

STATE OF ALASKA
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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May 5, 2025

MEMORANDUM


TO: Honorable Susan M. Carney
 Chief Justice, Alaska Supreme Court
 303 K St., 5th Floor
 Anchorage, AK 99501

 Senator Gary Stevens
 President of the Alaska Senate
 State Capitol, Rm 111
 Juneau, AK 99801

 Honorable Mike Dunleavy
 Governor of the State of Alaska
 P.O. Box 110001
 Juneau, AK 99811

 Representative Cathy Tilton
 Speaker of the House
 State Capitol, Rm 208
 Juneau, AK 99801

 Ms. Rebecca Patterson
 President, Alaska Bar Association
 840 K Street, Suite 100
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3353

FROM: Marla N. Greenstein, Executive Director 

RE: **2024 Annual Report**

The attached annual report outlines the activities of the Commission on Judicial Conduct during the calendar year 2024. This past calendar year continued to be a productive year for the Commission and one that emphasized our continued responsiveness to the concerns of the public. This report also highlights our plans for 2025. It is provided to you as required by the Commission's Rules of Procedure. Additional copies are available through our office or more easily available at: www.acjc.alaska.gov.

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON
JUDICIAL CONDUCT
2024 Roster**

Public Members

Todd Fletcher
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2027)

Aldean Kilbourn
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2025)

Robert Sheldon
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2028)

Attorney Members

Donald W. McClintock
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2025)

Jane Mores
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2024)

Karla Taylor-Welch
510 L Street, Suite 585
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(Term expires March 1, 2024)

Judge Members

Judge Amy G. Mead
Alaska Superior Court
PO BOX 114100
Juneau, Alaska 99881
(Term expires February 1, 2027)
(Chairperson)

Judge Ian Wheelles
Alaska Superior Court
825 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska
(Term expires February 1, 2028)

Judge Thomas I. Temple
Alaska Superior Court
101 Lacey Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(Term expires February 1, 2027)

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INTRODUCTION

Alaska's Commission on Judicial Conduct was created by amendment to the state constitution in 1968. The Commission is composed of three state court judges, three attorneys who have practiced law in the state for at least ten years, and three members of the public. This group of nine individuals from differing backgrounds and geographical areas addresses problems of judicial conduct and disability. Complaints alleging judicial misconduct may be filed by any person.

COMMISSIONER BIOGRAPHIES

Public Members (2024)

TODD FLETCHER was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska. He graduated from Service High School in 1983 and received his BA in Accounting from Western Washington University. Todd has been married to Lisa for over 25 years and they have two teenagers, Logan, who attends Dixie State in St. George, Utah, and Lauren who attends Dimond High School. He is the Branch Manager and a Senior Vice President-Investment Officer for Wells Fargo Advisors in Anchorage. He is an Eagle Scout and enjoys travel, music, camping, and softball. He was appointed to the Commission in 2019.

ALDEAN KILBOURN was born and raised in Olympia, Washington. She graduated in 1972 from the University of Washington, her major in Political Science and a minor in French. She married in 1972 and moved to Fairbanks, Alaska, where she and her husband have raised three boys. She earned her Alaska teaching certificate in 1974 from University of Alaska, Fairbanks, first substituting and then teaching full-time at the secondary level for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. From 1999 until 2010, Aldean was also a Project C.R.I.S.S. (CReating Independence through Student-owned Strategies) instructor for district teachers. Aldean earned her Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Washington in 2007. She has been active in the Fairbanks community in the historic Clay Street Cemetery Commission, the Fairbanks Genealogical Society, and Theta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma (a world-wide teachers' organization). As hobbies, her favorite activities include flying, snow machining, target practice, and reading. She was appointed to the Commission in 2021.

ROBERT D. SHELDON is a lifelong Alaskan who was raised in Talkeetna. He has a Bachelor of Science in Finance and a minor in Economics from Colorado State University. Robert has served as a director or partner for privately held organizations in aviation, banking, finance, oil & gas, and tourism. He also is active in the business community facilitating, financing, and encouraging relationships across the high latitudes and is a member of Omicron Delta Epsilon, an international economics society. His broad interest in finance extends into understanding interconnections with the judiciary. Robert has been married to Marne Sheldon for 30 years and they raised three sons. He was appointed to the Commission in 2008.

Attorney Members (2024)

DON MCCLINTOCK is an attorney in private practice with the law firm of Ashburn & Mason, PC., where he focuses on real estate and corporate transactions and finance, as well as eminent domain and land use litigation. Don worked as a law clerk for Justice Warren Matthews of the Alaska Supreme Court, and as an assistant attorney general for the State of Alaska. Don served on the Alaska Bar Association Board of Governors from 2008 to 2014, and has volunteered for many civic organizations over the years. He is a graduate of Stanford University (AB '76) and Harvard Law School (JD '80). He was appointed to the Commission in 2017.

JANE MORES was born in Canton, Ohio and moved to Southeast Alaska as a teenager. She is a graduate of Auburn University (BS '86) and the Ohio State College of Law (JD '90). Her legal career began with a firm in Anchorage, followed by nine years of private practice in Haines. Jane joined the City and Borough of Juneau Law Department's Civil Section in 2009, where she worked until semi-retiring in 2019. In 2021, Jane was beckoned back to a full-time public law practice. She is currently a Senior Assistant Attorney General in the Department of Law, Transportation Section. Jane served on the Alaska Bar Association Ethics Committee from 2002 to 2008. She was appointed to the Commission in 2019.

KARLA TAYLOR-WELCH was born and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. She received her bachelors ('77), masters ('78) and juris doctorate ('83) from Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Ms. Taylor-Welch worked for the Department of Law from 1984-2005 as an Assistant District Attorney and an Assistant Attorney General. She spent 11 years total in the DOA and 10 years in the AGO handling children and juvenile cases, as well as adult protection cases. From 2005, until her retirement in 2017, she worked for the Fairbanks section of OPA, the last two and a half years as the supervisor of the Fairbanks office. She remains an active bar member, working occasionally for private firms. Since retirement from the State of Alaska, she has been enjoying her time traveling, biking, skiing, swimming, and playing with her grandchildren. Because 2020 curtailed travel plans, she spent her time improving her skills in the fiber and quilting arts. She was appointed to the Commission in 2016.

Judicial Members (2024)

HONORABLE PAUL A. ROETMAN (August 2018 – February 2024) moved to Alaska in 1972 and has lived in Kotzebue 17 years. He was appointed to the superior court in 2010. He earned a B.A. in Economics from the University of Alaska, Anchorage and received his law degree from Regent University School of Law in Virginia. Prior to law school he worked out of Port Valdez as a commercial fisherman and as Executive Director of the Prince William Sound Economic Development Council. After law school, he worked for a civil law firm, the Alaska Legislature, and as a prosecutor for the State of Alaska. Judge Roetman currently serves as Chair of the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct, and is a member of the Three-Judge Sentencing Panel and the Statewide Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee. Judge Roetman is the Presiding Judge for the Second Judicial District. He was appointed to the Commission in 2018.

HONORABLE AMY GURTON MEAD is a Superior Court Judge in Juneau. She holds a JD Degree from Tulane Law School and a B.A. in Psychology from Boston University. Judge Mead was the Municipal Attorney for the City and Borough of Juneau when she was appointed to the bench in 2018. She began her career clerking for the Honorable Thomas Janke in Ketchikan, worked as a prosecutor for the State of Alaska, and spent a number of years in private practice before joining the City and Borough of Juneau's law department in 2010. Judge Mead is currently the Presiding Judge for the First Judicial District. She served on the Commission as an attorney member from 2012 until 2018 and was reappointed to the Commission in 2022.

HONORABLE THOMAS I. TEMPLE is a Superior Court Judge in the Fourth Judicial District in Fairbanks. He enlisted in the Marines at age seventeen, serving as a machine gunner during the Gulf War. Judge Temple then worked his way through college and law school at George Mason University, while serving in the Army National Guard. In 2001, he moved to Alaska and served as a prosecutor in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Utqiagvik, before entering private practice in Fairbanks, focusing on criminal defense and civil litigation. Judge Temple was appointed to the bench in 2018 and serves on the Criminal Rules Committee and the Court Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee. He was appointed to the Commission in 2023.

HONORABLE IAN WHEELLES is a Superior Court judge in the Third Judicial District in Anchorage, where he has lived his whole life. Judge Wheelles graduated from Dimond High School, played baseball at Illinois Tech, and completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He earned his law degree at the University of Idaho. Judge Wheelles practiced criminal defense and family law for a little over one year after law school before opening his own firm in 2009. He spent the next 13 years primarily practicing family law, in addition to a broad span of other areas. In 2015, he was appointed to serve on the Child Support Review Committee. He was appointed to the bench in 2022. Judge Wheelles enjoys spending time with his family, camping, hunting, and reading. He was appointed to the Commission in 2024.

I. THE COMMISSION'S ROLE AND FUNCTION

A. Judicial Officers Who Come Under the Commission's Authority

Alaska's Commission on Judicial Conduct oversees the conduct of justices of the Alaska Supreme Court, judges of the state court of appeals, state superior court judges, and state district court judges. The commission may not handle complaints against magistrates, administrative law judges, masters, attorneys, or federal judicial officers.

Complaints against state magistrates and masters are handled by the presiding superior court judge for their respective judicial districts:

First Judicial District

Honorable Amy G. Mead
Alaska Superior Court
P.O. BOX 114100
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Second Judicial District

Honorable Paul A. Roetman
Alaska Superior Court
P.O. BOX 317
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752-0317

Third Judicial District

Honorable Thomas A. Matthews
Alaska Superior Court
825 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2004

Fourth Judicial District

Honorable Brent E. Bennett
Alaska Superior Court
101 Lacey Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

**Complaints against attorneys can be
directed to:**

Phil Shanahan, Bar Counsel
Alaska Bar Association
Box 100279
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

**Complaints against federal judges in
Alaska are handled by:**

Assistant Circuit Executive
United States Court of Appeals
P.O. Box 193939
San Francisco, California 94119
Telephone (415) 556-6100

**Complaints against Administrative Law Judges
in Alaska can be directed to:**

Chief Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
Department of Administration
550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1940
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

B. Types of Complaints the Commission May Address (“Jurisdictional”)

1. Misconduct

The broadest category of conduct complaints against judges falls under the term "misconduct." Judicial misconduct has a very specific meaning under the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Code of Judicial Conduct generally governs the activities of judges both on and off the bench. It is a comprehensive statement of appropriate judicial behavior and has been adopted by the Alaska Supreme Court as part of the Rules of Court. Judicial misconduct can be divided into several categories.

(a) Improper Courtroom Behavior

At times complaints against judges allege improper behavior in the courtroom during a trial. Allegations of improper courtroom behavior may include: improper consideration and treatment of attorneys, parties, witnesses, and others in the hearing; improper physical conduct; or persistent failure to dispose of business promptly and responsibly.

Examples of improper courtroom behavior include racist or sexist comments by a judge, and sleeping or drunkenness on the bench. Judges can also be disciplined for administrative failures such as taking an excessive amount of time to make a decision.

(b) Improper or Illegal Influence

Judges must be independent from all outside influences that may affect their ability to be fair and impartial. Consequently, judges are restricted as to the types of activities in which they can participate. At a minimum, judges cannot allow

family, social, or political relationships to influence any judicial decision. Judges also should not hear a matter in which the judge has a personal interest in the outcome. Extreme examples of improper influence would include the giving or receiving of gifts, bribes, loans, or favors. To help assure judicial independence, judges are required to file financial disclosure statements with the court and other financial statements with the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

(c) Impropriety Off the Bench

Judges are required to live an exemplary life off the bench, as well. Consequently, the Commission has the authority and responsibility to look at judges' activities outside of the courtroom. Complaints dealing with off-the-bench conduct might allege: misuse of public employees or misappropriation of property or money for personal purposes; improper speech or associations; interference with a pending or impending lawsuit; lewd or corrupt personal life; or use of the judicial position to extort or embezzle funds. Clearly, off-the-bench conduct includes a wide range of behavior from merely inappropriate actions to criminal violations.

(d) Other Improper Activities

Judges are also subject to restrictions in other aspects of their positions. These include prohibitions against: conducting proceedings or discussions involving one party to a legal dispute; interfering with the attorney-client relationship; bias; improper campaign activities; abusing the prestige of the judicial office; obstructing justice; and criminal behavior.

2. Physical or Mental Disability

Apart from allegations of misconduct in office, the Commission also has the authority and responsibility to address allegations of judges' physical and mental disabilities. Disabilities may include: alcohol or drug abuse, senility, serious physical illness, or mental illness.

The Commission can require medical examinations as part of its investigation and also can recommend counseling when appropriate.

C. Complaints the Commission May Not Address (“Nonjurisdictional”)

The Commission has no authority to address questions of law, which are the most common complaints the Commission receives. Frequently, complaints allege dissatisfaction with decisions that judges make in their judicial capacity. For example, individuals often complain of wrong child custody awards or sentences that judges impose in criminal cases. The Commission may not enter into cases or reverse judicial decisions. That role belongs to the appellate courts.

II. HOW THE COMMISSION OPERATES

A. Filing a Complaint

While the Commission may initiate its own investigation, complaints can also be filed against any state judge by any member of the public. A blank complaint form is in **Appendix F** of this report. A form is not necessary, but the complaint should be in writing and should include enough information to enable the Commission staff to begin an investigation. Necessary information includes: the judge's name, the conduct complained of, a case number if it involves a court case, and the names of others present or aware of the facts. Complaints must be **signed** and should be sent to:

Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct

510 L Street, Suite 585

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Signed complaints may be e-mailed to administrator@acjc.state.ak.us. Commission staff is available to provide technical assistance to anyone trying to submit a complaint.

B. Complaint Investigation

Soon after a complaint is filed, Commission staff will review and research the accusation, which can include reviewing relevant CourtView information and interviewing the person who filed the complaint to determine the facts giving rise to the complaint and to ascertain whether or not the complaint appears to fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission. The Commission reviews all complaints and staff research and determines whether the complaint is jurisdictional or nonjurisdictional. Complaints that are nonjurisdictional are dismissed. All jurisdictional complaints are investigated. If after further investigation the Commission finds the accusation to be without merit, it will be

dismissed. If a preliminary investigation supports the complaint, a formal investigation begins. It is at this stage that the judge involved is informed of the complaint. A formal investigation often includes an interview with the judge.

Complaints filed with the Commission and all Commission inquiries and investigations are confidential. If the Commission finds probable cause exists to find a judge has committed misconduct that warrants action more serious than a private admonishment or counseling, a formal statement of charges is issued. The statement of charges is public information. Some time after the formal charges issue, the Commission will hold an open public formal hearing on the matter. At the hearing, Special Counsel (hired by the Commission) presents the evidentiary case against the judge. The judge is often represented by an attorney who presents the judge's evidence and defenses. The full Commission usually serves as the factfinder in the matter.

The Commission's decision after a formal hearing is based on the evidence presented and is a public document. It may decide to exonerate the judge of the charge or charges if there is a lack of clear and convincing evidence of misconduct or recommend that the Alaska Supreme Court take formal action. The Alaska Supreme Court may impose one of the following sanctions against the judge: suspension, removal, retirement, censure, or reprimand. The Alaska Supreme Court independently reviews the evidence and may decide not to impose any discipline.

COMMISSION COMPLAINT PROCESS

The complaint process begins when a written complaint is received by Commission staff. If the Commission determines that the complaint falls *outside the Commission's authority*, such as a complaint about an attorney or about a judge's legal decision, the complaint is *dismissed** by the Commission. If the complaint appears to be *within the Commission's authority*, a case number is assigned to the complaint and an initial *investigation* is begun.

During the initial *investigation* stage, a complaint is examined to determine if there is enough evidence to warrant a further investigation. Generally, this process includes close examination of the written complaint (including any evidence or explanation attached), an inspection of any relevant court documents, and, if applicable, review of court hearing audio.

If the Commission determines that there is no reliable evidence supporting the complaint, it is *dismissed** by the Commission at a meeting.

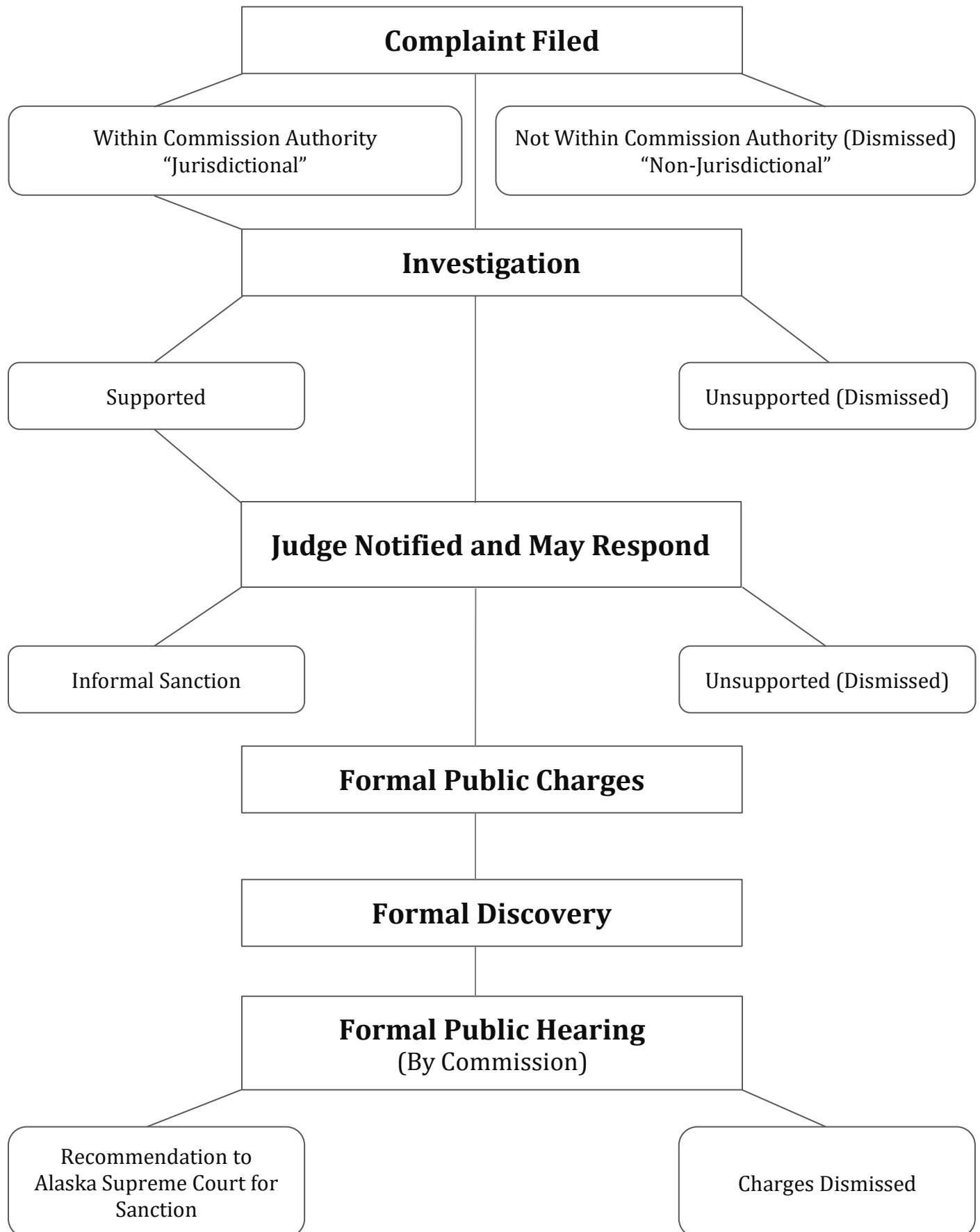
If the Commission determines the complaint appears to have enough substance to warrant action, the *judge in question is notified and given an opportunity to respond*. During this stage, the judge may provide information showing the complaint to be unfounded, may receive a private *informal admonishment*, or *private counseling*. The Commission may, after a determination of probable cause, issue *formal charges* of one or more violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The *issuing* of formal charges by the Commission starts a period of *formal discovery*, where both the Special Counsel hired by the Commission and the accused judge gather evidence and information to support their respective positions.

After the formal discovery period, a *public hearing* is held. The hearing is usually conducted by the Commission (but it is possible that a Special Master could be appointed). Special Counsel presents the case against the judge and the judge will often hire an attorney for his or her defense. There are two possible outcomes from the public hearing; either the charges are dismissed, or the Commission finds the judge committed misconduct and *recommends a sanction to the Alaska Supreme Court*.

The Alaska Supreme Court may impose the Commission's recommended sanction, modify it, or reject the Commission's decision.

*Prior to dismissal by the Commission, staff notifies the complainant in writing of the staff recommendation to dismiss.

Commission Complaint Process



III. CALENDAR YEAR 2024 ACTIVITIES

A. Summary of Complaints

The tables that follow summarize the current Commission caseload. Complaint filing numbers reflect only written complaints received by the Commission and do not reflect the numerous telephone inquiries staff receives. In 2024, staff responded in writing to 60 inquiries and more than 200 verbal and e-mail inquiries. “Complaints closed” during the annual report year may include complaints filed in a prior year but not closed until the annual report year.

In 2024, staff continued to make a concentrated effort to screen many complaints before they actually were filed with the Commission. 24 new jurisdictional complaints were filed this year. Of those jurisdictional complaints, 15 were eventually dismissed. One remaining jurisdictional complaint from 2022 and eight remaining from 2023 were dismissed in 2024.

The Commission opens approximately two complaints every month that requires staff investigation. In August of 1991, the Commission adopted a policy of processing all new incoming complaints within 90 days. Should the Commission receive more than four jurisdictional complaints in a month, the Commission established a minimum goal of fully investigating at least three complaints per month.

Table 1

Complaints Filed in 2024

Within the Commission's Authority	<i>Jurisdictional</i>	24
Not Within the Commission's Authority	<i>Non-Jurisdictional</i>	44
Total New Complaints		68

Not included are complaints received against attorneys, administrative law judges, magistrate judges or federal judges. Those were forwarded to the appropriate disciplinary authority.

Figure 1

2024 Complaint Filings

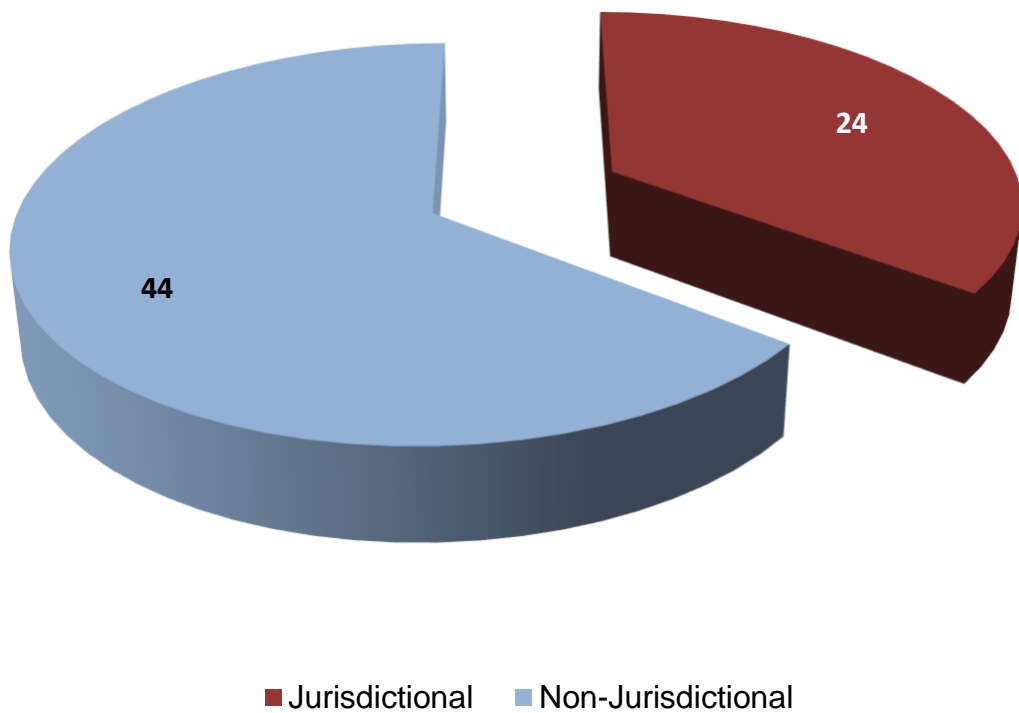


Table 1a

Total Number of Judges who Served by Judicial District

Judicial District	# of Judges
1 st	8
2 nd	3
3 rd	42
4 th	11
Appellate Courts	9
TOTAL	73

This table indicates the total number of judges who served in the district in 2024.
This number may be more than the authorized judicial positions in each district.

Table 1b

Number of Judges Named in Jurisdictional Complaints Filed in 2024

Judicial District	Urban* (# of Complaints)	Urban (# of Judges Named)	Rural (# of Complaints)	Rural (# of Judges Named)
1 st	1	1	1	1
2 nd	n/a	n/a	0	0
3 rd	13	11	2	2
4 th	5	5	2	2
Appellate Courts	0	0	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	19	17	5	5

Jurisdictional complaints are defined as those that are within the Commission's authority.

*Urban courts have been defined as court sites in: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Palmer.

Table 1c

Number of Judges Named in Non-Jurisdictional Complaints Filed in 2024

Judicial District	Urban* (# of Complaints)	Urban (# of Judges Named)	Rural (# of Complaints)	Rural (# of Judges Named)
1 st	1	1	1	1
2 nd	n/a	n/a	1	1
3 rd	30	19	3	3
4 th	6	3	0	0
Appellate Courts	3	2	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	40	25	5	5

Non-Jurisdictional complaints are defined as those that are not within the Commission's authority.

*Urban courts have been defined as court sites in: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Palmer.

Table 2

Comparison with Previous Years' Filings

Total Accusations Filed by Calendar Year

(Includes complaints both within the Commission's authority, and those not within the Commission's authority that were not screened out prior to receipt)

2024	68
2023	57
2022	53
2021	39
2020	40
2019	31
2018	44
2017	60
2016	53
2015	41
2014	60
2013	75
2012	73
2011	72
2010	52

2009	49
2008	61
2007	32
2006	58
2005	48
2004	64
2003	46
2002	44
2001	52
2000	63
1999	48
1998	57
1997	49
1996	38
1995	50

Figure 2

Total Filings Comparison by Year

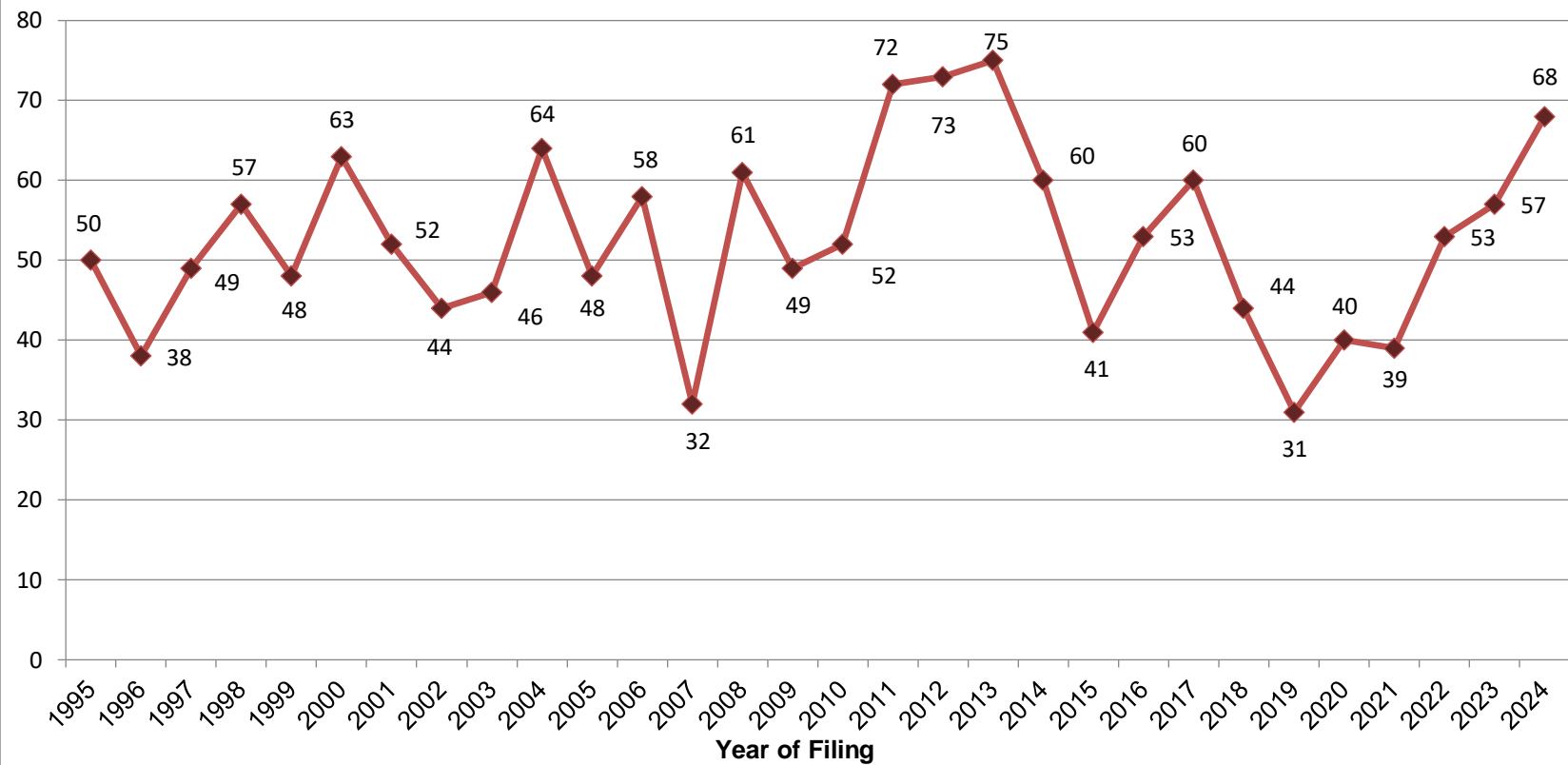


Table 3

Complaint Sources

(Jurisdictional and Non-Jurisdictional Filed by Year 2020 - 2024)

Complaint Sources	2020*	2021*	2022	2023*	2024*
Litigants	38	34	44	48	61
Non-Litigants	3	2	6	6	4
Attorneys/Judges/Court Personnel	1	4	3	4	4
Commission Initiated	0	0	0	0	0

*Some complaints had multiple sources &/or some complainants filed multiple complaints

Figure 3

Comparison of Complaint Sources

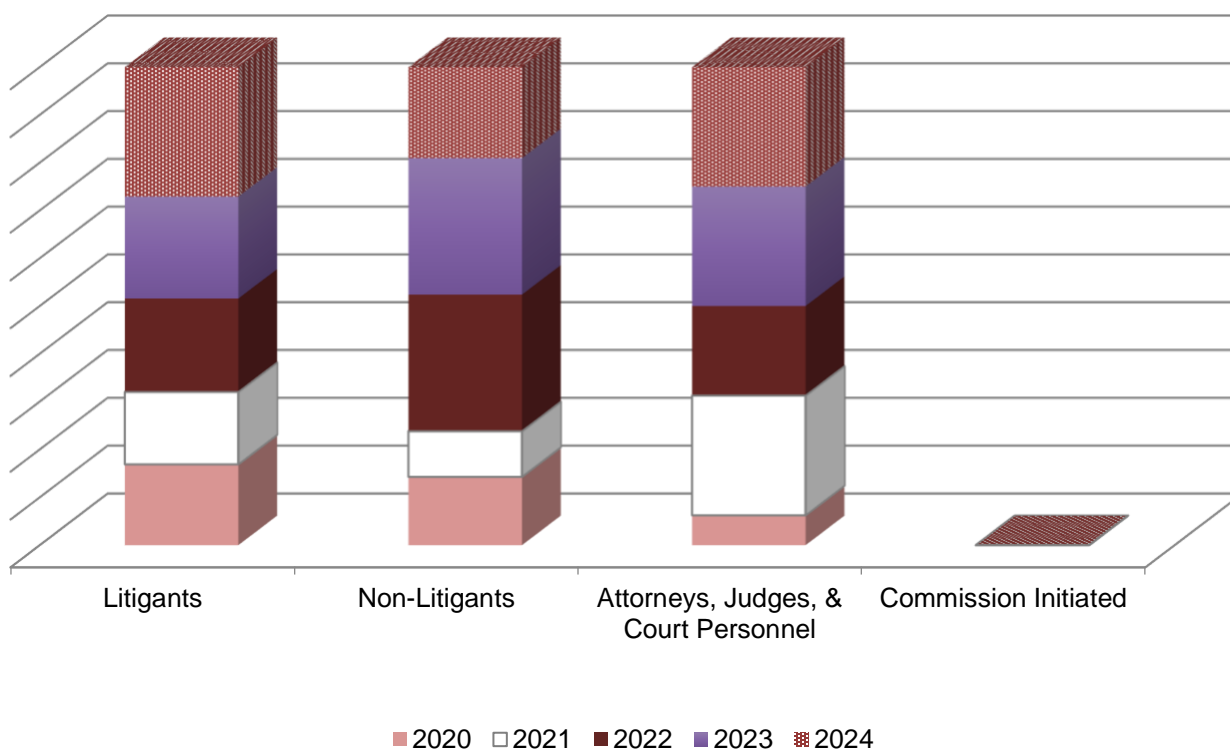


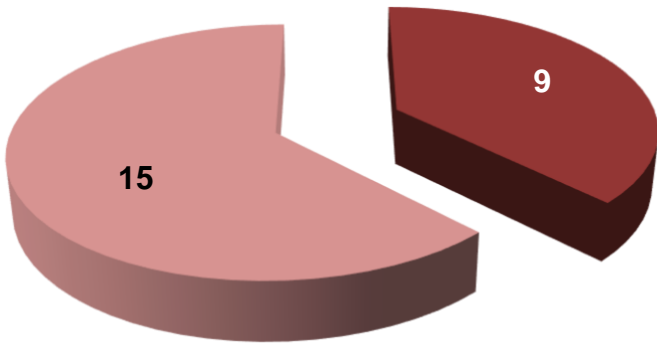
Table 4

2024 Jurisdictional Complaint Closures

Closed Complaints Filed Prior to 2024	9
Closed Complaints Filed in 2024	15

Figure 4

2024 Jurisdictional Complaint Closures



■ Closed Complaints Filed Prior to 2024 ■ Closed Complaints Filed in 2024

Table 5

Complaints Disposed in 2024

Complaints Outside the Commission's Authority

Dissatisfaction with Legal Ruling	51
Other	4
Total Non-Jurisdictional Complaints Processed	55

Complaints Within the Commission's Authority

Complainant Did Not Provide Further Information	1
Complainant Withdrew Complaint	1
Investigated then Dismissed	22
Further Commission Action	0
Total Jurisdictional Complaints Processed	24

Not included are complaints received against attorneys, administrative law judges, magistrate judges, or federal judges, which were forwarded to the appropriate disciplinary authority. Complaints may include those that were filed in prior years.

Figure 5

Jurisdictional Complaints Processed in 2024

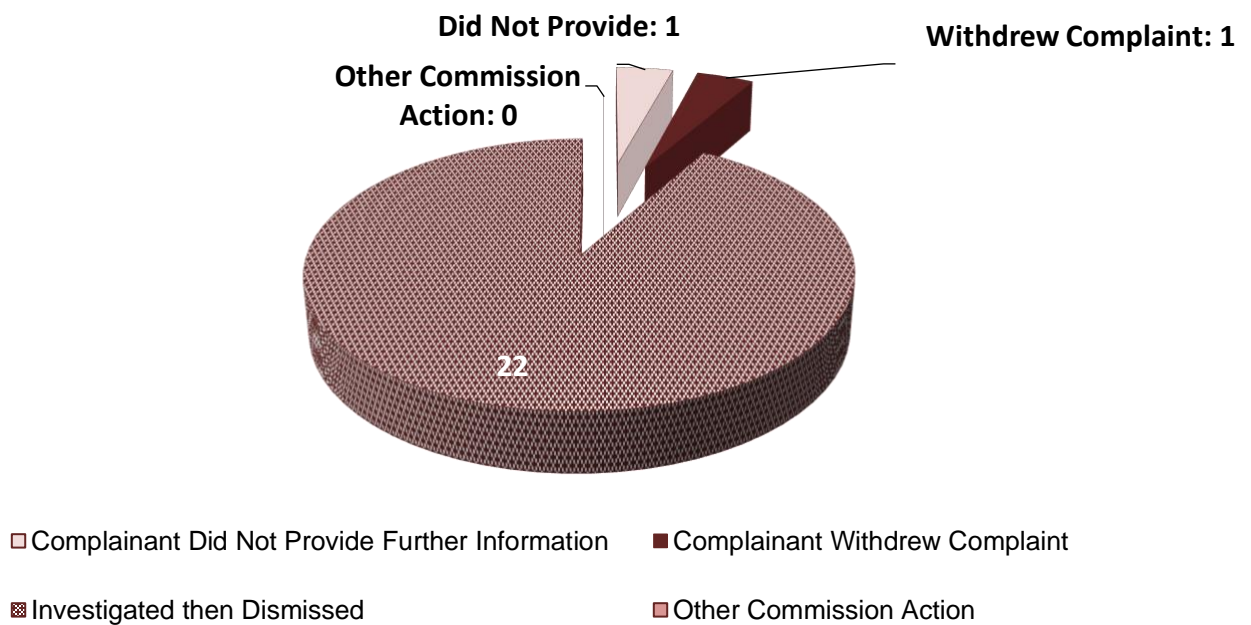


Table 6

Comparison with Previous Years' Closures*

Total Jurisdictional Complaints Closed
Per Year: 1995-2024

2024	24
2023	11
2022	6
2021	4
2020	13
2019	9
2018	8
2017	10
2016	7
2015	9
2014	11
2013	17
2012	5
2011	22
2010	14

2009	13
2008	8
2007	11
2006	11
2005	10
2004	17
2003	17
2002	14
2001	14
2000	19
1999	32
1998	21
1997	15
1996	15
1995	20

*Complaints closed in a particular year may not all have been filed in that same year. Prior to 1989, it was the Commission's policy to open a complaint for every inquiry made with the Commission's office. After 1989, the Commission opened files only for those matters that, on their face, were within the Commission's authority. Therefore, the numbers before 1989, published in prior annual reports, are not directly comparable to those after 1989.

Figure 6

Complaint Closure Comparison By Year

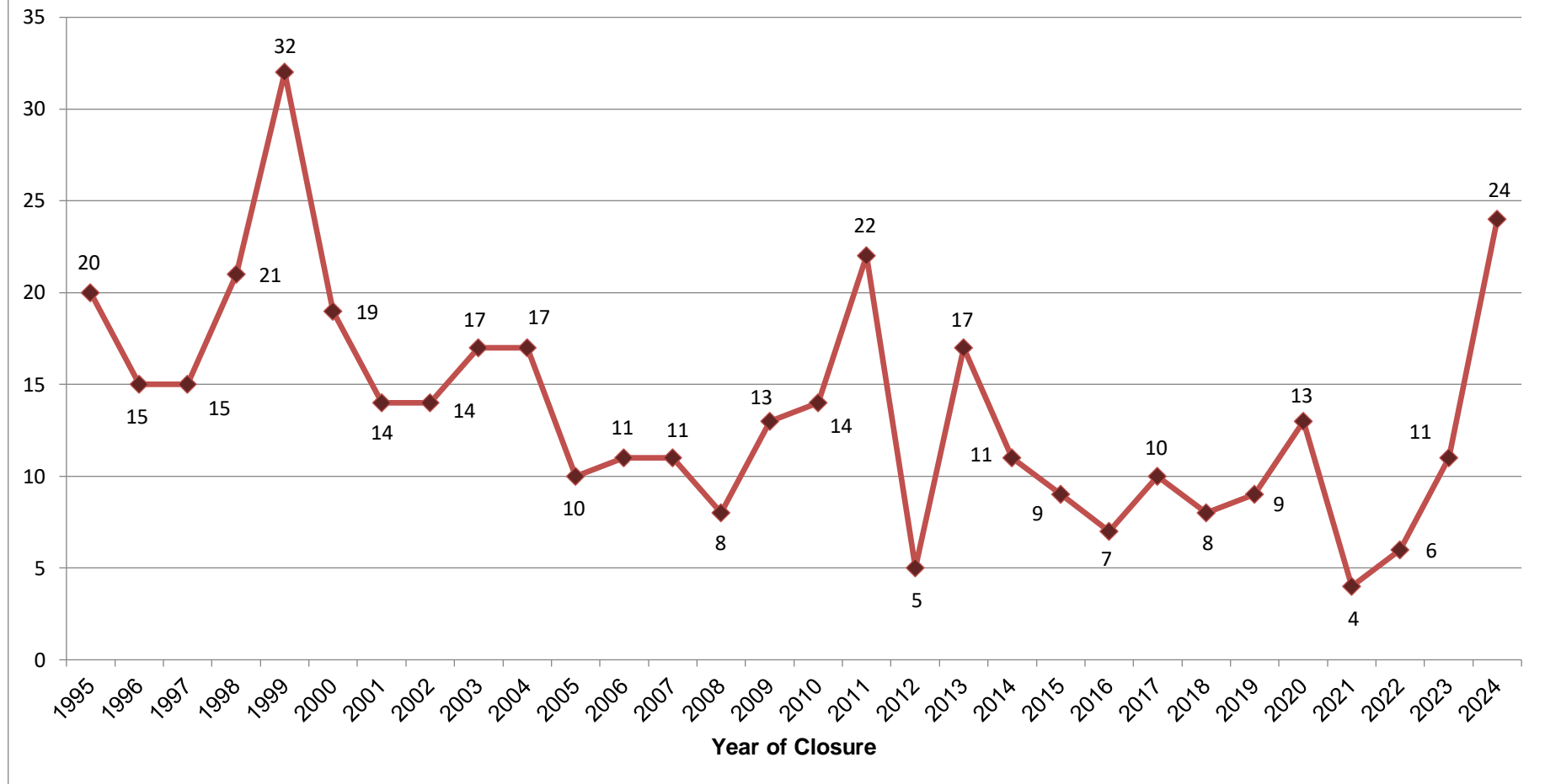


Table 7

Actions Taken: 2020 - 2024

Actions Taken	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Complaints Reviewed	42	34	50	45	76
Complaints dismissed for lack of jurisdiction	28	29	43	34	52
Complaints investigated	10	6	10	13	24
Complaints dismissed as unsupported	12	4	5	9	22
Judges asked to respond in writing to alleged misconduct	0	1	0	3	2
Judges requested to appear to explain alleged misconduct	0	0	1	2	0
Complaints dismissed as unsupported after response by judges	0	0	0	1	2
Private admonishments, counseling, and cautionary letters	0	0	1	1	3
Discipline/disability recommended to the Alaska Supreme Court	1	0	0	1	0

Some complaints may include more than one action by the Commission.

The stages of investigation and dismissal listed here can be found in the Commission Complaint Process Chart found on Page 23.

Figure 7

Actions Taken: 2020 - 2024

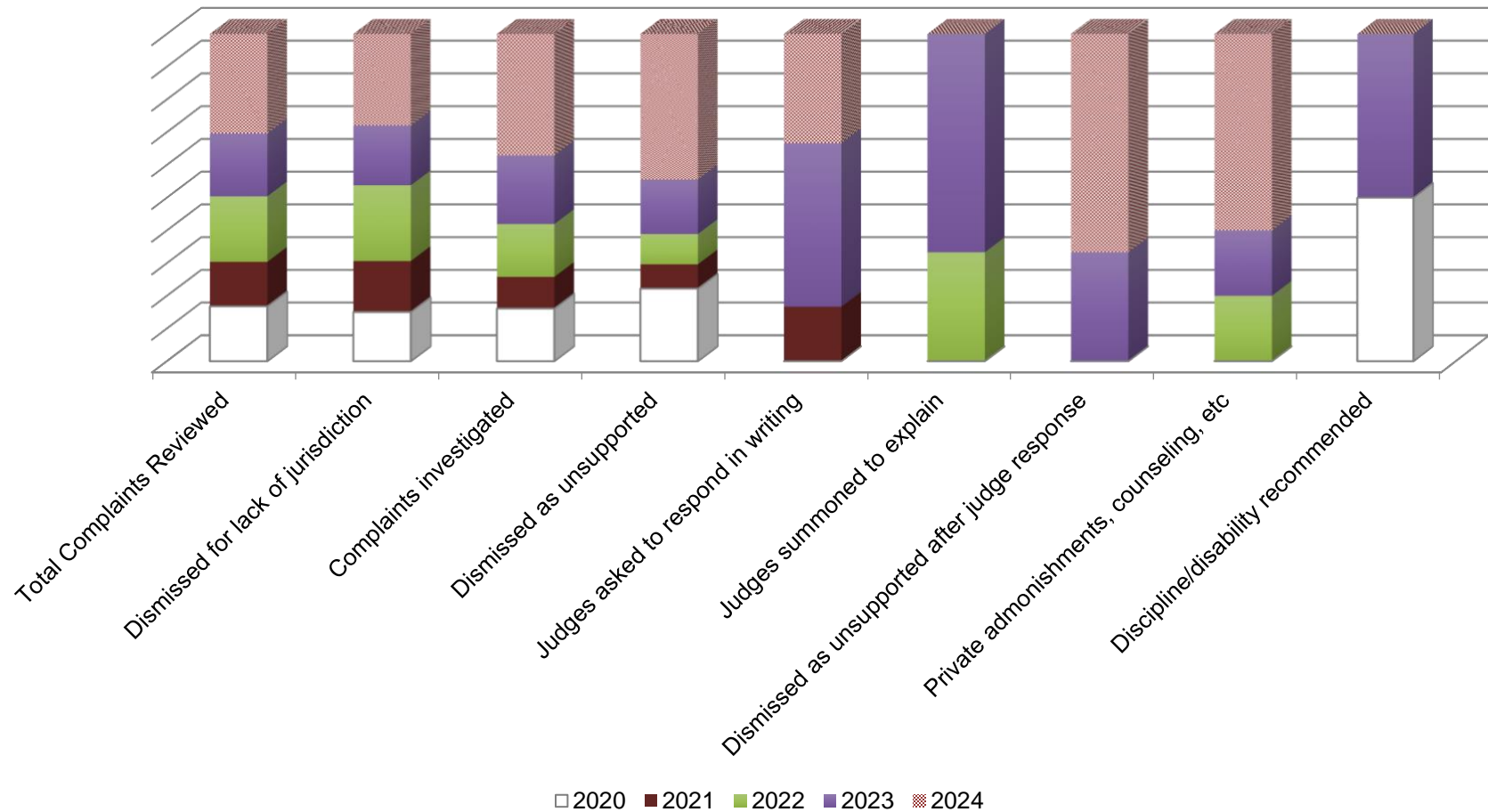


Table 8

Court Levels Involved

Jurisdictional Complaints Filed: 2020 - 2024

Court Levels Involved	2020*	2021*	2022	2023	2024
District Court Judges	2	0	3	3	3
Superior Court Judges	5	6	9	10	20
Court of Appeals Judges	0	0	0	0	0
Supreme Court Justices	1	0	0	0	0
Pro Tem Judges	0	0	0	0	1
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	0

*Not a total of the category. Some complaints include more than one judge/justice.

Figure 8

Court Levels Involved: 2020 - 2024

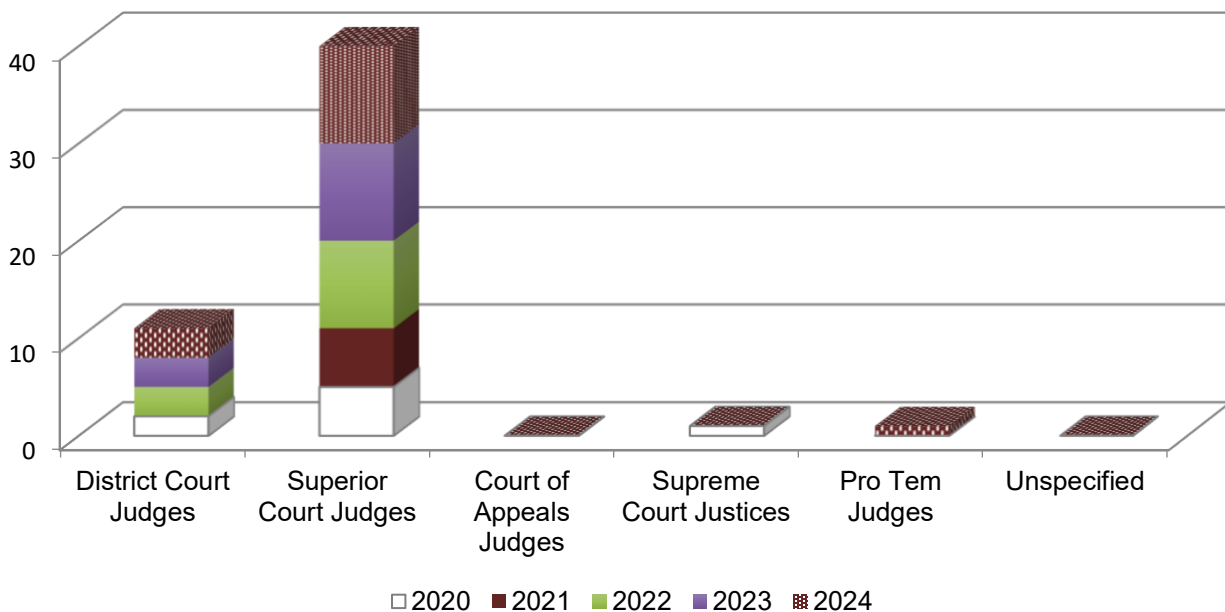


Table 9

Pending Jurisdictional Complaints by Year Filed

(As of December 31, 2024)

2024	9
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Table 10

Types of Allegations* Filed in 2024 (Jurisdictional and Non-Jurisdictional)

<i>Types of Allegations</i>	2024*
<i>Always Non-Jurisdictional</i>	
Dissatisfaction with Legal Ruling	39
<i>General Bias/Vague Assertion of Bias</i>	9
<i>Jurisdictional if Supported</i>	
Administrative Failure	6
Delay	4
Ex Parte Communications	1
Demeanor/Abuse of Authority/Temperament	11
Improper Courtroom Decorum	1
Conflict of Interest/Failure to Disqualify	2
Racial, Ethnic, Gender, or Personal Bias	0
Appearance of Impropriety	1
Personal Misconduct Off the Bench	0
Criminal Activity	0
Disability/Competence	0
Other/General Misconduct	0

*Some complaints include more than one type of allegation

Figure 10
Types of Allegations Filed in 2024
(Jurisdictional and Non-Jurisdictional)

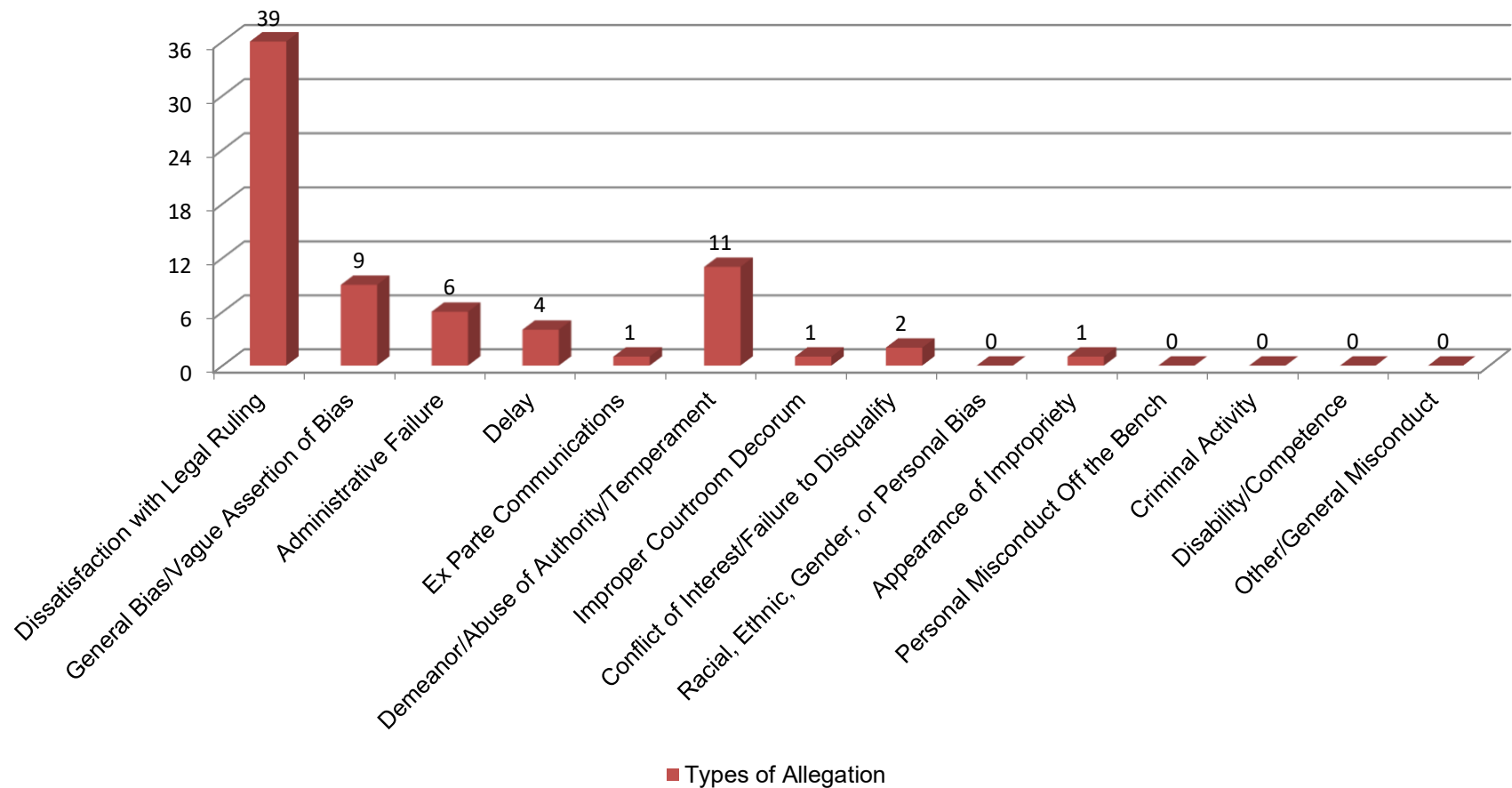


Table 11

2024 Recusals by Commissioners and Staff

Total Votes on Complaints in 2024	79
Judge Member Recusals	7
Attorney Member Recusals	4
Public Member Recusals	3
Staff Member Recusals	0

B. Commission Meetings

During 2024, the Commission held four regular meeting. With a full-time staff of two, the Commission continues to increase its case processing and fine-tune its procedures. Staff consistently works to increase staff responsiveness. Increased responsiveness increases the Commission's accessibility and has resulted in increased interaction with the public. Current funding levels allow for four regular meetings a year in Anchorage.

2024 Regular Meeting Locations

January 19, 2024	Zoom/Anchorage
May 17, 2024	Zoom/Anchorage
August 19, 2024	Zoom/Anchorage
December 6, 2024	Zoom/Anchorage

C. Outreach

Commission brochures inform the public of its purpose and functions. Brochures are available to the general public free of charge through the Commission's office. In addition, Commission members and staff address bar associations, court administrators, local community groups, and judicial programs. The Commission also maintains membership in the National Center for State Courts, Center for Judicial Ethics.

D. Formal Proceedings

There were no formal proceedings held in 2024.

E. Rules of Procedure

The Commission's operations are governed by Rules of Procedure. While the statutes relating to the Commission broadly outline the Commission's responsibilities, the Rules of Procedure define how the Commission operates. In 1991, the Commission revised its rules clarifying many rules and increasing their scope. In 1998, a committee consisting of four commission members, one attorney member, one public member, and two judge members, was established for the purpose of refining and modifying the Rules of Procedure. The Commission adopted this revision on December 1, 2000.

The Rules Revision Committee's work focused on enhancing the rules in the areas such as discovery, evidence, motions, role of the chair, executive director's role and authority,

standards for reopening complaints, deliberative process, the formal hearing, and settlement. In June 2003, the Notice Rule was revised to allow notice to a judge in anticipation of action at an upcoming meeting. Rule 5(e) was revised to specify the form that information would be released pursuant to a waiver in 2009. In August 2013, the Commission amended Rule 11 to allow for “informal advice” by the Commission to a judge where there is no misconduct. Most recently, (May 2020) the Commission amended Rule 1 to provide for public notice of formal hearings, and (May 2021) to clarify notice of meetings and the procedure for members of the general public to speak at a Commission meeting.

Most rule revisions are circulated for public comment prior to their adoption. The Commission's efforts are directed toward improving its public responsiveness, creating the fairest procedures, and fulfilling its directive under the state constitution. The Commission’s current Rules of Procedure are included in **Appendix I**.

F. Staffing

The Commission staff currently consists of an executive director and an administrative assistant.

IV. COMMISSION FINANCES AND BUDGET

The Commission's finances are planned according to the state fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). Each year the Commission on Judicial Conduct submits its budget request to the legislature. The Commission's resources are appropriated from the state general operating fund.

A. Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

In FY 2025, the legislature appropriated \$546,200.00 to the Commission. This money enables the Commission to operate a staff of one executive director and one administrative assistant.

In addition, in FY 2025, the legislature provided for language appropriation not to exceed \$75,000 to engage Special Counsel if needed.

B. Calendar Year 2024 Activity

All but one of the previous year's pending complaints were closed in 2024.

V. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

A. Commission Meetings

March 7, 2025	Zoom/Anchorage
June 30, 2025	Zoom/Anchorage
November 2025	Zoom/Anchorage

B. Caseload

In 2025, the Commission anticipates receiving approximately 70 complaints against judicial officers, of which 20 may require staff investigation.

C. Legislation

At the Commission's request, the House Judiciary Committee introduced a bill in 1989 that opened the Commission's formal hearings to the public. House Bill 268, passed in May 1990, also established a standard deadline of six years for complaints against judges to be filed with the Commission. (The former law required a period of not more than six years before the start of the judge's current term; creating different time limits for different judges.) The law also explicitly includes part-time or temporary judges within the Commission's authority. That law's enactment also made all Commission formal hearings and recommendations to the Alaska Supreme Court open to the public. In 1997, the Commission conducted its first public hearing under this legislation.

D. Formal Ethics Opinions

In 1991, the Commission issued its first Formal Ethics Opinions. These opinions are based on actual Commission complaints that resulted in some form of private informal action. Formal Ethics Opinions are reported in a way that protects confidentiality. Only the minimum facts necessary to an understanding of the opinion are reported. The Commission continues to adopt new formal ethics opinions as situations arise. These opinions are included in **Appendix G**.

E. Advisory Opinions

At the March 1, 1996, meeting, the Commission adopted a rule authorizing the issuance of advisory opinions to judges who would like guidance regarding ethical dilemmas. Special committees of the Commission draft opinions in response to written requests. A final opinion issues from the Commission and is confidential unless the requesting judge asks that it be public. The Commission adopted no new advisory opinions in 2024. Advisory opinions are included in **Appendix H**.

Staff also provided approximately 160 informal ethics opinions to judicial officers and court personnel.

F. Other Activities

In 2025, the Commission will continue developing and conducting educational programs for judicial officers on various judicial conduct issues. While advisory opinions provide guidance to individual judges addressing specific ethical issues, there is an ongoing need to provide general guidance to all judges in this changing field.

Again in 2024, the Commission provided self-study materials covering a variety of ethics topics for both new and experienced judges. In addition, the Commission continues to participate with the court system's judicial education committees and presents judicial programs periodically addressing a variety of ethical issues.

In 2000, the Commission jointly published Alaska Judicial Applicant Guidelines with the Alaska Judicial Council and the Alaska Bar Association. The publication gives guidance to judicial applicants and their supporters regarding the ethical considerations when soliciting support from others. There are suggestions for preferred methods and tone of communications as well as an appendix of resource materials. This publication was reprinted in 2003.

Other outreach activities will continue and expand to further general public awareness of the Commission's functions. Staff will continue to address community groups and meet individually with members of the general public. In addition, the Commission will periodically pay for display newspaper advertisements that highlight the Commission's purpose and invite public participation.

The Commission also hopes to continue work with the state and local bar associations to identify areas of concern that attorneys have encountered. A very small percentage of current complaints against judges are filed by attorneys.