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MEMORANDUM

TO: Anita M. DeCarlo, Section Staff Liaison, Illinois State Bar Association,
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FROM: Eric Lohrenz, Director of Administration, Illinois Board of Admissions to the Bar,
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DATE: December 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Requirements of Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716
(Limited Admission of House Counsel)

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716 governs the limited admission of house counsel to the practice of law in Illinois. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 706(g) governs the fees and deadlines for applications for admission under Rule 716. Rules 716 and 706(g) were both amended in June 2025, with the amendments becoming effective on January 1, 2026. The purpose of this memorandum and the attached Frequently Asked Questions (“FAQ”) is to advise the members of the Illinois State Bar Association Corporate Law Departments Section (“ISBA Section”) and the Chicago Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel (“Chicago Chapter”) regarding those amendments, and to educate those members more generally about the requirements and limitations applicable to Illinois house counsel under Rule 716. A copy of Rules 706 and 716, as amended, are also attached hereto.

This memorandum and its attachments are being sent to the specified points of contact for the ISBA Section and the Chicago Chapter. On behalf of the Illinois Board of Admissions to the Bar, I ask that you please distribute this information to your respective members.

Attachments: Frequently Asked Questions
Supreme Court Rules 706 and 716, as amended

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*
REGARDING ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT RULE 716
(LIMITED ADMISSION OF HOUSE COUNSEL)

Overview of Rule 716:

1. What is Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716?

Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716 is the rule governing limited admission of a lawyer, licensed in another United States or foreign jurisdiction, to practice law in Illinois when the lawyer is employed in Illinois as house counsel exclusively for a single corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity (as well as any parent, subsidiary or affiliate thereof), the lawful business of which consists of activities other than the practice of law or the provision of legal services.

2. Who should apply for admission under Rule 716?

The Illinois Board of Admissions to the Bar (IBAB) expects that the following categories of attorneys will apply for limited admission as house counsel under Rule 716:

- House counsel working on-site in Illinois for a legal entity physically located in Illinois
- House counsel working remotely from Illinois for a legal entity located outside of Illinois

In addition, house counsel working from outside of Illinois for a legal entity physically located in Illinois, or whose in-house practice for a legal entity otherwise has a nexus to Illinois and Illinois law, may apply for limited admission under Rule 716. For such house counsel, the decision whether to apply under Rule 716 generally will be based on their own analysis of their ethical and professional responsibilities vis-à-vis Illinois.

3. What are the requirements for limited admission as Illinois house counsel under Rule 716?

To qualify for limited admission under Rule 716, an applicant must:

- Be licensed to practice in the highest court of law in any United States state, territory, the District of Columbia, or a foreign jurisdiction, or otherwise authorized to practice in a foreign jurisdiction (see Rule 716 preamble)
- Meet the educational requirements of Rule 703, or Rule 715(c) if a foreign lawyer (see Rule 716(a))

* The answers to these Frequently Asked Questions may include summaries or paraphrasing of particular Illinois Supreme Court Rules. In case of a conflict between any of these answers and a given rule, the language of the rule itself will control.

- Meet Illinois character and fitness requirements and be certified by the Committee on Character and Fitness (see Rule 716(b); see also Rule 708)
- (If licensed to practice law for fewer than 15 years) Have passed the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, have completed the course on ethics for foreign lawyers approved by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism (see Rule 716(c))
- Be in good disciplinary standing before the highest court of every jurisdiction in which ever admitted and, at the time of application, be on active status in at least one such jurisdiction, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, must not be disbarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice in any jurisdiction by reason of discipline, resignation with charges pending, or permanent retirement (see Rule 716(d))
- Have paid the fee for limited admission of house counsel under Rule 706, including any late fees applicable upon grant of a petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period specified in Rule 716(l) (see Rule 716(e))

4. What are the authority and limitations for practice under Rule 716?

A lawyer licensed and employed as provided by Rule 716 has the authority to act on behalf of his or her employer for all purposes as if licensed in Illinois. A lawyer licensed under Rule 716 shall not offer legal services or advice to the public or in any manner hold himself or herself out to be engaged or authorized to engage in the practice of law, except such lawyer, other than a lawyer licensed under Rule 716 only on the basis of being admitted or authorized to practice in a foreign jurisdiction, may provide voluntary pro bono public services as defined in Rule 756(f). See Rule 716(g).

5. What is the duration of a limited license under Rule 716?

Assuming the lawyer complies with the annual registration and MCLE requirements, and otherwise remains in good standing, a limited license under Rule 716 remains in effect as long as the lawyer continues to be employed as house counsel for the employer listed on his or her initial application for licensure under Rule 716. Further, the lawyer may maintain the Rule 716 license under a different employer by filing certain documentation with Clerk of the Supreme Court and otherwise complying with the requirements of Rule 716(h)(2). See FAQ #12 below for additional information.

Otherwise, the license and authorization to perform legal services under Rule 716 terminates upon the earliest of the following events:

- The lawyer is admitted to the general practice of law under any other Supreme Court Rule.
- The lawyer is suspended or disbarred from practice in any jurisdiction or any court or agency before which the lawyer is admitted.

- The lawyer fails to maintain active status in at least one jurisdiction, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, has been disbarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice in any jurisdiction by reason of discipline, resignation with charges pending, or permanent retirement.

See Rule 716(h).

Applying for Admission Under Rule 716:

6. Where can I find the application for admission under Rule 716?

Please see the [Information and Applications page for Rule 716](#) on the IBAB [website](#).

7. What are the application requirements for Rule 716?

Applying for limited admission of house counsel is a two-step process. The first step involves the completion and electronic filing of the Application for Limited Admission of House Counsel form, the full Character & Fitness Questionnaire, and the Illinois State Police Criminal History form, all of which are available on the IBAB [website](#). The second step involves the printing of additional paper forms, completion of those forms by the applicant, the applicant's employer, and the applicant's law school, gathering additionally required external documents, and filing these forms and documents with the Board. For further details, see Rule 716(f) and the [Rule 716 Instructions](#).

8. What information is my employer required to provide?

The applicant's employer must provide a duly authorized and executed certification, on a form specified by IBAB, stating that:

- A.** The employer is not engaged in the practice of law or the rendering of legal services, whether for a fee or otherwise;
- B.** The employer is duly qualified to do business under the laws of its organization and the laws of Illinois;
- C.** The applicant works exclusively as an employee of said employer for the purpose of providing legal services to the employer at the date of his or her application for licensure; and
- D.** The employer will promptly notify the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the termination of the applicant's employment.

See Rule 716(f)(2).

Deadlines and Fees:

9. What is the deadline for an application for admission under Rule 716?

There is no absolute application deadline, but waiting beyond 90 days to apply for admission under Rule 716 may have significant adverse consequences. Pursuant to Rule 716(l), a lawyer who is newly employed as house counsel in Illinois shall not be deemed to have engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in Illinois prior to licensure under Rule 716 if application for the license is made within 90 days of the commencement of such employment.

NOTE: For purposes of Rule 716(l), the “application for the license” is considered to have been made when the applicant completes and electronically files the Application for Limited Admission of House Counsel form, the full Character & Fitness Questionnaire, and the Illinois State Police Criminal History form, and then pays the applicable fee under Rule 706(g). An application is not considered submitted until IBAB receives the required fee. (See FAQ #11 below for additional information regarding fees.)

10. What are the consequences if I miss the application deadline?

Pursuant to the 2025 amendments to Rule 716, effective January 1, 2026, the 90-day period for submitting an application may be extended upon grant of a petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period and payment of all associated fees and late fees as required by Rule 706, provided, however, that the Committee on Character and Fitness may consider:

- (1) the extent of any delay in filing an application under Rule 716;
- (2) the reason for such delay; and
- (3) any impact associated with the delay

as part of the determination whether an applicant possesses good moral character and general fitness for the practice of law pursuant to Rule 708 and the Rules of Procedure for the Board of Admissions to the Bar and the Committee on Character and Fitness. See Rule 716(l). For additional information on late fees, see Rule 706(g) and FAQ #11 below.

11. What are the fee requirements for an application for admission under Rule 716?

Each applicant for limited admission to the bar as house counsel under Rule 716 shall pay a fee of \$1500. See Rule 706(g).

Effective January 1, 2026, for applications submitted more than 90 days after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, after submitting the application, the applicant must petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period specified in Rule 716(l). If said petition is granted, the following late fees shall apply, in addition to the \$1500 application fee, unless the Court imposes a lesser late fee for good cause shown:

- (1) For applications submitted between 91 days and one year after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, the applicant shall pay an additional \$1500 late fee.
- (2) For applications submitted more than one year after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, the late fee shall be an additional \$1500 as specified in the preceding subparagraph (1) for the first year, plus an additional \$500 for each additional year or part thereof.

See Rule 706(g), as amended effective January 1, 2026.

Changing Employers Under Rule 716:

12. I was licensed under Rule 716 for one employer, but I will be taking a new job as Illinois house counsel with a different employer. What should I do?

Ordinarily, a lawyer's limited license under Rule 716 terminates when the lawyer ceases to be employed as house counsel for the employer listed on his or her initial application for Rule 716 licensure. However, if such lawyer, within 120 days of ceasing to be so employed, becomes employed by another employer and such employment meets all requirements of Rule 716, then his or her license shall remain in effect, so long as the following documents are filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court within said 120-day period:

- (A) written notification by the lawyer stating the date on which the prior employment terminated, identification of the new employer and the date on which the new employment commenced;
- (B) certification by the former employer that the termination of the employment was not based upon the lawyers character and fitness or failure to comply with this rule; and
- (C) the certification specified in Rule 716(f)(2) duly executed by the new employer.

Note, however, that if the lawyer's employment ceases with no subsequent employment within 120 days, the lawyer must promptly notify the Clerk of the Supreme Court in writing of the date of termination of the employment, and shall not be authorized to represent any single corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity (or any parent, subsidiary or affiliate thereof).

See Rule 716(h)(2).

Other Supreme Court Rules:

13. Does Rule 5.5(d)(1) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) authorize my practice as house counsel in Illinois?

RPC 5.5(d) provides in part as follows:

(d) A lawyer admitted in another United States jurisdiction or admitted or otherwise authorized to practice in a foreign jurisdiction, and not disbarred or suspended from practice in any jurisdiction or the equivalent thereof, may provide legal services through an office or other systematic and continuous presence in this jurisdiction that:

(1) are provided to the lawyer's employer or its organizational affiliates and are not services for which the forum requires pro hac vice admission....

Importantly, Comment [17] to RPC 5.5 states that:

If an employed lawyer establishes an office or other systematic presence in this jurisdiction for the purpose of rendering legal services to the employer, the lawyer may be subject to registration or other requirements, including assessments for client protection funds and mandatory continuing legal education. See Illinois Supreme Court Rules 706(f), (g), 716, and 717 concerning requirements for house counsel and legal service program lawyers admitted to practice in other jurisdictions who wish to practice in Illinois.

Comment [17] thus makes clear that the authority to practice under RPC 5.5(d)(1) is conditioned on compliance with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716, to the extent applicable.

14. As an out-of-state attorney employed (or to be employed) by an Illinois legal entity, do I have other options for seeking admission to the Illinois bar?

Yes. Illinois Supreme Court Rules 704A (Admission by Transferred Uniform Bar Examination Score) and 705 (Admission on Motion) are the most common pathways for attorneys from other jurisdictions to become generally licensed in Illinois without taking the Illinois bar examination.

Rule 704A generally applies to applicants who attained a passing score on an administration of the Uniform Bar Examination given in another jurisdiction within the last four years. Rule 705 generally applies to applicants licensed in one or more other jurisdictions who meet the various requirements of Rule 705, including that, for at least three of the five years immediately preceding the application, the applicant must have been engaged in the active, continuous, and lawful practice of law. For further information, see Rules 704A and 705, and the IBAB [website](#).



Rule 706. Filing Deadlines and Fees of Registrants and Applicants

(a) Character and Fitness Registration. Character and fitness registration applications filed with applications to take the bar examination shall be accompanied by a registration fee of \$550.

(b) Applications to Take the Bar Examination. The fees and deadlines for filing applications to take the February bar examination are as follows:

- (1) \$650 for applications submitted on or before the regular filing deadline of September 15 preceding the examination;
- (2) \$925 for applications submitted after September 15 but on or before the late filing deadline of November 1; and
- (3) \$1325 for applications submitted after November 1 but on or before the final late filing deadline of November 30.

The fees and deadlines for filing applications to take the July bar examination are as follows:

- (1) \$650 for applications submitted on or before the regular filing deadline of February 15 preceding the examination;
- (2) \$925 for applications submitted after February 15 but on or before the late filing deadline of April 1; and
- (3) \$1325 for applications submitted after April 1 but on or before the final late filing deadline of April 30.

(c) Applications for Reexamination. The fees and deadlines for filing applications for reexamination at a February bar examination are as follows:

- (1) \$650 for applications submitted on or before the regular reexamination filing deadline of November 1;
- (2) \$1125 for applications submitted after November 1 but on or before the final late filing deadline of November 30.

The fee and deadline for filing applications for reexamination at a July bar examination are \$650 for applications submitted on or before April 30.

(d) Late Applications. The Board of Admissions to the Bar shall not consider requests for late filing of applications after the final bar examination filing deadlines set forth in the preceding subparagraphs (b) and (c).

(e) Applications for Admission on Motion under Rule 705. Each applicant for admission to the bar on motion under Rule 705 shall pay a total fee of \$1500, comprising a fee of \$150 upon submission of an applicant's Preliminary Questionnaire on the form prescribed by the Board of Admissions to the Bar for preliminary evaluation of whether an applicant is qualified to apply for admission under Rule 705 and a fee of \$1350 due upon submission of an application for admission under Rule 705. An applicant whose Preliminary Questionnaire does not establish that the applicant is qualified to apply for admission under Rule 705 shall submit a new Preliminary Questionnaire upon reapplication for admission under Rule 705 and pay an additional \$150 fee.

(f) Applications for Admission by Transferred Uniform Bar Examination Score Under Rule 704A. Each applicant for admission to the bar by transferred UBE score under Rule 704A shall pay a fee of \$1500.

(g) Application for Limited Admission as House Counsel. Each applicant for limited admission to the bar as house counsel under Rule 716 shall pay a fee of \$1500. For applications submitted more than 90 days after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, after submitting the application, the applicant must petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period specified in Rule 716(I). If said petition is granted, the following late fees shall apply, in addition to the \$1500 application fee, unless the Court imposes a lesser late fee for good cause shown:

(1) For applications submitted between 91 days and one year after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, the applicant shall pay an additional \$1500 late fee.

(2) For applications submitted more than one year after the commencement of employment as house counsel in Illinois, the late fee shall be an additional \$1500 as specified in the preceding subparagraph (g)(1) for the first year, plus an additional \$500 for each additional year or part thereof.

(h) Application for Limited Admission as a Lawyer for Legal Service Programs. Each applicant for limited admission to the bar as a lawyer for legal service programs under Rule 717 shall pay a fee of \$100.

(i) Recertification Fee. Each applicant for Character and Fitness recertification shall pay a fee of \$450.

(j) Miscellaneous Fees. Each applicant shall pay a fee of \$25 per request for the following documents and/or services:

(1) For applicants who are unsuccessful in passing a particular administration of the bar examination, provision of a copy of the applicant's essay answers for that administration of the bar examination and a set of sample passing answers;

(2) Provision to the applicant of a copy of the applicant's application for admission to the bar under any of these Rules or any documents associated with that application;

(3) Transferring an applicant's score on the Multistate Bar Examination or Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination to another jurisdiction; or

(4) Provision of a letter to another jurisdiction or other third party, stating that an applicant has passed a particular administration of the bar examination in Illinois.

(k) Payment of Fees. All fees are nonrefundable and shall be paid in advance by credit or debit card, certified check, cashier's check, or money order payable to the Board of Admissions to the Bar. Payments by credit card shall be subject to a convenience fee commensurate with the fees charged to the Board for the processing of such credit card payments. Fees of an applicant who does not appear for an examination shall not be transferred to a succeeding examination.

(l) Fees to be Held by Treasurer. All fees paid to the Board of Admissions to the Bar shall be held by the Board treasurer, subject to the order of the Court.

Amended January 30, 1975, effective March 1, 1975; amended October 1, 1982, effective October 1, 1982; amended June 12, 1992, effective July 1, 1992; amended July 1, 1998, effective immediately;

amended July 6, 2000, effective August 1, 2000; amended December 6, 2001, effective immediately; amended February 11, 2004, effective July 1, 2004; amended October 1, 2010, effective January 1, 2011; amended January 10, 2012, effective immediately; amended Nov. 26, 2013, effective Jan. 1, 2014; amended February 10, 2014, effective immediately; amended May 26, 2016, effective July 1, 2016; amended June 22, 2017, eff. July 1, 2017; amended June 8, 2018, eff. Jan. 1, 2019; amended Dec. 22, 2022, eff. Jan. 1, 2023; amended Jan. 26, 2023, eff. immediately; amended May 29, 2025, eff. immediately; amended June 6, 2025, eff. Jan. 1, 2026; corrected Sept. 24, 2025, eff. Jan. 1, 2026.



Rule 716. Limited Admission Of House Counsel

A person who, as determined by the Board of Admissions to the Bar, has been licensed to practice in the highest court of law in any United States state, territory, the District of Columbia, or a foreign jurisdiction, or is otherwise authorized to practice in a foreign jurisdiction, may receive a limited license to practice law in this state when the lawyer is employed in Illinois as house counsel exclusively for a single corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity (as well as any parent, subsidiary or affiliate thereof), the lawful business of which consists of activities other than the practice of law or the provision of legal services upon the following conditions:

(a) The applicant meets the educational requirements of Rule 703 or Rule 715(c) if a foreign lawyer;

(b) The applicant meets Illinois character and fitness requirements and has been certified by the Committee on Character and Fitness;

(c) The applicant licensed to practice law for fewer than 15 years has passed the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam in Illinois or in any jurisdiction in which it was administered, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, has completed the course on ethics for foreign lawyers approved by the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Professionalism;

(d) The applicant is in good disciplinary standing before the highest court of every jurisdiction in which ever admitted and is at the time of application on active status in at least one such jurisdiction, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, is not disbarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice in any jurisdiction by reason of discipline, resignation with charges pending, or permanent retirement;

(e) The applicant has paid the fee for limited admission of house counsel under Rule 706, including any late fees applicable upon grant of a petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period specified in Rule 716(l).

(f) Application requirements. To apply for the limited license, the applicant must file with the Board of Admissions to the Bar the following:

(1) A completed application for the limited license in the form prescribed by the Board;

(2) A duly authorized and executed certification by applicant's employer that:

(A) The employer is not engaged in the practice of law or the rendering of legal services, whether for a fee or otherwise;

(B) The employer is duly qualified to do business under the laws of its organization and the laws of Illinois;

(C) The applicant works exclusively as an employee of said employer for the purpose of providing legal services to the employer at the date of his or her application for licensure; and

(D) The employer will promptly notify the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the termination of the applicant's employment.

(3) Such other affidavits, proofs and documents as may be prescribed by the Board.

(g) Authority and Limitations. A lawyer licensed and employed as provided by this Rule has the authority to act on behalf of his or her employer for all purposes as if licensed in Illinois. A lawyer licensed under this rule shall not offer legal services or advice to the public or in any manner hold himself or herself out to be engaged or authorized to engage in the practice of law, except such lawyer, other than a lawyer licensed under this rule only on the basis of being admitted or authorized to practice in a foreign jurisdiction, may provide voluntary *pro bono* public services as defined in Rule 756(f).

(h) Duration and Termination of License. The license and authorization to perform legal services under this rule shall terminate upon the earliest of the following events:

(1) The lawyer is admitted to the general practice of law under any other rule of this Court.

(2) The lawyer ceases to be employed as house counsel for the employer listed on his or her initial application for licensure under this rule; provided, however, that if such lawyer, within 120 days of ceasing to be so employed, becomes employed by another employer and such employment meets all requirements of this Rule, his or her license shall remain in effect, if within said 120-day period there is filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court: (A) written notification by the lawyer stating the date on which the prior employment terminated, identification of the new employer and the date on which the new employment commenced; (B) certification by the former employer that the termination of the employment was not based upon the lawyers character and fitness or failure to comply with this rule; and (C) the certification specified in subparagraph (f)(2) of this rule duly executed by the new employer. If the employment of the lawyer shall cease with no subsequent employment within 120 days thereafter, the lawyer shall promptly notify the Clerk of the Supreme Court in writing of the date of termination of the employment, and shall not be authorized to represent any single corporation, partnership, association or other legal entity (or any parent, subsidiary or affiliate thereof).

(3) The lawyer is suspended or disbarred from practice in any jurisdiction or any court or agency before which the lawyer is admitted.

(4) The lawyer fails to maintain active status in at least one jurisdiction, or, in the case of a lawyer who has been admitted or otherwise authorized to practice only in a foreign jurisdiction, has been disbarred, suspended, or otherwise prohibited from practice in any jurisdiction by reason of discipline, resignation with charges pending, or permanent retirement.

(i) Annual Registration and MCLE. Beginning with the year in which a limited license to practice law under this rule is granted and continuing for each subsequent year in which house counsel continues to practice law in Illinois under the limited license, house counsel must register with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission and pay the fee for active lawyers set forth in Rule 756 and fully comply with all MCLE requirements for active lawyers set forth in Rule 790 *et seq.*

(j) Discipline. A lawyer licensed under this rule shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Court for disciplinary purposes to the same extent as all other lawyers licensed to practice law in this state.

(k) Credit toward Admission on Motion. The period of time a lawyer practices law while licensed under this rule may be counted toward eligibility for admission on motion, provided all other requirements of Rule 705 are met.

(l) Newly Employed House Counsel. A lawyer who is newly employed as house counsel in Illinois shall not be deemed to have engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in Illinois prior to licensure under this rule if application for the license is made within 90 days of the commencement of such employment. This 90-day period may be extended upon grant of a petition to the Supreme Court for waiver of the 90-day period and payment of all associated fees and late fees as required by Rule 706, provided, however, that the Committee on Character and Fitness may consider:

(1) the extent of any delay in filing an application under this Rule;

(2) the reason for such delay; and

(3) any impact associated with the delay

as part of the determination whether an applicant possesses good moral character and general fitness for the practice of law pursuant to Rule 708 and the Rules of Procedure for the Board of Admissions to the Bar and the Committee on Character and Fitness.

Adopted February 11, 2004, effective July 1, 2004; amended March 26, 2008, effective July 1, 2008; amended October 1, 2010, effective January 1, 2011; amended December 9, 2011, effective July 1, 2012; amended Apr. 8, 2013, effective immediately; amended Nov. 26, 2013, effective immediately; amended Oct. 15, 2015, eff. Jan. 1, 2016; amended June 6, 2025, eff. Jan. 1, 2026.