

SURVEY OF Judicial Salaries

How States Set Judicial Salaries

States have devised a number of different ways for changing judicial salaries. Whatever the method for implementing changes, the desired system for both judges and the taxpaying public strives to be predictable, reasonable, and easily assessed. When considering judicial salary increases, states with compensation commissions are tasked by statute with considering a variety of factors, including:

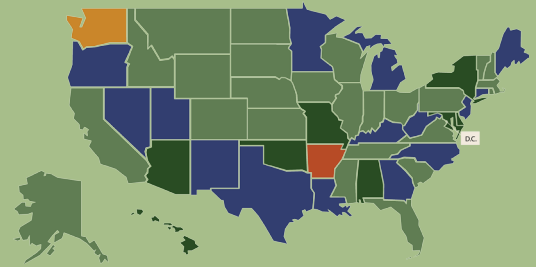
- Overall economic climate of the state and rate of inflation;
- Levels of compensation earned by judges in other states and the federal judiciary;
- State's interest in attracting highly qualified and experienced attorneys to serve as judges;
- Consideration of adjustments received by other state employees; and
- The state's overall ability to fund increases in compensation.

While some states have compensation commissions, roughly half the states do not. The states with compensation commissions implement changes in four different ways, which are detailed below.

1. Advisory: The commission presents a salary report that serves as a recommendation for legislative action.
2. Binding unless overridden by legislature: The commission's salary report goes into effect unless changed or overridden by the legislature. The threshold can be a simple majority or as high as two-thirds.
3. Binding unless overridden by voters.
4. Binding cannot be overridden: The commission's salary report goes into effect and cannot be changed or overridden by the legislature. This appears to be limited to the newly formed Independent Citizens Commission of Arkansas, which sets salaries for state elected officials in all three branches.

The map shown on the right highlights states that use commissions and the different ways in which they make changes detailed above. For more information on the specific makeup of state salary commissions, statutory authority, and processes, visit our website at www.ncsc.org/salarytracker.

EFFECT OF A COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION



ADVISORY

Connecticut	Michigan	North Carolina
Georgia	Minnesota	Oregon
Kentucky	Nevada	Texas
Louisiana	New Jersey	Utah
Maine	New Mexico	West Virginia

BINDING UNLESS OVERRIDDEN BY LEGISLATURE

Alabama	Hawaii	New York
Arizona	Maryland	Oklahoma
Delaware	Missouri	

BINDING UNLESS OVERRIDDEN BY VOTERS

Washington

BINDING CANNOT BE OVERRIDDEN

Arkansas

NO COMMISSION

Alaska	Massachusetts	South Carolina
California	Mississippi	South Dakota
Colorado	Montana	Tennessee
Florida	Nebraska	Vermont
Idaho	New Hampshire	Virginia
Illinois	North Dakota	Wisconsin
Indiana	Ohio	Wyoming
Iowa	Pennsylvania	
Kansas	Rhode Island	

Judicial Salaries at a Glance

The average annual percent change for the four judicial positions, and the state court administrators analyzed by the Survey, is 1.7% for increases from July 1, 2015 through July 1, 2016. As indicated in the table below, this increase remains below the pre-recession (2003-2007) average increase of 3.24%.

	Mean	Median	Range	Average Annual % Change			
				Pre-Recession 2003-2007	Recession 2008-2009	Recession 2010-2011	Recovery 2012-2015
Chief, Highest Court	\$174,225	\$170,500	\$133,174 to \$245,269	3.19%	1.58%	0.67%	2.19%
Associate Justice, COLR	\$168,225	\$167,210	\$130,136 to \$233,888	3.21%	1.88%	0.64%	2.18%
Judge, Intermediate Appellate Court	\$162,306	\$162,488	\$124,616 to \$219,272	3.20%	1.60%	0.36%	2.21%
Judge, General Jurisdiction Trial Courts	\$151,624	\$149,000	\$118,384 to \$201,100	3.30%	1.91%	0.58%	2.24%
State Court Administrators	\$150,694	\$143,163	\$107,000 to \$245,640	3.30%	1.38%	0.89%	2.21%
			Average	3.24%	1.67%	0.63%	2.20%

Salaries and Rankings for Appellate and General-Jurisdiction Judges - Listed Alphabetically by State 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 (actual salaries and cost-of-living-adjusted salaries as of July 1, 2016). Where possible, the salary figures are actual salaries. In jurisdictions where some judges receive supplements, the figures are the most representative available—either the base salary, the midpoint of a range between the lowest and highest supplemented salaries, or the median. Salaries are ranked from highest to lowest, with the highest salary for each position having a rank of “1.” The lowest salary has a rank of “51” except for intermediate appellate courts, which exist in only 40 states. The mean, median, and salary range for each of the positions are also shown.

	Highest Court		Intermediate Appellate Court		General-Jurisdiction Court		General-Jurisdiction Court Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index		
	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Factor	Salary	Rank
Alabama	\$ 167,685	26	\$ 178,878	7	\$ 134,943	38	95.71	\$ 140,993	21
Alaska	\$ 205,176	6	\$ 193,836	5	\$ 189,720	6	135.65	\$ 139,863	22
Arizona	\$ 155,000	35	\$ 150,000	29	\$ 145,000	31	108.25	\$ 133,951	30
Arkansas	\$ 166,500	28	\$ 161,500	21	\$ 160,000	14	95.08	\$ 168,281	3
California	\$ 233,888	1	\$ 219,272	1	\$ 191,612	5	139.89	\$ 136,974	27
Colorado	\$ 173,024	18	\$ 166,170	15	\$ 159,320	17	109.4	\$ 145,625	15
Connecticut	\$ 185,610	10	\$ 174,323	11	\$ 167,634	10	136.08	\$ 123,186	43
Delaware	\$ 192,360	9			\$ 180,733	7	108.29	\$ 166,903	4
District of Columbia	\$ 213,300	5			\$ 201,100	1	146.11	\$ 137,637	26
Florida	\$ 162,200	32	\$ 154,140	26	\$ 146,080	29	105.83	\$ 138,036	25
Georgia	\$ 167,210	27	\$ 166,186	14	\$ 156,252	21	100.35	\$ 155,704	7
Hawaii	\$ 218,820	3	\$ 202,596	4	\$ 197,112	2	157.91	\$ 124,828	40
Idaho	\$ 140,000	43	\$ 130,000	39	\$ 128,500	42	96.96	\$ 132,529	32
Illinois	\$ 224,628	2	\$ 211,416	2	\$ 194,001	3	112.15	\$ 172,987	2
Indiana	\$ 170,195	22	\$ 165,443	16	\$ 141,311	35	97.32	\$ 145,206	17
Iowa	\$ 170,544	21	\$ 154,556	25	\$ 143,897	32	98.95	\$ 145,421	16
Kansas	\$ 135,905	46	\$ 131,518	37	\$ 120,037	50	100.27	\$ 119,711	46
Kentucky	\$ 135,504	48	\$ 130,044	38	\$ 124,620	47	93.87	\$ 132,760	31
Louisiana	\$ 164,590	31	\$ 154,059	27	\$ 148,108	28	99.56	\$ 148,767	12
Maine	\$ 130,136	51			\$ 121,968	49	122.49	\$ 99,577	51
Maryland	\$ 176,433	14	\$ 163,633	19	\$ 154,433	22	120.7	\$ 127,950	37
Massachusetts	\$ 175,984	15	\$ 165,087	17	\$ 159,694	16	133.26	\$ 119,838	45
Michigan	\$ 164,610	30	\$ 151,441	28	\$ 139,919	36	98.46	\$ 142,110	18
Minnesota	\$ 169,135	24	\$ 159,370	22	\$ 149,605	24	105.38	\$ 141,965	19
Mississippi	\$ 152,250	37	\$ 144,827	31	\$ 136,000	37	90.94	\$ 149,543	11
Missouri	\$ 172,017	19	\$ 157,242	24	\$ 148,263	27	98.77	\$ 150,115	10
Montana	\$ 136,177	44			\$ 126,131	45	104.11	\$ 121,156	44
Nebraska	\$ 171,975	20	\$ 163,476	20	\$ 159,077	18	100.21	\$ 158,737	5
Nevada	\$ 170,000	23	\$ 165,000	18	\$ 160,000	14	109.8	\$ 145,725	14
New Hampshire	\$ 159,042	33			\$ 149,175	25	126.5	\$ 117,922	47
New Jersey	\$ 185,482	11	\$ 175,534	10	\$ 165,000	12	125.68	\$ 131,289	33
New Mexico	\$ 131,174	50	\$ 124,616	40	\$ 118,384	51	104.88	\$ 112,876	49
New York	\$ 213,600	4	\$ 203,400	3	\$ 193,000	4	148.76	\$ 129,735	36
North Carolina	\$ 146,191	41	\$ 140,144	32	\$ 132,584	39	101.16	\$ 131,067	34
North Dakota	\$ 157,009	34			\$ 143,869	33	105.25	\$ 136,693	28
Ohio	\$ 148,700	39	\$ 138,600	34	\$ 127,450	43	97.97	\$ 130,086	35
Oklahoma	\$ 145,914	42	\$ 138,235	35	\$ 131,835	40	96.53	\$ 136,569	29
Oregon	\$ 135,688	47	\$ 132,820	36	\$ 124,468	48	114.29	\$ 108,901	50
Pennsylvania	\$ 203,409	7	\$ 191,926	6	\$ 176,572	8	112.89	\$ 156,404	6
Rhode Island	\$ 175,870	16			\$ 158,340	20	127.95	\$ 123,753	42
South Carolina	\$ 148,794	38	\$ 145,074	30	\$ 141,354	34	101.55	\$ 139,194	24
South Dakota	\$ 135,270	49			\$ 126,346	44	101.87	\$ 124,024	41
Tennessee	\$ 182,508	12	\$ 176,436	9	\$ 170,352	9	95.93	\$ 177,583	1
Texas	\$ 168,000	25	\$ 158,500	23	\$ 149,000	26	102.02	\$ 146,050	13
Utah	\$ 174,950	17	\$ 167,000	13	\$ 159,050	19	102.56	\$ 155,073	8
Vermont	\$ 152,538	36			\$ 145,011	30	124.51	\$ 116,468	48
Virginia	\$ 192,458	8	\$ 176,510	8	\$ 166,136	11	107.76	\$ 154,176	9
Washington	\$ 179,432	13	\$ 170,808	12	\$ 162,618	13	114.83	\$ 141,618	20
West Virginia	\$ 136,000	45			\$ 126,000	46	99.36	\$ 126,808	39
Wisconsin	\$ 147,403	40	\$ 139,059	33	\$ 131,187	41	103.07	\$ 127,286	38
Wyoming	\$ 165,000	29			\$ 150,000	23	107.58	\$ 139,434	23
Mean	\$ 168,225		\$ 162,306		\$ 151,624				
Median	\$ 167,210		\$ 162,488		\$ 149,000				
Range	\$ 130,136 to \$ 233,888		\$ 124,616 to \$ 219,272		\$ 118,384 to \$ 201,100				

Using 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, with nearly 400 reporting jurisdictions across America. The cost-of-living indices used in this report were developed by C2ER using a robust, multivariable model, which incorporates the costs of goods and services within a reporting jurisdiction along with seven additional variables to greatly improve predicted, statewide average C2ER factors. The seven variables are: community population, population density, income, growth rate, utility rates, efficiency of the government sector, and location of the region. More detailed information can be found at www.c2er.org.

Salaries and Rankings for Appellate and General-Jurisdiction Judges - Listed in Order of State Rank

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 (actual salaries and cost-of-living-adjusted salaries as of July 1, 2016). Where possible, the salary figures are actual salaries. In jurisdictions where some judges receive supplements, the figures are the most representative available--either the base salary, the midpoint of a range between the lowest and highest supplemented salaries, or the median. Salaries are ranked from highest to lowest, with the highest salary for each position having a rank of "1." The lowest salary has a rank of "51" except for intermediate appellate courts, which exist in only 40 states. The mean, median, and salary range for each of the positions are also shown.

Highest Court		Intermediate Appellate Court		General-Jurisdiction Court		General-Jurisdiction Court Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index		
1	California	\$ 233,888	California	\$ 219,272	District of Columbia	\$ 201,100	Tennessee	\$ 177,583
2	Illinois	\$ 224,628	Illinois	\$ 211,416	Hawaii	\$ 197,112	Illinois	\$ 172,987
3	Hawaii	\$ 218,820	New York	\$ 203,400	Illinois	\$ 194,001	Arkansas	\$ 168,281
4	New York	\$ 213,600	Hawaii	\$ 202,596	New York	\$ 193,000	Delaware	\$ 166,903
5	District of Columbia	\$ 213,300	Alaska	\$ 193,836	California	\$ 191,612	Nebraska	\$ 158,737
6	Alaska	\$ 205,176	Pennsylvania	\$ 191,926	Alaska	\$ 189,720	Pennsylvania	\$ 156,404
7	Pennsylvania	\$ 203,409	Alabama	\$ 178,878	Delaware	\$ 180,733	Georgia	\$ 155,704
8	Virginia	\$ 192,458	Virginia	\$ 176,510	Pennsylvania	\$ 176,572	Utah	\$ 155,073
9	Delaware	\$ 192,360	Tennessee	\$ 176,436	Tennessee	\$ 170,352	Virginia	\$ 154,176
10	Connecticut	\$ 185,610	New Jersey	\$ 175,534	Connecticut	\$ 167,634	Missouri	\$ 150,115
11	New Jersey	\$ 185,482	Connecticut	\$ 174,323	Virginia	\$ 166,136	Mississippi	\$ 149,543
12	Tennessee	\$ 182,508	Washington	\$ 170,808	New Jersey	\$ 165,000	Louisiana	\$ 148,767
13	Washington	\$ 179,432	Utah	\$ 167,000	Washington	\$ 162,618	Texas	\$ 146,050
14	Maryland	\$ 176,433	Georgia	\$ 166,186	Arkansas	\$ 160,000	Nevada	\$ 145,725
15	Massachusetts	\$ 175,984	Colorado	\$ 166,170	Nevada	\$ 160,000	Colorado	\$ 145,625
16	Rhode Island	\$ 175,870	Indiana	\$ 165,443	Massachusetts	\$ 159,694	Iowa	\$ 145,421
17	Utah	\$ 174,950	Massachusetts	\$ 165,087	Colorado	\$ 159,320	Indiana	\$ 145,206
18	Colorado	\$ 173,024	Nevada	\$ 165,000	Nebraska	\$ 159,077	Michigan	\$ 142,110
19	Missouri	\$ 172,017	Maryland	\$ 163,633	Utah	\$ 159,050	Minnesota	\$ 141,965
20	Iowa	\$ 170,554	Nebraska	\$ 163,476	Rhode Island	\$ 158,340	Washington	\$ 141,618
21	Indiana	\$ 170,195	Arkansas	\$ 161,500	Georgia	\$ 156,252	Alabama	\$ 140,993
22	Nevada	\$ 170,000	Minnesota	\$ 159,370	Maryland	\$ 154,433	Alaska	\$ 139,863
23	Minnesota	\$ 169,135	Texas	\$ 158,500	Wyoming	\$ 150,000	Wyoming	\$ 139,434
24	Texas	\$ 168,000	Missouri	\$ 157,242	Minnesota	\$ 149,605	South Carolina	\$ 139,194
25	Alabama	\$ 167,685	Iowa	\$ 154,556	New Hampshire	\$ 149,175	Florida	\$ 138,036
26	Georgia	\$ 167,210	Florida	\$ 154,140	Texas	\$ 149,000	District of Columbia	\$ 137,637
27	Arkansas	\$ 166,500	Louisiana	\$ 154,059	Missouri	\$ 148,263	North Dakota	\$ 136,693
28	Nebraska	\$ 166,159	Michigan	\$ 151,411	Louisiana	\$ 148,108	Oklahoma	\$ 136,569
29	Wyoming	\$ 165,000	Arizona	\$ 150,000	Florida	\$ 146,080	California	\$ 135,136
30	Michigan	\$ 164,610	South Carolina	\$ 145,074	Vermont	\$ 145,011	Arizona	\$ 133,951
31	Louisiana	\$ 164,590	Mississippi	\$ 144,827	Arizona	\$ 145,000	Kentucky	\$ 132,760
32	Florida	\$ 162,200	North Carolina	\$ 140,144	Iowa	\$ 143,897	Idaho	\$ 132,529
33	New Hampshire	\$ 159,042	Wisconsin	\$ 139,059	North Dakota	\$ 143,869	New Jersey	\$ 131,289
34	North Dakota	\$ 157,009	Ohio	\$ 138,600	South Carolina	\$ 141,354	North Carolina	\$ 131,067
35	Arizona	\$ 155,000	Oklahoma	\$ 138,235	Indiana	\$ 141,311	Ohio	\$ 130,086
36	Vermont	\$ 152,538	Oregon	\$ 132,820	Michigan	\$ 139,919	New York	\$ 129,735
37	Mississippi	\$ 152,250	Kansas	\$ 131,518	Mississippi	\$ 136,000	Maryland	\$ 127,950
38	South Carolina	\$ 148,794	Kentucky	\$ 130,044	Alabama	\$ 134,943	Wisconsin	\$ 127,286
39	Ohio	\$ 148,700	Idaho	\$ 130,000	North Carolina	\$ 132,584	West Virginia	\$ 126,808
40	Wisconsin	\$ 147,403	New Mexico	\$ 124,616	Oklahoma	\$ 131,835	Hawaii	\$ 124,828
41	North Carolina	\$ 146,191	Delaware		Wisconsin	\$ 131,187	South Dakota	\$ 124,024
42	Oklahoma	\$ 145,914	District of Columbia		Idaho	\$ 128,500	Rhode Island	\$ 123,753
43	Idaho	\$ 140,000	Maine		Ohio	\$ 127,450	Connecticut	\$ 123,186
44	Montana	\$ 136,177	Montana		South Dakota	\$ 126,346	Montana	\$ 121,156
45	West Virginia	\$ 136,000	New Hampshire		Montana	\$ 126,131	Massachusetts	\$ 119,838
46	Kansas	\$ 135,905	North Dakota		West Virginia	\$ 126,000	Kansas	\$ 119,711
47	Oregon	\$ 135,688	Rhode Island		Kentucky	\$ 124,620	New Hampshire	\$ 117,992
48	Kentucky	\$ 135,504	South Dakota		Oregon	\$ 124,468	Vermont	\$ 116,468
49	South Dakota	\$ 135,270	Vermont		Maine	\$ 121,967	New Mexico	\$ 112,876
50	New Mexico	\$ 131,174	West Virginia		Kansas	\$ 120,037	Oregon	\$ 108,901
51	Maine	\$ 130,136	Wyoming		New Mexico	\$ 118,384	Maine	\$ 99,577
	Mean	\$ 168,163	Mean	\$ 162,306	Mean	\$ 151,624		
	Median	\$ 167,210	Median	\$ 162,488	Median	\$ 149,000		
	Range	\$ 130,136 to \$ 230,750	Range	\$ 124,616 to \$ 219,272	Range	\$ 118,384 to \$ 201,100		

Information in this Survey is collected from designated representatives in each state. The National Center for State Courts has protocols in place to help ensure the accuracy of the data that are collected, analyzed, and ultimately reported.

Methodology

The *Survey of Judicial Salaries*, published for nearly 30 years by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) with the support of state court administrative offices across the United States, serves as the primary record of compensation for state judicial officers and state court administrators.

This issue of the *Survey of Judicial Salaries* reports salary data as of July 1, 2016. This cutoff date is important because states implement salary changes at various points during the year. However, a standard and unchanging cutoff date must be established to publish salary data in a timely and predictable fashion. Due to recent changes in data-collection protocols and analytics, the NCSC is now able to report changes in state salaries more quickly. This will give policymakers who are considering changes in judicial compensation the most up-to-date salary information at the national level.

This Survey was prepared by the Knowledge and Information Services (KIS) Office of the National Center for State Courts.



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Judicial Salary Tracker

Interactive online app that presents judicial salary and compensation data in clear visual displays.

How does your state go about setting judicial salaries?

Who are the people that make salary change recommendations?