



alaska judicial council

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<http://www.ajc.state.ak.us> E-mail: postmaster@ajc.state.ak.us

September 24, 2026

Re: Alaska Public Defender Position

Dear Member of the Alaska Bar Association:

The Alaska Judicial Council invites qualified attorneys to apply for the position of **Alaska Public Defender**. This letter provides essential information about the application process, the position, and the application deadline.

Alaska Statute 18.85.030 requires the Alaska Judicial Council to nominate two or more candidates for the Alaska Public Defender position. The Alaska Judicial Council has established bylaws to fulfill this duty given to it by the Alaska Legislature. The Council's bylaws require the same process and standards for selecting nominees for the Public Defender as the Council uses for judicial selection. Council bylaws may be found at: <http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/about/bylaws.html>.

The governor appoints the Public Defender from among two or more nominees sent by the Alaska Judicial Council. The governor's appointment is subject to confirmation by the Legislature. The Position Description (over) contains more information about the position.

Application forms for the Public Defender position may be obtained by writing or calling the Alaska Judicial Council. Application forms may also be obtained on-line by visiting the Council's web site: www.ajc.state.ak.us. For more information, please contact the Judicial Council at 907-279-2526, or by email at sdipietro@ajc.state.ak.us. **Completed applications for the Public Defender position must be received by the Alaska Judicial Council no later than 3:00 p.m. on October 30, 2026.**

Sincerely,

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

Susanne DiPietro
Executive Director

To ensure receipt of the forthcoming survey on applicants for this position, 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@gemailserver.com as a safe sender in your email account.

Public Defender Position Description

The position of **Public Defender** is currently vacant. The Public Defender is responsible for providing legal representation to indigent persons charged with misdemeanor and felony crimes at the trial and appellate levels. The Public Defender also represents indigent parents whose parental rights are at issue in Child in Need of Aid cases, persons who are involuntarily committed to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, and juveniles who face delinquency charges. The Public Defender Agency handled approximately 19,000 new cases in FY 2026.

The Public Defender administers 14 offices throughout the state and prepares a yearly budget for the agency in coordination with the Department of Administration. When fully staffed, the Public Defender supervises approximately 143 attorneys and 91 support staff. The Public Defender testifies before the legislature on bills involving substantive and procedural aspects of criminal law and serves on a number of commissions and committees involving criminal justice issues.

The Public Defender is appointed by the governor from among two or more persons nominated for that position by the Alaska Judicial Council and is subject to confirmation by a majority of the members of the Alaska Legislature meeting in joint session. The Public Defender serves a term of four years and may be reappointed for subsequent terms by the governor, without re-nomination by the Council, with confirmation by the Legislature. The Public Defender is subject to removal by the Governor for good cause. A person is not eligible to serve as the Public Defender or an assistant public defender unless admitted to the practice of law in this state no later than 10 months following the commencement of the person's employment by the agency. *See AS 18.85.010 - .180.* The Public Defender is eligible for personal leave under the public employees' leave system, and all state benefits including state paid health and retirement benefits. Starting salary range was estimated at \$142,506 - \$163,395 but may vary significantly depending on experience and prior state service.