Judicial Position Description
Alaska Supreme Court

Five justices sit on the Alaska Supreme Court. The Alaska Supreme Court has
final appellate jurisdiction in all Alaska state court proceedings. The supreme court hears
civil appeals, including administrative appeals from the superior court, as a matter of
right and criminal appeals from the Alaska Court of Appeals upon grant of petition. The
court hears judicial discipline appeals from the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct
and attorney application and discipline cases from the Alaska Bar Association. The court
may, upon its discretion, decide questions of state law certified from the federal courts.
The court also promulgates the Alaska Rules of Court and administers the Alaska Court
System. According to the Alaska Court System’s fiscal year 2018 annual report, 382
cases were filed in the Alaska Supreme Court, including 193 civil appeals, 109 petitions
for hearing, 61 petitions for review, and 19 bar/original applications.

Each supreme court justice is assisted by and is responsible for the supervision of
three law clerks and a judicial assistant. The supreme court hears cases monthly in
Anchorage, and other times as needed in Fairbanks and Juneau. The principal office of
the supreme court is in Anchorage. A supreme court justice may maintain an office at a
place other than the principal office as designated by order of the court or of the chief
justice. Justices residing in a location other than Anchorage must be prepared to travel
frequently to Anchorage for oral arguments and court meetings. Justices residing in
Anchorage regularly travel to hear cases in Juneau and Fairbanks. Justices may travel to
other communities to hear cases or for other purposes. Justices may be assigned to other
courts as needed. Justices are expected to lead court committees and/or task forces, as
appointed by the chief justice.

Supreme court justices must have excellent communication skills, both oral and
written. They must be capable of a very high level of analytical reasoning. They must
possess unimpaired judgment at all times. They must thoroughly evaluate briefs, motions,
and arguments and render decisions in a timely and even-handed manner. Justices must
treat colleagues, parties, attorneys, employees, and the public with fairness, courtesy, and
respect. They must work effectively under pressure. Justices must be familiar with Alaska
law, procedure, and precedent. Justices must conform their conduct to the Code of
Judicial Conduct and to the laws of the State of Alaska and the United States. Justices
often must sit (or stand) at a desk or bench for prolonged periods of time.

Supreme court justices stand for retention at the first general election more than
three years after initial appointment and every ten years thereafter. The annual salary of a
supreme court justice is $205,179.