



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

December 23, 2011

Judicial Vacancy Announcement

Alaska Supreme Court

The Alaska Judicial Council is now receiving applications for a position on the Alaska Supreme Court created by the impending appointment of Justice Morgan Christen to the United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit. Interested persons may obtain application forms from the Judicial Council offices or online at the Council's website (www.ajc.state.ak.us). The Judicial Council must have completed applications in its office by 3:00 p.m. on January 30, 2012.

A justice of the supreme court must be a citizen of the United States and the state of Alaska, a resident of Alaska for at least five years immediately preceding appointment, have been engaged in the active practice of law for not fewer than eight years immediately preceding appointment, and at the time of appointment be licensed to practice law in Alaska. The active practice of law is defined in AS 22.05.070.

Applications are reviewed by the Judicial Council, a seven member citizens commission with three attorneys, three non-attorneys, and the chief justice of the 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 applicant; looks at bar or judicial disciplinary records; sends out requests for more detailed information to attorneys/judges in recent cases handled by the applicant; 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 meet to conduct a public hearing, and interview every applicant for the vacancy. Most meetings are in the location of the vacancy to encourage public participation.

At the end of the interviews, the Council discusses the applicants, and votes on the two or more most qualified to nominate for appointment. The Council votes on which applicants are the most qualified based upon the Council's consideration of their professional competence, integrity, fairness, temperament, judgment, legal and life experience, and demonstrated commitment to public and community service. The governor then has 45 days in which to appoint a judge from the Council's list of nominees.

Persons interested in applying for this position may obtain more information from the Judicial Council at 1029 W. Third Avenue, Suite 201, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-1969, (907) 279-2526.

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