

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT
OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS**

**ADVISORY OPINION NO. 15
(March 28, 2022)**

**JUDICIAL PARTICIPATION IN FUNDRAISING, MEMBERSHIP SOLICITATION,
AND GRANT APPLICATIONS**

This advisory opinion addresses use of a judge's name on letterhead of organizations engaged in fundraising appeals or membership solicitation, as well as judicial involvement in applications for grants. This advisory opinion supersedes Advisory Opinion No. 8, which addressed the same issues. Advisory Opinion No. 8 was based on the 1995 version of the Code of Judicial Conduct, and the relevant Code provisions and comments were modified in 2012.

Rule 3.7(A)(2) of the Code of Judicial Conduct permits a judge to solicit contributions for organizations only from members of the judge's family or from judges over whom the judge does not exercise supervisory or appellate authority. That restriction applies to solicitations for (1) organizations concerned with the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice and (2) other educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations not conducted for profit. Similarly, Rule 3.7(A)(3) permits a judge to solicit membership for an organization even though membership dues or fees may be used to support the organization's objectives, provided that the organization is concerned with the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice.

However, Comment 4 to Rule 3.7 states, "Identification of a judge's position in educational, religious, charitable, fraternal, or civic organizations on letterhead used for fundraising or membership solicitation does not violate this Rule." As the Comment states, "The letterhead may list the judge's title or judicial office if comparable designations are used for other persons." Letterhead including a judge's name and position, even when used for fund-

raising or membership solicitation purposes, is not coercive and does not abuse the prestige of judicial office, as long as the judge is identified in the same way as other people on the letterhead.

Furthermore, Rule 3.7(A)(5) allows judges to make recommendations to a public or private fund-granting organization or entity in connection with its programs and activities, provided that the organization or entity is concerned with the law, the legal system, or the administration of justice.