



## Ohio Revised Code

### Section 2101.11 Court records - investigators - bond.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

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(A)(1)(a) The probate judge shall have the care and custody of the files, papers, books, and records belonging to the probate court. The probate judge is authorized to perform the duties of clerk of the judge's court. The probate judge may appoint deputy clerks, court reporters, a bailiff, and any other necessary employees, each of whom shall take an oath of office before entering upon the duties of the employee's appointment and, when so qualified, may perform the duties appertaining to the office of clerk of the court.

(b) Not later than eighteen months after the effective date of this amendment, the general docket of the probate court shall be available online on the clerk of court's web site for remote access and printing by the public of the information in that docket, including all individual documents in each case file, pertaining to probate cases filed on or after the effective date of this amendment. Nothing in this division shall be construed as making available online any of the following:

- (i) Internal documents such as notes, electronic mails, drafts, recommendations, advice, or research of judicial officers and court staff;
- (ii) Any document or any information in a case file the public access to which the court has ordered restricted under the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

(2)(a) The probate judge shall provide for one or more probate court investigators to perform the duties that are established for a probate court investigator by the Revised Code or the probate judge. The probate judge may provide for an investigator in any of the following manners, as the court determines is appropriate:

- (i) By appointing a person as a full-time or part-time employee of the probate court to serve as investigator, or by designating a current full-time or part-time employee of the probate court to serve as investigator;



(ii) By contracting with a person to serve and be compensated as investigator only when needed by the probate court, as determined by the court, and by designating that person as a probate court investigator during the times when the person is performing the duties of an investigator for the court;

(iii) By entering into an agreement with another department or agency of the county, including, but not limited to, the sheriff's department or the county department of job and family services, pursuant to which an employee of the other department or agency will serve and perform the duties of investigator for the court, upon request of the probate judge, and designating that employee as a probate court investigator during the times when the person is performing the duties of an investigator for the court.

(b) Each person appointed or otherwise designated as a probate court investigator shall take an oath of office before entering upon the duties of the person's appointment. When so qualified, an investigator may perform the duties that are established for a probate court investigator by the Revised Code or the probate judge.

(c) Except as otherwise provided in this division, a probate court investigator shall hold at least a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, education, special education, or a related human services field. A probate judge may waive the education requirement of this division for a person the judge appoints or otherwise designates as a probate court investigator if the judge determines that the person has experience in family services work that is equivalent to the required education.

(d) Within one year after appointment or designation, a probate court investigator shall attend an orientation course of at least six hours, and each calendar year after the calendar year of appointment or designation, a probate court investigator shall satisfactorily complete at least six hours of continuing education.

(e) For purposes of divisions (A)(4), (B), and (C) of this section, a person designated as a probate court investigator under division (A)(2)(a)(ii) or (iii) of this section shall be considered an appointee of the probate court at any time that the person is performing the duties established under the Revised Code or by the probate judge for a probate court investigator.



(3)(a) The probate judge may provide for one or more persons to perform the duties of an assessor under sections 3107.031, 3107.032, 3107.082, 3107.09, 3107.101, and 3107.12 of the Revised Code or may enter into agreements with public children services agencies, private child placing agencies, or private noncustodial agencies under which the agency provides for one or more persons to perform the duties of an assessor. A probate judge who provides for an assessor shall do so in either of the following manners, as the judge considers appropriate:

(i) By appointing a person as a full-time or part-time employee of the probate court to serve as assessor, or by designating a current full-time or part-time employee of the probate court to serve as assessor;

(ii) By contracting with a person to serve and be compensated as assessor only when needed by the probate court, as determined by the court, and by designating that person as an assessor during the times when the person is performing the duties of an assessor for the court.

(b) Each person appointed or designated as a probate court assessor shall take an oath of office before entering on the duties of the person's appointment.

(c) A probate court assessor must meet the qualifications for an assessor established by section 3107.014 of the Revised Code.

(d) A probate court assessor shall perform additional duties, including duties of an investigator under division (A)(2) of this section, when the probate judge assigns additional duties to the assessor.

(e) For purposes of divisions (A)(4), (B), and (C) of this section, a person designated as a probate court assessor shall be considered an appointee of the probate court at any time that the person is performing assessor duties.

(4) Each appointee of the probate judge may administer oaths in all cases when necessary, in the discharge of official duties.

(B)(1)(a) Subject to the appropriation made by the board of county commissioners pursuant to this division, each appointee of a probate judge under division (A) of this section shall receive such



compensation and expenses as the judge determines and shall serve during the pleasure of the judge. The compensation of each appointee shall be paid in semimonthly installments by the county treasurer from the county treasury, upon the warrants of the county auditor, certified to by the judge.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in the Revised Code, the total compensation paid to all appointees of the probate judge in any calendar year shall not exceed the total fees earned by the probate court during the preceding calendar year, unless the board of county commissioners approves otherwise.

(2) The probate judge annually shall submit a written request for an appropriation to the board of county commissioners that shall set forth estimated administrative expenses of the court, including the salaries of appointees as determined by the judge and any other costs, fees, and expenses, including, but not limited to, those enumerated in section 5123.96 of the Revised Code, that the judge considers reasonably necessary for the operation of the court. The board shall conduct a public hearing with respect to the written request submitted by the judge and shall appropriate such sum of money each year as it determines, after conducting the public hearing and considering the written request of the judge, is reasonably necessary to meet all the administrative expenses of the court, including the salaries of appointees as determined by the judge and any other costs, fees, and expenses, including, but not limited to, the costs, fees, and expenses enumerated in section 5123.96 of the Revised Code.

If the judge considers the appropriation made by the board pursuant to this division insufficient to meet all the administrative expenses of the court, the judge shall commence an action under Chapter 2731. of the Revised Code in the court of appeals for the judicial district for a determination of the duty of the board of county commissioners to appropriate the amount of money in dispute. The court of appeals shall give priority to the action filed by the probate judge over all cases pending on its docket. The burden shall be on the probate judge to prove that the appropriation requested is reasonably necessary to meet all administrative expenses of the court. If, prior to the filing of an action under Chapter 2731. of the Revised Code or during the pendency of the action, the judge exercises the judge's contempt power in order to obtain the sum of money in dispute, the judge shall not order the imprisonment of any member of the board of county commissioners notwithstanding sections 2705.02 to 2705.06 of the Revised Code.

(C) The probate judge may require any of the judge's appointees to give bond in the sum of not less



than one thousand dollars, conditioned for the honest and faithful performance of the appointee's duties. The sureties on the bonds shall be approved in the manner provided in section 2101.03 of the Revised Code.

The judge shall not be personally liable for the default, malfeasance, or nonfeasance of any appointee.

All bonds required to be given in the probate court, on being accepted and approved by the probate judge, shall be filed in the judge's office.