

SUBMISSION TO

THE CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL COMPENSATION



BY CHIEF JUSTICE RAHEEM L. MULLINS
NOVEMBER 12, 2024

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
JUDICIAL BRANCH

CHAMBERS OF
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November 2024

Commission on Judicial Compensation
c/o Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
210 Capitol Avenue
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Dear Commission Members:

I respectfully submit this report to you for your consideration. The report carefully examines the seven factors that the Commission must consider when making its recommendations and provides a compelling case for the need to increase judges' salaries.

By every objective measure, the current compensation for Connecticut judges is well below what would be considered fair compensation. As further detailed in the report, please find below a summary of current comparative data relative to Connecticut judges' compensation:

1. The salary of a Connecticut Superior Court judge is ranked in the bottom third when compared to all trial court judges across the country, with a current national rank of 37 out of 51. Even with the salary increases over the past four years, Connecticut judicial salaries have decreased in the national ranking by one place each year, falling from 34th place, to 35th, to 36th and now to 37th place.
2. Connecticut judicial salaries have not kept pace with the average rate of inflation.
3. Connecticut judicial salaries have not kept pace with the rate of increase for other state employees.
4. The salary of a Connecticut Superior Court judge is less than the salary of the Chief State's Attorney, the Deputy Chief State's Attorney and the 13 State's Attorneys.
5. The salary of a Connecticut Superior Court judge is less than the salary of the Chief Public Defender, the Deputy Public Defender and the 13 Public Defenders.
6. The salary of a Connecticut Superior Court judge is less than the General Counsel for the University of Connecticut.
7. The salary of a Connecticut Superior Court judge is 35% lower than an 8th year associate.

I am recommending that in Fiscal Year 2026, the salary for a Superior Court judge increase to \$221,839, which would bring a Connecticut Superior Court judge's salary near the

median salary received by all trial court judges from across the nation (26th out of 51). The salaries of Supreme Court justices, Appellate Court judges and family support magistrates should increase by the same percentage as set forth in the chart listed in Appendix A. For the remaining three fiscal years, Fiscal Year 27, Fiscal Year 28 and Fiscal Year 29, I am recommending that judicial salaries increase consistent with the CPI-U plus 2%. The 2% mirrors that which state employees have received as an annual step increase in addition to their cost-of-living increase. In determining the adjustment, the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, over the 12-month period ending the previous December 31 shall be used, plus 2.0%, rounded to the nearest cent.

Here is why such a request is not only fair, but also urgently necessary.

Judicial salary increases have been inconsistent and irregular over the past several decades. This long-term piecemeal approach to fair judicial compensation has had a detrimental impact on this vital institution. Indeed, unlike any time in our history, retention is becoming a significant issue. From January 2020 through to December 31, 2023, 74 judges have separated from the Judicial Branch, many returning to private practice.

Not only has retention become a new issue for this institution, but recruitment, especially of candidates from underrepresented populations, is a challenge as well. We learned in 2020 after the affinity bar associations polled their membership regarding interest in applying for judicial office, that “inadequate salary is a deterrent to minority applications for judicial office.”

Further, the increase I request strikes directly at the heart of declining morale. Incidence of violence towards judges is a nationwide concern, of which Connecticut is no stranger. The incidents of threats against our judges have increased by 31% in the last two years. Judges are sued, false liens are placed upon their property, and they and their family’s personal information is broadcast across blog platforms, all in an effort to undermine this critical institution.

Our judicial institutions are the backbone of democracy. Judges play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring that justice is served in our society. Each day, judges deal with extremely serious problems affecting people’s lives – their liberty, their property, their children, their spousal relationships, and their business relationships. Fair compensation is an important and necessary investment to ensure effective functioning of our justice system.

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the Commission on Judicial Compensation. I know you will carefully review the factors that are delineated in the statute along with my report, and that you will recommend fair compensation levels for our state’s judges and magistrates.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Raheem L. Mullins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Raheem L. Mullins
Chief Justice

BACKGROUND

The Commission on Judicial Compensation is charged with examining the adequacy of and need for adjustments to compensation for judges and family support magistrates for each of the following four fiscal years, and reporting its recommendations by January 2, 2025, to the Governor, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), the Legislature, the Chief Justice and the Chief Court Administrator by January 2, 2025.¹

SEVEN STATUTORY FACTORS

In conducting its examination, the Commission is required to consider all appropriate factors including, but not limited to, the following:

1. levels of compensation of other states and federal judges;
2. inflation rate;
3. compensation adjustments for state employees during the applicable fiscal years;
4. levels of compensation of attorneys employed by government agencies, academic institutions, and private and nonprofit organizations;
5. the State's overall economic climate;
6. the State's interest in attracting highly qualified and experienced attorneys to serve in judicial capacities; and
7. the State's ability to fund compensation increases.

The next sections of the report will discuss each factor.

Factor #1: Level of compensation received by judges of other states and the federal government

Compensation Received by Judges of other States

The National Center for State Courts publishes the *Survey of Judicial Salaries* that compares compensation levels for state judicial officers. The table on the next page lists the rankings for judges of general jurisdiction trial courts adjusted for the cost-of-living using the C2ER cost-of-living index² as of July 1, 2024³. The rankings are listed from 1 to 51, which includes all states and the District of Columbia and lists the highest salary as “1” when adjusted using the C2ER index and the lowest salary as “51.”

¹ Please see Appendix B for information on the reports that the 2013 and 2021 Commissions on Judicial Compensation issued and the General Assembly's action.

² Founded in 1961, the Council for Economic Research (C2ER) is a membership organization that promotes excellence in community and economic research.

³ *Survey of Judicial Salaries*, Vol. 49. No. 2, July 2024, compiled by the National Center for State Courts.

Connecticut Superior Court judges' adjusted salary ranked 37th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Connecticut judges' adjusted salary is equivalent to \$159,289. Both the mean and median adjusted salaries for all states was greater than \$180,000, which is significantly higher than Connecticut's trial court judges adjusted salary.

General-Jurisdiction Court Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index			General-Jurisdiction Court Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index		
State		Ranking	State		Ranking
Illinois	\$246,592	1	Wisconsin	\$174,338	27
Tennessee	\$230,704	2	Ohio	\$174,027	28
South Carolina	\$220,217	3	Iowa	\$169,692	29
Pennsylvania	\$215,621	4	Kentucky	\$169,259	30
Arkansas	\$213,170	5	New Jersey	\$168,455	31
New Mexico	\$208,870	6	Wyoming	\$162,738	32
Virginia	\$208,623	7	Alabama	\$162,709	33
New York	\$206,940	8	Rhode Island	\$162,145	34
Nebraska	\$206,524	9	Maryland	\$161,735	35
Utah	\$206,268	10	Texas	\$159,420	36
Georgia	\$200,851	11	Connecticut	\$159,289	37
Missouri	\$196,253	12	Alaska	\$158,693	38
Washington	\$194,707	13	North Dakota	\$158,585	39
Florida	\$194,180	14	Massachusetts	\$157,228	40
Indiana	\$191,959	15	Idaho	\$155,820	41
Michigan	\$188,951	16	District of Columbia	\$152,923	42
Delaware	\$187,420	17	New Hampshire	\$152,664	43
Minnesota	\$186,207	18	Kansas	\$151,642	44
South Dakota	\$181,972	19	Vermont	\$150,577	45
Louisiana	\$180,029	20	Oregon	\$146,803	46
Oklahoma	\$179,939	21	Hawaii	\$145,512	47
Colorado	\$178,775	22	West Virginia	\$145,435	48
Mississippi	\$178,330	23	Montana	\$143,146	49
North Carolina	\$177,652	24	Nevada	\$142,857	50
California	\$176,913	25	Maine	\$138,245	51
Arizona	\$175,781	26			

Based on data from the *Survey of Judicial Salaries*, Connecticut trial court judges have consistently earned some of the lowest salaries compared with their counterparts in other states, when adjusted for the cost-of-living index. And, over the past three years, the scenario has gotten

progressively worse. The chart below illustrates these rankings from 2024 to 2021. Again, with #1 being the most well compensated and 51 being the least.

Year of Report	CT Ranking for the salaries of General Jurisdiction Judges adjusted for cost-of-living
2024	37
2023	36
2022	35
2021	34

The salaries of Connecticut judges rank 37 out of 51 compared with trial judges across the country and in the District of Columbia.

Federal District Court Judges

Federal District Court judges currently earn \$243,300 and have lifetime appointments. They earn 21% more than Connecticut Superior Court judges. This is a significant difference in salary, considering that most disputes that govern our daily lives are adjudicated in state courts by state judges, and not in federal courts.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear that the salaries of Connecticut trial court judges continue to lag far behind the salaries of judges in other states, when adjusted for the cost-of-living. In fact, their salaries are ranked 37 out of 51 jurisdictions. The salaries of Superior Court judges would need to increase to \$221,839 to reach the median ranking of 26 adjusted for the cost-of-living factor adopted by C2ER. Additionally, Federal District Court judges are paid 21% more than Connecticut Superior Court judges.

Factor #2: Rate of inflation

To determine the general rate of inflation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was consulted. The CPI is a measure of the average change in prices over time. It looks at the prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuel, transportation fares, medical and dental charges, prescription drugs, and other goods that people buy for day-to-day living. Please note that for the purposes of this report, the CPI Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was used.⁴

⁴ Page 9 of the January 2021 Report of the Commission on Judicial Compensation to the General Assembly reads, “the benchmark for determining inflation over time is the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and, more specifically for judges, the CPI-U (“U” for “all urban consumers” as opposed to the CPI-W for “wage earners” bears the closest correlation to their occupation.”

“The CPI is often used to adjust consumers' income payments (for example, Social Security), to adjust income eligibility levels for government assistance, and to automatically provide cost-of-living wage adjustments to millions of American workers. The index affects the income of more than 90 million people because of statutory action: over 65 million Social Security beneficiaries and over 38 million Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients (formerly food stamps), among other programs.

Another example of how dollar values may be adjusted is the use of the CPI to adjust the federal income tax structure. These adjustments prevent inflation-induced increases in tax rates. In addition, eligibility criteria for millions of food stamp recipients, and children who eat lunch at school, are affected by changes in the CPI. Many collective bargaining agreements also tie wage increases to the CPI.”⁵

The salaries of Connecticut judges have not kept up with inflation.

The CPI is presented as of December 31 annually in the chart below, and the cost-of-living adjustment has been applied for the following fiscal year to align with the effective date of increases in judges' compensation. For example, the CPI growth in 2020 was 1.4%. In fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021), Superior Court judges earned \$172,663, and this figure is the beginning baseline for this chart. The chart below shows the salary of Superior Court judges adjusted for inflation, over the past four years.

Salaries of Superior Court judges *if* their salaries had been adjusted by the rate of inflation

As of Dec. 31st	CPI Growth		As of July 1st	Salary of Superior Court Judges <i>if</i> Adjusted by CPI
2020	1.4%		2021	\$175,080
2021	7.0%		2022	\$187,336
2022	6.5%		2023	\$199,513
2023	3.4%		2024	\$206,296

Conclusion

The current salary of a Superior Court judge is \$201,023. As clearly shown by the chart, the salaries of Connecticut judges have not kept pace with inflation. If judges had received cost-of-living increases based on the CPI-U beginning in 2021, they would currently be earning \$5,273

⁵ <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/questions-and-answers.htm> (Question/Answer #5)

more than their current salary, which represents a difference of 2.6%. Put differently, the salaries are 2.6% behind where they should be if judges had gotten cost-of-living increases.

Factor #3: Compensation adjustments for state employees during the applicable fiscal years

Percentage Increase in State Employees' and Judges' Salaries

The chart below shows that between fiscal years 2022 and 2025, the average increase in state employee's compensation was 4.5%, while judges' and magistrates' salaries increased an average of 3.88%.

**Percentage increase in state employees' and judges' salaries
Fiscal Years 2022 to 2025**

Fiscal Year Beginning	State Employees' Rate of Increase	Judge's Rate of Increase
July 1, 2021 (FY 22)	4.5%	4.5%
July 1, 2022 (FY 23)	4.5%	5.0%
July 1, 2023 (FY 24)	4.5%	3.0%
July 1, 2024 (FY 25)	4.5%	3.0%

The salaries of Connecticut judges have not kept pace with those afforded to state employees.

For the purposes of this report, and consistent with calculations made for budgeting purposes, a combined rate of increase for all state employees of 4.5% was used. This consists of 2.5% general wage increase, also known as a cost-of-living adjustment and a 2.0% step increase, also known as an annual increment. Increases for state employees were identical in each of the four years.

Superior Court judges would currently be earning \$205,903, if they received the same percentage increase as all employees. They currently earn \$201,023.

Conclusion

Periodic salary increases for judges have not kept pace with salary increases afforded to state employees.

Factor #4: The levels of compensation received by attorneys employed by academic institutions, government organizations and private and nonprofit organizations

Compensation for Attorneys in Academia

In the 2020/2021 academic year, the last year data is available from Yale University, professors earned on average \$234,337.⁶ Looking to the University of Connecticut School of Law, Professors of Law earned on average \$230,159, with a high end salary of approximately \$314,000.⁷ Looking finally to Quinnipiac University, its full-time professors earned on average \$103,000 in 2021, the last year for which data was available.⁸ Please note that this average is not limited to Quinnipiac University law professors – it is of all full-time faculty members.

Public Sector Lawyers Salary Comparison

There are many attorneys who work in various capacities throughout state government. As the Commission is required to consider the salaries of lawyers working for government agencies, please find below the salary ranges for state's attorneys, public defenders and attorneys working in the Attorney General's office, and at public educational institutions.

Agency	Job Class	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
State's Attorney	Chief State's Attorney	233,786*	233,786*
State's Attorney	Deputy Chief State's Attorney	219,800*	219,800*
State's Attorney	State's Attorney	214,686*	214,686*
Public Defenders	Chief Public Defender	240,799	240,799
Public Defenders	Deputy Chief Public Defender	226,393	226,393
Public Defenders	Public Defender	221,126	221,126
Attorney General	Attorney General	201,023	201,023
Attorney General	Deputy Attorney General	227,220	227,220
University of Connecticut	General Counsel		353,627
University of Connecticut Health Center	Chief Counsel		271,625

**These positions do not contribute towards or receive social security payments.*

⁶ <https://oir.yale.edu/data-browser/faculty-staff/faculty/faculty-salary-benefits/university-faculty-salary-benefits-w107> Salary information for Yale University professors includes all full-time Yale professors, including Professors of Law, but excluding educators from the School of Medicine.

⁷ Average annual salary and range of compensation for University of Connecticut law school professors were accessed using CT Open Payroll <https://openpayroll.ct.gov#!/year/2024/>

⁸ "QU professor advocacy group speaks out against stagnant faculty compensation" April 11, 2023, *The Quinnipiac Chronicle* <https://quchronicle.com/81763/featured/qu-faculty-organization-advocates-for-higher-pay/>

The salaries of Connecticut judges is less than private and public sector lawyers.

Private Organizations

“NALP’s 2023 *Associate Salary Survey* report showed that the overall median first-year associate base salary as of January 1, 2023, was \$200,000, up \$35,000 (21.2%) from 2021 when the survey was last administered. Since the 2021 survey, several large firms announced salary increases in the latter part of 2021 and early 2022 – with many firms now paying entry-level associates \$215,000 in major markets. About 81% of the 694 responses to the survey were from offices in firms of more than 250 lawyers, up from 78% in 2021.”⁹

In addition, NALP issued a media release on July 25, 2024, that stated, “The national median salary for the Class of 2023 grew to a record high of \$90,000, up 5.9% compared to the median of \$85,000 for the Class of 2022. For graduates working in private practice, the median law firm salary increased by 10% to \$165,000 compared to \$150,000 for the Class of 2022. By firm size, the median salaries ranged from \$75,000 in firms of 1-10 lawyers to \$215,000 in firms of more than 500 lawyers. Although many large firms announced in late 2023 and early 2024 that they were increasing first-year associate salaries to \$225,000, fewer than 16% of all law firm salaries were reported at this amount.”¹⁰

The chart on the next page shows that the median salary for associates with eight years of experience working in any size firm is \$307,500, which is \$106,477 more than the salary of a Superior Court judge. Eight-year associates working in any size firm earn 35% more than a Superior Court judge.

⁹ NALP, *Findings on First-Year Salaries from the 2023 Associate Salary Survey*, NALP Bulletin+ June 2023.

¹⁰ NALP Press Release, *Class of 2023 Shatters Records in Historic Year as NALP Celebrates 50 Years of Employment Reporting*, July 25, 2024.

Median Base Salaries by Associate Year and Firm Size

(in \$/year unless otherwise noted, as of January 1, 2023)

Associate Year	FIRM SIZE – Number of Lawyers													
	100 or Fewer		101-250		251-500		501-700		701-1,000		1,001+		All Sizes	
	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept	Median	# Rept
First	\$155,000	29	\$160,000	78	\$190,000	64	\$200,000	83	\$200,000	160	\$215,000	108	\$200,000	522
Second	165,000	27	170,000	74	195,000	67	209,000	87	209,000	162	225,000	94	209,000	511
Third	180,000	27	180,000	71	207,500	66	220,000	86	220,000	168	250,000	92	220,000	510
Fourth	181,250	24	195,000	69	239,025	64	255,000	85	255,000	164	285,000	99	245,000	505
Fifth	192,500	22	200,000	73	243,325	66	280,000	86	280,000	161	315,000	94	265,000	502
Sixth	193,450	24	210,000	73	245,000	64	290,000	86	290,000	162	355,000	93	280,000	502
Seventh	210,000	24	225,000	68	286,250	64	303,750	95	303,750	160	387,500	90	295,000	501
Eighth	213,950	20	217,775	68	235,000	49	310,000	76	310,000	149	395,000	88	307,500	450

Note: All figures are based on average salaries reported. The “# Rept.” column indicates the number of offices reporting. For the purposes of this summary report, medians have been rounded to the nearest \$25.

Conclusion

The Commission is required to consider whether judges are paid appropriately in comparison to lawyers who are not judges. Connecticut judges generally earn significantly less than lawyers working in the private sector (35% less than associate attorneys with only eight years of experience.)

It is reasonable to expect that judges who have dedicated their careers to public service would not earn the lucrative salaries available in the private sector; however, it is also reasonable that Connecticut judges should receive consistent increases that, at a minimum, keep pace with attorneys working in state government.

Factor #5: The overall economic climate in the state

Connecticut’s economic climate has improved over the last four years and the forecast for the next four years looks promising as well. In his economic report for the Fiscal Year 2025, Governor Ned Lamont states that Connecticut’s economy remains “strong and stable,” citing continued growth in real gross state product, increasing population, rising employment levels and low unemployment rates.¹¹

General Economic Indicators

In the 2nd quarter of 2024, Connecticut has seen an increase over the 1st quarter of 2024 in two key economic indicators:¹²

- 2.8% increase in the annual rate of GDP
- 4.1% increase in the annual rate of personal income

¹¹ *Economic Report of the Governor FY 2025*, February 7, 2024.

¹² United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, September 27, 2024; www.bea.gov

“With easing inflation, solid wage growth, and our lowest employment rate since 2001, Connecticut is well-positioned to continue our fiscal and economic growth.”
Comptroller Sean Scanlon, Monthly Financial and Economic Update, November 1, 2024.

The Labor Market

According to the Connecticut Department of Labor in June of 2024, Connecticut has recovered all jobs lost during the 2020 recession. As of April 2024, Connecticut has a 102% recovery rate. Most northeast states have also recovered all the jobs lost during the 2020 recession. 1.7 million people are presently employed in Connecticut, which is just over the peak February 2020 levels. New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island are respectively at -0.1%, -0.3%, and 1.1% of February 2020 employment levels.¹³

This is supported by the Connecticut Department of Labor’s *Labor Market Information*, in which it states that Connecticut’s jobless rate dropped to 3.9% in June 2024 and state payrolls added another 3,300 jobs. “Connecticut’s labor market continues its strong start to 2024 with the fifth consecutive monthly gain in payroll employment.”¹⁴

Conclusion

Key economic indicators suggest that the state’s economy continues to see growth. Given these indicators, the Commission has the authority to recommend reasonable increases for judicial officers based on the state’s projected strong economic climate.

Factor #6: Connecticut’s interest in attracting highly qualified and experienced attorneys to serve in judicial capacities

Judges make difficult decisions every day that impact the most sensitive and consequential aspects of someone’s life including their personal liberty, their families, their housing and their finances. The residents of Connecticut deserve to have judges with the knowledge and expertise necessary to issue high-quality judicial decisions that promote consistency, predictability, and fairness in the legal system. To accomplish this, the state must attract highly qualified and experienced attorneys to pursue judgeships.

Additionally, it is in the state’s best interest to attract attorneys who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the residents of Connecticut to serve as judges. This will help ensure that the

¹³ Connecticut Department of Labor, *Connecticut’s Short-Term Employment Outlook 2023-2025*, June 2024.

¹⁴ Connecticut Department of Labor, *Labor Market Information*, July 19, 2024.

perspectives and experiences of all members of the community are represented in the judicial system, which helps enhance the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Connecticut's residents deserve to have an effective and robust judicial system comprised of diverse judges with the knowledge and expertise to issue high quality judicial decisions.

Finally, an effective and robust court system comprised of talented judges is essential for creating a conducive business environment that fosters economic growth. Judges provide a stable and predictable legal framework for resolving complex business disputes.

Conclusion

It is clearly in the state's best interest to attract highly qualified, diverse, and experienced attorneys from varied legal backgrounds to serve as judges. Connecticut is fortunate in that so many attorneys have decided to pursue a judgeship. They are public servants who uphold the rule of law and ensure access to justice.

Factor #7: The state's ability to fund increases in compensation

Budget Projections

Comptroller Sean Scanlon provided a monthly financial update on November 1, 2024, and "projected a Fiscal Year 2025 General Fund surplus of \$71.2 million and a Special Transportation Fund (STF) surplus of \$131.6 million, both in general agreement with the Office of Policy and Management's projections."¹⁵

Comptroller Scanlon also reported that the state is projected to pay down outstanding Special Tax Obligation debt, freeing up as much as \$60 million per year in future fiscal years, "¹⁶which frees up debt service funding for other worthwhile purposes."

While we recognize the complex economic challenges that the state is facing, the Judicial Branch believes that the State of Connecticut can afford the modest costs associated with compensating judges, consistent with their colleagues from across the country.

¹⁵ November monthly financial and economic update, "Comptroller Sean Scanlon Projects \$71.2 million Surplus, Nods to Connecticut's Positive Economic Outlook," November 1, 2024.

¹⁶ November monthly financial and economic update, "Comptroller Sean Scanlon Projects \$71.2 million Surplus, Nods to Connecticut's Positive Economic Outlook," November 1, 2024.

“Connecticut’s fiscal health continues to be in prime condition.” *Comptroller Sean Scanlon, Economic Outlook report, September 3, 2024.*

The estimated cost to fund the recommendations in FY 2026 is \$4,999,914, which is based on authorized positions including vacancies. Of these positions, 167 are currently filled and not all vacancies are presently funded. This represents less than 1% (0.83%) of the Judicial Branch’s budget and 0.02% of the state’s General Fund budget.

Conclusion

The judiciary plays a central role in preserving the principles of justice and the rule of law in our state. Funding to provide adequate compensation to judges should be viewed as a small but sound investment in our legal system.

Additional Factor to be considered: New salary structure for Members of the General Assembly, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of the State, Comptroller and Attorney General

Public Act 22-85, *An Act Concerning the Compensation of Legislators and Constitutional Officers*, establishes mechanisms to adjust the annual salaries of legislators and the state’s six constitutional officers.

Additionally, the act requires the Office of Legislative Management’s executive director to biennially adjust the base legislator and leadership salary amounts for inflation. Specifically, by January 1, 2025, and every two years after that, the executive director must, in consultation with the Commissioner of the Department of Labor, determine the adjustments using the percentage change in the employment cost index (ECI) (or its successor index) for wages and salaries for all civilian workers, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, over the 24-month period ending on the previous June 30, rounded to the nearest cent.

Finally, the act ties the annual salary for the Governor to the salary of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the salaries of the Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of the State, Comptroller and Attorney General to the salary of a Superior Court judge. As the constitution prohibits the state from paying any elected official compensation greater than the amount set in the beginning of the official’s term in office, these salaries will be adjusted every four years, when the official starts a new term.

Conclusion

Recognizing that careers in public service demand sacrifice, but that inadequate pay impacts the type of people who can afford to serve in elected positions, the General Assembly established a mechanism to provide periodic and consistent salary increases to legislators and constitutional

officers. Similarly, judges should be afforded periodic and consistent increases in line with the Consumer Price Index.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fiscal Year 2026

The salary for a Superior Court judge should increase to \$221,839, which would bring a Connecticut Superior Court judge's salary near the median salary received by all trial court judges from across the nation. The salaries of Supreme Court justices, Appellate Court judges and family support magistrates should increase by the same percentage as set forth in the chart listed in Appendix A.

Fiscal Years 2027, 2028, and 2029

Judicial salaries should increase consistent with the CPI-U plus 2%. The 2% mirrors that which state employees have received as an annual step increase for many years. In determining adjustment, the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, as calculated by the U.S. Department of Labor, over the 12-month period ending the previous December 31, shall be used, plus 2.0%, rounded to the nearest cent.

Moving Forward

Recommend that the General Assembly adopt a statute that would provide for these increases beginning on July 1, 2026, and continue onward. This would ensure that judicial pay levels are set regularly and are based on accepted, easy to measure objective benchmarks.

Maintain section 51-47c of the Connecticut General Statutes, which establishes this Commission, to ensure that there are periodic reviews of judicial salaries. The Commission that will be established in the fall of 2028 will have the opportunity to review the levels of judicial pay at that time, to apply the factors and to determine if adjustments need to be made.

Appendix A: Proposed Salary Levels

<i>Position</i>	<i>Current Compensation</i>	<i>FY 26</i>	<i>FY 27</i>	<i>FY 28</i>	<i>FY 29</i>
Superior Court Judge	\$201,023	\$ 221,728	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Chief Administrative Judge and Administrative Judge	\$ 1,371 in addition to judicial salary	\$ 1,512	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Senior Judge or Judge Trial Referee	\$ 302 per day	\$ 333	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Chief Family Support Magistrate	\$174,976	\$192,998	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Family Support Magistrate	\$ 166,533	\$ 183,686	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Family Support Referee	\$ 260 per day	\$ 287	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Supreme Court Chief Justice	\$ 240,518	\$265,291	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Chief Court Administrator (if a judge or justice)	\$ 231,121	\$254, 926	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Supreme Court Associate Justice	\$ 222,545	\$ 245,467	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Appellate Court Chief Judge	\$ 220,084	\$242,753	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Appellate Court Judge	\$ 209,046	\$230,578	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%
Deputy Chief Court Administrator (if a judge)	\$ 205,199	\$226,334	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%	Increase based on CPI-U + 2%

Appendix B: Commission on Judicial Compensation issued reports to the General Assembly in 2013 and 2021

2013 Report of the Commission on Judicial Compensation

In January 2013, the Commission issued its first report and recommended that judges, family support magistrates, senior judges, judge trial referees, and family support referees receive increases in the amount of 5.3% on July 1, 2013; July 1, 2014; July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016. As Connecticut adopts a biennial budget, the Commission's recommendations cover two budget cycles.

Pursuant to section 51-47c of the general statutes, the Chief Court Administrator submitted a proposed budget to OPM in January of 2013, that included salary increases for judges and magistrates in the amount of 5.3% effective July 1, 2013, and July 1, 2014. The General Assembly accepted the recommendations and, as part of the biennial budget process, subsequently increased the salaries of judges and family support magistrates by 5.3% on July 1, 2013, and by another 5.3% on July 1, 2014.¹⁷

As part of the FY 2016 and FY 2017 biennial budget process and pursuant to statute, the Chief Court Administrator submitted a proposed biennial budget to OPM that included salary increases for judges and magistrates in the amount of 5.3% effective July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2016. The General Assembly considered the recommendations but did not accept the Commission's recommendations. Instead, the General Assembly reduced the recommendation by 2.3% each year and thus only increased the salaries of judges and family support magistrates by 3% on July 1, 2015, and by 3% on July 1, 2016.¹⁸

Additionally, due to budgetary shortfalls, the judges and magistrates received no raise in 2016. The Legislature, as part of its midterm budget adjustment, delayed the 3% raise that was to take effect on July 1, 2016, to July 1, 2017.¹⁹ This 3% increase went into effect on July 1, 2017; however, in November, the General Assembly reduced the salaries of judges and magistrates by 3% (bringing the salary to the pre-July 1, 2017, level). As a result, in 2018, the judges and magistrates not only did not receive a raise but had their salaries reduced to what it had been back in 2015, three years earlier. The General Assembly reinstated the 3% increase effective on July 1, 2019.²⁰ This raise, however, only put judges back to where they should have been in 2017. The table on the next page lists judicial salaries from 2013 to 2019.

¹⁷ Public Act 13-247

¹⁸ Public Act 15-5 of the June Special Session

¹⁹ Public Act 16-3 of the May Special Session

²⁰ Public Act 17-2 of the June Special Session

Position	Salary Starting July 1, 2013 (5.3% increase)	Salary Starting July 1, 2014 (5.3% increase)	Salary Starting July 1, 2015 (3% increase)	Salary Starting July 1, 2016 (0% increase)	Salary from July 1, 2017, (3% increase)	Salary from July 1, 2018 (3% decrease)²¹	Salary Starting July 1, 2019 (3% increase)
Superior Court judge	\$154,559	\$162,751	\$167,634	\$167,634	\$172,663	\$167,634	\$172,663
Supreme Court chief justice	184,954	194,757	200,599	200,599	206,617	200,599	206,617
Chief court administrator	177,728	187,148	192,763	192,763	198,545	192,763	198,545
Supreme Court associate justice	171,134	180,204	184,610	184,610	191,178	185,610	191,178
Appellate Court chief judge	169,240	178,210	183,556	183,556	189,063	183,556	189,063
Appellate Court judge	160,727	169,245	174,323	174,323	179,552	174,323	179,552
Deputy chief court administrator	157,795	166,158	171,143	171,143	176,277	171,143	176,277
Superior Court judge	154,559	162,751	167,634	167,634	172,663	167,634	172,663
Chief family support magistrate	134,554	141,686	145,936	145,936	150,314	145,936	150,314
Family support magistrate	128,061	134,848	138,893	138,893	143,060	138,893	143,060
Family support referee	200/day	211/day	217/day	217/day	223/day	217/day	223/day
Judge trial referee	232/day	244/day	251/day	251/day	259/day	251/day	259/day

²¹ The Legislature, as part of its midterm budget adjustment, delayed the 3% raise that was to take effect on July 1, 2016, to July 1, 2017. This 3% increase went into effect on July 1, 2017; however, effective in November, the General Assembly reduced the salaries of judges and magistrates by 3% (bringing the salary to the pre-July 1, 2017, level). The General Assembly re-instated the 3% increase effective on July 1, 2019.

2021 Report of the Commission on Judicial Compensation

In January 2021, the Commission issued its second report and recommended that the salaries of judges and family support magistrates increase by 4.5% in FY 22 (effective July 1, 2021), and then, in the subsequent three fiscal years (FYs 23, 24 and 25), that salaries be increased based on CPI-U with a floor of 2.5%. The Commission also recommended that, should no Commission be convened in 2024, the cost-of-living adjustments should be maintained until such time as a Commission is convened and issues its report.

Also in January of 2021, the Chief Court Administrator submitted a proposed biennial budget to OPM that included 4.5% increases effective July 1, 2021, and 2.5% increases effective July 1, 2022. The General Assembly subsequently increased the salaries for judges and family support magistrates by 4.5% effective July 1, 2021,²² and by 5% effective July 1, 2022.²³

As part of the FY 24 and FY 25 biennial budget process, the Chief Court Administrator, in accordance with the CPI-U index, which was 8.5% at that time, submitted a proposed biennial budget to OPM that included salary increases for judges and family support magistrates in the amount of 8.5% for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

The General Assembly increased the salaries for judges and family support magistrates by 3% on July 1, 2023, and by another 3% on July 1, 2024.²⁴

The table on the following page lists the salaries of judicial officials between July 1, 2021, and July 1, 2024. There are currently no additional increases scheduled.

²² Public Act 21-2 of the June Special Session

²³ Public Act 22-118

²⁴ Public Act 23-204

Position	Salary Starting July 1, 2021 (FY 22) 4.5% increase	Salary Starting July 1, 2022 (FY 23) 5% increase	Salary Starting July 1, 2023 (FY 24) 3% increase	Salary Starting July 1, 2024 (FY 25) 3% increase
Superior Court judge	\$180,460	\$189,483	\$195,167	\$201,023
Supreme Court chief justice	215,915	\$226,711	\$233,512	\$240,518
Chief court administrator	207,480	217,854	224,390	231,121
Supreme Court associate justice	199,781	209,770	216,063	222,545
Appellate Court chief judge	197,571	207,450	213,674	220,084
Appellate Court judge	187,663	197,046	202,957	209,046
Deputy chief court administrator	184,209	193,420	199,223	205,199
Chief family support magistrate	157,078	164,932	169,880	174,976
Family support magistrate	149,498	156,973	161,682	166,533
Family support referee	233/day	245/day	252/day	260/day
Judge trial referee	271/day	271/day	294/day	302/day

Appendix C: Survey of Judicial Salaries, July 2024



SURVEY OF Judicial Salaries

ncsc.org/salarytracker

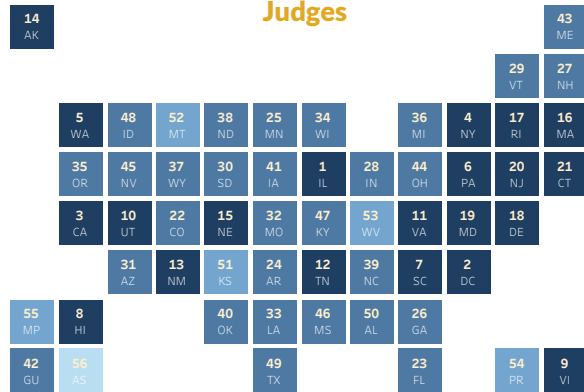
Published July 2024 — Vol. 49, No. 2
Data and Rankings as of July 1, 2024

These graphics depict the rankings of judicial salaries, with the highest salary for each position having a rank of "1."

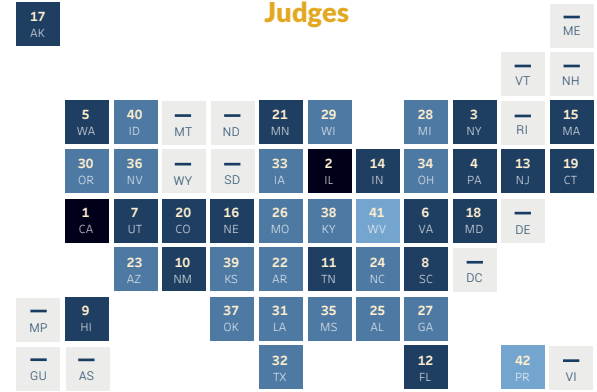
Data is reported by each jurisdiction to NCSC.

Less than \$100,000 \$100,000 to \$149,999 \$150,000 to \$199,999 \$200,000 to \$249,999 More than \$250,000

General Jurisdiction Judges



Intermediate Appellate Court Judges



— States without an intermediate appellate court

General Jurisdiction Judges Adjusted for Cost of Living



X C2ER does not provide cost of living index for U.S. Territories (except for San Juan, Puerto Rico)

Court of Last Resort Associate Justices



• No Response

Judicial Salaries at a Glance

	Mean	Median	Range
Chief, Highest Court	\$214,896	\$214,830	\$130,000 to \$305,259
Associate Justice, Court of Last Resort	\$207,249	\$203,625	\$126,000 to \$291,094
Judge, Intermediate Appellate Court	\$200,011	\$200,062	\$139,563 to \$272,902
Judge, General Jurisdiction Trial Court	\$184,366	\$183,006	\$68,675 to \$246,099



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Salaries and Rankings - Listed Alphabetically by Jurisdiction Name

The table below lists the salaries and rankings for associate justices of the courts of last resort, associate judges of intermediate appellate courts and judges of general jurisdiction trial courts. Salaries are ranked from highest to lowest, with the highest salary for each position having a rank of "1." The adjustment factor for general jurisdiction courts is available for 52 of the jurisdictions. Salaries are as of July 1, 2024.

	Court of Last Resort		Intermediate Appellate Court		General Jurisdiction Court		General Jurisdiction Court <i>Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index</i>		
	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Factor	Salary	Rank
Alabama	\$189,353	36	\$188,271	25	\$151,482	50	93.1	\$162,709	33
Alaska	\$226,200	18	\$213,701	17	\$209,157	14	131.8	\$158,693	38
American Samoa	No Response		Not Applicable		\$68,675	56	Not Available		
Arizona	\$205,000	27	\$190,000	23	\$180,000	31	102.4	\$175,781	26
Arkansas	\$203,625	28	\$197,596	22	\$192,919	24	90.5	\$213,170	5
California	\$291,094	1	\$272,902	1	\$238,479	3	134.8	\$176,913	25
Colorado	\$215,904	24	\$207,351	20	\$198,798	22	111.2	\$178,775	22
Connecticut	\$222,545	21	\$209,046	19	\$201,023	21	126.2	\$159,289	37
Delaware	\$218,684	23	Not Applicable		\$205,600	18	109.7	\$187,420	17
District of Columbia	\$257,900	4	Not Applicable		\$243,300	2	159.1	\$152,923	42
Florida	\$258,957	3	\$218,939	12	\$196,898	23	101.4	\$194,180	14
Georgia	\$189,112	37	\$187,990	27	\$187,796	26	93.5	\$200,851	11
Guam	\$177,000	44	Not Applicable		\$165,114	42	Not Available		
Hawaii	\$239,688	10	\$222,804	9	\$217,104	8	149.2	\$145,512	47
Idaho	\$169,508	50	\$161,508	40	\$155,508	48	99.8	\$155,820	41
Illinois	\$284,948	2	\$268,190	2	\$246,099	1	99.8	\$246,592	1
Indiana	\$221,024	22	\$214,852	14	\$183,513	28	95.6	\$191,959	15
Iowa	\$196,692	31	\$178,253	33	\$165,959	41	97.8	\$169,692	29
Kansas	\$168,598	51	\$163,156	39	\$148,912	51	98.2	\$151,642	44
Kentucky	\$170,050	48	\$163,292	38	\$156,565	47	92.5	\$169,259	30
Louisiana	\$194,427	33	\$182,007	31	\$174,988	33	97.2	\$180,029	20
Maine	\$172,266	47	Not Applicable		\$161,470	43	116.8	\$138,245	51
Maryland	\$226,433	16	\$213,633	18	\$204,433	19	126.4	\$161,735	35
Massachusetts	\$226,187	19	\$213,924	15	\$207,855	16	132.2	\$157,228	40
Michigan	\$181,483	43	\$186,310	28	\$172,135	36	91.1	\$188,951	16
Minnesota	\$214,935	25	\$202,528	21	\$190,117	25	102.1	\$186,207	18
Mississippi	\$173,800	45	\$168,467	35	\$158,000	46	88.6	\$178,330	23
Missouri	\$205,965	26	\$188,267	26	\$177,609	32	90.5	\$196,253	12
Montana	\$162,503	52	Not Applicable		\$148,872	52	104.0	\$143,146	49
Nebraska	\$225,055	20	\$213,803	16	\$208,176	15	100.8	\$206,524	9
Nevada	\$170,000	49	\$165,000	36	\$160,000	45	112.0	\$142,857	50
New Hampshire	\$197,945	29	Not Applicable		\$185,640	27	121.6	\$152,664	43
New Jersey	\$226,292	17	\$215,546	13	\$204,167	20	121.2	\$168,455	31
New Mexico	\$232,606	12	\$220,979	10	\$209,914	13	100.5	\$208,870	6
New York	\$257,500	5	\$245,100	3	\$232,600	4	112.4	\$206,940	8
North Carolina	\$197,802	30	\$189,621	24	\$169,125	39	95.2	\$177,652	24
North Dakota	\$186,484	41	Not Applicable		\$171,113	38	107.9	\$158,585	39
Northern Mariana Islands	\$126,000	55	Not Applicable		\$120,000	55	Not Available		
Ohio	\$187,805	39	\$175,045	34	\$160,975	44	92.5	\$174,027	28
Oklahoma	\$173,469	46	\$164,339	37	\$167,703	40	93.2	\$179,939	21
Oregon	\$188,208	38	\$184,584	30	\$174,108	35	118.6	\$146,803	46
Pennsylvania	\$253,361	6	\$239,059	4	\$219,933	6	102.0	\$215,621	4
Puerto Rico	\$153,519	53	\$139,563	42	\$126,875	54	102.6	\$123,660	52
Rhode Island	\$230,343	13	Not Applicable		\$207,384	17	127.9	\$162,145	34
South Carolina	\$229,026	14	\$223,300	8	\$217,574	7	98.8	\$220,217	3
South Dakota	\$194,241	34	Not Applicable		\$181,426	30	99.7	\$181,972	19
Tennessee	\$228,132	15	\$220,548	11	\$212,940	12	92.3	\$230,704	2
Texas	\$184,800	42	\$178,400	32	\$154,000	49	96.6	\$159,420	36
Utah	\$235,300	11	\$224,600	7	\$213,900	10	103.7	\$206,268	10
Vermont	\$191,963	35	Not Applicable		\$182,499	29	121.2	\$150,577	45
Virgin Islands	\$241,091	9	Not Applicable		\$213,992	9	Not Available		
Virginia	\$243,842	8	\$225,325	6	\$213,839	11	102.5	\$208,623	7
Washington	\$247,064	7	\$235,188	5	\$223,913	5	115.0	\$194,707	13
West Virginia	\$149,600	54	\$142,500	41	\$138,600	53	95.3	\$145,435	48
Wisconsin	\$196,102	32	\$184,995	29	\$174,512	34	100.1	\$174,338	27
Wyoming	\$187,250	40	Not Applicable		\$171,200	37	105.2	\$162,738	32
Mean	\$207,249		\$200,011		\$184,366				
Median	\$203,625		\$200,062		\$183,006				
Range	\$126,000 to \$291,094		\$139,563 to \$272,902		\$68,675 to \$246,099				

*The figures presented use the C2ER Cost-of-Living Index. The Council for Community and Economic Research-C2ER is the most widely accepted U.S. source for cost-of-living indices. C2ER does not provide cost of living index for U.S. Territories (except for San Juan, Puerto Rico). Due to the rounding of C2ER factors to the nearest hundredth for publication purposes, user calculations of our adjusted salary figures may not equate to the published totals. More detailed information can be found at www.c2er.org.