



# The Honorable Catherine J. Hoskins

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### About the Report

For the purpose of performance evaluations, justice court judges receive either a full evaluation, mid-level evaluation, or basic evaluation. A judge receives a mid-level performance evaluation if at least one of the judge's court locations has a weighted case load at least 0.2 and fewer than 50 qualified attorneys have appeared in the judge's court(s). The Mid-Level Report is based on a series of in-person court user interviews conducted by JPEC staff. In making its recommendation to voters about whether a judge should be retained, JPEC considers the Mid-Level Report resulting from the court user interviews as well as public comment, judicial discipline records, and compliance with judicial education, fitness for office, and case-under-advisement time standards. If a judge meets minimum standards, there is a legal presumption that commissioners will vote to recommend the judge be retained. If a judge fails to meet minimum standards, there is a legal presumption that commissioners will vote not to recommend the judge for retention. Included below is the Mid-Level Report.

### Content Links

[Mid-Level Report](#)

[Mid-Level Interview Method](#)

[Voter Information Pamphlet](#)

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## Mid-Level Report

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### Introduction

Judge Hoskins's report consists of 44 interviews conducted on two days outside of her courtroom. The interview sample consists of court staff, attorneys, litigants, and the family members and friends of litigants. Court staff may include clerks, bailiffs, interpreters, and service providers.

### Overall assessment

Judge Hoskins received positive reviews from nearly all respondents. Respondents found the judge to be humane and compassionate toward the needs of courtroom participants. Judge Hoskins displays fairness by striving to put courtroom participants in a position to succeed. Yet, the judge also holds those in court accountable to fulfilling their obligations. According to respondents, Judge Hoskins builds trust through her listening skills and by treating courtroom participants in an amiable manner.

### Widely agreed-upon themes

Respondents overwhelmingly found Judge Hoskins to be a kind, friendly, and helpful judge. Respondents described Judge Hoskins as "calm," "nice," "uplifting," and "compassionate." According to one attorney, the judge is "very pleasant" and "has a good rapport with the community." According to a litigant, the judge said, "I am here to help out," which comforted this person. Three subsequent litigants appreciated Judge Hoskins's respectful treatment. According to one, "she treats you like a person," while another commented, "she [treats] you like a human." The judge impressed the third by her up-front communication approach and her flexibility in dealing with court payments.

Respondents agreed that Judge Hoskins is especially sensitive to the needs of courtroom participants. One litigant noted, "She has compassion without breaking the law." In other words, "She enforces the law but tries to understand the people." A court staff member agreed, stating that Judge Hoskins is good at "balancing compassion with the rule of law." A family member/friend of a litigant stated that the judge is the "most understanding of all judges I've seen." Another, who described Judge Hoskins as "super fair," appreciated that the judge gave her husband the option to do community service instead of jail time, as the former was better for their family. A court staff member added that the judge is very fair regarding "process and rights" but is especially sensitive to "individuals." Another explained that Judge Hoskins wants people to succeed and lets them know this, which, this person believes, has led to more compliance in court.

In spite of Judge Hoskins's compassionate behavior toward those in court, a number of respondents asserted that the judge expects courtroom participants to do their part. A family member/friend found Judge Hoskins to be fair, but added, "not too lenient." A litigant echoed those sentiments, explaining that the judge is lenient only to a certain point. A court staff member indicated that while the judge is compassionate, she does not allow people to take advantage of it.

Some respondents praised Judge Hoskins for her listening skills. Numerous respondents noted that the judge "listens." A family member/friend indicated that the judge listened to people in the courtroom rather than cutting people off. One litigant said, "She listened to me and gave me time." According to another, Judge Hoskins "...listens to people" regarding the various situational needs of litigants.



## Minority Observations

Four respondents commented on Judge Hoskins's even-handed treatment of those in the courtroom. According to one person, the judge treats everyone fairly, even people who are angry. One respondent felt that her original charge was racially motivated, but Judge Hoskins put her at ease by focusing on the issue and treating the litigant in an equal manner. According to another respondent, the judge ensures that both sides in her courtroom know what to expect.

Four additional respondents commended Judge Hoskins's efforts to ensure understanding among courtroom participants. One person indicated that Judge Hoskins helps people to understand. Another noted that the judge "made sure people understood their rights." Another added, "she also dumbed things down," which was helpful to ensure understanding for all in the courtroom.

## Anomalous Comments

One respondent expressed some concern with Judge Hoskins's behavior. She said, "[the judge] was nice to me before," but [she was] "not as friendly to me today." However, this person eventually said, "Otherwise, [the judge is] fair."



## Mid-Level Interview Method

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### Purpose

Mid-level Justice Court interviews are designed to evaluate the judge according to principles of procedural fairness. These interviews are generally conducted outside of the judge's court with people who have just exited the courtroom. The interviewer typically spends two to three days at the courthouse collecting interviews.

### Data Collection

The interviewer approaches court participants who exit the courtroom to conduct brief interviews. Potential respondents may be litigants, family or friends of litigants, attorneys, witnesses, court interpreters, and/or service providers. The total number of people interviewed per judge depends on when the interviewer reaches the point of data saturation. In other words, once the interviewer obtains no new additional information concerning a judge's performance, data saturation is achieved, and the interviewer then seeks no further interviews.

The interviewer makes contact with the interviewee, identifies his/her role with JPEC, and briefly explains the purpose of the interview. Upon receiving permission to proceed, the interviewer asks the respondent the following question, "How well did the judge do today at treating everyone fairly?" The interviewer listens to and jots down the response. Where necessary, the interviewer seeks to clarify details of the response, or asks the respondent for more information. A typical follow-up question probes what the judge did or said to induce such reactions from the respondent. In other words, the interviewer seeks to gather information that focuses on the behaviors of the judge. After all of the information has been collected, the interviewer thanks the respondent and waits for the next interview. The duration of the average interview is about one minute long.

Court clerks and bailiffs are typically interviewed during breaks from the courtroom proceedings or after proceedings have finished for the day. Interviews with clerks are usually conducted in an office, or other private setting, in the courthouse. The number of clerks and bailiffs interviewed for a particular judge depends on the administrative makeup of the particular court(s).

### Data Analysis

Once the interviews are complete, the interviewer evaluates the data according to procedural fairness criteria. The interviewer analyzes interview content according to the procedural fairness principles of respect, neutrality, and voice. The results are organized into a report with four distinct overview sections:



- The Overall Assessment section serves as an overall summary of the entire set of respondent comments.
- The Widely Agreed-Upon Themes section discusses the most frequently noted and forcefully expressed themes in the data.
- The Minority Observations section addresses behaviors noted by a roughly three to five respondents. Not every behavior reported by a minority of observers is summarized here but, rather, those that reflect a notable or somewhat inconsistent perspective upon which there was not wide agreement.
- Finally, an Anomalous Comments section addresses comments of one or two observers that reflect a markedly different or contradictory perspective from all other respondents. The purpose of this section is to stimulate reflection pertaining to the relationship between behaviors, situational contexts, and respondent perceptions. Not every anomalous comment is included in this section because they are either too minor, or appear to reflect something about the respondent rather than the judge.

During the retention cycle, the commission determines if the judge receives a Pass or Fail regarding the minimum performance standard of procedural fairness. The judge's evaluation must demonstrate that it is more likely than not, based on the interview data, that the judge's conduct in court promotes procedural fairness for court participants.



# JUSTICE COURT—Mid-Level Evaluation\*

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## Honorable Catherine J. Hoskins

- Serving **Syracuse & Clinton** Municipal Justice Courts, Davis County
- Commission Recommendation: **RETAIN**
- Commission Vote Count: 12-0 (for retention)
- Performance Standards: Passed 4 of 4

Judge Catherine J. Hoskins receives positive reviews from nearly all respondents. Respondents find the judge to be humane and compassionate toward the needs of courtroom participants. They say Judge Hoskins displays fairness by striving to put courtroom participants in a position to succeed. Yet, the judge also holds those in court accountable to fulfill their obligations. According to respondents, Judge Hoskins builds trust through her listening skills and by treating courtroom participants in an amiable manner. JPEC conducts interviews with court participants about the performance of mid-level evaluation judges and completed 44 interviews about the performance of Judge Hoskins. This judge meets discipline standards set by statute and has been certified by the Judicial Council as meeting all time standards, education requirements, and mental and physical competence standards.

Judge Catherine J. Hoskins was appointed to the Syracuse Justice Court in September 2014. Judge Hoskins received an Associate's degree from Brigham Young Idaho in 1996, a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Utah in 1999, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Oregon School of Law. Judge Hoskins currently works for Hoskins Legal Solutions. Judge Hoskins has served as Davis County Bar President and as member of the Second District Nominating Committee. Currently, she is co-chair of the Second District Pro Bono Committee, a member of the Rex E. Lee Inns of the Court, a member of the Divorce Procedures Subcommittee, and a member of the Justice Court's Justice Court Trust and Confidence Committee.

\*See Judges Section Introduction for Justice Court Information

