



# News Release

## Colorado Judicial Branch

Monica M. Márquez, Chief Justice  
Steven Vasconcellos, State Court Administrator

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 3, 2026**

Amy Woodward, Media Coordinator  
720-550-1194  
[Amy.Woodward@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:Amy.Woodward@judicial.state.co.us)

### **23rd Judicial District announces District Court vacancy** ***Commission sets date to select nominees***

The 23rd Judicial District Nominating Commission will meet on April 13, 2026, at the Douglas County Combined Courthouse, 4000 Justice Way, Castle Rock, CO 80109, to interview and select nominees for appointment by the governor to the office of district court for the 23rd Judicial District (Douglas, Elbert, and Lincoln counties). The vacancy will be created by the retirement of the Honorable Ben L. Leutwyler, III. The vacancy will occur on May 31, 2026.

To be eligible, the applicant must be a qualified elector of the 23rd Judicial District at the time of investiture and must have been admitted to the practice of law in Colorado for five years. The current annual salary for this position is \$203,768.20. The initial term of office of a district judge is a provisional term of two years; thereafter, the incumbent district judge, if approved by the voters, has a term of six years.

Application forms are available from the office of the ex officio chair of the nominating commission, Justice Carlos Samour, at 2 E. 14th Ave., Denver, CO 80203, and from the office of the court executive, Carol Rigato, at 4000 Justice Way, Ste. 2009, Castle Rock,

CO 80109. Applications are also available on the court's home page at [coloradojudicial.gov/careers/judge-opportunities](http://coloradojudicial.gov/careers/judge-opportunities).

The completed application must be emailed to the address listed in the instructions below no later than 4 p.m. on March 30, 2026. Late applications will not be considered. Any person wishing to suggest a candidate to fill the vacancy may do so by letter to be submitted to any member of the nominating commission, with a copy to the ex officio chair, no later than March 23, 2026, by 4 p.m.

The members of the nominating commission for the 23rd Judicial District are:

Ara Ohanian of Castle Pines; Patrick O'Rourke of Highlands Ranch; Dr. Tracie Keesee of Elizabeth; Jennifer Vasquez-Stitt of Castle Rock; Kevin Stansbury of Hugo; and Fay Matsukage & Jayant Patel of Parker.

Editor's Note: Contact information for the nominating commission members:

- Fay Matsukage, [fay@doidacrow.com](mailto:fay@doidacrow.com)
- Ara Ohanian, [ara.ohanian@coloradodefenders.us](mailto:ara.ohanian@coloradodefenders.us)
- Patrick O'Rourke, [patricktorourke@gmail.com](mailto:patricktorourke@gmail.com)
- Dr. Tracie Keesee, [tdoctor45@yahoo.com](mailto:tdoctor45@yahoo.com)
- Jayant Patel, [jayson1inc@hotmail.com](mailto:jayson1inc@hotmail.com)
- Jennifer Vasquez-Stitt, [jennifer.vasquez@state.co.us](mailto:jennifer.vasquez@state.co.us)
- Kevin Stansbury, [kstansbury@lchnh.com](mailto:kstansbury@lchnh.com)

**JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION  
APPLICATION FOR COLORADO STATE COURT JUDGESHIP  
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Instructions

1. The application form for a Colorado state court judgeship can be found on the Judicial Branch website at [coloradojudicial.gov/careers/judge-opportunities](http://coloradojudicial.gov/careers/judge-opportunities) complete and thorough in answering the questions. If an answer to any question requires more space than provided, attach a separate page for the question(s). Do not change the margins or font size on the application.

2. Your application materials should be prepared in the following manner:

The application and any attachments must be submitted as a single PDF file with reference letters attached last. The application should be in text searchable format.

You may submit letters of reference from not less than three and no more than five individuals who are able to comment upon your qualifications for a judicial position.

It is preferred that reference letters are included with your application submission. However, if they are submitted directly by the author, they must be submitted by email as described below in paragraph 3. All letters of reference are due by the filing deadline listed in paragraph 4.

3. Your application materials compiled as outlined above should be sent via email with **your name and 23rd JD Douglas District Court – Leutwyler vacancy in the subject line** with your materials attached as outlined above no later than 4 p.m. on **March 30, 2026**, to the following email address:

[judicial.applicants@judicial.state.co.us](mailto:judicial.applicants@judicial.state.co.us)

You should receive an automatic response to your email submission. If you do not, please call the supreme court at the telephone number listed below. Please add this email address to your contacts so that email does not get filtered into your spam.

4. Your application must be received no later than: 4 p.m. on **March 30, 2026**.
5. Call the Colorado Supreme Court Clerk's office with questions: 720-625-5150

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