UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

Application Instructions

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This package provides information on applying for a 14-year term as a United States Bankruptcy Judge in the Ninth Circuit. The materials in this packet are:

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Information for Applicants

A. QUALIFICATIONS OF U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGES

To be qualified for appointment as a U.S. bankruptcy judge, pursuant to the Judicial Council of the Ninth Circuit's Regulations Governing the Appointment of U.S. Bankruptcy Judges (2007); the Guide to Judiciary Policy, Volume 3, Chapter 3, § 320; and Chapter 4 of "The Selection, Appointment, and Reappointment of United States Bankruptcy Judges," Judges Information Series No. 3 (January 2026), applicants must meet the following standards:

1. Be a member of at least one state bar, the District of Columbia, or one of the United States territories, and in good standing in every bar association in which they are admitted to practice.

2. Possess and have a reputation for integrity and good character.

3. Possess and have demonstrated a commitment to equal justice under the law.

4. Possess and have demonstrated outstanding legal ability and competence (evidenced by substantial legal experience, ability to deal with complex legal problems, aptitude for legal scholarship and writing, and familiarity with courts and court processes).

5. Indicate by their demeanor, character, and personality that they would exhibit judicial temperament, if appointed.

6. Be of sound physical and mental health sufficient to perform the essential duties of the office.

7. May not be related by blood or marriage to a judge of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals or the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council, or to a judge of the district court to be served, within the degree specified in 28 U.S.C. § 458 at the time of initial appointment.

8. Must have been engaged in the active practice of law for at least five years unless the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council determines that special conditions exist. The Council may consider as substitute experience for the active practice of law the following, including any combination thereof:

    a. Judge of a state court of record or other state judicial officer.
    b. United States magistrate judge, referee in bankruptcy, bankruptcy judge, or other federal judicial officer.
    c. Attorney for federal or state agencies.
    d. Law clerk to any judge or judicial officer (limited to two years).
    e. Other legal experience which is suitable as a substitute.

9. Must comply with the financial disclosure requirements of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-521, 92 Stat. 1824 (1978) (codified as amended at 5 U.S.C. app. §§ 101-111).

B. JUDGESHIP AVAILABILITY/TERM OF APPOINTMENT

The Merit Screening Committee is searching for the best-qualified individuals currently available for appointment to a fourteen-year term as a bankruptcy judge for the Ninth Circuit.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION NOTICE

Federal law requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities. Please tell us if you require a reasonable accommodation to apply for this position or perform this position if selected. Examples of reasonable accommodation include making a change to the application process or work procedures, providing documents in an alternate format, using a sign language interpreter, or using specialized equipment.

D. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE SALARY

Bankruptcy judge salaries are set by Congress to equal 92% of the salary of a United States district judge.

E. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE JURISDICTION

The basic jurisdiction of a bankruptcy judge is specified in 28 U.S.C. § 151 and in Title 11, United States Code, as well as in 98 Stat. 344 P.L. 98-353, Title I, Section 120.

F. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Applicants are considered without regard to race, sex, or gender (including pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, and parenthood), color, creed, national origin, citizenship, ancestry, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, or past, current, or prospective service in the uniformed forces, in addition to any other status or characteristic protected under applicable federal law. The United States Courts is an equal opportunity employer.

G. NINTH CIRCUIT SELECTION PROCESS

The Court of Appeals uses a competitive open-selection merit process in making appointments for the fourteen-year term of office of a bankruptcy judge. It is an extended and time-consuming procedure. Applicants should expect the entire process to take at least 12-18 months. Following is a brief description of this selection process.

1. The process is initiated by a district Merit Screening Committee (MSC), which typically includes a circuit judge, the chief district judge, the chief bankruptcy judge, state bar president, local bar association president, and dean of a law school within the district, or their designees. This committee reviews all timely submitted applications, conducts background reference checks on selected applicants, and interviews those deemed most qualified. The interview time for any one candidate generally lasts 30-45 minutes. The MSC prepares a written report and recommends the best-qualified applicants for further consideration.

2. The MSC's recommendations are then considered by the Court-Council Committee on Bankruptcy Appointments (Committee). The Committee is composed of four circuit judges and one chief bankruptcy judge. The Committee considers the candidates referred by the MSC and makes any additional inquiries it deems necessary, including conducting another interview.

3. Based on the interviews conducted, all materials gathered, and preliminary disclosures submitted, the Committee prepares a report to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council (Council) to request certification that appropriate recruitment procedures were followed. The Council is composed of circuit and district judges and is the governing administrative body of the Circuit.

4. After the Council certification, the Committee sends the report to the full Court of Appeals recommending the name of one candidate for each vacancy to be filled. The Court of Appeals will vote on this recommendation.

5. Once the Court of Appeals makes its nomination for appointment, an FBI and IRS check of the nominated candidate is initiated. This generally requires three to six months to complete. Following receipt of the FBI and IRS reports and a determination of suitability, the Chief Circuit Judge will issue an Order of Appointment. This concludes the process and a public announcement regarding the appointment will be made.

H. REMOVAL OF A BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 152(e), a "bankruptcy judge may be removed during the term for which such bankruptcy judge is appointed, only for incompetence, misconduct, neglect of duty, or physical or mental disability and only by the judicial council of the circuit in which the judge's official duty station is located. Removal may not occur unless a majority of all of the judges of such council concur in the order of removal. Before any order of removal may be entered, a full specification of charges shall be furnished to such bankruptcy judge who shall be accorded an opportunity to be heard on such charges."

I. DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

1. Applicants must follow all instructions provided. No additional notice or warnings regarding these instructions or requirements will be provided.

2. All applications must be typed and adhere to the Ninth Circuit application format. Do not alter the format of the application. This Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Judge application form (revised 10/2026) is used for all Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Judge recruitments.

3. Answer all questions as thoroughly, comprehensively, and candidly as possible. If a question or section is not applicable, please indicate as such. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

4. If there is insufficient space for your response on the application itself, use a separate attached page. All attached pages should be appended to the application,

refer to the related section and corresponding question number, and include the restated question.

5. Complete and sign the Authorizations and Waivers of the application.

6. Do not include photos of yourself in the application form or in any part of the appended materials. If included, they will be redacted.

7. A maximum of three optional letters of reference may be submitted and should be addressed to the Office of the Circuit Executive for the Ninth Circuit. Such letters must accompany the completed application. Unless specifically requested by the Office of the Circuit Executive, no letters or documents received separately from the completed application will be considered.

8. Reference checks may be conducted during this recruitment process, which may not be limited to the persons named on the application as "references." If this is concerning, please contact the Office of the Circuit Executive as soon as possible.

9. Applicants should complete and return only the application form and any supplemental materials. Do not send these instructions.

10. Applicants who are selected for an interview by the MSC will be required to provide a transcript from all law schools attended and evidence of good standing in all bar associations in which membership is held.

11. Applicants who are selected for an interview with the Committee will be required to submit health information and preliminary disclosures, including tax records.

J. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Please email a single combined PDF of your completed and signed application and supplemental materials to the Office of the Circuit Executive for the Ninth Circuit at personnel@ce9.uscourts.gov.

All application materials must be received in electronic copy via email by the closing date and time listed on the vacancy announcement. Absent extraordinary circumstances, late applications will not be considered.

Applicants may submit concerns about discriminatory treatment during the recruitment process to the Ninth Circuit Office of Workplace Relations at workplacedirector@ce9.uscourts.gov.

Applicants may submit concerns about any other aspect of the recruitment process to the Office of the Circuit Executive at personnel@ce9.uscourts.gov.