



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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Judicial Vacancy Announcements

Palmer and Bethel District Courts

The Alaska Judicial Council is now receiving applications for positions on the Palmer and Bethel District Courts. The Palmer District Court position is due to the appointment of Judge Amanda L. Browning to the Sitka Superior Court, and the Bethel District Court position is due to the appointment of Judge William T. Montgomery to the Bethel Superior Court. 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 these positions in its office by 3:00 p.m. on April 26, 2024.**

Alaska judges must conform their conduct to the Alaska Code of Judicial Conduct and the laws of Alaska and the United States. They must be familiar with Alaska law, procedure, and trial practice.

A district court judge must be a citizen of the United States and the state of Alaska, at least 21 years of age, a resident of Alaska for at least five years immediately preceding appointment, and either (1) have been engaged in the active practice of law for not less than three years immediately preceding appointment and at the time of appointment licensed to practice law in Alaska, or (2) have served for at least seven years as a magistrate in the state. A magistrate who seeks an appointment as a district court judge must also be a graduate of a

law school accredited or approved by the Council of Legal Education of the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools.

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 2024 to conduct public hearings and to interview the applicants for the vacancies.

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 each vacancy. The Council votes on which applicants are the most qualified based upon consideration of the applicant's professional competence, diligence and administrative skills, integrity, fairness, temperament, judgment, 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. The governor then has 45 days in which to appoint judges from the Council's list of nominees.

Persons interested in applying for a 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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