

LIO DIRECTORY



Separation of Powers

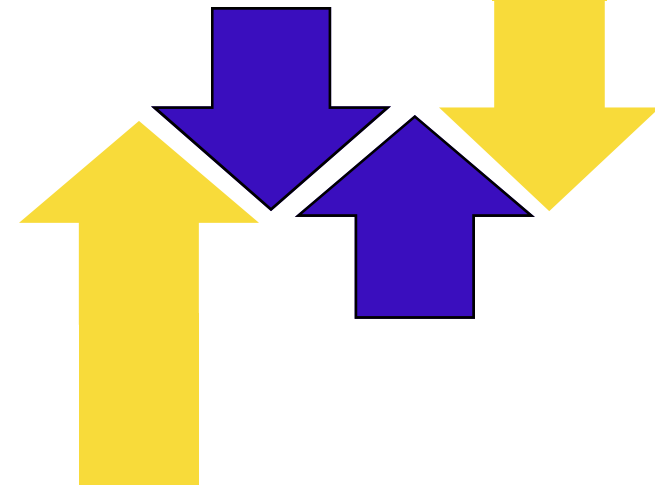
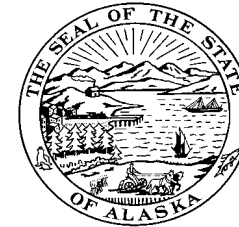
Alaska state government is made up of three separate branches: legislative, executive and judicial. Each branch has its own specific powers and duties, but also serves to 'check and balance' the other two branches. This constitutional separation of powers ensures that each branch of government fulfills its responsibilities without exceeding its power.

The people have the constitutional right to enact laws through the **initiative** process and to approve or reject acts of the Legislature by **referendum**. When the application and certification process is complete, the Lieutenant Governor places an **initiative** on the ballot for the first statewide election held more than one hundred-twenty days after adjournment of the legislative session following the filing of the petition. If the Legislature enacts 'substantially the same measure,' the initiative is void and the measure does not appear on the ballot. **Referendum** petitions must be filed within 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the law was enacted. The referendum is placed on the ballot for the first statewide election held more than 180 days after that session adjourned.

An initiative or referendum is approved or rejected by a majority of the votes cast. An initiative cannot be vetoed by the Governor nor repealed by the Legislature for two years. It may, however, be amended.

Anchorage LIO	269-0111 716 W 4th Ave Ste 200, Anchorage 99501-2133
Barrow LIO	852-7111 119 Bank Bldg, PO Box 830, Barrow 99723-0830
Bethel LIO	543-3541 301 Willow St, PO Box 886, Bethel 99559-0886
Cordova LIO	424-5461 705 2nd St, PO Box 2248, Cordova 99574-2248
Delta Junction LIO	895-4236 Jarvis Office Center, PO Box 1189, Delta Jct 99737-1189
Dillingham LIO	842-5319 Kangiiqutaq Bldg, PO Box 829, Dillingham 99576-0829
Fairbanks LIO	452-4448 119 N Cushman Ste 101, Fairbanks 99701-2879
Glennallen LIO	822-5588 Mile 186 Glenn Hwy, PO Box 68, Glennallen 99588-0068
Homer LIO	235-7878 345 W Sterling Hwy Ste 102A, Homer 99603-7524
Juneau LIO	465-4648 Rm 111 Terry Miller Bldg, State Capitol, Juneau 99801
Kenai LIO	283-2030 145 Main St Loop Ste 217, Kenai 99611
Ketchikan LIO	225-9675 50 Front St Ste 203, Ketchikan 99901
Kodiak LIO	486-8116 112 Mill Bay Rd, Kodiak 99615
Kotzebue LIO	442-3880 373 2nd St Pillautaq Centre, PO Box 650, Kotzebue 99752
Mat-Su LIO	376-3704 600 E Railroad Ave, Wasilla 99654
Nome LIO	443-5555 103 E Front St State Office Bldg, PO Box 1630, Nome 99762
Petersburg LIO	772-3741 11B Gjoa St., PO Box 1470, Petersburg 99833
Seward LIO	224-5066 2001 Seward Hwy, PO Box 1769, Seward 99664
Sitka LIO	747-6276 201 Katlian St, Ste 200A, Sitka 99835
Tok LIO	883-5020 PO Box 845, Tok 99780
Valdez LIO	835-2111 Rm 13 State Office Bldg, PO Box 1969, Valdez 99686
Wrangell Teleconference Center	874-3013 223 Front St, PO Box 1514, Wrangell 99929

SEPARATION OF POWERS



LEGISLATIVE

The Legislative Branch is responsible for enacting the laws of the State of Alaska and appropriating the money necessary to operate the government.

Alaska has a bicameral Legislature composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The House is composed of forty members elected from forty election districts for two-year terms. The Senate has twenty members elected from twenty Senate districts for four-year terms, with one-half of the membership standing for election every two years. House and Senate election districts are determined on the basis of population. Under the State Constitution, redistricting is accomplished every ten years after the reporting of the decennial federal census. An advisory reapportionment board is appointed by and assists the Governor in redistricting the state.

A Legislature consists of two regular sessions, which convene annually on the second Monday in January or on the third Tuesday in January following the election of a governor. A Legislature must adjourn from a regular session no later than 120 consecutive calendar days from the day it convenes, except the session may be extended once for up to ten days by a two-thirds vote of each house. Special sessions can be called by the Governor or by the Legislature and are limited to thirty calendar days. Procedures for convening and organizing the first and second sessions of a Legislature are provided for by law and rule.

Legislative bills must refer to only one subject, unless the bill is to appropriate funds or to revise existing laws. Appropriation bills must include only money matters and cannot create law. When a bill has been approved by a majority vote of each house, it goes to the Governor for his approval or veto. The Governor may veto or reduce items in appropriation bills. This is commonly called the power of "line item veto", because the Governor can veto any line item of an appropriation bill and approve the balance. The Legislature, meeting in a joint session of both houses, can overturn the veto if two-thirds of the membership (three-quarters for revenue and appropriation bills) votes to do so.

The Legislature reviews major appointments made by the Governor, including the heads of departments and members of certain boards and commissions, and decides whether to confirm or deny these appointments. All civil officers of the state are subject to impeachment by the Legislature. Each house of the Legislature, however, is the judge of the election and qualifications of its own members and may expel a member with the concurrence of two-thirds of its members.

The Legislative Council, Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, and the Administrative Regulation Review Committee are permanent interim committees. They include members from each house, appointed by the leadership. The Code Revision Commission is a permanent commission of the Legislature with representation from both houses, the Alaska Bar Association, and the public (appointed by the Governor).

The Office of the Ombudsman receives complaints from the public about administrative acts of state agencies. When investigation determines that an agency, or an officer or employee of the state government, acted unreasonably, illegally, inefficiently, or discourteously, the Ombudsman may recommend a remedy to correct that act or to assure that similar acts do not occur.

EXECUTIVE

The Executive Branch is responsible for implementing and administering the public policy enacted and funded by the Legislative Branch.

The Executive Branch of government is headed by the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor. They are the only elected officials in the executive branch.

All offices, divisions, agencies, boards and commissions of state government fall under the supervision of one of 15 major departments: Administration, Community, Commerce, & Economic Development, Corrections, Education & Early Development, Environmental Conservation, Fish & Game, Health & Social Services, Labor & Workforce Development, Law, Military & Veterans Affairs, Natural Resources, Public Safety, Revenue, Transportation & Public Facilities, and the Office of the Governor, according to their major purpose.

The Governor appoints an attorney general to head the Department of Law, an adjutant general to head the Department of Military Affairs, and a commissioner to head all other departments except Education & Early Development (whose commissioner is chosen by the State Board of Education and approved by the Governor) and the Department of Fish & Game (whose commissioner is chosen by the Governor from names submitted by the Boards of Fish & Game). All appointments must be confirmed by the Legislature except the commissioner of Education & Early Development.

The Lieutenant Governor performs the duties prescribed by law and delegated by the Governor. These include administration of the state election laws, appointment of notaries public, custody of the state seal, convening the Legislature, custody of original copies of all state laws, and administration of the Administrative Procedures Act. The Lieutenant Governor serves as acting governor when the Governor is temporarily absent.

JUDICIAL

The Judicial Branch is responsible for applying the laws to controversies brought before it.

The Alaska Court System, the Judicial Council, and the Commission on Judicial Conduct comprise Alaska's judicial branch. The courts hear and decide issues of law and fact and determine the penalty, punishment, or remedy that should be applied.

Alaska Court System There are four levels of state court in Alaska: supreme court, court of appeals, superior court and district court.

The Alaska Supreme Court is the highest level of state court in Alaska. The Alaska Constitution grants the supreme court power to establish rules governing the administration of all courts in the state and rules governing practice and procedure in civil and criminal cases.

The court of appeals hears appeals from both superior and district courts in criminal matters. The superior court is the trial court for major civil cases and severe criminal cases (felonies). It also hears appeals from the district court from administrative agencies. The district court is a trial court for lesser civil and criminal (misdemeanor) offenses.

The Judicial Council is a constitutionally created nine-member body that operates independently of the court system. The council was created to perform three primary functions: solicit, screen, and nominate judicial applicants for gubernatorial appointment; conduct studies for the improvement of the judicial system and to report the findings to the legislature and the supreme court; and conduct evaluations of justices and judges for each retention election and to provide information and recommendations to the public prior to the elections.

The Commission on Judicial Conduct is a constitutionally created nine-member body that operates independently of the court system. The commission has the power to investigate complaints of judicial misconduct and to recommend that the supreme court sanction a justice or judge.

For more detailed information refer to the following publication: **Handbook on State Government**, available at your local Legislative Information Office (LIO). In addition, your LIO has the following publications:

Constitution of the State of Alaska
Uniform Rules of the Alaska State Legislature
The Legislative Process (pamphlet)
Directory of State Officials
Alaska State Legislature Directory