



alaska judicial council

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January 3, 2025

RE: **District and Superior Court Vacancies**

Dear Member of the Alaska Bar Association:

The Alaska Judicial Council is soliciting applications for the **Anchorage Superior Court, and Bethel District Court**. This letter includes detailed position descriptions containing essential information about the positions. Applicants may apply for any of the positions, or multiple positions on the same form, if desired. For more information, please contact the Alaska Judicial Council at 279-2526, or by e-mail at sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us.

The legal qualifications and annual salaries of judges on these courts are listed in the attached position descriptions. Judges also receive personal leave as established by the Administrative Rules of Court, state-paid health and dental benefits, and judicial retirement system benefits.

An application form for these positions may be obtained by writing or calling the Alaska Judicial Council. Application forms may also be obtained on-line by visiting the Council's website: www.ajc.state.ak.us. The form was recently updated, so please make sure you include all questions if you previously applied and are using a saved application.

Completed applications for all positions must be received by the Alaska Judicial Council no later than 3:00 p.m. on February 7, 2025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susanne DiPietro".

Susanne DiPietro
Executive Director

Encl: Judicial Position Descriptions

To ensure receipt of the survey on the applicants for these positions, be sure that the email address you have on file with the Alaska Bar Association is current. To prevent survey emails from being diverted as spam, add ajc@gmailserver.com as a safe sender in your email account.

Judicial Position Description

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. To be successful, a judge must be proficient in understanding oral and written communications, and must effectively communicate orally and in writing with parties, attorneys, members of the public, and court employees. They must be familiar with Alaska law, procedure, and trial practice. Judges must regularly employ a high level of analytical legal reasoning, must possess unimpaired judgment, and must be able to concentrate on and evaluate evidence and legal arguments. Judges must be willing and able to render timely and impartial decisions, without regard for popular sentiment. They must treat parties, attorneys, the public, and court employees with fairness, courtesy, and respect, and they must work effectively under pressure. In addition to presiding over cases, Alaska judges are expected to serve on court committees working to improve the administration of justice in the state. Alaska judges must conform their conduct to the Alaska Code of Judicial Conduct and the laws of Alaska and the United States.

The working environment is a courtroom and office setting. Alaska judges typically sit in court or in chambers for long periods of time, but sitting is not an essential requirement of the job; some judges prefer to stand or make comparable adjustments for their individual needs. Judges may be required to travel, including travel to rural areas, often by small airplane. They may be temporarily reassigned to different court locations within the state. Judges may share weekend duty with other judicial officers and are expected to work closely with court clerks.

Judicial salaries vary depending on level of court and location. In addition to salary, judges receive personal leave as established by the Administrative Rules of Court, state-paid health and dental benefits, and judicial retirement system benefits.

Superior Court Judge

Superior court judges must meet the qualifications set out at AS 22.10.090. They must be familiar with Alaska law, procedure, and trial practice. Alaska judges must conform their conduct to the Alaska Code of Judicial Conduct and the laws of Alaska and the United States. Superior court judges stand for retention at the first general election held more than three years after their appointment and every six years thereafter. Further information regarding the jurisdiction, authority, and duties of superior court judges may be found at AS 22.10.

Anchorage Superior Court, Third Judicial District

A superior court position is impending in Anchorage due to the forthcoming retirement of Judge Kevin M. Saxby. Anchorage has seventeen superior court judges who preside over a general jurisdiction trial court in the Third Judicial District. According to the Alaska Court System's *Statistical Report FY 2023*¹, 9,741 cases were filed in the Anchorage Superior Court, including 2,972 felony cases, 736 child-in-need-of-aid matters, 223 delinquency matters, 1,539 domestic relations matters, 1,187 general civil matters, and 3,084 probate matters. Anchorage Superior Court judges hear both criminal and civil matters but are assigned to, and rotate between, a primarily criminal or civil calendar. They are expected to travel to rural communities as needed. The annual salary of an Anchorage Superior Court judge is \$216,236.

District Court Judge

District court judges must meet the qualifications set out at AS 22.15.160. They must: be a citizen of the United States and of the State of Alaska; be at least 21 years of age; be a resident of Alaska for at least five years immediately preceding appointment; and either (1) have engaged in the active practice of law, as defined in AS 22.05.070, for not less than three years immediately preceding appointment and be licensed to practice law in Alaska at the time of appointment, or (2) have served for at least seven years as a magistrate in the state. In addition, Administrative Rule 19.1 requires that a magistrate who seeks appointment as a district court judge 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. District court judges stand for retention at the first general election held more than two years after their initial appointment, and every four years thereafter. Further information regarding the jurisdiction, authority and duties of district court judges may be found at AS 22.15.

¹ *Alaska Court System Statistical Report FY 2023: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*, 61. The report is available at <https://courts.alaska.gov/admin/docs/fy23-statistics.pdf>.

Bethel District Court, Fourth Judicial District

A district court position is open in Bethel due to the appointment of Judge William T. Montgomery to the Bethel Superior Court. Bethel has one district court judge who presides over a limited jurisdiction trial court serving the Yukon-Koyukon Delta in the Fourth Judicial District. According to data available in the Alaska Court System Annual Report for FY 2023,² 1,001 cases were filed in the Bethel District Court, including 530 misdemeanors, 84 minor offenses, 24 small claims, 311 civil protective orders, and 52 general civil cases. A Bethel District Court judge hears both criminal and civil proceedings. The annual salary of a district court judge in Bethel is \$233,320, which includes a geographic cost of living adjustment.

² *Alaska Court System Statistical Report FY 2023: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*, 61. The report is available at <https://courts.alaska.gov/admin/docs/fy23-statistics.pdf>.