

**UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE
FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT**

Application Instructions



revised 01/2025

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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 (May 2016), applicants must meet the following standards:

1. Be a member in good standing of at least one state bar, the District of Columbia, or one of the United States territories, and every state bar 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 similarity 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. They 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. They 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
 - c. Referee in Bankruptcy
 - d. Bankruptcy Judge, or other federal judicial officer
 - e. Attorney for federal or state agencies
 - f. Law clerk to any judge or judicial officer (limited to two years)
 - g. Other legal experience which is suitable as a substitute in the opinion of

the majority of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

9. 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 14-year term as a bankruptcy judge for the Ninth Circuit.

C. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE SALARY

The current annual salary is \$227,608. Bankruptcy judge salaries are set by Congress to equal 92% of the salary of a United States district judge (\$247,400).

D. 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.

E. 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.

F. NINTH CIRCUIT SELECTION PROCESS

The Court of Appeals uses a competitive open-selection merit process in making appointments for the 14-year term of office of a bankruptcy judge. It is an extended and time-consuming procedure. Applicants should expect the entire process to take about six months. Following is a brief description of this selection process.

1. The process is initiated by a district Merit Screening Committee (MSC) made up of the administrative 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 most outstanding 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 three or four U.S. circuit judges and one chief bankruptcy judge. The Committee considers the candidates referred by the MSC and makes any additional inquiries it deems necessary, which typically includes another interview.

3. Based on the interview and background checks, the Committee prepares a report to the Ninth Circuit Judicial Council (Council), certifying that appropriate recruitment procedures were followed. The Council is composed of circuit and district judges and is the governing administrative body of the Circuit. It is the Council's responsibility to certify that appropriate recruitment procedures were followed.
4. The Committee also sends a report to the full Court of Appeals recommending the name of one candidate for each vacancy to be filled.
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 6-8 months. Upon determination by the Court of Appeals that the investigative reports do not contain information that would make it reconsider its nomination, it issues an Order of Appointment. It is only at this point that a public announcement regarding the appointment is made.

G. 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.”

H. DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

1. Applicants must follow all instructions provided herein. 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 4/2024) is used for Ninth Circuit Bankruptcy Judge recruitments.
2. Answer all questions as thoroughly as possible. If a question or section is not applicable, please indicate as such. Incomplete applications will not be processed.
3. If there is insufficient space for your response on the application itself, use a separate attachment sheet. Any attached sheets should be appended to the application and should refer to the related page and question number.
4. Complete and sign the Authorizations and Waivers of the application.
5. Do not include photos of yourself in the application form or in any part of the appended materials. Any such photos will be redacted.

6. All optional letters of reference, which should be addressed to the Office of the Circuit Executive for the Ninth Circuit, and supporting documents must accompany the completed application. Letters of reference received separately from the submission of the completed application will not be considered, unless specifically requested by the Office of the Circuit Executive.
7. Reference checks may be conducted upon receipt of the completed application. We do not limit such contacts solely to those persons named on the application as “references.” If this is concerning, please contact the Office of the Circuit Executive as soon as possible.
8. Applicants should complete and return only the application form and any supplemental materials. Do not send these instructions.
9. Only applicants who are selected for interview by the MSC will be required to provide a transcript from all law schools attended and evidence of good standing in all state bars in which membership is held.

I. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

All application materials must be received in hard copy by delivery service or U.S. mail and in electronic copy via email by the closing date listed on the vacancy announcement. Absent extraordinary circumstances, late applications will not be considered.

1. Hard Copy: Send a completed and signed original hard copy of your application and supplemental materials to the Office of the Circuit Executive for the Ninth Circuit at one of the addresses listed below. The original materials should be single sided and secured with a binder clip. Do not staple or hole punch your application materials.

Parcel/Express Delivery service
 Office of the Circuit Executive
 U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit
 95 Seventh Street, Suite 429
 San Francisco, CA 94103-1526

U.S. Mail
 Office of the Circuit Executive
 U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit
 P.O. Box 193939
 San Francisco, CA 94119-3939

Attention: Bankruptcy Judgeship Recruitment – [District]

2. Electronic Copy: Email a PDF copy of your completed and signed application and supplemental materials to the Office of the Circuit Executive at the Ninth Circuit at personnel@ce9.uscourts.gov.

THE UNITED STATES COURTS IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

If an applicant believes that he or she is the recipient of discriminatory treatment at any time during the recruitment process, or if an applicant has a complaint about any other aspect of the merit selection process, such complaint should be addressed to:

**Office of the Circuit Executive
c/o Office of Workplace Relations
United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit
P.O. Box 193939
San Francisco, CA 94119-3939**