

STATE COURTS

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

State or other jurisdiction	Residency requirement				Minimum age		Legal credentials	
	State		Local					
	A	T	A	T	A	T	A	T
Alabama.....	1 yr.	1 yr.	...	1 yr.	...	18	10 years state bar	5 years state bar
Alaska.....	5 yrs.	5 yrs.	...	...	...	...	8 years practice	5 years practice
Arizona.....	5/10 yrs. (a)	5 yrs.	(b)	1 yr.	30	30	(c)	(d)
Arkansas.....	...	...	★	...	...	...	8 years practice	6 years licensed in state
California.....	★	...	...	...	...	...	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Colorado.....	★	★	...	★	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Connecticut.....	★	★	...	...	...	...	Licensed attorney	Member of the bar
Delaware.....	★	★	...	★	...	...	“Learned in law”	“Learned in law”
Florida.....	★	★	★ (f)	★ (g)	...	...	10 years state bar	5 years state bar
Georgia.....	★	3 yrs.	...	must	...	30	7 years state bar	7 years state bar
				reside within court circuit				
Hawaii.....	★	★	...	...	...	30	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Idaho.....	2 yrs.	1 yr.	...	...	30	...	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
Illinois.....	★	★	★	★	...	...	Licensed attorney	Law degree
Indiana.....	★	1 yr.	...	★	...	...	10 years state bar (h)	Licensed attorney
Iowa.....	★	★	...	★	...	...	Licensed attorney	Admitted to state bar
Kansas.....	...	5 yrs.	...	...	30	30	10 years active and continuous practice (i)	5 years state bar
Kentucky.....	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	...	...	8 years state bar and licensed attorney	8 years state bar
Louisiana.....	1 yrs.	1 yrs.	1 yrs.	1 yrs.	...	...	10 years state bar	8 years state bar
Maine.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	“Learned in law”	1 year state bar
Maryland.....	5 yrs.	5 yrs.	6 mos.	6 mos.	30	30	State bar member	State bar member
Massachusetts.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	State bar member
Michigan.....	★	★	...	...	...	...	State bar member and 5 years practice	State bar member
Minnesota.....	30 days	30 days	...	30 days	...	...	Licensed attorney	Licensed attorney
Mississippi.....	5 yrs.	5 yrs.	★ (j)	...	30	26	5 years state bar	5 years practice
Missouri.....	9 yrs. (k)	3 yrs. (k)	...	1 yr. (k)	30	30	State bar member	State bar member
Montana.....	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	...	...	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Nebraska.....	3 yrs.	★	★	★	30	30	5 years practice	5 years practice
Nevada.....	2 yrs.	2 yrs.	...	...	25	25	State bar member (l)	2 years state bar member and 10 years practice
New Hampshire.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	10 years practice	State bar member
New Jersey.....	★	(m)	...	(m)	...	...	Admitted to practice in state for at least 10 years	10 years practice of law
New Mexico.....	3 yrs.	3 yrs.	...	★	35	35	10 years practice	6 years active practice
New York.....	★	★	...	...	...	18	10 years state bar	10 years state bar
North Carolina.....	...	★	...	(n)	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
North Dakota.....	★	★	...	★	...	...	License to practice law	State bar member
Ohio.....	★	★	...	★	...	...	6 years practice	6 years practice
Oklahoma.....	★	(o)	1 yr.	★	30	...	5 years state bar	(p)
Oregon.....	3 yrs.	3 yrs.	...	1 yr.	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Pennsylvania.....	1 yr.	★	...	1 yr.	...	21	State bar member	State bar member
Rhode Island.....	...	...	...	...	21	...	License to practice law	State bar member
South Carolina.....	5 yrs.	5 yrs.	...	(q)	32	32	8 years state bar	8 years state bar
South Dakota.....	★	★	★	★	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
Tennessee.....	5 yrs.	5 yrs.	★ (r)	1 yr.	35/30 (s)	30	License to practice law	License to practice law
Texas.....	★	...	...	2 yrs.	35	25	(t)	(u)
Utah.....	5 yrs.	3 yrs.	...	★	30	25	State bar member	State bar member
Vermont.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Virginia.....	...	★	...	★	...	...	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Washington.....	1 yr.	1 yr.	1 yr.	1 yr.	...	...	State bar member	State bar member
West Virginia.....	5 yrs.	★	...	★	30	30	10 years state bar	5 years state bar
Wisconsin.....	28 days	28 days	28 days	28 days	...	18	5 years state bar	5 years state bar
Wyoming.....	3 yrs.	2 yrs.	...	...	30	28	9 years practice	Law degree
Dist. of Columbia.....	N.A.	N.A.	90 days	90 days	...	...	5 years practice	5 years state bar (v)
Puerto Rico.....	5 yrs.	...	...	...	...	...	10 years practice	7 years state bar

See footnotes at end of table.

QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES OF STATE APPELLATE COURTS AND GENERAL TRIAL COURTS—Continued

Sources: S. Strickland, R. Schauffler, R. LaFountain, & K. Holt, eds. *State Court Organization*. National Center for State Courts. April 8, 2016. www.ncsc.org/sco.

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 of 3 years 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) Court of Appeals minimum age is 30.
- (f) The candidate must be a resident of the district at the time of the original appointment.
- (g) Circuit court judge must reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the court.
- (h) In the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, five years service as a general jurisdiction judge may be substituted.
- (i) Relevant legal experience, such as being a member of a law faculty or sitting as a judge, may qualify under the 10 year requirement.
- (j) Must reside within the district.
- (k) 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 and resident of the circuit for 1 year.

(l) Minimum of two years state bar member and at least 15 years of legal practice.

(m) Restricted Superior court judgeships require residence within the particular county of assignment at time of appointment and reappointment.

(n) Resident judges of the Superior Court are required to have local residency, but special judges are not.

(o) District and associate judges must be state residents for six months if elected, and associate judges must be county residents.

(p) 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.

(q) Circuit judges must be county electors and residents of the circuit.

(r) Supreme Court: One justice from each of three divisions and two seats at large; no more than two may be from any grand division. Court of Appeals and Court of Criminal Appeals: Must reside in the grand division served.

(s) 35 for Supreme Court, 30 for Court of Appeals & Court of Criminal Appeals

(t) Ten years practicing law or a lawyer and judge of a court of record at least 10 years.

(u) District Court: judges must have been a practicing lawyer or a judge of a court in this state, or both combined, for four years.

(v) 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 in the District, been on the faculty of a law school in the District, or been employed by either the by the United States or District of Columbia government.