

Task Force on Rules and Policies for Municipal Courts

The 69th Legislative Assembly adopted HB 1032 which created the first significant reform to the procedures and governance of municipal courts since 1984.

A review of existing rules and orders is needed to determine if they should be amended or repealed. HB 1032 also gives the court explicit authority to set qualifications for clerks of court, to set initial training and ongoing education requirements, and to require annual reports from the municipal courts. Additional rules or modifications to existing rules may be needed to define the record on appeal, to set standards for making the record, or to establish timelines for events in a Fitness to Proceed action.

1. Purpose – The Task Force is convened to study the changes to the municipal court statutes and to make recommendations for any new or amended rules, policies, administrative orders or court policies necessary to meet statutory requirements or to exercise the supervisory authority of the Supreme Court. The responsibilities of the Task Force include:
 - Reviewing and making recommendations regarding N.D.Sup.Ct.Admin.R. 30 – Minimum Standards for Municipal Courts; N.D.Sup.Ct.Admin.R. 36 – Judicial Education; N.D. Sup.Ct.Admin. R.19 – Court Records Management; N.D. Sup.Ct.Admin. R.40 – Access to Recordings of Proceedings; and N.D. Sup.Ct.Admin. R.41 – Access to Court Records.
 - Drafting proposed rules, administrative orders or court policies to establish minimum qualifications and training for clerks of municipal court and deputy clerks of municipal court;
 - Drafting proposed rules, administrative orders or court policies to establish requirements for the municipal court annual report to the supreme court; and
 - Reviewing and making recommendations for any required changes to the Court Services Contract for transfer of cases to the district court.

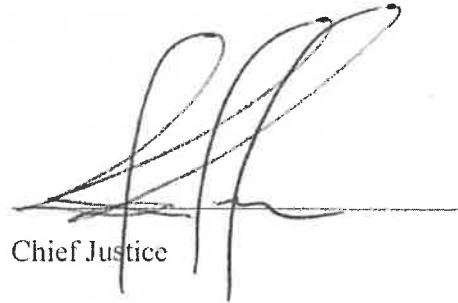
The Task Force may propose amendments to any existing rules, administrative orders, court policies or forms and propose any new orders, policies or forms it deems necessary to comply with HB 1032.

2. Report and Recommendations – The task force shall send the Chief Justice an initial report by January 31, 2026, an interim report by December 1, 2026 and a final report by June 30, 2027.
3. Membership – The individuals listed in Appendix A are appointed as member of the Task Force for a term beginning August 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2027. As needed, the chief justice may appoint additional members, appoint a replacement for a current member, or remove a member after consultation with the chair of the task force.

4. Meetings – Task Force meetings shall be scheduled at the discretion of the Chair. All meetings must comply with N.D.Sup.Ct.Admin.R. 41.1. requirements. Meeting materials must be preserved and filed with the state court administrator's office.
5. Staff – The state court administrator will provide staff for the Task Force and shall assist the Task Force in developing recommendations and preparing any necessary reports and supporting documents.
6. Expiration – The charter for this Task Force expires on June 30, 2027 unless extended by the Chief Justice.

Date: _____

7/7/25



Chief Justice

APPENDIX A - MEMBERSHIP LIST

Task force on Rules and Policies for Municipal Courts

Don Hager, Chair NECJD Presiding Judge Grand Forks, North Dakota	Trent Barkus West Fargo Municipal Court Judge West Fargo, North Dakota
Stephanie Dassinger-Engebretson North Dakota League of Cities Bismarck, North Dakota	Peter Halbach Devils Lake Municipal Court Judge Devils Lake, North Dakota
Shiloh Hanson Clerk of Court Fargo Municipal Court	Sara Behrens Staff Attorney State Court Administrator's Office Bismarck North Dakota
Rachael Mickelson Hendrickson Prosecutor, City of Dunseith Rolla, North Dakota	Catie Palsgraaf Supreme Court Law Librarian Bismarck, North Dakota

Staff: Andrew Forward, Office of the State Court Administrator