



# alaska judicial council

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## Press Release

Contact: Susanne DiPietro, Executive Director  
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For immediate release  
February 6, 2026

## Announcing Applicants

### ***Alaska Court of Appeals, Kotzebue Superior, Anchorage Superior, & Anchorage District Courts***

Four attorneys have applied to the Alaska Judicial Council for a position on the Alaska Court of Appeals, two attorneys have applied for a position on the Kotzebue Superior Court, three attorneys have applied for a position on the Anchorage Superior Court, and eleven attorneys have applied to a position on the Anchorage District Court. These vacancies are due to the impending retirements of The Honorable Timothy W. Terrell (Alaska Court of Appeals), The Honorable Paul A. Roetman (Kotzebue Superior), The Honorable Dani Crosby (Anchorage Superior Court), and The Honorable David R. Wallace (Anchorage 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 evaluation, according to the Council's Executive Director, Susanne DiPietro. Interviews with applicants and public hearings will be held in May 2026. The Council will nominate two or more applicants for each vacancy to send to the governor, after which the governor will have 45 days to make appointments from the Council's lists of nominees.

**The applicants for the Alaska Court of Appeals are:**

**Mark Clark:** Mr. Clark has been an Alaska resident for 8½ years and has practiced law for 9½ years. He graduated from Northern Kentucky University, Salmon P. Chase College of Law in 2016 and is currently the district attorney for the Department of Law in Bethel.

**Patricia L. Haines:** Judge Haines has been an Alaska resident for 15 years and has practiced law for 14 years. She graduated from Temple University Beasley School of Law in 2010 and is currently a superior court judge in Fairbanks.

**Kelly Taylor:** Ms. Taylor has been an Alaska resident for 44½ years and has practiced law for 15½ years. She graduated from Duke University School of Law in 2009 and is currently an assistant public defender with the appellate unit in Anchorage.

**Matt Widmer:** Mr. Widmer has been an Alaska resident for 20½ years and has practiced law for 20½ years. He graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2005 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

**The applicants for the Kotzebue Superior Court are:**

**Daniel DalleMolle:** Mr. DalleMolle has been an Alaska resident for 41½ years and has practiced law for 12½ years. He graduated from Arizona State University – Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law in 2013 and is currently the supervising attorney for the Alaska Public Defender Agency in Kotzebue.

**Nicholas Adam Defreitas:** Mr. Defreitas has been an Alaska resident for 7 years and has practiced law for 8 years. He graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2017 and is currently a magistrate judge in Utqiagvik.

**The applicants for the Anchorage Superior Court are:**

**Loren Patrick Hildebrandt:** Mr. Hildebrandt has been an Alaska resident for 42 years and has practiced law for 16 years. He graduated from the University of Washington School of Law in 2009 and is currently a magistrate judge in Anchorage.

**Matt Widmer:** Mr. Widmer has been an Alaska resident for 20½ years and has practiced law for 20½ years. He graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2005 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

**David Wilkinson:** Mr. Wilkinson has been an Alaska resident for 38½ years and has practiced law for 13½ years. He graduated from the Seattle University School of Law in 2012 and is currently a senior assistant attorney general with the Department of Law in Anchorage.

**The applicants for the Anchorage District Court are:**

**Michael John Branson:** Mr. Branson has been an Alaska resident for 44½ years and has been practicing law for 9 years. He graduated from the Southern Illinois University School of Law in 2016 and is currently in private practice.

**Ronald Dupuis:** Mr. Dupuis has been an Alaska resident for 15½ years and has practiced law for 15 years. He graduated from Vermont Law School in 2009 and is currently an assistant attorney general with the Office of Special Prosecutions in Anchorage.

**Lindsay Ingaldson:** Ms. Ingaldson has been an Alaska resident for 37 years and has practiced law for 6½ years. She graduated from Mitchell Hamline College of Law (William Michell College of Law) in 2017 and is currently an assistant attorney general with the Office of Special Prosecutions in Anchorage.

**Eva Khadjinova:** Ms. Khadjinova has been an Alaska resident for 12 years and has practiced law for 16 years. She graduated from the Syracuse University College of Law in 2008 and is currently the supervising attorney for Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) in Anchorage.

**Julia Metzger:** Ms. Metzger has been an Alaska resident for 13½ years and has practiced law for 13½ years. She graduated from the Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law in 2012 and is currently a supervising assistant public advocate with the Office of Public Advocacy in Anchorage.

**Ben Muse:** Mr. Muse has been an Alaska resident for 44 years and has practiced law for 15 years. He graduated from the Gonzaga University School of Law in 2010 and is currently an assistant federal defender in Anchorage.

**Eric Salinger:** Mr. Salinger has been an Alaska resident for 12½ years and has practiced law for 12½ years. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 2013 and is currently an administrative law judge in Anchorage.

**Patrick Sherry:** Mr. Sherry has been an Alaska resident for 38 years and has practiced law for 15 years. He graduated from the University of Colorado Law School in 2010 and is currently a senior assistant attorney general with the Department of Law in Anchorage.

**Hannah Steketee:** Ms. Steketee has been an Alaska resident for 5½ years and has practiced law for 5½ years. She graduated from West Virginia University School of Law in 2020 and is currently a magistrate judge in Palmer.

**Sam Vandergaw:** Mr. Vandergaw has been an Alaska resident for 41½ years and has practiced law for 15½ years. He graduated from the Gonzaga University School of Law in 2009 and is currently an assistant attorney general with the Office of Special Prosecutions in Anchorage.

**Matt Widmer:** Mr. Widmer has been an Alaska resident for 20½ years and has practiced law for 20½ years. He graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2005 and is currently in private practice 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 DIPETRO,  
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