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Judicial Position Description Alaska Supreme Court

Five justices sit on the Alaska Supreme Court. The chief justice is selected by other members of the court for a three-year term pursuant to Article IV, section 2, of the Alaska Constitution.

The Alaska Supreme Court has final appellate jurisdiction in all Alaska state court proceedings. The supreme court hears civil appeals, including administrative appeals from the superior court, as a matter of right and criminal appeals from the Alaska Court of Appeals upon grant of petition. The court hears judicial discipline appeals from the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct and attorney application and discipline cases from the Alaska Bar Association. The court may, upon its discretion, decide questions of state law certified from the federal courts. The court also promulgates the Alaska Rules of Court and administers the Alaska Court System. According to the Alaska Court System's fiscal year 2019 annual report, 353 cases were filed in the Alaska Supreme Court, including 166 civil appeals, 144 petitions for hearing, 54 petitions for review, and 19 bar/original applications. Thirty-four petitions for rehearing, 68 full court motions, 930 individual justice motions, and 473 routine (clerk) motions were also filed with the Alaska Supreme Court in FY 2019.

Each supreme court justice is assisted by and is responsible for the supervision of three law clerks and a judicial assistant. The supreme court hears cases monthly in Anchorage, and several times a year as needed in Fairbanks and Juneau.

The principal office of the supreme court is in Anchorage. A supreme court justice may maintain an office at a place other than the principal office as designated by order of the court or of the chief justice. Justices residing in a location other than Anchorage must be prepared to travel frequently to Anchorage for oral arguments and court meetings. Justices residing in Anchorage must be prepared to travel to hear cases in Juneau and Fairbanks. Justices may be assigned to other courts as needed.

Supreme court justices must have excellent communication skills, both oral and written. They must be capable of a very high level of analytical reasoning. They must possess unimpaired judgment at all times. They must thoroughly evaluate briefs, motions, and arguments and render decisions in a timely and even-handed manner. Justices must treat colleagues, parties, attorneys, employees, and the public with fairness, courtesy, and respect. They must work effectively under pressure. Justices must be familiar with Alaska law, procedure, and precedent. Justices must conform their conduct to the Code of Judicial Conduct and to the laws of the State of Alaska and the United States. Justices often must sit (or stand) at a desk or bench for prolonged periods of time.

Supreme court justices stand for retention at the first general election more than three years after initial appointment and every ten years thereafter. The annual salary of a supreme court justice is \$205,179.