

Alaska Judicial Council

Application for Judicial Appointment

Position(s) for which you wish to be considered:
Anchorage District Court

Date: 09 February 2024

I. Public Information (Questions 1-24)

Personal

1. (a) State full name* John Christopher Darnall
Name as it should appear on bar survey: Chris Darnall
* Unless otherwise specified, this is how your name will appear on the bar survey.
- (b) Have you ever used or been known by any other names or pseudonyms? If so, please identify. Chris Darnall
2. How long have you been a resident of the State of Alaska immediately preceding the date of this application? **
7 years 8 months
Total 32 years 8 months
3. How long have you been engaged in the active practice of law immediately preceding the date of this application? **
6 years 0 months
Total 6 years 0 months

Nonlegal Education

4. State names and dates of attendance of all colleges and professional schools (other than law schools) ever attended and degrees and dates conferred. List any honors.

University of Alaska Anchorage, B.S. Biological Sciences, Cum Laude, 2005-2010.

** See AS 22.10.090; see also 1984 Inf. Op. Atty. Gen. (July 19; 366- 624-84).

Legal Education

5. List all law schools, dates attended and degrees conferred. If you did not receive a degree from any law school, please indicate.

State University of New York (SUNY") at Buffalo Law School, J.D., Cum Laude, 2013-2016.

6. (a) Did you receive any honors in law school or belong to any honorary societies or groups?

☒ Yes ☐ No If yes, please give details.

CALI Award for Excellence in Patent Law
ABA Award for Excellence in Intellectual Property Law
Pace Environmental Law Moot Court Participant (x2)
Intellectual Property Law Journal (Member)

- (b) Have you taken any CLE (continuing legal education) courses during the past five years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please describe or list. Please do not attach individual certificates of attendance.

Attended Alaska Department of Law District Attorney Training in 2018 through 2023.

Military

7. Have you served in the armed forces (reserves or otherwise)? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If so, please provide the following information:

(a) Dates of service: 06/08/05 - 06/08/11

(b) Branch of service: United States Air National Guard (Alaska)

(c) Rank at time of discharge: Senior Airman (E-4)

(d) Type of military discharge: Honorable

(e) Awards or citations:

Air Force Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

- (f) Have you ever been refused admission to or released from any of the armed services for reasons other than honorable discharge? ☐ Yes ☒ No If so, state the details.

Nonlegal Employment

8. Describe major nonlegal working experience. If you had a business or association that has been discontinued, please note whether there are unpaid debts or claims pending litigation.

I worked at the McDonalds on Tudor in Anchorage from 2002 to 2005. I was eventually promoted to "crew trainer."

I worked as a lab assistant at UAA while completing my degree. I performed all kinds of tasks including setting up labs for students and supervising open lab time. I also briefly worked as a "supplemental instructor" (essentially a tutor) for French.

Through college I was a member of the Alaska Air National Guard. In the guard I was initially trained to work on communications and computer systems but eventually transitioned to loading air freight and passengers when my first unit closed.

After college I worked for a year at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute as a psychiatric nurse's assistant before moving to Buffalo, New York. In Buffalo, I worked as a nurse's assistant on the telemetry floor of a local hospital before attending law school.

While in law school, in addition to my volunteer legal work over the summers, I worked in the law library as an A/V technician for three years.

Legal Experience

9. Describe chronologically your legal employment since admission to law school. **Please provide dates and location of employment, name of employer, name AND CURRENT ADDRESS OF supervisor or person who can verify AND COMMENT ON YOUR employment, the reason you left the position, and a brief description of type of practice (i.e., insurance defense, criminal, appellate, general, litigation, etc.) for each position listed below.** IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY A TRIAL COURT JUDGE, PLEASE LIST YOUR PRESIDING JUDGE. FOR PAST JUDGESHIPS, PLEASE LIST THE JUDGE WHO LAST PRESIDED DURING YOUR TIME ON THE BENCH.

The Council will ask for comments from your current and former employers about your employment and your judicial qualifications. You may choose to list other persons as character and professional references in response to Question 20 of this application.

If the supervisor or contact person asks (in writing) that the letter be shared with the governor, the Council will send designated letters for each nominee. The applicant should not request a copy of the letter from the reference. References or letters not solicited by the Council are considered public (with few exceptions) and will be sent to the governor for all nominees.

Current Employer: State of Alaska, Department of Law, Criminal Division, Office of Special Prosecutions

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: Jenna Gruenstein

Current address of this person: 310 K. Street, Ste 701

City Anchorage State AK Zip 99501

Dates and location of Employment: From May 2019 To Current City Anchorage State AK

Job title and description:

Assistant Attorney General, Cybercrime and Trafficking. Mix of criminal case work, training, and agency advice/policy work. Caseload primarily consists of internet crimes against children ("ICAC") charges. Policy work has been grounded in trafficking. Training has covered a variety of topics from trafficking to warrants to presenting digital evidence in court.

Previous Employers: *(In chronological order, most recent first)*

Employer: State of Alaska, Department of Law, Criminal Division, Anchorage District Attorney's Office

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: Angie Kemp

Current address of this person: 1031 W. 4th Ave., Suite 200

City Anchorage State AK Zip 99501

Dates and Location of Employment: From February 2018 To April 2019 City Anchorage State AK

Job title and description: Assistant District Attorney. Line prosecutor, handled mixed docket of Anchorage felonies and the Unalaska docket. Participated as lead ADA in Anchorage Veteran's Court.

Reason for Leaving: Promoted into a specialized practice that aligns with my background.

Employer: Alaska Court System, Law Court to Superior Court Judge Charles Huguelet

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: Hon. Charles Huguelet (Ret.)

Current address of this person: [REDACTED]

City [REDACTED] State [REDACTED] Zip [REDACTED]

Dates and Location of Employment: From June 2016 To January 2018 City Kenai State AK

Job title and description: Law clerk. Conducted extensive research on topics such as search and seizure, sufficiency of the evidence supporting an indictment, competency, and various family law topics. Drafted over one hundred proposed orders for criminal and civil matters.

Reason for Leaving: Law Clerking Was Temporary

Previous Employers (continued)

Employer: Judicial Extern for the Hon. Billy Roy Wilson

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: Hon. Billy Roy Wilson

Current address of this person: 500 West Capitol Ave

City Little Rock State AR Zip 72201

Dates and Location of Employment: From June 2015 To August 2015 City Little Rock State AR

Job title and description: Summer extern for Hon. Billy Roy Wilson. Researched and wrote about issues such as federal abstention, natural gas law, and other various civil topics.

Reason for Leaving: Summer Job

Employer: _____

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: _____

Current address of this person: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dates and Location of Employment: From _____ To _____ City _____ State _____

Job title and description: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: _____

Current address of this person: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dates and Location of Employment: From _____ To _____ City _____ State _____

Job title and description: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: _____

Current address of this person: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dates and Location of Employment: From _____ To _____ City _____ State _____

Job title and description: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

Employer: _____

Supervisor or name of contact person who can verify employment: _____

Current address of this person: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Dates and Location of Employment: From _____ To _____ City _____ State _____

Job title and description: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____

10. During your legal career, please indicate (approximately) the following:

(a) Percent of your practice that was: Civil 3
Criminal 97
Other 0
= 100%

Comment: _____

(b) Percent: State 100
Federal 0
Other _____
= 100%

Comment: _____

(c) Of practice in state courts, percent: Supreme Court 0
Court of Appeals 3
Superior Court 80
District Court 17
= 100%

Comment: _____

(d) Frequency of appearance in court (select one):
☒ Regularly ☐ Occasionally ☐ Infrequently ☐ Not at All

Comment: _____

(e) Number of trials (by court or jury) you conducted (select one):
☐ None ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-15 ☒ 16-30 ☐ 31 or more

Comment: _____

(f) Percent of these trials which were: Jury 100 Non-Jury _____

Comment: _____

(g) Approximate number of appellate matters handled: 3

Comment: _____

(h) Approximate number of arbitrations or administrative hearings (select one):
☒ None ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-15 ☐ 16-30 ☐ 31 or more

Briefly describe type of matters heard:

(i) Please briefly summarize any *pro bono* work that you have done and indicate whether the work was done through a *pro bono* legal service provider (e.g. Alaska Legal Services, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, etc.).

During my 1L summer I worked as a volunteer clerk in the Fairbanks office of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation.

11. List all the courts and administrative tribunals in the United States or elsewhere to which you are or have been admitted to practice, and the dates of admission.

Alaska, November 2017 - Current.

Public Service

12. List bar associations, and sections and committees of which you are or have been a member or officer.

Alaska Bar Association

13. List publications, if any (give title, subject and date of publications). Please include online publications such as blogs or websites, and any publications you have co-authored and the name(s) of the co-author(s).

14. Have you ever applied for a judgeship? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Please list dates and judgeships applied for, as well as whether you were nominated by the Judicial Council and appointed.

Judgeship	Date	Nominated By Council (Y/N)	Appointed By Governor (Y/N)

15. Have you ever held public or political office, elective or appointive? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If so, state office, manner selected, and when and where held.

16. Please provide the Council with information that you would like the Council to consider about other legal and nonlegal organizations and clubs of which you are a member, including civic, charitable, religious, educational, social and fraternal organizations. Please indicate whether you participate in the organization's activities, or simply hold a membership. Your involvement in the community is one of the criteria the Council uses in its evaluations. The Council does not use affiliation with a particular group as a criterion except to the extent that it might raise questions of conflict of interest or would affect an applicant's ability to impartially apply the law.

I am not an active member of any particular organizations though I donate annually to Anchorage's local public radio station (KSKA) and attend events put on by organizations like STAR and the APOA.

17. Indicate (Yes or No) whether you have ever:

- (a) been arrested, charged with, pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to, or been convicted of the violation of any law or ordinance, or been requested to appear before any prosecuting or investigative agency in connection with any matter in any jurisdiction, including all traffic offenses, unless the fine was less than \$50 and there were no other sanctions?
☐ Yes ☒ No
- (b) failed to answer any summons or other legal process served upon you personally at any time? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- (c) as a member of any armed forces, been the subject of any charges which may have resulted in disciplinary action or court martial? ☐ Yes ☒ No

- (d) had any proceedings brought to have you declared a ward of any court or adjudged an incompetent? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If your answer is "yes" to any part of this question, state the facts in detail. Give the name and place of the court or agency, dates of the beginning and end of any action or proceeding, case numbers, and the judgment or other disposition.

18. (a) Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? ☐ Yes ☒ No

In particular, have you been the subject of any proceeding, criminal or civil, initiated against you by the Internal Revenue Service or a State Tax Office? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, give particulars, including case numbers.

- (b) Have you ever been sued by a client? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, give particulars, including case numbers.

- (c) Have you ever been a party in any other legal proceeding? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, give the particulars. Include all legal proceedings in which you were a party in interest, including petitioner or respondent in dissolution or divorce proceedings; a material witness; a named co-conspirator or correspondent; and subject or witness in any grand jury proceedings. Do not list proceedings in which you were sued only in a representative capacity (e.g. guardian ad litem, or as Commissioner of Natural Resources).

(d) Has a court ever found you to have provided ineffective assistance of counsel?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, provide the particulars including petitioner and case number.

19. State the nature and disposition of any of the following actions which apply to you:

(a) Are there any unsatisfied judgments against you? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Have you ever defaulted in the performance of any court-imposed obligation, including payment of alimony or child support or compliance with another court order or decree?

☐ Yes ☒ No

In each case, list the name and address of the creditor, the court which rendered the judgment, the case number, the date, the amount of the judgment, and the circumstances on which such claim was based.

Has property owned by you been either judicially or non-judicially foreclosed?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Please state the circumstances and outcome of any such unsatisfied or default judgment, or of any foreclosure.

(b) Have you ever made an assignment for the benefit of creditors?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Have you ever filed any petition in bankruptcy?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If so, state the circumstances, case number, and the outcome.

References and Counsel Questionnaires*

- * **Please Note:** Letters of reference from these persons are confidential and will not be given to the applicant. If the reference asks (in writing) that the letter be shared with the governor, the Council will send designated letters and counsel questionnaires for each nominee. The applicant should not request a copy of the letter from the reference. (You **should not** list the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court.)

References or letters not solicited by the Council are considered public (with few exceptions) and will be sent to the governor for all nominees.

20. (a) List the names, addresses, **including zip codes**, and **phone numbers** of two persons whom the Judicial Council may contact who can discuss your general character and background.

Name: Hon. Charles Huguelet (ret.)

Address: [REDACTED]

City/State/Zip: [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED]

Name: Brandon Hunter

Address: 3131 Rosella Street

City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99504 Phone: 9075382387

- (b) List the names, addresses, **including zip codes**, and **phone numbers** of three other persons whom the Judicial Council may contact who can discuss your professional competence and qualifications for a judicial position.

Name: CAAG Jenna Gruenstein

Address: 310 K. Street, Suite 701

City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: 9072696447

Name: Hon. Jack McKenna

Address: 825 W. 4th Ave, Suite 402

City/State/Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501 Phone: 9072640772

Name: Hon. Martin Fallon

Address: 125 Trading Bay Rd.

City/State/Zip: Kenai, AK 99611 Phone: 9072838583

References and Counsel Questionnaires (continued)

(c) List the names, addresses, including zip codes, and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in your three most recent cases that have gone to trial. Please do not list cases with any pending issues in the trial or appellate courts. (Applicants who are currently judges should list the three most recent trials they presided over.) List only those cases that have gone to trial within the past three years. If you have no cases that have gone to trial within the past three years, you may include cases that went to trial before that date, or may provide up to six cases in response to the next subsection, 20(d). Please include the judge's name and case names and numbers. *(Attach additional pages if necessary.)*

Case Number 1

Case Name: State
v. Peronto
Case Number: 3AN-18-03858CR
Judge Name: Hon. Andrew Peterson

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Julia Moudy (defense - first chair)	Name: Case Mohr (defense - second chair)
Address: 1049 W 5th Ave Ste 100	Address: 900 West 5th Avenue, Ste 101
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501
Name: Sarah Grieb (State - second chair)	Name:
Address: 310 K. Street, Ste 701	Address:
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip:

Case Number 2

Case Name: State
v. Moreno
Case Number: 3AN-15-09978CR
Judge Name: Hon. Erin Martson

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Katharine Penrod (State - second chair)	Name: Ronnie Moreno (defense - Pro Se)
Address: 310 K. Street, Ste 501	Address: 1400 E. 4TH Avenue
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501	City, State, Zip: Anchorage AK 99501
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
City, State, Zip:	City, State, Zip:

Case Number 3

Case Name: State
v. Campbell
Case Number: 4FA-20-02630CR
Judge Name: Hon. Patricia Haines

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Amy Welch	Name:
Address: 101 Lacey St.	Address:
City, State, Zip: Fairbanks, AK 99701	City, State, Zip:
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
City, State, Zip:	City, State, Zip:

References and Counsel Questionnaires (continued)

(d) List the names, addresses, including zip codes, and suite numbers where applicable, of each attorney involved in your three most recent cases that did not go to trial but in which you did significant work. Please do not list cases with any pending issues in the trial or appellate courts. (Applicants who are currently judges should list the three most recent cases they presided over that did not go to trial but in which they did significant work.) Please include the judge's name and case names and numbers. (Attach additional pages if necessary.)

Case Number 1

Case Name: State
v. Standifer

Case Number: 3AN-16-01543CR

Judge Name: Hon. Peter Ramgren

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Rachel Lauesen (defense - second chair)
Address: 521 W. 41st Ave, Ste 102
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99503

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Name: Jarrett Adams (defense - first chair)
Address: 40 Fulton Street, Floor 17
City, State, Zip: New York, NY 10038

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Case Number 2

Case Name: State
v. Williams

Case Number: 3AN-16-01544CR

Judge Name: Hon. Peter Ramgren

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Chong Yim
Address: 900 W. 5th Ave, Ste 200
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Case Number 3

Case Name: State
v. Durosseau

Case Number: 3AN-15-04213CR

Judge Name: Hon. Erin Marston

Attorneys Involved:

Name: Dina Marie Cale
Address: 900 W. 5th Ave, Ste 702
City, State, Zip: Anchorage, AK 99501

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Writing Sample

21. Attach one example of a brief, memorandum of law, or legal opinion or similar example of legal writing (10-20 pages in length; 15-25 pages for appellate positions) prepared solely by you within the last five years. Please choose a sample that reflects your ability to do legal research and analysis. If you do not have a good sample of this length, include an excerpt from a longer writing. Make sure the sample contains sufficient facts to make it understandable. (Some reply briefs may not meet these requirements.)

Please do not submit: (a) coauthored writing samples, (b) samples with confidential information unless redacted to remove such information, (c) longer writing samples, (d) samples from open cases including cases on appeal.

22. Has any **public** sanction been imposed against you in response to a complaint, charge or grievance brought against you as an attorney or a judge? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Have formal grievance procedures been brought against you? ☐ Yes ☒ No

See Bar Rule 22(b) & (e) concerning public bar grievance procedures against attorneys, and AS 22.30.011(b) and .060(b)(3) concerning public disciplinary grievance procedures against judges.

Have you ever been held in contempt of court? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Have you ever been fined or otherwise sanctioned by a judge? ☐ Yes ☒ No

In each case, state in detail the circumstances and the outcome.

Additional Comments (Non-Confidential)

23. Please make any additional comments that you wish to bring to the Council's attention about your experience and suitability for this judgeship.

I believe that I would be a good candidate for this position because I have first-hand experience in courtrooms across the state. I began my legal career as a law clerk for the superior court in Kenai. After clerking I became an ADA in Anchorage and took my first cases to trial in Unalaska. As an AAG, I have been to trial in every judicial district and I have seen a wide range of judicial styles. I think these experiences would be useful as a judge in Anchorage.

My time volunteering with the Alaska Legal Service Corporation and working at API gives me a somewhat unique perspective for a prosecutor. During my first summer in law school I worked at the ALSC in Fairbanks assisting indigent clients with basic legal issues. That experience helped open my eyes to some of the challenges faced by my fellow Alaskans in the legal system. Similarly, working with clients at API going through hard times taught me how important it is to treat others with empathy regardless of their present circumstances. These experiences have shaped my work as a prosecutor and would hopefully make me be a better judge.

Additional Comments (Continued)

I believe I have the appropriate temperament to be successful as a judge. I believe in being fair and treating others with respect. I believe that everyone deserves to be heard. And I believe that treating others as you would like to be treated is one of the most important things a person can do. I have applied this philosophy to my practice as an attorney just as I would apply it to work as a judge.

Finally, I am a firm believer in the legal system as a whole and keenly aware of the important part that the court plays in the lives of every Alaskan. Every decision a judge makes has the potential to impact untold numbers of others in this state. And the system only works if the people believe that judges are neutral and fair. That means judges must strive to be thoughtful, reasoned, and considerate in making any of their decisions. I would strive to conduct myself in a way that would exemplify these characteristics if appointed.

24. Please indicate whether you prefer to be interviewed in public session or in private session. Your choice of a public or private interview has no bearing on the Council's determination of your qualifications or on the questions the Council may ask. You may change your request in writing at any time before the interview starts (select one).

☒ Public Interview

☐ Private Interview

25. Please prepare a brief biographical statement (*limited to 150 words*) about your background, legal education, and legal experience. Please do not list personal information about minor children. Your picture and a copy of this statement will be scanned and posted on the Council's website after the application deadline. In its bar survey, the Council will invite attorneys to review the information if they wish to become more familiar with your background and experience. Use the form on the following page for your biographical statement. Please leave the box at the top empty. The Council will use this space for your scanned picture. ***To be fair to all applicants, the Council will strictly enforce the 150 word limit.***

If you object to the posting of your picture on the Council's website, please indicate your objection below. If you object, we will not post your picture, although you still must submit a photograph of yourself with your application.

☐ If you check this box **we will not** post your picture on the website.

Biographical Statement

Name Chris Darnall

Position(s) for which you wish to be considered:

Anchorage District Court

Please leave this area blank

Date: _____

I was born in Fairbanks and spent the first half of my childhood in North Pole. I moved to Anchorage in 8th grade where I attended Wendler Middle School and the "School Within a School" at Betty Davis East Anchorage High School.

After high-school I joined the Alaska Air National Guard where I maintained computers and loaded planes while attending UAA. At UAA I earned my degree in Biology and a minor in Spanish. I worked as a lab assistant and as a nurse's assistant at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute before moving across the country to Buffalo, New York.

I earned my law degree in Buffalo and returned home to Alaska to begin my career. I worked in Kenai for 18 months as a law clerk before transitioning to the Anchorage District Attorney's Office. A year later I moved to the Office of Special Prosecutions where I presently handle Cybercrime.