



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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## Requirements for Juvenile Court Certification for District Court Judges

Whereas G.S. 7A-147(c) requires the Administrative Office of the Courts to develop a plan whereby a district court judge may be better qualified to hear juvenile cases by reason of training, experience, and demonstrated ability; and whereas the existing juvenile court certification fulfills that mandate for less experienced district court judges, and whereas more experienced district court judges should also have access to ongoing training to continue to improve their qualifications to be effective in juvenile matters; the current requirements for Certification as a Juvenile Court Judge under 7A-147(c) are amended as follows to add the opportunity for advanced certification:

### CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR JUVENILE COURT JUDGES

1. Initial Certification requires that a District Court Judge:
  - a. Has completed the core curriculum approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts and administered by the North Carolina Judicial College at the UNC School of Government. A judge must attend the entire course to receive credit. The core curriculum shall include emphasis in the following topics and may be completed in any order:
    - i. Child Development, including the impact of trauma on child development
    - ii. Substance Use Disorders
    - iii. The Law applicable to Child Abuse, Neglect, Dependency, and Termination of Parental Rights
    - iv. The Law relating to Delinquency
    - v. Introduction to Juvenile Court; and
  - b. Submits a certification from the Chief District Court Judge to the Director of the Administrative Office of the Court, that at any time after completing the first of the core courses but not later than 12 months after completing the final course, the judge has presided over:
    - i. At least 100 juvenile hearings (adjudication or disposition, termination of parental rights, or other contested juvenile matters) or
    - ii. At least 50% of all juvenile hearings in the district.

The judge may begin counting hearings after completion of one of the core courses.

2. To maintain Certification, each Certified Juvenile Court Judge must complete at least six hours of continuing judicial education in each biennium at courses administered by the North Carolina Judicial College at the UNC School of Government or at the Summer or Fall Judges' Conferences of the North Carolina Association of District Court Judges. Faculty of the North Carolina Judicial College shall designate qualified courses. These six hours may include designated courses that also are counted toward the twenty-four hours required of a Family Court Judge.

- a. No judge may claim a current certification unless this continuing education requirement has been fulfilled.
  - b. A failure to maintain this education requirement results in an automatic expiration and suspension of the certification until an equivalent of all delinquent hours have been made up.
  - c. This requirement shall commence beginning with the June 2012 Conference of District Court Judges, and the School of Government shall designate qualifying courses at the agenda for that conference and each succeeding conference thereafter.
  - d. Each certified Juvenile Court Judge is responsible for reporting compliance to the Administrative Office of the Courts.
  - e. For good cause, the Chief Justice may grant relief or alternative remedial measures for any failure to maintain this continuing judicial education requirement.
3. Following completion of initial juvenile court certification, judges may opt to obtain Advanced Certification in Child Welfare and/or Advanced Certification in Juvenile Justice. Each advanced certification requires that a District Court Judge:
- a. Has completed the core curriculum approved by the Administrative Office of the Courts and administered by the North Carolina Judicial College at the UNC School of Government. The core curriculum shall include emphasis in the following topics
    - i. Intersection of child welfare and juvenile justice with the education and mental health systems
    - ii. complex procedural issues in abuse, neglect, dependency; termination of parental rights; or juvenile delinquency proceedings, based on the applicable advanced certification
    - iii. experiential learning through practical experiences in the field
    - iv. best practices to improve outcomes for system-involved children and families; and
  - b. Submits a certification from the Chief District Court Judge to the Director of the Administrative Office of the Court, that the judge is continuing to preside over child welfare or juvenile delinquency matters, based on the applicable advanced certification.
  - c. To maintain advanced certification, the provisions of paragraph number two (2) above apply.
4. This amendment is effective as of the beginning of the new CJE biennium on July 1, 2022 and shall be applied to all future certifications. The School of Government shall designate, as has been the practice, the courses and sessions that may be credited for the purpose of maintaining the certifications.

This the day of June 9, 2022



Andrew Heath  
Director  
Administrative Office of the Courts