



alaska judicial council

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Press Release

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Announcing Applicants

Juneau, Sitka, and Anchorage Superior Courts

Two attorneys have applied to the Alaska Judicial Council for a position on the Juneau Superior Court, two attorneys have applied for a position on the Sitka Superior Court, and seven attorneys have applied for a position on the Anchorage Superior 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 August 2023. 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 Juneau Superior Court are:

Andrew Dunmire: Mr. Dunmire has been an Alaska resident for 12½ years and has practiced law for 11½ years. He graduated from Washington and Lee University School of Law in 2011 and currently serves as Legislative Counsel for the Alaska Legislature, Division of Legal and Research Services, in Juneau.

Nicholas Polasky: Mr. Polasky has been an Alaska resident for 36 years and has practiced law for 16 years. He graduated from the University of St. Thomas School of Law in 2006 and is currently in private practice in Juneau.

The applicants for the Sitka Superior Court are:

Amy Fenske: Ms. Fenske has been an Alaska resident for 20 years and has practiced law for 20 years. She graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law in 2000 and is currently an assistant district attorney in Sitka.

William T. Montgomery: Judge Montgomery has been an Alaska resident for 12 years and has practiced law for 11 years. He graduated from William Mitchell College of Law in 2010 and is currently a district court judge in Bethel.

The applicants for the Anchorage Superior Court are:

Kate Demarest: Ms. Demarest has been an Alaska resident for 12½ years and has practiced law for 14½ years. She graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in 2008 and is currently a senior assistant attorney general in the Opinions, Appeals, and Ethics section at the Department of Law.

Kari Lyn McCrea: Judge McCrea has been an Alaska resident for 17½ years and has practiced law for 21½ years. She graduated from Mitchell Hamline School of Law in 2001 and is currently a district court judge in Anchorage.

Patrick J. McKay, Jr.: Mr. McKay has been an Alaska resident for 31½ years and has practiced law for 11½ years. He graduated from Western State University College of Law in 2011 and is currently an assistant district attorney and the Major Crimes Unit Supervisor in Anchorage.

David A. Nesbett: Judge Nesbett has been an Alaska resident for 51 years and has practiced law for 22½ years. He graduated from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in 1998 and is currently a district court judge in Anchorage.

Dané Pontious: Ms. Pontious has been an Alaska resident for 19 years and has practiced law for 18½ years. She graduated from the University of Denver, College of Law, in 2004 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

Rob Sato: Mr. Sato has been an Alaska resident for 28 years and has practiced law for 27½ years. He graduated from the University of California, Davis School of Law in 1994 and is currently in private practice in Anchorage.

Sam Vandergaw: Mr. Vandergaw has been an Alaska resident for 38½ years and has practiced law for 13 years. He graduated from Gonzaga University School of Law in 2009 and is currently an assistant attorney general in the Office of Special Prosecutions and serves as the Rural Unit Supervisor, Violent Case Prosecution 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.

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