



alaska judicial council

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Alaska Judicial Council

Retention Questionnaire

2026 Candidates for Judicial Retention

Full Name: Benjamin Alan Seekins

Court: Fairbanks District Court

1a. Please estimate your workload during your present term:

- **Case work:** 98%
- **Administrative work, outreach, continuing education, etc:** 2%

1b. District Court Judges:

- **Criminal:** 70%
- **Minor Offense:** 10%
- **Small Claims:** 5%
- **Civil Protective Orders:** 5%
- **General Civil:** 10%

1c. Number of jury trials/year: 8

1d. Number of non-jury trials/year: 4

1e. Any additional information you would like to provide about your workload?

I was a backup Judge for the Fairbanks Wellness Court. That court consists primarily of Felony DUI participants with some Drug Court participants as well. I am a member of the new Judge training committee and present topics at their conference in January. I am also a Magistrate training Judge.

2. Please describe your participation on court/bar committees or other administrative activities during your current term of office.

As a member of the new Judge Training Committee, I present on at least one topic annually at the January conference. I also attend the Judicial conference. As a Magistrate training Judge, I periodically review the performance of Magistrates.

3. Please describe any judicial or legal education you have undertaken or provided during your current term in office.

I frequently field questions from Magistrate Judges as they develop. Many of their questions require me to do research to find the correct answers. As a member of the committee, I attend the New Judge Training Conference each year and present on at least one topic. Earlier today I finished updating and expanding my now 72 page DUI outline to be presented at this years conference. I attend the Judicial Conference each year as well. Additionally, the parties appearing before me are quite skilled and regularly find novel areas of the law for me to research. I also read the majority of the slip opinions from the Alaska Court of Appeals, and Alaska Supreme Court.

4. Please describe any public outreach activities.

None.

5. Please assess, in one or two paragraphs, your judicial performance during your present term. Appropriate areas of comment could include: satisfaction with your judicial role, specific contributions to the judiciary or the field of law, increases in legal knowledge and judicial skills, or other measures of judicial abilities that you believe to be important.

Although I am generally satisfied with my performance, I am continuously trying to improve. It is certainly true that the more you learn, the more aware you become of how little you know. The most significant contribution is my participation on the New Judge Training Committee. I have consistently tried to prepare materials with good black letter law on a variety of topics. This Committee is very labor intensive and every year about this time I question how long I will stay on that Committee. However, after attending the New Judge Training, meeting the excellent new judges, and seeing their interest and participation, I remember why I am doing it.

6. During your most recent term as a judge, have you:

a) had a tax lien filed or other collection procedure instituted against you by federal, state, or local authorities?

No

b) been involved in a non-judicial capacity in any legal proceeding whether as a party or otherwise?

No

c) engaged in the practice of law (other than as a judge)?

No

d) held office in any political party?

No

e) held any other local, state or federal office?

No

f) had any complaints, charges or grievances filed against you with the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Alaska Bar Association, or with the Alaska Court System that resulted in public proceedings or sanctions?

No

8. Please provide any other information which you believe would assist the Council in conducting its evaluations and in preparing its recommendations for the 2020 retention elections.

None.

Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9a. Please list your three most recent jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: State of Alaska v. Jose Alejandro Gallo Ramirez

(Case No: 4FA-24-02286CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Cate Pierson 510 2nd Ave #200 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701	Atty 2: Christopher Lough 529 5th Ave. #1 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Case 2: State of Alaska v. Lourdes Hernandez Bernal

(Case No: 4FA-19-02248CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Ethan VanDeWall 354 Broadway Ave, Unit 2 B Eielson, Alaska 99702	Atty 2: Robert John 751 7th Ave Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Case 3: State of Alaska v. Eric Anthony Wolfe

(Case No: 4NE-23-00044CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Anna Ralph 510 2nd Ave #200 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701	Atty 2: Ileana Polis 529 5th Ave. #1 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9b. Please list your three most recent non-jury trials including case names and numbers. Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these trials. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Non-Jury Trial Cases

Case 1: Umialik Insurance Company v. Aldo Bravo et all

(Case No: 4FA-23-01599CI)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Christi Pavia 1201 W 33rd Ave Suite B Anchorage, Alaska 99503	Atty 2: Tyler Broker 100 Cushman Street, Suite 400 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Case 2: Helayne Eakin v. Paul Smith

(Case No: 4FA-21-01864CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: William Satterberg 709 4th Ave. Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Case 3: Kassandra Smith-Buckwalter v. Leanna Barron and Justin Barron

(Case No: 4FA-23-001580CI)

Total Attorneys: 1

Atty 1: Valerie Therrien 208 Barnette Street Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Trial Judges: Questions 9a-9d please do not list any cases that have pending issues in your court.

9c. Please list your three most recent cases, including case names and numbers, which did not go to trial, but on which you did significant work (such as settlement conference, hearings, motion work, etc.). Please list the names, current addresses, including zip codes and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in these cases. (If there are additional pages, please email these to sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us)

Cases that Did Not Go to Trial

Case 1: State of Alaska v. Justin Beyer

(Case No: 4FA-25-01298CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Lexi Voudrie 510 2nd Ave #200 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701	Atty 2: Jennifer Hite 100 Cushman St. Suite 201 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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Case 2: State of Alaska v. Ian Dominic Surike

(Case No: 4FA-24-00361)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Anna Ralph 510 2nd Ave #200 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701	Atty 2: Cianna Howie 529 5th Ave. #1 Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
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Case 3: State of Alaska v. Stephen Brian Lawrence

(Case No: 4FA-23-01022CR)

Total Attorneys: 2

Atty 1: Cate Pierson 510 2nd Ave #200 Fairbanks, Alaska 99701	Atty 2: Robert John 751 7th Ave Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
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