Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between an Administrative Justice of the Peace and a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

For the purposes of pay and authorizations, there are two categories of Justices of the Peace in the Northwest Territories:

1) Administrative Justice of the Peace; and
2) Presiding Justice of the Peace.

An administrative Justice of the Peace is generally a Clerk of the Territorial Court who is appointed as a Justice of the Peace to perform certain administrative level functions. A Clerk of the Court performs these duties as part of their full-time employment and as such does not receive additional remuneration. Administrative Justice of the Peace may:

- Receive Informations;
- Issue summonses, warrants of arrest and subpoenas; and
- Confirm or cancel promises to appear, notices, or undertakings to an officer in charge.

Presiding Justices of the Peace in the Northwest Territories are independent judicial officers who are appointed by the Commissioner, until age 75. Depending on their assigned powers and duties, Presiding Justices of the Peace may preside over:

- Bail Court;
- Municipal and Territorial Offences Court;
- Applications for Emergency Protection Orders;
- Applications for Peace Bonds; and
- Applications for Warrants and Production Orders.

2. How do I become an Administrative Justice of the Peace?

To become an Administrative Justice of the Peace, you must first be employed as a clerk of the Territorial Court. After obtaining some experience as a clerk, you may be invited to attend basic, Level 1 Justice of the Peace training. If you complete the training successfully and have no criminal record, you may be recommended for appointment as an Administrative Justice of the Peace.

3. How do I become a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

To become a Justice of the Peace, you must apply through the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee.

The Committee reviews applications and recommends the candidates it considers best qualified for appointment. The Commissioner in Executive Council makes the final appointments.

4. Who can apply to be a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

To be eligible, you must:

- Be between 19 and 75 years old;
- Be a Canadian Citizen
- Have lived in the Northwest Territories for at least six months;
- Be available to work part-time when needed, including on-call shifts;
- Be willing to travel to other NWT communities; and
- Provide a Criminal Record Check.

Please note that after appointment, Presiding Justices of the Peace cannot hold other positions that could create a conflict of interest, including being a GNWT employee, a peace officer, or practicing law in the NWT.

5. What are the Qualifications to be recommended for appointment as a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

Strong candidates will have:

- A good reputation in their community
- At least 10 years of work and/or volunteer experience
- A commitment to public service
- An understanding of social issues affecting people who come before the courts
- A record of fairness, integrity, and professionalism

A law degree is considered an asset, but it is **not required**.

Criteria used as a guideline for considering Justice of the Peace appointments can be found through the “Criteria for Evaluating Candidates” document.

6. Where do I get training to become a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

Training for Presiding Justices of the Peace is provided after appointment. New Justices of the Peace receive training and support from Territorial Court judges and experienced Justices of the Peace through workshops, mentoring, and ongoing learning opportunities. Training sessions are offered each year in person or by videoconference.

7. Do I need a law degree to become a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

No. A law degree is not required to become a Presiding Justice of the Peace. While a law degree or other post-secondary education may be considered an asset, people from a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds can serve in this role.

8. How do I apply to become a Presiding Justice of the Peace?

Please submit the following documents to JAAC.Applications@ntcourts.ca:

1. Completed and signed Justice of the Peace Candidate Information Form (2026);
2. Criminal Record Check, or proof that you have applied for one;
3. Résumé (maximum 3 pages); and
4. One letter of support from a community member describing your community and involvement and suitability for the role (maximum 1 page).

Please ensure you provide a valid email address, as all application updates and communications will be sent by email.

9. How do I learn more about the role?

One of the best ways to learn about the role of a Presiding Justice of the Peace is to see it in action. Prospective applicants are encouraged to observe court proceedings before applying.

Many court sittings presided over by Justices of the Peace are open to the public and can be attended in person. If you are unable to attend in person, you may be able to observe by telephone or video. To request virtual access, please contact the Court Registry at territorialcourt@gov.nt.ca.

The following are some specific opportunities to observe Justices of the Peace presiding in court:

Bail Court

Justices of the Peace regularly preside over bail court in Courtroom 102 at the Yellowknife Courthouse:

- Monday to Friday at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.
- Saturdays and statutory holidays at 1:30 p.m.

Municipal and Territorial Offences Court

Justices of the Peace also preside over municipal and territorial offences court during select sittings. Current court schedules are available on the Courts of the Northwest Territories website: https://www.nwtcourts.ca/en/schedule/docket-pdfs/

Observing court can help you better understand the responsibilities of a Presiding Justice of the Peace, the types of matters they hear, and the important role they play in serving communities across the Northwest Territories.

10. What if I have more questions?

If you have questions about the role or about the application process, please contact:

Justice of the Peace Program
Courts of the Northwest Territories
Phone: 867-920-6439
Email: jp_program@nwtcourts.ca