

UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

Alaska Judicial Council

Judicial Retention Survey: Social Service Professionals

Technical Report

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Executive Summary

Alaska statutes require the Alaska Judicial Council to evaluate Alaska judges eligible to stand for retention election. This survey was conducted among Alaska social service professionals to obtain information about their direct professional and other relevant experience with the judges, and their assessments of judicial performance. This 2022 survey included 29 trial court judges eligible for retention. Of those, 19 were evaluated by fewer than ten respondents, so there was not enough data to include their responses. The ten judges whose ratings are shown in this report are Judges Mead, Schally, Cagle, Gandbhir, Kristiansen, Stohler, Bennett, Haas, Peterson, and Temple.

The Alaska Judicial Council asked social service professionals to evaluate the judges on five characteristics: *Impartiality/Fairness, Integrity, Judicial Temperament, Diligence,* and *Overall*. The rating scale ranged from *Poor* (1) to *Excellent* (5).

Table 1 shows the mean ratings for each judge by respondents with direct professional experience on all five characteristics. Within each district, superior court judges appear first and are followed by district court judges.

Table 1Mean Ratings of Judges

	n	Impartiality/ Fairness <i>M</i>	Integrity M	Judicial Temperament <i>M</i>	Diligence M	Overall M
Judge Amy Gurton Mead	10	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.6
Judge Daniel Schally	11	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.4
Judge John C. Cagle	17	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6
Judge Una Sonia Gandbhir	12	4.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4
Judge Kari Kristiansen	19	2.7	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.0
Judge Kristen C. Stohler	15	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Judge Brent Bennett	13	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.7
Judge Terrence Haas	11	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5
Judge Earl Peterson	10	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.0
Judge Thomas Temple	11	2.5	2.9	2.3	3.6	2.5

Note: Ratings from only those respondents with direct professional experience with the judges.

2022 Judicial Retention Survey: Social Service Professionals

Introduction

Alaska statutes require that the Alaska Judicial Council (Council) evaluate judges standing for retention in an election year. The Council makes a recommendation to the State's voters to either retain or not retain each judge. As part of the information used to fulfill its mandate, the Council distributed surveys to Alaska social service professionals and asked them to rate judges on five characteristics: *Impartiality/Fairness, Integrity, Judicial Temperament, Diligence,* and *Overall.* Each survey also contained demographic questions about the respondents, including type of work, length of experience, community population, location of work, and gender.

To maintain objectivity, the Council contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), a research workgroup at the University of Alaska Anchorage. ISER was responsible for all aspects of distribution and data collection for the survey as well as data analysis. ISER prepared this report summarizing survey procedures and results.

The 2022 retention survey for social service professionals included 29 trial court judges eligible for retention. Of those, 19 were evaluated by fewer than ten respondents, so there was not enough data to include their responses. The ten judges whose ratings are shown in this report are Judges Mead, Schally, Cagle, Gandbhir, Kristiansen, Stohler, Bennett, Haas, Peterson, and Temple.

Methodology

State of Alaska social service professionals, specifically Office of Children's Services protective service specialists and managers (also known as social workers), guardians ad litem, court appointed special advocate (CASA) volunteers, and tribal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) workers, were invited via email to participate in an online survey.

Of the 446 social service professionals invited via email to participate, 128 initiated an online survey for a return rate of 28.7%. Of the 128 initiated surveys, 44 did not rate any judges; 84 (65.6%) respondents evaluated one or more judges. Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

		All Respo	ondents	Responder Rated ≥ 1	
		n	%	n	%
	All respondents	128	100	84	100
Type of Work					
	No response	-	-	-	-
	Protective Services Specialist (aka Social Worker)	77	60.2	55	65.5
	Guardian Ad Litem (GAL)	22	17.2	16	19.1
	CASA Volunteer	19	14.8	6	7.1
	Tribal ICWA Worker	2	1.6	1	1.2
	Other	8	6.2	6	7.1
Length of Experier	ice				
	No response	1	0.8	-	-
	5 years or fewer	67	52.3	41	48.8
	6 to 10 years	30	23.4	21	25.0
	11 to 15 years	18	14.1	12	14.2
	16 to 20 years	6	4.7	5	6.0
	More than 20 years	6	4.7	5	6.0
Community Popula					
	No response	5	3.9	3	3.6
	Under 2,000	2	1.6	1	1.2
	Between 2,000 and 35,000	52	40.6	36	42.8
	Over 35,000	69	53.9	44	52.4
Location of Work					
	No response	3	2.3	-	-
	First District	15	11.7	11	13.1
	Second District	9	7.0	1	1.2
	Third District	72	56.3	49	58.3
	Fourth District	29	22.7	23	27.4
	Outside Alaska	-	-	-	-
Gender					
	No response	2	1.6	-	-
	Male	30	23.4	21	25.0
	Female	94	73.4	62	73.8
	Another identity	2	1.6	1	1.2

Instrumentation

The survey contained the names of the judges eligible for retention, questions about demographic information for each respondent, five evaluation items for each judge, and space for respondents to provide additional comments regarding each judge.

Respondents evaluated judges in five areas of performance. Detailed instructions for each domain were provided:

Impartiality/Fairness: Please evaluate the judge's sense of basic fairness and justice and whether the judge treats all parties equally.

- *Integrity:* Please evaluate whether the judge's conduct is free from impropriety or appearance of impropriety and whether the judge makes decisions without regard to possible public criticism.
- Judicial Temperament: Please evaluate the judge's courtesy and freedom from arrogance and whether the judge manifests human understanding and compassion.
- Diligence: Please evaluate whether the judge is prepared for court proceedings, works diligently, and is reasonably prompt in making decisions.

Overall Evaluation: Please provide your overall assessment of the judge's performance.

Respondents assigned ratings for each domain using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from *Poor* (1) to *Excellent* (5). Detailed descriptions of the meaning of each point on the Likert scale were provided:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Poor	Deficient	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Seldom meets minimum standards of performance for this court	Does not always meet minimum standards of performance for this court	Meets minimum standards of performance for this court	Often exceeds minimum standards of performance for this court	Consistently exceeds minimum standards of performance for this court

Confidentiality and Data Safety

The survey introduction included a statement that reassured respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. Confidentiality is also a paramount concern at ISER and translated into specific procedures related to data security. Because data such as those collected through the judicial retention survey are of a sensitive nature, ISER has rigorous procedures to protect data. Organizational policies and procedures highlight the requirement for confidentiality and ensure that only staff involved with the project have access to the data. All data are maintained on a secure server.

Each potential respondent was provided with a unique URL that could only be used once and only accessed from the e-mail address to which it was sent. Online data were downloaded from the survey website and imported into SPSS for analysis.

Results

Ten superior court judges were rated by ten or more respondents: Judges Mead, Schally, Cagle, Gandbhir, Kristiansen, Stohler, Bennett, Haas, Peterson, and Temple. Their results are presented below. The remaining judges were not rated by enough respondents to report valid statistical results.

Table 3 shows survey respondents' level of experience with each judge, with options of direct professional experience, professional reputation, and other personal contacts.

Table 3Level of Experience with Judges

		% of all	% of all Percent of Respondents Basin			
	п	respondents who rated judge	Direct Professional Experience	Professional Reputation	Other Personal Contacts	
Judge Amy Gurton Mead	10	7.8	100.0	-	-	
Judge Daniel Schally	11	8.6	100.0	-	-	
Judge John C. Cagle	18	14.1	94.4	5.6	-	
Judge Una Sonia Gandbhir	12	9.4	100.0	-	-	
Judge Kari Kristiansen	19	14.8	100.0	-	-	
Judge Kristen C. Stohler	15	11.7	100.0	-	-	
Judge Brent Bennett	13	10.2	100.0	-	-	
Judge Terrence Haas	11	8.6	100.0	-	-	
Judge Earl Peterson	10	7.8	100.0	-	-	
Judge Thomas Temple	12	9.4	91.7	8.3	-	

Results (cont.)

Tables 4 and 5 present details on the *Overall* item. Table 4 compares all ratings to those from respondents with direct professional experience and includes the median rating (Mdn) and the standard deviation (SD) in addition to number of respondents and average. Table 5, which only presents data from those respondents who indicated direct professional experience, provides the distribution of responses on the *Overall* item.

The remaining tables (6-25) provide a summary of respondents' experience with each judge and detailed information on ratings provided by respondent experience. Throughout this report, results based on small numbers of respondents within the cross-tabulations should be regarded with caution and more weight given to the overall results.

	All Respondents				Respon		n Direct Pro erience	ofessional
	п	M	Mdn	SD	n	M	Mdn	SD
Judge Amy Gurton Mead	9	3.6	4.0	1.1	9	3.6	4.0	1.1
Judge Daniel Schally	11	4.4	5.0	0.8	11	4.4	5.0	0.8
Judge John C. Cagle	17	3.5	4.0	0.9	16	3.6	4.0	0.9
Judge Una Sonia Gandbhir	11	4.4	4.0	0.5	11	4.4	4.0	0.5
Judge Kari Kristiansen	19	3.0	3.0	0.9	19	3.0	3.0	0.9
Judge Kristen C. Stohler	15	4.0	4.0	0.7	15	4.0	4.0	0.7
Judge Brent Bennett	12	4.7	5.0	0.5	12	4.7	5.0	0.5
Judge Terrence Haas	11	3.5	3.0	1.1	11	3.5	3.0	1.1
Judge Earl Peterson	9	4.0	4.0	0.5	9	4.0	4.0	0.5
Judge Thomas Temple	11	2.5	3.0	1.1	10	2.5	3.0	1.2

Table 4Summary of Overall Ratings

Table 5Distribution of Responses for Overall Rating

		Po	or	Def	icient	Acce	ptable	G	bod	Exe	cellent
	n	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Judge Amy Gurton Mead	9	-	-	2	22.2	2	22.2	3	33.3	2	22.2
Judge Daniel Schally	11	-	-	-	-	2	18.2	3	27.3	6	54.5
Judge John C. Cagle	16	-	-	2	12.5	5	31.3	7	43.8	2	12.5
Judge Una Sonia Gandbhir	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	63.6	4	36.4
Judge Kari Kristiansen	19	-	-	7	36.8	6	31.6	5	26.3	1	5.3
Judge Kristen C. Stohler	15	-	-	-	-	3	20.0	9	60.0	3	20.0
Judge Brent Bennett	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	33.3	8	66.7
Judge Terrence Haas	11	1	9.1	-	-	5	45.5	3	27.3	2	18.2
Judge Earl Peterson	9	-	-	-	-	1	11.1	7	77.8	1	11.1
Judge Thomas Temple	10	3	30.0	1	10.0	4	40.0	2	20.0	-	-

Note: Ratings from only those respondents with direct professional experience with the judges.

		п	%
	All respondents	10	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	10	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	10	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	2	20.0
	Moderate amount of experience	6	60.0
	Limited amount of experience	2	20.0

Table 7Judge Amy Gurton MeadDetailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	M	M	M
All respondents	10	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.6
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	10	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.6
Experience within last 5 years	10	3.3	3.7	3.3	3.9	3.6
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	2	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Moderate amount of experience	6	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.3
Limited amount of experience	2	3.0	3.5	3.0	4.5	3.5
Professional reputation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 8Judge Daniel SchallyDemographic Description of Respondents

		n	%
	All respondents	11	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	11	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	10	90.9
	Substantial amount of experience	2	18.2
	Moderate amount of experience	5	45.5
	Limited amount of experience	4	36.4

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 9 Judge Daniel Schally Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	\boldsymbol{M}	\boldsymbol{M}	M
All respondents	11	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.4
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	11	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.4
Experience within last 5 years	10	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.3
Experience not within last 5 years	1	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
Substantial amount of experience	2	5.0	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.0
Moderate amount of experience	5	4.0	3.8	3.4	3.6	4.0
Limited amount of experience	4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5
Professional reputation	-	_	_	-	_	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 10Judge John C. CagleDemographic Description of Respondents

		n	%
	All respondents	18	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	17	94.4
	Professional reputation	1	5.6
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	17	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	7	41.2
	Moderate amount of experience	7	41.2
	Limited amount of experience	3	17.6

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 11 Judge John C. Cagle Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	\boldsymbol{M}	M	M
All respondents	18	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.5	3.5
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	17	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6
Experience within last 5 years	17	3.5	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.6
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	7	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.4	3.7
Moderate amount of experience	7	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.3
Limited amount of experience	3	3.3	4.0	3.0	3.7	3.7
Professional reputation	1	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 12Judge Una Sonia GandbhirDemographic Description of Respondents

		п	%
	All respondents	12	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	12	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	12	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	4	33.3
	Moderate amount of experience	6	50.0
	Limited amount of experience	2	16.7

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 13 Judge Una Sonia Gandbhir Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	M	\boldsymbol{M}	M
All respondents	12	4.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	12	4.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4
Experience within last 5 years	12	4.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	4	4.5	5.0	4.8	4.5	4.5
Moderate amount of experience	6	4.0	4.8	4.0	4.2	4.4
Limited amount of experience	2	3.5	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.0
Professional reputation	-	-	_	-	_	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

		n	%
	All respondents	19	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	19	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	19	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	12	63.2
	Moderate amount of experience	6	31.6
	Limited amount of experience	1	5.3

Table 15 Judge Kari Kristiansen Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	M	M	M
All respondents	19	2.7	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.0
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	19	2.7	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.0
Experience within last 5 years	19	2.7	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.0
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	12	2.9	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.1
Moderate amount of experience	6	2.3	3.5	2.3	4.0	2.8
Limited amount of experience	1	2.0	3.0	5.0	4.0	3.0
Professional reputation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 16Judge Kristen C. StohlerDemographic Description of Respondents

		n	%
	All respondents	15	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	15	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	15	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	6	40.0
	Moderate amount of experience	8	53.3
	Limited amount of experience	1	6.7

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 17 Judge Kristen C. Stohler Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	\boldsymbol{M}	M	M
All respondents	15	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	15	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Experience within last 5 years	15	3.3	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	6	3.0	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.0
Moderate amount of experience	8	3.5	4.1	3.6	3.9	4.0
Limited amount of experience	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Professional reputation	-	_	_	-	_	_
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 18Judge Brent BennettDemographic Description of Respondents

		n	%
	All respondents	13	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	13	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	13	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	4	30.8
	Moderate amount of experience	8	61.5
	Limited amount of experience	1	7.7

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 19 Judge Brent Bennett Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	M	M	M
All respondents	13	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.7
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	13	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.7
Experience within last 5 years	13	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.7
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	4	4.8	4.5	5.0	4.5	4.8
Moderate amount of experience	8	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.6
Limited amount of experience	1	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	5.0
Professional reputation	-	-	_	-	_	_
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

		n	%
	All respondents	11	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	11	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	10	90.9
	Substantial amount of experience	3	27.3
	Moderate amount of experience	7	63.6
	Limited amount of experience	1	9.1

Table 21 Judge Terrence Haas Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	M	M	M
All respondents	11	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	11	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5
Experience within last 5 years	10	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.4
Experience not within last 5 years	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Substantial amount of experience	3	3.7	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.7
Moderate amount of experience	7	3.1	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.3
Limited amount of experience	1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Professional reputation	-	_	_	-	_	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

		n	%
	All respondents	10	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	10	100.0
	Professional reputation	-	-
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	9	90.0
	Substantial amount of experience	5	50.0
	Moderate amount of experience	4	40.0
	Limited amount of experience	1	10.0

Table 23 Judge Earl Peterson Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/	T , I ,	Judicial	D	A B
	n	Fairness M	Integrity M	Temperament <i>M</i>	Diligence <i>M</i>	Overall M
All respondents	10	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.0
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	10	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.9	4.0
Experience within last 5 years	9	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.0
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	5	4.5	4.8	4.0	3.8	4.0
Moderate amount of experience	4	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.0	4.0
Limited amount of experience	1	4.0	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0
Professional reputation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 24Judge Thomas TempleDemographic Description of Respondents

		n	%
	All respondents	12	100
Experience with Judge			
	Direct professional experience	11	91.7
	Professional reputation	1	8.3
	Other personal contacts	-	-
Detailed Experience*			
	Recent experience (within last 5 years)	11	100.0
	Substantial amount of experience	4	36.4
	Moderate amount of experience	4	36.4
	Limited amount of experience	3	27.3

*Only among those respondents reporting direct professional experience with the judge.

Table 25 Judge Thomas Temple Detailed Responses

		Impartiality/		Judicial		
		Fairness	Integrity	Temperament	Diligence	Overall
	n	M	M	\boldsymbol{M}	M	M
All respondents	12	2.5	2.9	2.2	3.6	2.5
Basis for Evaluation						
Direct professional experience	11	2.5	2.9	2.3	3.6	2.5
Experience within last 5 years	11	2.5	2.9	2.3	3.6	2.5
Experience not within last 5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
Substantial amount of experience	4	2.3	2.8	2.0	2.8	2.3
Moderate amount of experience	4	2.3	3.0	2.0	4.0	2.3
Limited amount of experience	3	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.3	3.0
Professional reputation	1	2.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	2.0
Other personal contacts	-	-	-	-	-	-