



alaska judicial council

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January 9, 2012

Re: Bethel District Court

Dear Member of the Alaska Bar Association:

The Alaska Judicial Council is seeking applicants for a position on the **Bethel District Court** due to the forthcoming retirement of Judge Dennis Cummings. This letter provides essential information about the position and the application deadline. For more information, please contact the Judicial Council at 279-2526, or by e-mail at lcohn@ajc.state.ak.us.

A district court judge must meet the qualifications set out at AS 22.15.160. He or she must: be a citizen of the United States and of the State of Alaska; be at least 21 years of age, be a resident of Alaska for at least five years immediately preceding appointment; and either (1) have engaged in the active practice of law, as defined in AS 22.05.070, for not less than three years immediately preceding appointment; and be licensed to practice law in Alaska at the time of appointment, or (2) have served for at least seven years as a magistrate in the state. In addition, Administrative Rule 19.1 requires that a magistrate who seeks appointment as a district court judge 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.

The annual salary of a district court judge in Bethel is \$157,824. *The Alaska Court System will be seeking a modification in the cost of living adjustment applicable to the salaries of judges in rural Alaska, including Bethel.* The court will request an adjustment that more closely matches the adjustment applicable to executive branch attorneys who work in rural Alaska. It is important for applicants to recognize that the legislature may not approve any such change. Judges also receive personal leave as established by the Administrative Rules of Court, state-paid health and dental benefits, and judicial retirement system benefits.

An application form for this 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 Internet site: www.ajc.state.ak.us. **Completed applications for this position must be received by the Alaska Judicial Council no later than 3:00 p.m. February 6, 2012.**

Interested persons who applied for the open Bethel Superior Court position, either when the vacancy was first announced or when the position was readvertised, may apply for the Bethel District Court position without completing another application. Such persons should contact the Judicial Council to indicate their interest and to receive instruction about filing any information needed to supplement the prior application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Cohn".

Larry Cohn
Executive Director

(Over: Bethel District Court position description)

Judicial Position Description

Judges must be familiar with Alaska law, procedure, and trial practice. Alaska judges must conform their conduct to the Alaska Code of Judicial Conduct and the laws of Alaska and the United States. Judges must be proficient in understanding oral and written communications, and must effectively communicate orally and in writing with parties, attorneys, members of the public, and court employees. Judges must regularly employ a high level of analytical legal reasoning, must possess unimpaired judgment, and must be able to concentrate on and evaluate evidence and legal arguments. Judges must be willing and able to render timely and impartial decisions, without regard for popular sentiment. They must treat parties, attorneys, the public, and court employees with fairness, courtesy and respect, and they must work effectively under pressure. In addition to presiding over cases, Alaska judges are expected to serve on court committees working to improve the administration of justice in the state.

The working environment is a courtroom and office setting. Alaska judges typically sit in court or in chambers for long periods of time, but sitting is not an essential requirement of the job; some judges prefer to stand or make comparable adjustments for their individual needs. Judges may be required to travel, including travel to rural areas, often by small airplane. They may be temporarily reassigned to different court locations within the state. Judges may share weekend duty with other judicial officers.

Bethel District Court, Fourth Judicial District

A **District Court** position is open in **Bethel**. Bethel has one district court judge who presides over a limited jurisdiction trial court serving Bethel in the Fourth Judicial District. According to data available from the Alaska Court System for FY 2011, 1,988 cases were filed in the Bethel District Court, including 1,183 misdemeanors, 349 minor offense cases, 81 small claims, 267 domestic violence cases, and 108 general civil cases. A Bethel District Court judge hears both criminal and civil proceedings. The annual salary of a district court judge in Bethel is \$157,824 but the Alaska Court System is seeking a modification of the cost of living adjustment applicable to rural judges that may increase this amount.

District court judges must meet the qualifications set out at AS 22.15.160. District court judges stand for retention at the first general election held more than two years after their initial appointment, and every four years thereafter. Further information regarding the jurisdiction, authority and duties of district court judges may be found at AS 22.15.