

**Alaska Court System
Class Specification**

MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Range: 22

EEO4: 02

SOC: 23-1023

Class Code: C4107

Definition:

A rural Magistrate Judge is appointed by the presiding judge and serves as an on-call judicial officer in a rural court location serving one or more small communities. A Magistrate Judge serves as a judicial officer with limited district court jurisdiction pursuant to AS 22.15.010-270 and other statutes.

Incumbents serve as either: 1) a full-time judicial officer in a larger rural court location without another resident judicial officer; OR 2) a full-time judicial officer in a small rural court location who regularly travels to one or more court locations (working title Circuit Magistrate Judge).

Incumbents perform limited judicial duties that are frequently of circumscribed complexity and are assisted by a rural Clerk of Court in the home court and usually by a Deputy Magistrate II in other locations served by the Magistrate Judge. The incumbent will occasionally help with clerical and accounting functions but will not routinely perform this work.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

A Magistrate Judge is a judicial officer serving one or more rural court locations at which there are no other judicial officers and typically no clerical staff. Duties include the clerical and accounting functions of the court. Travel to these locations by judges or more experienced magistrate judges is infrequent. Incumbents may provide coverage for other rural court locations on a rotating basis. Weekend, holiday, and evening work of an emergency nature is necessary but may not be frequent. Court facilities are generally small, and office space may also serve as hearing (courtroom) space. Locations may not be jury trial sites.

Supervision Received: Supervision, training, and guidance are provided to the Magistrate Judge by the presiding judge, the training judge, or others under the general direction of the presiding judge. In judicial matters there is no direct supervision except that provided in the course of judicial review by a court with appellate jurisdiction. General guidance regarding clerical, ministerial, or non-judicial functions is received from the Area Court Administrator.

Supervision Exercised: A Magistrate Judge is not assigned supervisory responsibilities.

Complexity of Tasks: A Magistrate Judge performs legal work related to minor offenses, misdemeanors, and related matters that are generally uncontested and less complex in nature.

Independent Judgment: The duties of a Magistrate Judge require the exercise of independent judgment regarding routine, less complex tasks. The Magistrate Judge is expected to seek assistance from training judges or others when appropriate.

Consequence of Error: The decisions of a Magistrate Judge regarding preliminary matters (setting of bail, acceptance of not guilty pleas) are generally reviewed when a defendant is transported or further hearings are held. Other decisions, such as sentencing, are generally reviewed only if appealed. The Magistrate Judge performs all clerical work in support of the court location; errors are routinely correctable.

Examples of Duties:

Perform magistrate duties pursuant to AS 22.15.

Perform all judicial functions relating to minor offenses such as arraignments, trials, acceptance of pleas, sentencing, and limited post-sentence monitoring. The incumbent may perform some clerical tasks

Perform all less-complex misdemeanor tasks, including accepting complaints, ordering warrants and summonses, presiding over arraignments, accepting pleas, and imposing sentences.

Issue routine search warrants.

Hear domestic violence actions primarily at the emergency stage.

Perform duties relating to felony first appearances, emergency children's proceedings, extradition proceedings, and small claims trials.

Perform coroner functions, usually with the assistance of the regional coroner/public administrator. Not generally expected to perform complex master's work.

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities:

A Magistrate Judge requires knowledge of:

- Alaska Statutes, Rules of Court, regulations, and local ordinances.
- Basic office and court procedures.

A Magistrate Judge requires skill in order to:

- Find facts, apply the law, make routine or preliminary decisions for a small community whose size, caseload, isolation, and limited legal or law enforcement presence usually generate minimally complex cases.

A Magistrate Judge requires the ability to:

- Follow written instructions and apply basic legal principles in routine matters.
- Communicate effectively with the general public.
- Render fair and impartial decisions.

Minimum Qualifications:

1. Must be a citizen of the United States of America and of the State of Alaska.
2. Must be at least 21 years of age.
3. Must be a resident of Alaska for at least six months immediately preceding appointment as magistrate.

NOTE:

Term of Office. Magistrate Judges are appointed to a four-year term and serve a one-year probationary period. The probationary period may be extended. Following successful completion of the probationary period, an incumbent may only be removed from office for cause during their term. A Magistrate Judge may be reappointed to additional four-year terms.

APOC Reporting. Judicial Officers are required to file an initial financial disclosure statement with the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) within 30 days of taking office and annually (by March 15) thereafter.

Public Reports of Compensation. Canon 4H(3) of the Code of Judicial Conduct requires judges to file an annual report of any extra-judicial activity for which the judge received compensation. Reports are filed with the Office of the Administrative Director.

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