

**Table 5.3**  
**QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES OF STATE APPELLATE COURTS AND GENERAL TRIAL COURTS**

State or other jurisdiction	Years of minimum residence						Legal credentials	
	In state		In district		Minimum age		A	T
	A	T	A	T	A	T		
Alabama	1	1	...	1	...	...	Licensed attorney	Licensed attorney
Alaska	5	5	...	...	...	...	8 years practice	5 years practice
Arizona	10 (a)	5	(b)	1	30	30	(c)	(d)
Arkansas	2	2	(b)	...	30	28	8 years practice	6 years practice/bench
California	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Colorado	★	★ (e)	...	★	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Connecticut	★	★	(f)	(f)	...	...	10 years state bar	Member of the bar
Delaware	★	★	(f)	(g)	...	...	"Learned in law"	"Learned in law"
Florida	★ (h)	★	(i)	★ (j)	...	...	10 years state bar	5 years state bar
Georgia	★	3	...	...	...	30	7 years state bar	7 years state bar
Hawaii	★	★	...	...	...	...	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Idaho	2	1	...	...	30	...	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Illinois	★	★	★	★	...	...	Licensed attorney	...
Indiana	...	1	(b)	★	...	...	10 years state bar (k)	...
Iowa	...	...	...	★	...	...	Licensed attorney	...
Kansas	...	...	...	★	30	...	10 years active and continuous practice (l)	5 years state bar
Kentucky	2	2	2	2	...	...	8 years state bar and licensed attorney	8 years state bar
Louisiana	2	2	2	2	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Maine	...	...	...	...	...	...	"Learned in law"	"Learned in law"
Maryland	5	5	6 mos.	6 mos.	30	30	State bar member	State bar member
Massachusetts	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	No law degree required
Michigan	...	...	(b)	...	...	...	State bar member (m)	State bar member
Minnesota	...	...	(n)	...	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Mississippi	5	5	...	...	30	26	5 years state bar	5 years practice
Missouri	(o)	(o)	(b)	★	30	30	State bar member	State bar member
Montana	2	2	...	...	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Nebraska	3 (p)	...	★	★	30	30	5 years practice	5 years practice
Nevada	2	2	...	...	25	25	State bar member	...
New Hampshire	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Jersey	...	(q)	...	(q)	...	...	Admitted to practice in state for at least 10 years	10 years practice of law
New Mexico	3	3	...	★	35	35	10 years active practice (r)	6 years active practice
New York	★	★	(s)	(s)	...	18	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
North Carolina	...	N.A.	...	★	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
North Dakota	★ (p)	★	...	★	...	...	License to practice law	State bar member
Ohio	★ (p)	★	(t)	★	...	...	6 years practice	6 years practice
Oklahoma	...	(u)	1	★	30	...	5 years state bar	(v)
Oregon	3	3	...	(w)	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Pennsylvania	1	1	(f)	★	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Rhode Island	...	...	...	...	21	...	License to practice law	State bar member
South Carolina	5	5	...	...	32	32	8 years state bar	8 years state bar
South Dakota	★	★	★	★	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Tennessee	5	5	★ (x)	1	35	30	Qualified to practice law	Qualified to practice law
Texas	★	...	...	2	35	25	(y)	(z)
Utah	5 (aa)	3	...	★	30	25	State bar member	State bar member
Vermont	5	5	...	(bb)	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Virginia	...	★	...	★	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Washington	1	1	1	1	...	...	(cc)	State bar member
West Virginia	5	★	...	★	30	30	10 years state bar	5 years state bar
Wisconsin	10 days	10 days	10 days	10 days	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Wyoming	3	2	...	...	30	28	9 years state bar	...
Dist. of Columbia	★	★	90 days	90 days	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar (dd)
No. Mariana Islands	...	...	...	...	...	30	N.A.	N.A.
Puerto Rico	5	...	...	...	...	...	10 years state bar	7 years state bar

See footnotes at end of table.

## JUDICIARY

### QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES — Continued

Sources: National Center for State Courts, *State Court Organization*, 1998 and state web sites, January 2003.

Key:

- A — Judges of courts of last resort and intermediate appellate courts.
- T — Judges of general trial courts.
- ★ — Provision; length of time not specified.
- . . . — No specific provision.
- N.A.— Not applicable
- (a) For court of appeals, five years.
- (b) No local residency requirement stated for Supreme Court. Local residency required for Court of Appeals.
- (c) Supreme Court- ten years state bar, Court of Appeals - five years state bar.
- (d) Admitted to the practice of law in Arizona for five years.
- (e) State residency requirement for District Court, no residency requirement stated for Denver Probate Court, Denver Juvenile Court or Water Court.
- (f) Local residency not required.
- (g) Court of Chancery does not have residency requirement, Superior Court requires residency.
- (h) For District Courts of Appeal must reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the court.
- (i) Initial appointment, must be resident of district at the time of original appointment.
- (j) Circuit court judge must reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the court.
- (k) In the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, five years service as a general jurisdiction judge may be substituted.
- (l) Relevant legal experience, such as being a member of a law faculty or sitting as a judge, may qualify under the 10 year requirement.
- (m) Supreme Court: state bar member and practice at least five years.
- (n) No residency requirement stated for Supreme Court, Court of Appeals varies.
- (o) At the appellate level must have been a state voter for nine years. At the general trial court level must have been a state voter for three years.

- (p) No state residency requirement specified for Court of Appeals.
- (q) For Superior court: out of a total of 427 authorized judgeships (including thirty-two in the appellate division), there are restricted superior court judgeships that require residence within the particular county of assignment at time of appointment and reappointment; there are 142 unrestricted judgeships for which assignment of county is made by the chief justice.
- (r) Supreme Court and Court of Appeals : and/or judgeship in any court of the state.
- (s) No local residency requirement stated for Court of Appeals, local residency requirement for presiding judge of Supreme Court, Appellate Divisions.
- (t) No local residency requirement for Supreme Court, Court of Appeals requires district residency.
- (u) Six months if elected.
- (v) District Court: judges must be a state bar member for four years or a judge of court record. Associate judges must be a state bar member for two years or a judge of a court of record.
- (w) Local residency requirement for Circuit Court, no residency requirement stated for Tax Court.
- (x) Supreme Court: One justice from each of three divisions and two seats at large. Court of Appeals and Court of Criminal Appeals: Must reside in the grand division served.
- (y) Ten years practicing law or a lawyer and judge of a court of record at least 10 years.
- (z) District Court: judges must have been a practicing lawyer or a judge of a court in this state, or both combined, for four years.
- (aa) Supreme Court is five; Court of Appeals is three.
- (bb) No local residency requirement stated for Superior Court, District Court must reside in geographic unit.
- (cc) Supreme Court: State bar member; Courts of Appeals: five years state bar.
- (dd) Superior Court: Judge must also be an active member of the unified District of Columbia bar and have been engaged, during the five years immediately preceding the judicial nomination, in the active practice of law as an attorney by the United States, of District of Columbia government.