



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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Judicial Vacancies Announcement

Anchorage Superior (2 seats), Fairbanks Superior, Palmer Superior, and Kotzebue & Nome Superior Courts (Re-Announcements)

The Alaska Judicial Council is now receiving applications for impending vacancies on the superior courts in Anchorage (two seats), Fairbanks, Palmer, Kotzebue, and Nome. The Anchorage vacancies are due to the forthcoming retirements of Judge Una Gandbhir and Judge Herman G. Walker. The Nome and Kotzebue seats are vacant due to the retirements of Judge Romano DiBenedetto and Judge Paul A. Roetman. The Palmer Superior court vacancy is a new position created in 2026 by the Alaska Legislature. The Fairbanks Superior Court vacancy is due to the appointment of Judge Tricia Haines to the Court of Appeals.

For more information regarding these positions and qualifications of superior court judges, please see the Council's website at www.ajc.state.ak.us. Interested persons may obtain an application form by calling the Judicial Council office or online via the Council's website. **The Judicial Council must have completed applications for these positions in its office by 3:00 p.m. on October 30, 2026.**

Applications are reviewed by the Alaska 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 applicants; looks at bar or judicial disciplinary records; sends out requests for more detailed information to attorneys and judges in recent cases handled by the applicants; 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 February 2027 to conduct public hearings and to interview the applicants for these vacancies.

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 vacancy. The Council votes on which applicants are the most qualified based upon consideration of the applicant's professional competence, diligence and administrative skills, integrity, fairness, temperament, judgment, legal and life experience, demonstrated commitment to public and community service, and demonstrated commitment to equal justice and the legal needs of the diverse communities of Alaska. The governor then has 45 days in which to appoint judges from the Council's list of nominees.

Persons interested in applying for a position may obtain more information from the Judicial Council at 510 L Street, Suite 450, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1295, or by calling (907) 279-2526.

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