Supreme Court of Texas

Misc. Docket No. 26-9084

Preliminary Approval of New Rule 22 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas

ORDERED that:

1. The Court invites public comments on proposed new Rule 22 of the Rules Governing Admission to the Bar of Texas.

2. Comments regarding the rule should be submitted in writing to rulescomments@txcourts.gov by February 1, 2027.

3. The Court will issue an order finalizing the rule after the close of the comment period. The Court may change the rule in response to public comments.

4. The Clerk is directed to:

   a. file a copy of this order with the Secretary of State;

   b. send a copy of this order to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and each elected member of the Legislature; and

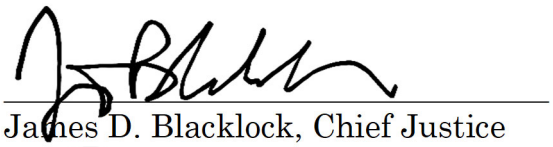
   c. submit a copy of this order for publication in the *Texas Register*.

5. The State Bar of Texas is directed to:

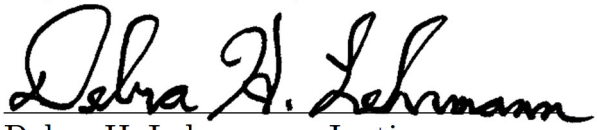
   a. cause a copy of this order to be sent to each registered member of the State Bar of Texas by email; and

   b. cause a copy of this order to be mailed to each registered member of the State Bar of Texas by publication in the *Texas Bar Journal*.

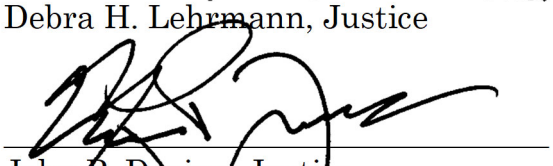
Dated: November 20, 2026.



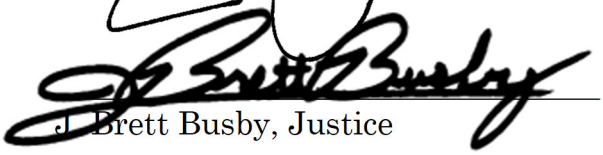
James D. Blacklock, Chief Justice



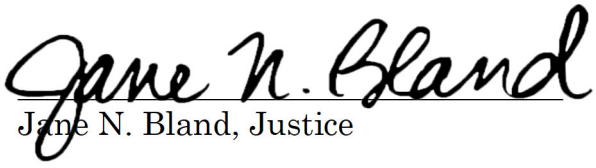
Debra H. Lehrmann, Justice



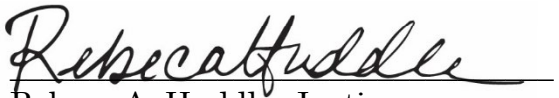
John P. Devine, Justice



J. Brett Busby, Justice



Jane N. Bland, Justice



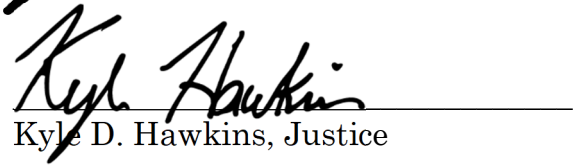
Rebeca A. Huddle, Justice



Evan A. Young, Justice



James P. Sullivan, Justice



Kyle D. Hawkins, Justice

Rule 22.
Expedited Licenses for Employees of Qualified Employers

§1 Qualified Employer Defined.
A "qualified employer" is:
(a) a district or county attorney's office in Texas;
(b) a public defender's office in Texas; or
(c) an organization that receives funds from the Texas Access to Justice Foundation.

§2 Eligibility
An Applicant is eligible for an expedited licensure process if the Applicant:
(a) is authorized to practice law in another State;
(b) meets the requirements of Rule 2 unless specifically exempted under other rules; and
(c) either:
    (1) has accepted an offer from a qualified employer for employment as an attorney and has an anticipated start date within 270 days; or
    (2) is employed by a qualified employer.

§3 Application
An Applicant seeking expedited licensure must submit to the Board:
(a) a completed Application in the form prescribed by the Board, including fingerprints and relevant information listed in Rule 6(a)(1);
(b) a certificate of good standing from the appropriate authority in each State where the Applicant is authorized to practice law that certifies:
    (1) that the Applicant is authorized to practice law in the State;
    (2) the date the Applicant became authorized to practice law in the State; and
    (3) that the Applicant remains in good standing as an attorney in the State;
(c) a certificate of disciplinary history from the appropriate authority in each State where the Applicant is or has been authorized to practice law that:
    (1) certifies that the Applicant has not been disciplined, suspended, disbarred, or resigned in lieu of discipline and that no charges of professional misconduct are pending; or
    (2) identifies any disciplinary sanctions, suspensions, disbarment, or resignation in lieu of discipline and any pending charges of professional misconduct;
(d) a certification by the Applicant's employer stating that the employer:
    (1) is a qualified employer as defined in this Rule;
    (2) either:
        (A) currently employs the Applicant, the date the employment began, and a description of the Applicant's position; or

(B) will employ the Applicant, the date the employment will begin, and a description of the Applicant's position; and

(3) will promptly notify the Board if the Applicant's employment terminates within one year after the Applicant receives a license;

(e) any other evidence or documentation that the Board may require; and

(f) the fees required by Rule 18.

§4 Preliminary Character and Fitness Determination

(a) The Board must preliminarily determine whether, on the documentation before it, the Board is satisfied that the Applicant possess the good moral character and fitness required by Rule 4 for admission to the Bar. The Board must notify the Applicant of its preliminary determination in writing within 60 days after the date the Application and fees were filed.

(b) If the Board's preliminary determination is that the Applicant has the requisite good moral character and fitness, the Board's notice must so advise the Applicant and state whether the Board intends to continue its investigation or whether its determination is final. The Board's notice must also advise the applicant of any other requirements for admission that remain to be completed. If all other requirements have been satisfactorily completed, then on the same date as its notice, the Board will certify that the applicant is eligible for admission.

(c) If the Board's preliminary determination is that the Applicant does not or potentially does not have the requisite good moral character and fitness, the notice must state:

(1) whether the Board intends to continue investigation or whether its determination is final;

(2) an analysis of the preliminary investigation;

(3) an objective list of actions, if any, that the Applicant may take to correct or clarify any deficiencies and to become eligible for admission.

(d) The Board must complete any continued investigation within 270 days after the date the Application and fees were filed.

§5 Scope of Practice and Credit for Rule 13 Practice Requirements

An attorney licensed under this rule must provide legal services only to a qualified employer and clients represented by a qualified employer for one year after receiving a license. This year of practice will be credited in advance toward the practice time requirements of Rule 13.

§6 Revocation

The Board must recommend that the Court revoke the attorney's license if:

(a) the Board continues its character and fitness investigation under Section 4(b) and determines that the attorney does not have the requisite good moral character and fitness; or

(b) the attorney received under Section 5 advance credit toward the practice time requirements of Rule 13, the attorney's employment with the qualified employer ends within one year after receiving a license, and the attorney is not employed by another qualified employer within 90 days.