



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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Public Defender Vacancy Announcement

The Alaska Judicial Council is now receiving applications for the position of Alaska Public Defender due to the end of present Public Defender Samantha Cherot's four-year term effective September 2023. Interested persons may obtain an application form by calling the Judicial Council office or online at the Council's website (www.ajc.state.ak.us). **The Judicial Council must have completed applications for the Public Defender position in its office by 3:00 p.m. on May 5, 2023.**

Alaska Statute 18.85.030 requires the Alaska Judicial Council to nominate two or more applicants for the Alaska Public Defender position. The governor appoints the Public Defender from the list of nominees. The governor's appointment is subject to confirmation by the Alaska Legislature. The Public Defender serves a four-year term and may be reappointed for another term by the governor without re-nomination by the Council. Any re-appointment is subject to confirmation by the Legislature. During his or her term, the Public Defender may be removed only for cause by the governor, who must report the reason for removal to the Legislature.

The Alaska Judicial Council has established bylaws to fulfill this duty given to it by the Legislature. The Council's bylaws require the same process and standards for selecting nominees for the Public Defender as the Council uses for judicial selection. Council bylaws may be found at <http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/about/bylaws.html>.

Applications are reviewed by the Alaska Judicial Council, a seven member citizens' commission with three attorneys, three non-attorneys, and the chief justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who serves as Chair, *ex officio*. Each applicant completes a detailed questionnaire covering all aspects of the applicant's personal and professional history. Applicants also submit a legal writing sample and references.

Following the application closing date, the Council conducts a comprehensive investigation of the applicants. The Council asks the public for comments; reviews criminal and credit records; examines any litigation involving the applicants; looks at bar or judicial disciplinary records; sends out requests for more detailed information to attorneys and judges in recent cases handled by the applicants; checks references supplied by the applicants; contacts all former employers; surveys Alaska Bar Association members about legal skills, integrity and other qualities; and does any other needed investigation.

Council members will meet in August 2023, to conduct a public hearing and to interview the applicants for the vacancy.

At the end of the interviews, the Council deliberates in executive session. The Council then takes a public vote to nominate at least two of the most qualified applicants for the position. The Council votes on which applicants are the most qualified based upon consideration of the applicant's professional competence, including written and oral communication skills; diligence and administrative skills; integrity; fairness; temperament; judgment, including common sense; legal and life experience; demonstrated commitment to public and community service, and demonstrated commitment to equal justice and the legal needs of the diverse communities of Alaska.

Persons interested in applying for this position may obtain more information from the Judicial Council at 510 L Street, Suite 450, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1295, (907) 279-2526.

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