



alaska judicial council

510 L Street, Suite 450, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1295 (907) 279-2526 FAX (907) 276-5046
http://www.ajc.state.ak.us E-Mail: postmaster@ajc.state.ak.us

Press Release

July 12, 2019

Announcing Applicants for Homer and Valdez Superior Courts Kenai and Palmer District Courts

Thirteen attorneys have applied to the Alaska Judicial Council for a position on the Homer Superior Court, six attorneys have applied for a position on the Valdez Superior Court, eight attorneys have applied for a position on the Kenai District Court, and ten attorneys have applied for a position on the Palmer District Court.

Applicants for the judgeships will be evaluated by the Council's seven members (the chief justice, three non-attorney members, and three attorney members). Comprehensive background investigations, a survey of Alaska Bar members, and personal interviews with the applicants are all part of the evaluations, according to the Council's Executive Director, Susanne DiPietro. Interviews with applicants and public hearings will be held in November 2019. The Council will select two or more nominees for each vacancy to send to the governor. The governor will have 45 days to make appointments from among the Council's nominees.

Summary of Applicants for Judgeships:

Homer Superior Court	Valdez Superior Court	Kenai District Court	Palmer District Court
Craig S. Condie Martin C. Fallon Andrew V. Grannik Jürgen Jensen Kelly J. Lawson Russell G. Leavitt David L. Roghair Bride Seifert Gary Soberay Colin A. Strickland William W. Taylor Lance Christian Wells Nicholas Richard Torres	Rachel Ahrens Craig S. Condie Andrew V. Grannik David L. Roghair Nicholas Richard Torres Lance Christian Wells	Amanda Browning Craig S. Condie Martin C. Fallon Michelle D. Higuchi Kelly J. Lawson Colin A. Strickland William W. Taylor Nicholas Richard Torres	Amanda Browning Craig S. Condie Martin C. Fallon Lars Johnson Ariel Toft Klugman Trina Sears Bride Seifert Gary Soberay Shawn Traini Andrew Weinraub

The Applicants:

Rachel Ahrens: Ms. Ahrens has been an Alaska resident for 12 years, and has practiced law for 13 years. She graduated from Hamline University School of Law in 2003, and is currently an assistant district attorney in Kotzebue.

Amanda Browning: Magistrate Judge Browning has been an Alaska resident for 7½ years, and has practiced law for 14 years. She graduated from Roger Williams University, Ralph R. Pappito School of Law, in 2005, and is currently a magistrate judge in Sitka.

Craig S. Condie: Magistrate Judge Condie has been an Alaska resident for 15 years, and has practiced law for 15 years. He graduated from the University of Utah School of Law in 2004, and is currently a magistrate judge in Palmer.

Martin C. Fallon: Magistrate Judge Fallon has been an Alaska resident for 11 ½ years, and has practiced law for 19 ½ years. He graduated from Northeastern University School of Law in 1998, and is currently a magistrate judge in Kenai.

Andrew V. Grannik: Mr. Grannik has been an Alaska resident for 25 years, and has practiced law for 13 ½ years. He graduated from Northeastern University School of Law in 2004, and is currently an assistant attorney general in Anchorage.

Michelle D. Higuchi: Ms. Higuchi has been an Alaska resident for 20 years, and has practiced law for 20½ years. She graduated from Willamette University College of Law in Oregon in 1998, and is not currently employed.

Jürgen Jensen: Mr. Jensen has been an Alaska resident for 27½ years, and has practiced law for 11½ years. He graduated from Willamette University College of Law in 2007, and is currently in private practice in Homer.

Lars Johnson: Mr. Johnson has been an Alaska resident for 10 years, and has practiced law for 10 years. He graduated from New York University School of Law in 2009, and is currently an assistant attorney general in Anchorage.

Ariel Toft Klugman: Ms. Klugman has been an Alaska resident for 7 years, and has practiced law for 7 years. She graduated from Columbia Law School in New York in 2012, and is currently an assistant public advocate in Anchorage.

Kelly J. Lawson: Ms. Lawson has been an Alaska resident for 42½ years, and has practiced law for 15½ years. She graduated from University of Montana School of Law in 2002, and is currently an assistant attorney general in Kenai.

Russell G. Leavitt: Mr. Leavitt has been an Alaska resident for 8 ½ years, and has practiced law for 20½ years. He graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in 1997, and is currently a supervisory general attorney with the United States Air Force, 673rd Air Base Wing, at JBER in Anchorage.

David L. Roghair: Magistrate Judge Roghair has been an Alaska resident for 23½ years, and has practiced law for 13 years. He graduated from Lewis & Clark Law School in Oregon in 2006, and is currently a magistrate judge in Utqiagvik.

Trina Sears: Ms. Sears has been an Alaska resident for 41½ years, and has practiced law for 15½ years. She graduated from Northeastern University School of Law in Massachusetts in 2003, and is currently an assistant municipal attorney with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in Palmer.

Bride Seifert: Ms. Seifert has been an Alaska resident for 8 years, and has practiced law for 9½ years. She graduated from the William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota in 2010, and is currently an assistant district attorney in Bethel and Kotzebue.

Gary Soberay: Mr. Soberay has been an Alaska resident for 19 years, and has practiced law for 28½ years. He graduated from the University of Florida College of Law in 1990, and is not currently employed.

Colin A. Strickland: Mr. Strickland has been an Alaska resident for 5 years, and has practiced law for 8½ years. He graduated from the University of Florida, Levin College of Law, in 2010, and is currently GEICO Staff Counsel at the Law Office of John R. Dean, in Anchorage.

William W. Taylor: Mr. Taylor has been an Alaska resident for 12 years, and has practiced law for 23 years. He graduated from Ohio Northern University, Claude W. Pettit College of Law in 1995 and received an LL.M. in tax from the Capital University Law School in Ohio in 1996. He is currently an assistant public advocate in Kenai.

Nicholas Richard Torres: Mr. Torres has been an Alaska resident for 7 years, and has practiced law for 5½ years. He graduated from Ohio State University, Moritz College of Law in 2011, and is currently an assistant district attorney in Kenai.

Shawn Traini: Mr. Traini has been an Alaska resident for 33½ years, and has practiced law for 20 years. He graduated from the University of Utah, S.J. Quinney College of Law, in 1999, and is currently an assistant district attorney in Palmer.

Andrew Weinraub: Mr. Weinraub has been an Alaska resident for 10 years, and has practiced law for 22½ years. He graduated from the University of Akron School of Law in Ohio in 1991, and is currently an assistant public advocate in Palmer.

Lance Christian Wells: Mr. Wells has been an Alaska resident for 28 years, and has practiced law for 27 years. He graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1991. He is currently a self-employed attorney in Anchorage.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THESE APPLICANTS IS ENCOURAGED DURING THE EVALUATION PHASE OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK. TO COMMENT, OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT SUSANNE DiPIETRO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA JUDICIAL COUNCIL, 510 L STREET, SUITE 450, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-1295, (907) 279-2526.

* * * * *