

**JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION  
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

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April 29, 2026

*Notice of Judicial Vacancy*

TO: All Active Members of the State Bar of South Dakota  
FROM: Cheryle Gering, Secretary, Judicial Qualifications Commission

Due to the Hon. John H. Fitzgerald's future retirement pursuant to SDCL 16-6-31, a vacancy will be created in Circuit Court Judge position (Position D) in the Fourth Judicial Circuit. The duty station for this position will be located in Sturgis, SD. As of July 1, 2025, the salary for a circuit court judge position in South Dakota is \$183,694.13. In addition, circuit court judges and their dependents are eligible to participate in the State of South Dakota's health insurance plan; circuit court judges participate in the State's defined benefit retirement plan. The Judicial Qualifications Commission is now taking applications for this position.

All lawyers and judges interested in applying should obtain the application form at <http://ujqs.sd.gov/>, or contact Lori Grode at the State Court Administrator's Office. The application must be returned to the Administrator's Office via United States Postal Service (USPS) Priority Mail and must be postmarked no later than **5:00 PM on June 12, 2026**. **Due to USPS delivery issues, it is recommended that Applicants contact Lori Grode to advise their application has been submitted by the deadline.**

You may also obtain the application form by writing or telephoning:

Lori Grode  
State Court Administrator's Office  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Telephone: 605-773-3474  
Email: [lori.grode@ujqs.state.sd.us](mailto:lori.grode@ujqs.state.sd.us)

**Or, visit <http://ujqs.sd.gov/> for current job openings.**

The Fourth Circuit is comprised of the following counties: Butte, Corson, Harding, Dewey, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins and Ziebach.