

IN RE THE MATTER OF
ADMISSION TO THE BAR

FILED

MAY 28, 2021

Sheila T. Reiff
Clerk of Supreme Court
Madison, WI

You are hereby notified that the Court has issued the following interim order, which terminates and supersedes the court's order of March 25, 2020, regarding an alternative procedure for admission to the bar of this state during the Covid-19 Pandemic:

WHEREAS the Supreme Court has administrative and superintending authority over the courts and judicial system of this state and a duty to promote the efficient and effective operation of the state's judicial system, Wis. Const. Art. VII, § 3; In re Kading, 70 Wis. 2d 508, 519-20, 235 N.W.2d 409 (1976); In re Bar Admission of Rippl, 2002 WI 15, ¶3, 250 Wis. 2d 519, 639 N.W.2d 553, (court has the "ultimate responsibility for regulating admission to the Wisconsin bar"); see also Supreme Court Rule (SCR) 40.10; and

WHEREAS the number of newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 has decreased significantly as the number of vaccinated individuals has increased in Wisconsin, and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared on May 16, 2021, that "[f]ully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing;" and

WHEREAS, in light of the Court's recent experience, the Court nonetheless concludes that it is necessary to issue an interim order for a limited period of time regarding an alternative procedure for admission to the bar of this state that may warrant consideration of its continued use on a permanent basis, with the expectation that a petition for the adoption of a permanent rule addressing this procedure will be filed with and considered by the Court;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Court's order of March 25, 2020, temporarily waiving the requirement in SCR 40.02(4) to take the Attorney's oath in person before certain identified courts or individuals and allowing applicants to complete the admission process in absentia, shall terminate as of 8:00 a.m. on June 1, 2021, and the following provisions shall be in effect on an interim basis from June 1, 2021, to December 1, 2021; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Court shall resume in-person admission ceremonies, and applicants shall be notified of such ceremonies in the normal course. An applicant who participates in an in-person ceremony conducted by the Court shall comply with the existing Supreme Court Rules regarding taking the Attorney's Oath of Admission, SCR 40.02(4), enrolling with the State Bar of Wisconsin, SCR 10.03(2), and paying all necessary bar dues, assessments, and fees; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, as an alternative to participating in an in-person admission ceremony for individuals who are unable to do so, upon receipt of notification from the Board of Bar Examiners (Board) that an applicant has been certified for admission, a qualified applicant may request to take the Attorney's Oath remotely via audio-visual communications technology. The applicant shall make such a request by sending an email to the Clerk of the Supreme Court (clerk@wicourts.gov) and shall file the Certificate Address Mailing Form with the Clerk of the Supreme Court. Upon receipt of confirmation of eligibility from the Clerk of the Supreme Court, the qualified applicant may take the oath or affirmation before a justice of the Supreme Court remotely via audio-visual communications technology, provided that the justice administering the Attorney's Oath can see and hear the applicant and can identify the applicant. Upon completion of the Attorney's Oath, the justice administering the oath shall issue an order

admitting the applicant to the practice of law in this state, which order shall be filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that applicants who are admitted under the alternative procedure set forth in this order shall make arrangements with the Clerk of this Court to subscribe the roll of attorneys maintained by the Clerk or to have the applicant's name entered thereon by the Clerk; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that applicants who are admitted under the alternative procedure set forth in this order shall enroll with the State Bar of Wisconsin pursuant to SCR 10.03(2), and shall pay all applicable bar dues, assessments, and fees, or seek a waiver from the State Bar with respect to those dues, assessments, and fees, within 30 days of taking the Attorney's Oath and being admitted to the practice of law in this state, as a condition of practicing law in this state; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this interim order shall expire at 8:00 a.m. on December 1, 2021. The Court expects that during the period in which this interim order is in effect, a rule petition regarding alternative procedures for admission to the bar in this state will be filed with and considered by the Court. In addition, a copy of this order will be posted on the Wisconsin Court system website, www.wicourts.gov.