



United States District Court
Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
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U.S. District Court selects Lisa Jensen to serve as U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division

CHICAGO, Ill.- Chief Judge Rubén Castillo announced today that the U.S. District Court selected Lisa Jensen to be the new United States Magistrate Judge for the Northern District of Illinois. Ms. Jensen will fill the newly-added Magistrate Judge position in the Western Division in Rockford, Illinois. Ms. Jensen will be the first woman to serve as a judicial officer in the Court's Western Division

"I am confident that Ms. Jensen will be an outstanding addition to our Court. Adding Ms. Jensen to our Rockford bench will provide much-needed assistance to our Court's Western Division," said Chief Judge Rubén Castillo.

Ms. Jensen earned her undergraduate degree from Illinois State University and her law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law. Beginning in 1986, she worked as an associate in the environmental law department of Sidley Austin for two years. In 1988, she went on to practice in environmental law, medical malpractice and complex commercial litigation as an associate for Lord Bissell and Brook until 1995. In 1995, she, along with a co-partner, established Di Franco and Jensen/Jensen law Office in Park Ridge, Illinois. In 2002, she and a co-partner established Faulkner & Jensen in Rockford, Illinois, where she handled the firm's federal litigation including employment discrimination cases and other civil rights matters. In 2008, she became the owner of Jensen Law Office LLC, where she currently oversees all of the firm's legal and administrative work. Ms. Jensen is also a professor at Northern Illinois University College of Law and has worked on the Prisoners' Rights Project, a project in which NIU law students represent inmates incarcerated at various correctional facilities in civil rights litigation.

On September 13, 2018, the Judicial Conference approved the addition of a new Magistrate Judge position for the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division, bringing the total number of Magistrate Judges at the Stanley J. Roszkowski U.S. Courthouse to two.

The selection of a magistrate judge is governed by statute and by regulations adopted by the Judicial Conference of the United States. The process included the work of the district's Merit Selection Panel, which screened and interviewed candidates and made a recommendation to the district judges of five applicants it found best qualified from fifty-two applicants. The Panel is statutorily required to include at least two non-lawyers and cannot include any sitting judge. The Panel was chaired by Judge P. Michael Mahoney (ret.). Members of the Panel included Carlos S. Arevalo; Judge Manuel Barbosa (ret.); Charles Box; Wendy Crouch; Earl Dotson, Jr.; Judge Lisa Fabiano; Paul Gaziano; Ifeanyi Mogbana; Justice Jack O'Malley (ret.); and Maggie Schneider.

The magistrate judge position requires a minimum of five years as a member in good standing of the bar of the highest court of a state and at least five years of active practice of law. The term of office for a magistrate judge is eight years, with the opportunity to renew the appointment for additional terms.

Magistrate judges perform a variety of duties for the court, including conducting preliminary proceedings in federal criminal cases and the trial and disposition of federal misdemeanor cases upon consent of the litigants. They conduct various pretrial matters and evidentiary proceedings upon referral from a district judge of the court and the trial and disposition of federal civil cases upon consent of the litigants.

With twenty-two authorized district judgeships, the U.S. District for the Northern District of Illinois is the third largest district court in the U.S. The Northern District of Illinois stretches across 18 counties, covering an area of nearly 10,100 square miles, with a population of 9.3 million people.

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