs of the district and shall keep apprised of any changes in district needs that require reassignment. The chief judge shall work with the management team to ensure that personnel records are maintained for all employees.

The chief judge is responsible for setting appropriate expectations for the court executive, the chief probation officer, magistrates, and water referees, if any, within the judicial district. The chief judge may delegate supervisory and disciplinary authority for magistrates within the district and may delegate supervisory and disciplinary authority for water referees to the water judge. The chief judge shall appropriately supervise and conduct annual performance evaluations for the court executive and chief probation officer and shall ensure consistent and effective review of magistrate and water referee performance.

The chief judge is responsible for disciplinary actions involving the court executive and chief probation officer consistent with the Judicial Department Personnel Rules. The chief judge shall

work in cooperation with the Human Resources Division and Judicial Department legal counsel in such disciplinary actions.

The chief judge shall attend trainings on human resource policies and administrative operations of the Judicial Department developed for judicial officers.

**J. Implementation of New Legislation, Chief Justice Directives, Court Rules, Judicial Department Policies, and MVV**

The chief judge shall remain informed of and implement new legislation, court rules, Chief Justice Directives, and Judicial Department policies, and shall communicate the changes to affected judges and employees in the district. The chief judge shall communicate and promote MVV and shall manage the district consistent with the MVV.

**III. Docket Assignments**

**A. Case Assignment, Case Management, and Calendaring**

The chief judge may assign and reassign cases to courts or divisions within the courts and may delegate the assignment power.

The chief judge may establish uniform case management, case processing, and calendaring procedures for all district and county courts in the district.

The chief judge shall utilize available tools, such as open case reports, age of case reports, weighted caseload studies, or other tools in determining case and judicial officer assignments.

**B. Chief Judge Assignment of District Court Judges, County Court Judges, and Magistrates**

The chief judge may assign district court judges to any district or county court within the district when necessary.

The chief justice delegates authority to the chief judge to assign qualified county court judges to any court in the district when necessary, pursuant to section 13-6-218, C.R.S.

The chief judge may assign a judge by written order to a particular court, to a division within a court, to try a specific case, or to hear or decide all or any part of a case.

The chief judge may assign district court, county court, and small claims court magistrates in accordance with the statutory authority for magistrates and the Colorado Rules for Magistrates in order to meet the needs of the district.

The chief judge may request that the chief justice assign district court judges or county court judges from another judicial district to serve in the district when it is necessary for the prompt disposition of judicial business pursuant to the Colorado Constitution, Article VI, Section 5. Requests for judge assistance from outside the district shall be submitted by the chief judge to SCAO. All requests from SCAO for judges to serve outside of their own jurisdiction shall be coordinated with the chief judge. Any requests for assistance or docket coverage from the Senior Judge Program must be made by the chief judge or the chief judge's designee.

**C. County Court, including Designating a Presiding Judge**

Pursuant to section 13-6-215, C.R.S., the chief justice has the authority to designate a presiding county court judge in each county court which has more than one county court judge. The chief justice delegates this authority to the chief judge in each judicial district. The chief judge shall designate a presiding county court judge for each eligible county in his or her district.

**D. Additional Presiding Judicial Officers**

The chief judge may appoint presiding judges and presiding magistrates over specific case types or dockets to assist with the administration and docket management of those matters. The chief judge shall communicate the presiding judges' and presiding magistrates' duties and responsibilities in making such designations.

**E. Chief Judge Docket Reduction Expectation**

To ensure the chief judge has adequate time to discharge administrative responsibilities, it is the expectation of the chief justice that chief judges assume a reduced docket consistent with the needs of the district. Taking into consideration district court weighted caseload studies, the expected docket reduction is as follows, but may vary based on the needs of the district:

<b>Total Number of Judicial Officers (not Judicial Officer FTE)</b>	<b>Docket Reduction Expectation</b>
1-4	20%
5-10	30%
11-19	40%
20-34	50%
35 or More	60%

**F. Judicial Officer Leave**

Chief judges shall manage judicial officer leave to meet district needs, promote continuity of service, ensure timely resolution of cases, and to support the health and well-being of judicial

officers, recognizing that each judicial district is unique and judicial officer leave arrangements may vary by district.

All judges shall notify the chief judge or the chief judge's designee of proposed vacation time in writing and with sufficient advance notice for the chief judge to coordinate judge leave requests to meet the needs of the district. Consistent with longer-tenured Judicial Department employees, judges should limit leave requests to no more than six weeks per year, prorated for part-time judges. The chief judge has discretion to approve leave requests in excess of six weeks when leave requests will not impact district operations. Consistent with Section II.E. of this Directive, if a judge takes in excess of six weeks of vacation without chief judge approval, the chief judge may exercise discretion to take action, including but not limited to: notifying the chief justice; notifying the Office of Judicial Performance Evaluation; filing a report with the Commission on Judicial Discipline; and shifting docket assignments.

Judges are independently responsible for the cases assigned to them, and for that reason it is necessary for all judges to arrange to have assigned matters handled by another judicial officer before taking any planned leave.

Chief judges may develop a local leave policy for judges and shall support judicial officers in addressing coverage issues so that judicial officers are able to obtain coverage for planned and unplanned leave. When appropriate, the chief judge may utilize the Senior Judge Program for planned judicial officer leave.

### **G. Judicial Officer Availability**

The chief judge shall require that there is at least one judicial officer available during all business hours who is able to address emergent or time-sensitive filings.

The chief judge shall establish an on-call and emergency schedule for judicial officers to be available and shall distribute that schedule as appropriate or make sure those that need to know have a clear procedure for emergency issues.

Part-time county court judges are required to maintain a schedule and be available at the courthouse consistent with the FTE percentage assigned to their position and subject to the needs of their dockets, unless the chief judge grants an exception to this Directive that ensures cases and dockets are managed without delays. The chief judge shall have the authority to require all part-time county court judges to submit their court schedules to the chief judge for review and approval on a daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis. Changes to the schedule may be made with the approval of the chief judge.

Full-time judges are required to maintain a full-time schedule and are expected to be available at a courthouse during the normal business hours unless the chief judge grants an exception to this Directive that ensures cases and dockets are managed without delays. Chief judges may institute local policies regarding judicial officer schedules and courthouse availability.



**IV. Chief Judge Council**

In recognition of the leadership role which chief judges play in their respective districts and in the Judicial Department, there shall be a Chief Judge Council consisting of the chief judge of each judicial district, the chief judge of the Court of Appeals, and the presiding judges of the Denver County Court, the Denver Juvenile Court, and the Denver Probate Court. The Chief Judge Council shall meet at least quarterly. Chief judges are expected to attend Chief Judge Council meetings in person unless the chairs of the Chief Judge Council approve remote participation in advance. Other judges are not permitted to attend or serve as substitutes in Chief Judge Council meetings. However, judges formally designated as acting chief judges may attend Chief Judge Council meetings. The chief justice shall consult with and consider the recommendations of the Chief Judge Council in setting priorities for the branch and in developing policies and making and implementing administrative decisions. The Chief Judge Council may elect from among them a chair and/or co-chairs as necessary to improve and maintain effective communication with the chief justice and SCAO.

**V. Communication within the Judicial Department**

A significant component of the chief judge's duties is communicating clearly and effectively within the judicial district and within the Judicial Department as a whole. The MVV emphasize open, transparent, and collaborative communication, and the chief judge should demonstrate and promote the MVV in exercising their authority.

**A. Communication with the Judicial District**

The chief judge shall endeavor to be visible, available, and communicate regularly with judges and employees within the district, recognizing that such efforts may look different depending on the size, structure, and workload in each district. The chief judge shall meet regularly with the district's management team to coordinate district operations and priorities. The chief judge should utilize in-person and electronic communications to ensure judges and employees are aware of district operations and priorities and the opportunities for judges and employees to provide input and ask questions. Chief judges are encouraged to hold periodic en banc meetings, all-staff meetings, and other opportunities for such communications.

The chief judge's communications should periodically include information on the roles and responsibilities of the chief judge, court executive, chief probation officer, and clerks of court.

The chief judge should ensure that there is a process for communicating Chief Justice Directives, Judicial Department policies, chief judge orders, processes for addressing workplace complaints, and SCAO resources available to judges and employees.

The chief judge shall promote well-being resources available to judges and employees and encourage open dialogue about the workplace.

**B. Communication with the Chief Judge Council**

The chief judge shall work collaboratively within the Chief Judge Council to address statewide issues, provide consistency on statewide issues and processes where appropriate, and to assist in guiding the work of SCAO.

**C. Communication with SCAO**

The chief judge shall ensure the district works in coordination with SCAO on matters that involve the application of Judicial Department policies, such as human resource matters, procurement, contracting and fiscal rules, records requests, and issues with the counties about facilities or security.

**D. Communication with the Chief Justice**

The chief judge shall communicate with the office of the chief justice on issues directly concerning the chief justice's delegated authority and other matters referenced in this Directive.

**VI. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

**A. Communication with County Officials**

The chief judge shall communicate and collaborate with county officials in their district, including the Board of County Commissioners, County Attorney, County Manager, and the Sheriff when appropriate to address space, security, and operational needs and policies for district operations. The chief judge shall ensure that any chief judge orders impacting the work of county officials are timely communicated to the county.

**B. Communication with Attorneys**

The chief judge is encouraged to proactively communicate with the attorney community within the judicial district, including the District Attorney's Office, local Public Defender's Office, defense bar, and other local bar associations on proposed and adopted district procedures, administrative matters outside of the adjudication of individual cases, and to promote collegiality in the practice of law. The chief judge is encouraged to conduct outreach to local access to justice committees to become aware of barriers in the district that inhibit access to justice.

**C. Communication with the Public**

The chief judge is encouraged to attend community events to educate the public on the role of the courts, district processes, and available judicial resources.

**D. Communication with the Judicial Performance Commission**

The chief judge shall respond to requests from the judicial performance commission and shall communicate with the performance commission as required by sections 13-5.5-101 to 116, C.R.S.

**VII. Strategic Vision**

**A. Strategic Planning**

The chief judge shall promote and oversee strategic planning within the district in collaboration with the management team. The strategic planning should be inclusive and transparent in developing and communicating a clear, innovative, and compelling long-term vision for the district that outlines the district's goals, values, and priorities and should incorporate and implement the MVV. Chief judges are encouraged to work with the Chief Judge Council, other judicial districts, SCAO, and others to identify opportunities for strategic planning.

**B. Transition Planning**

The chief judge should encourage thoughtful and appropriate transition planning for key positions within the judicial district. Transition planning should include: identifying essential competencies for leadership positions and other key roles; identifying and communicating available training and professional development opportunities for employees to strengthen skills in those competencies; ensuring key positions document responsibilities and develop transition materials to transfer knowledge during a transition; encouraging career planning for employees interested in advancement; and encouraging employee engagement with district and statewide committees. Transition planning should not involve pre-selection of employees for future vacancies and should be conducted consistent with the Judicial Department's Personnel Rules.

**C. Service on Statewide Committees**

The chief judge is encouraged to participate in statewide opportunities to help guide the priorities and administration of the Judicial Department, including Judicial Department initiatives, committees, training opportunities, and mentoring and coaching opportunities.

**VIII. Professionalism**

As the administrative authority in the judicial district, the chief judge is expected to demonstrate professionalism. The chief judge should interact with others professionally and with integrity, promote responsibility and accountability, encourage the constructive expression of ideas, be inclusive of differing voices and opinions, and demonstrate knowledge of the policies, procedures, and resources of the Judicial Department.

**IX. Leadership**

The chief judge shall demonstrate leadership both as a judicial officer and as the administrative authority of the judicial district. Accordingly, the chief judge shall act consistently with the MVV, model ethics and integrity, and strive to inspire respect, confidence, and trust.

The chief judge shall proactively identify problems and concerns of the district and promote a workplace culture that is inclusive, collaborative, and innovative. The chief judge and management team shall maintain appropriate demeanor and neutrality and ensure that workplace complaints are appropriately addressed.

The chief judge should promote transparency in decision making, including the process for making decisions and who has decision-making authority.

The chief judge shall remain aware of and promote well-being resources and opportunities.

The chief judge shall promote onboarding, training, and mentorship opportunities for judicial officers and serve as a resource for judicial officers throughout the performance review and/or retention process.

The chief judge shall communicate with judges and employees about leadership development and training opportunities in the district and available from external organizations.

**X. Chief Judge Performance Evaluations and Complaint Procedure**

Chief judges are reappointed by the chief justice on an annual basis. Chief judges shall be subject to performance reviews at least every three years to provide feedback to the chief judge on administrative performance and implementation of MVV. Performance evaluations shall be developed, reviewed, and refined in collaboration with the Chief Judge Council.

Complaints concerning the chief judge's administrative performance shall be addressed in writing to the chief justice.

Complaints concerning potential judicial misconduct by a chief judge must be communicated to the Office of Judicial Discipline in accordance with Chief Justice Directive 22-01 and reported in accordance with other Judicial Department rules and Directives.

**XI. Interpretation**

Any disputes arising from the exercise of the authority described in this Directive shall be resolved by the chief justice.

**PART B: COURT OF APPEALS**

---

<b>I.</b>	<b>Authority</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Management</b> .....	<b>15</b>
	A. Management Teams .....	15
	B. Budget and Organization .....	15
	C. Facilities and Equipment.....	15
	D. Delegation of Authority .....	16
	E. Chief Judge Orders on Administrative Matters .....	16
	F. Courthouse Schedule .....	16
	G. Emergency Management Planning .....	16
	H. Virtual Proceedings and Livestreaming.....	17
	I. Assignment of Personnel, Supervision, Performance Evaluations, and Disciplinary Proceedings .....	17
	J. Implementation of New Legislation, Chief Justice Directives, Court Rules, Judicial Department Policies, and MVV .....	17
<b>III.</b>	<b>Docket Assignments</b> .....	<b>18</b>
	A. Case Assignment, Case Management, and Calendaring.....	18
	B. Additional Presiding Judicial Officers.....	18
	C. Chief Judge Docket Reduction Expectation .....	18
	D. Judicial Officer Leave.....	18
	E. Judicial Officer Availability .....	19
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Chief Judge Council</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>Communication within the Judicial Department</b> .....	<b>20</b>
	A. Communication with the Court.....	20
	B. Communication with the Chief Judge Council .....	20
	C. Communication with SCAO .....	20
	D. Communication with the Chief Justice .....	20
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Community and Stakeholder Engagement</b> .....	<b>21</b>
	A. Communication with Attorneys .....	21
	B. Communication with the Public.....	21

C.	Communication with the Judicial Performance Commission.....	21
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Strategic Vision .....</b>	<b>21</b>
A.	Strategic Planning .....	21
B.	Transition Planning.....	21
C.	Service on Statewide Committees .....	22
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Professionalism.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Leadership .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b>Chief Judge Performance Evaluations and Complaint Procedure .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Interpretation .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## **I. Authority**

The chief judge of the Court of Appeals is the administrative head of the Court of Appeals, unless otherwise noted in this Directive, as delegated by the chief justice pursuant to section 13-4-105, C.R.S. The chief judge has the authority and responsibility to manage the court consistent with this Directive and the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) of the Judicial Department.

Every Court of Appeals judge is an independent officer responsible for making decisions in the cases before them. The chief judge has no authority under this Directive or otherwise to modify, change, or influence decisions of other judicial officers outside of the procedures contained in the constitution, court rules, statutes, or directives. For purposes of this Directive, the terms “judge” and “judicial officer(s)” include Court of Appeals Judges.

## **II. Management**

### **A. Management Teams**

To facilitate the administration of the court, the chief judge shall appoint an executive team. It is recommended that the executive team include at a minimum, the chief judge and the clerk of court/court executive. The chief judge has the authority to appoint a deputy chief judge, presiding judges, a chief staff attorney, a chief of staff to the chief judge, a deputy court executive, a reporter of decisions and others to the executive team and/or a management team as appropriate considering the needs of the court and the issues to be determined.

### **B. Budget and Organization**

The chief judge shall exercise oversight of the court’s budget and regularly review the budget at a minimum with the clerk of court/court executive and deputy court executive. The chief judge shall set clear expectations that the court’s budget be managed in accordance with fiscal policies and procedures established by the State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO).

### **C. Facilities and Equipment**

The chief judge is responsible for the assignment and management of all court facilities, including, but not limited to, courtrooms, chambers, clerks’ offices, and office space.

The chief judge is responsible for coordinating with SCAO on those aspects of facility management that affect state responsibilities, including the cleanliness, safety, security, and adequacy of the court facilities. Use of court facilities for non-judicial functions by outside groups or agencies shall be approved by the chief judge in consultation with the chief justice and SCAO.

The chief judge shall work with SCAO on technology needs, upgrades to court facilities, and any additional security and furnishing needs.

**D. Delegation of Authority**

The chief judge may delegate authority to the clerk of court/court executive, deputy court executive, other judicial officers, the chief staff attorney, the chief of staff to the chief judge, and the reporter of decisions as deemed appropriate. The chief judge maintains ultimate authority and responsibility despite delegation pursuant to this Directive. Delegation should be in writing and communicate appropriate expectations and parameters for the delegation.

The chief judge may enter a written order designating the deputy chief judge or an acting chief judge during any absence of the chief judge. For any absence in excess of ten consecutive business days, the chief judge shall notify the chief justice, State Court Administrator, and the Chief Judge Council of the absence and designated acting chief judge.

**E. Chief Judge Orders on Administrative Matters**

The chief judge has the authority to enter an administrative order requiring compliance with an administrative decision of the chief judge. Judges and court employees have a duty to comply with all directives and administrative orders of the chief judge. Noncompliance with a directive or an administrative order may result in a personnel action, a report to the Office of Judicial Performance Evaluation, a report to the Commission on Judicial Discipline, mandated training, mediation, or other actions as appropriate.

**F. Courthouse Schedule**

Temporary Reduction of Courthouse Hours

If the chief judge determines that the courthouse cannot operate regularly, the chief judge will work in conjunction with the chief justice on a temporary reduction of courthouse hours. The request shall include the reason the reduction is necessary, a plan for addressing the reason for the reduction in hours, and an end date for the reduction. The chief justice must approve any temporary reduction of courthouse hours. Any reduction in hours must be posted prominently at the courthouse and on the court's webpage.

Communication Regarding Weather Delays and Closures

The chief judge shall develop a communication plan for weather delays and closures. The plan should include the process for notifying judges and employees, SCAO, attorneys and litigants, and the public about weather delays, closures, and options for filing or contacting court staff during the delay or closure.

**G. Emergency Management Planning**

The chief judge shall work with Colorado State Patrol (CSP), the supreme court, and SCAO to develop an emergency management plan that includes court plans for emergency response, coordination, communication, and post-event actions. The emergency management plan for the



court should be distributed to judges and employees, and the chief judge should ensure that judges and employees receive regular emergency response training in coordination with CSP and SCAO.

#### **H. Virtual Proceedings and Livestreaming**

The chief judge shall ensure that court policies regarding virtual participation and livestreaming for court proceedings are available and updated on the court's webpage. The chief judge shall communicate such policies to judges and employees and ensure that livestreaming links are easily accessible on the court's webpage. The chief judge may implement chief judge orders to clarify or expand the court's practices for virtual participation or livestreaming.

#### **I. Assignment of Personnel, Supervision, Performance Evaluations, and Disciplinary Proceedings**

The chief judge may assign and reassign employees to meet the needs of the court and shall keep apprised of any changes in court needs that require reassignment. The chief judge shall work with the management team to ensure that personnel records are maintained for all employees.

The chief judge is responsible for setting appropriate expectations for the clerk of court/court executive, the chief staff attorney, the reporter of decisions, the chief of staff to the chief judge, and the senior judges assigned to the Court of Appeals. The chief judge shall appropriately supervise and conduct annual performance evaluations for the clerk of court/court executive, the chief staff attorney, the reporter of decisions, and the chief of staff to the chief judge. The chief judge shall appropriately evaluate and provide input on the renewal of senior judge contracts assigned to the Court of Appeals in conjunction with SCAO.

The chief judge is responsible for disciplinary actions involving the clerk of court/court executive, the chief staff attorney, the reporter of decisions, and the chief of staff to the chief judge. The chief judge shall work in cooperation with the Human Resources Division and Judicial Department legal counsel in such disciplinary actions.

The chief judge shall attend trainings on human resource policies and administrative operations of the Judicial Department developed for judicial officers.

#### **J. Implementation of New Legislation, Chief Justice Directives, Court Rules, Judicial Department Policies, and MVV**

The chief judge shall remain informed of and implement new legislation, court rules, Chief Justice Directives, and Judicial Department policies, and shall communicate the changes to affected judges and employees. The chief judge shall communicate and promote the MVV and shall manage the court consistent with the MVV.

### **III. Docket Assignments**

#### **A. Case Assignment, Case Management, and Calendaring**

The chief judge may assign and reassign cases to divisions and may delegate the assignment power.

The chief judge may establish uniform case management, case processing, and calendaring procedures.

The chief judge shall utilize available tools, such as on desk reports, age of case reports, weighted caseload studies, or other tools in determining case and judicial officer assignments and ensuring timely resolution of appeals.

#### **B. Additional Presiding Judicial Officers**

The chief judge may appoint presiding judges over specific case types or dockets to assist with the administration and docket management of those matters. The chief judge shall communicate the presiding judges' duties and responsibilities in making such designations.

#### **C. Chief Judge Docket Reduction Expectation**

To ensure the chief judge has adequate time to discharge administrative responsibilities, it is the expectation of the chief justice that the chief judge of the Court of Appeals assume a reduced docket consistent with the needs of the court. The expected docket reduction is as follows, but may vary based on the needs of the court:

<b>Total Number of Judicial Officers (not Judicial Officer FTE)</b>	<b>Docket Reduction Expectation</b>
20-34	50%
35 or More	60%

#### **D. Judicial Officer Leave**

The chief judge shall manage judicial officer leave to meet court needs, promote continuity of service, ensure timely resolution of cases, and support the health and well-being of judicial officers.

All judges shall notify the chief judge or the chief judge's designee of proposed vacation time in writing and with sufficient advance notice for the chief judge to coordinate judge leave requests to meet the needs of the court. Consistent with longer-tenured Judicial Department employees, judges should limit leave requests to no more than six weeks per year, prorated for part-time judges. The chief judge has discretion to approve leave requests in excess of six weeks when

leave requests will not impact court operations. Consistent with Section II.E. of this Directive, if a judge takes in excess of six weeks of vacation without chief judge approval, the chief judge may exercise discretion to take action, including but not limited to: notifying the chief justice; notifying the Office of Judicial Performance Evaluation; filing a report with the Commission on Judicial Discipline; and shifting docket assignments.

Judges are independently responsible for the cases assigned to them, and for that reason it is necessary for all judges to arrange to have assigned matters handled by another judicial officer before taking any planned leave.

The chief judge may develop a local leave policy for judges and shall support judicial officers in addressing coverage issues so that judicial officers are able to obtain coverage for planned and unplanned leave. When appropriate, the chief judge may utilize the Senior Judge Program for planned judicial officer leave.

#### **E. Judicial Officer Availability**

The chief judge shall require that there is at least one judicial officer available during all business hours who is able to address emergent or time-sensitive filings.

The chief judge may establish an on-call and emergency schedule for judicial officers to be available and shall distribute that schedule as appropriate or make sure those that need to know have a clear procedure for emergency issues.

Full-time judges are required to maintain a full-time schedule and are expected to be available at a courthouse during the normal business hours unless the chief judge grants an exception to this Directive that ensures cases and dockets are managed without delays. The chief judge may institute local policies regarding judicial officer schedules and courthouse availability.

#### **IV. Chief Judge Council**

In recognition of the leadership role which the chief judge plays in their respective districts and in the Judicial Department, there shall be a Chief Judge Council consisting of the chief judge of each judicial district, the chief judge of the Court of Appeals, and the presiding judges of the Denver County Court, the Denver Juvenile Court, and the Denver Probate Court. The Chief Judge Council shall meet at least quarterly. Chief judges are expected to attend Chief Judge Council meetings in person unless the chairs of the Chief Judge Council approve remote participation in advance. Other judges are not permitted to attend or serve as substitutes in Chief Judge Council meetings. However, judges formally designated as acting chief judges may attend Chief Judge Council meetings. The chief justice shall consult with and consider the recommendations of the Chief Judge Council in setting priorities for the branch and in developing policies and making and implementing administrative decisions. The Chief Judge Council may elect from among them a chair and/or co-chairs as necessary to improve and maintain effective communication with the chief justice and SCAO.

**V. Communication within the Judicial Department**

A significant component of the chief judge's duties is communicating clearly and effectively within the court and within the Judicial Department as a whole. The MVV emphasize open, transparent, and collaborative communication, and the chief judge should demonstrate and promote the MVV in exercising their authority.

**A. Communication with the Court**

The chief judge shall endeavor to be visible, be available, and communicate regularly with judges and employees within the court. The chief judge shall meet regularly with the court's management team to coordinate operations and priorities. The chief judge should utilize in-person and electronic communications to ensure judges and employees are aware of operations and priorities and the opportunities for judges and employees to provide input and ask questions. The chief judge is encouraged to hold periodic en banc meetings, all-staff meetings, and other opportunities for such communications.

The chief judge's communications should periodically include information on the roles and responsibilities of the chief judge, the clerk of court/court executive, and the chief of staff to the chief judge.

The chief judge should ensure that there is a process for communicating Chief Justice Directives, Judicial Department policies, chief judge orders, processes for addressing workplace complaints, and SCAO resources available to judges and employees.

The chief judge shall promote well-being resources available to judges and employees and encourage open dialogue about the workplace.

**B. Communication with the Chief Judge Council**

The chief judge shall work collaboratively within the Chief Judge Council to address statewide issues, provide consistency on statewide issues and processes where appropriate, and assist in guiding the work of SCAO.

**C. Communication with SCAO**

The chief judge shall ensure the court works in coordination with SCAO on matters that involve the application of Judicial Department policies, such as human resource matters, procurement, contracting and fiscal rules, records requests, and issues about facilities or security.

**D. Communication with the Chief Justice**

The chief judge shall communicate with the office of the chief justice on issues directly concerning the chief justice's delegated authority and other matters referenced in this Directive.

## **VI. Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

### **A. Communication with Attorneys**

The chief judge is encouraged to proactively communicate with the appellate bar, including the Attorney General’s Office, Appellate Public Defender’s Office, Alternate Defense Counsel, the Office of Respondent Parents’ Council, and bar associations on proposed and adopted court procedures, administrative matters outside of the adjudication of individual cases, and promotion of collegiality in the practice of law. The chief judge is encouraged to conduct outreach to local access to justice committees to become aware of barriers that inhibit access to justice.

### **B. Communication with the Public**

The chief judge is encouraged to attend community events to educate the public on the role of the courts, district processes, and available judicial resources.

### **C. Communication with the Judicial Performance Commission**

The chief judge shall respond to requests from the judicial performance commission and shall communicate with the performance commission as required by sections 13-5.5-101 to 116, C.R.S.

## **VII. Strategic Vision**

### **A. Strategic Planning**

The chief judge shall promote and oversee strategic planning within the court in collaboration with the management team. The strategic planning should be inclusive and transparent in developing and communicating a clear, innovative, and compelling long-term vision for the court that outlines the court’s goals, values, and priorities and should incorporate and implement the MVV. The chief judge is encouraged to work with the Chief Judge Council, other judicial districts, SCAO, and others to identify opportunities for strategic planning.

### **B. Transition Planning**

The chief judge should encourage thoughtful and appropriate transition planning for key positions. Transition planning should include: identifying essential competencies for leadership positions and other key roles; identifying and communicating available training and professional development opportunities for employees to strengthen skills in those competencies; ensuring key positions document responsibilities and develop transition materials to transfer knowledge during a transition; encouraging career planning for employees interested in advancement; and encouraging employee engagement with court and statewide committees. Transition planning should not involve pre-selection of employees for future vacancies and should be conducted consistent with the Judicial Department’s Personnel Rules.

**C. Service on Statewide Committees**

The chief judge is encouraged to participate in statewide opportunities to help guide the priorities and administration of the Judicial Department, including Judicial Department initiatives, committees, training opportunities, and mentoring and coaching opportunities.

**VIII. Professionalism**

As the administrative authority, the chief judge is expected to demonstrate professionalism. The chief judge should interact with others professionally and with integrity, promote responsibility and accountability, encourage the constructive expression of ideas, be inclusive of differing voices and opinions, and demonstrate knowledge of the policies, procedures, and resources of the Judicial Department.

**IX. Leadership**

The chief judge shall demonstrate leadership both as a judicial officer and as the administrative authority of the court. Accordingly, the chief judge shall act consistently with the MVV, model ethics and integrity, and strive to inspire respect, confidence, and trust.

The chief judge shall proactively identify problems and concerns of the court and promote a workplace culture that is inclusive, collaborative, and innovative. The chief judge and management team shall maintain appropriate demeanor and neutrality and ensure that workplace complaints are appropriately addressed.

The chief judge should promote transparency in decision making, including the process for making decisions and who has decision-making authority.

The chief judge shall remain aware of and promote well-being resources and opportunities.

The chief judge shall promote onboarding, training, and mentorship opportunities for judicial officers and serve as a resource for judicial officers throughout the performance review and/or retention process.

The chief judge shall communicate with judges and employees about leadership development and training opportunities in the court and available from external organizations.

**X. Chief Judge Performance Evaluations and Complaint Procedure**

The chief judge is reappointed by the chief justice on an annual basis. The chief judge shall be subject to performance reviews at least every three years to provide feedback to the chief judge on administrative performance and implementation of MVV. Performance evaluations shall be developed, reviewed, and refined in collaboration with the Chief Judge Council.

Complaints concerning the chief judge's administrative performance shall be addressed in writing to the chief justice.

Complaints concerning potential judicial misconduct by a chief judge must be communicated to the Office of Judicial Discipline in accordance with Chief Justice Directive 22-01 and reported in accordance with other Judicial Department rules and Directives.

**XI. Interpretation**

Any disputes arising from the exercise of the authority described in this Directive shall be resolved by the chief justice.

Done at Denver, Colorado this 13th day of December, 2024, effective January 1, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Monica M. Márquez, Chief Justice