



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

June 5, 2019

Judicial Vacancy Announcements

Homer and Valdez Superior Courts Kenai and Palmer District Courts

The Alaska Judicial Council is now receiving applications for judgeships on the recently authorized **Homer and Valdez Superior Courts** (formerly District Court positions) and for impending vacancies on the **Kenai and Palmer District Courts**. The vacancies will occur due to the upcoming retirements of Homer District Court Judge Margaret L. Murphy, Kenai District Court Judge Sharon A.S. Illsley, and Palmer District Court Judge John W. Wolfe. The Valdez position is vacant due to the appointment of District Court Judge Daniel Schally to the Juneau Superior Court. Interested persons may obtain application forms from the Judicial Council offices or online at the Council's website (www.ajc.state.ak.us). **The Judicial Council must have completed applications in its office by 3:00 p.m. on July 10, 2019.**

A superior court judge must be a citizen of the United States and of the state of Alaska, a resident of Alaska for five years immediately preceding appointment, engaged in the active practice of law for not less than five years immediately preceding appointment, and at the time of appointment be licensed to practice law in Alaska. The active practice of law is defined in AS 22.05.070.

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 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 applicant; looks at bar or judicial disciplinary records; sends out requests for more detailed information to attorneys and judges in recent cases handled by the applicant; 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 November to conduct public hearings and to interview the applicants for the vacancies. Most meetings are in the location of the vacancy to encourage public participation.

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 of the appointments. The Council votes on which applicants are the most qualified based upon consideration of the applicant's professional competence, integrity, fairness, temperament, judgment, legal and life experience, and demonstrated commitment to public and community service. The governor then has 45 days in which to appoint a judge from the Council's list of nominees.

Persons interested in applying for these positions 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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