



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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For immediate release
August 19, 2026

Announcing Nominees Anchorage District Court and intent to re-advertise Nome Superior Court

The Alaska Judicial Council met in Anchorage on August 17, and in Nome on August 18, 2026, to interview applicants for vacancies on the Anchorage District Court and Nome Superior Court.

The Council voted on Monday, August 17, 2026, to nominate **Julia Metzger, Ben Muse, Eric Salinger, and Matt Widmer** as the most qualified applicants to fill the Anchorage District Court. The governor has 45 days in which to appoint from among these nominees to fill the positions.

After travelling to Nome, holding a public hearing, and interviewing two applicants, the Council made no nominations for the Nome Superior Court vacancy. Because the Council's vote did not result in at least two sufficiently qualified nominees, the Council declined to submit any names to the governor and will re-advertise the position.

The Judicial Council is required to nominate two or more of the most qualified applicants applying for a judicial vacancy. (The framers of our Constitution referred to this standard as the "best available timber.")

The Council is a citizens' commission created by the Alaska Constitution composed of three attorneys, three non-attorneys, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. The Council completes an extensive investigation and evaluation of judicial applicants. The Council reviews each applicant's education, experience, bar discipline and credit records, participation in community activities, and other records. It asks members of the Alaska Bar to evaluate the applicants, encourages the public to submit comments, and interviews the applicants.

Nominees for the Anchorage District Court vacancy are:

Julia Metzger: Ms. Metzger has been an Alaska resident for 14½ years and has practiced law for 14½ years. She graduated from Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law in 2012 and is currently an assistant public advocate in Anchorage.

Ben Muse: Mr. Muse has been an Alaska resident for 44½ years and has practiced law for 15½ years. He graduated from Gonzaga University School of Law in 2010 and is currently an assistant federal defender in Anchorage.

Eric Salinger: Mr. Salinger has been an Alaska resident for 13½ years and has practiced law for 13½ years. He graduated from University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 2013 and is currently an administrative law judge in Anchorage.

Matt Widmer: Mr. Widmer has been an Alaska resident for 21½ years and has practiced law for 21½ years. He graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2005 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

Attached are records of the Council members' votes.

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**Vote Tally Sheet
Anchorage District Court
August 17, 2026**

Candidates	Council Members						
	Babcock	Collins	DeWitt	Fletcher	Miller	Robinson	Carney*
Julia Metzger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ben Muse	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Eric Salinger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Matt Widmer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

**The Chief Justice votes only when to do so would change the result.*



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**Vote Tally Sheet
Nome Superior Court
August 18, 2026**

Candidates	Council Members						
	Babcock	Collins	DeWitt	Fletcher	Miller	Robinson	Carney*
Elisabeth Mering	No	Yes	No	Abstain	No	No	
John Revis	No	No	No	No	No	No	

**The Chief Justice votes only when to do so would change the result.*