

Minnesota Judicial Salaries

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Introduction

- **Role of Competitive Salaries:** Competitive judicial salaries are essential for attracting and retaining qualified judges, ensuring the effective functioning of the judiciary.
- **Declining Interest in Judicial Positions:** Recent trends indicate a decrease in applications for judicial appointments, raising concerns about the future of the judiciary.
- **Factors Influencing Judicial Compensation:** Economic conditions, inflation, and salary competitiveness with other legal professions significantly impact judicial compensation.

Judicial Salary Trends & Inflation Impact

- **There has been stagnation in judicial salaries in once adjusted for inflation.**
 - Decreased purchasing power.
- Pennsylvania implemented a 3.4% pay raise in 2025 to align with inflation, reflecting efforts to maintain salary competitiveness.
 - Pennsylvania trial court salaries in 2023 were more than 20% higher than Minnesota's.

Comparative Salary Analysis

Private Sector Comparison

Public Sector Comparison

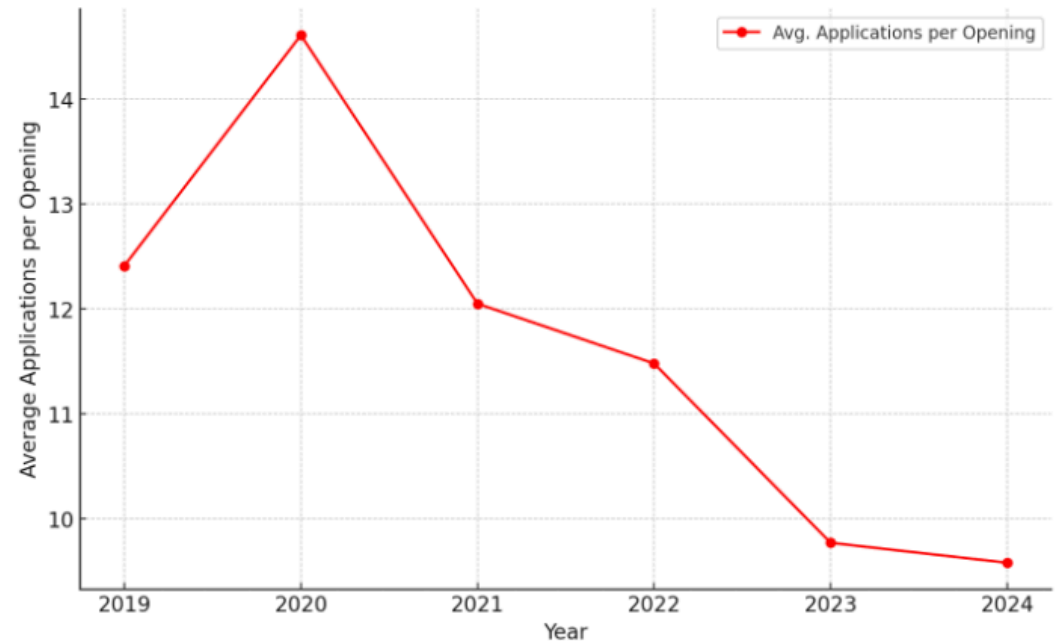
Judicial Retention & Turnover Trends

- **Early Departures:** An increasing number of judges are retiring early or returning to private practice, indicating potential dissatisfaction with current conditions.
- **Contributing Factors:** Heavy workloads, burnout, and stagnant salaries are primary reasons for judges leaving the bench prematurely.
- **Security Concerns:** Rising threats against judges have heightened safety concerns, further impacting job satisfaction and retention.

Declining Interest in Judicial Appointments

- **Application Trends:** Data from 2019–2024 shows a significant decline in applications for judicial positions, suggesting waning interest in these roles.
- **Competitive Job Market:** The private sector's attractive compensation packages draw potential candidates away from public judicial roles.

District Judge Openings and Application Trends (2019-2024)



Source: Dataset provided by the Governor's Office of Minnesota, Tovah Pentelovitch (Deputy General Counsel).

Recommendations

Proposed Increases: Implementing a 6.9% salary increase in 2025 and a 3.4% increase in 2026 to restore purchasing power and enhance competitiveness.

- Inflation expectations from Wall Street Journal Economic Forecasting Survey
- The 3.2% returns you to compensation as of July 1, 2021.
- Lawyers with 10+ years experience averaged increases of 5.45% 2020-24.
 - The gap between median wage of experienced lawyer and district judge has compressed to 6% from 13% in 2020.

	On July 1, 2025	On July 1, 2026
Expected inflation over next two years	2.66%	2.40%
Restoring lost purchasing power since 2021	3.2%	n/a
To keep pace with faster increases in compensation in legal profession	1%	1%
TOTAL Increase	6.9%	3.4%

Conclusions



Significance of Competitive Salaries: Ensuring judicial salaries are competitive is crucial for maintaining a robust and effective judiciary.



Consequences of Inaction: Failure to address salary disparities may lead to increased turnover, reduced applicant pools, and a potential decline in judicial quality.



Call to Action: Policymakers must prioritize judicial compensation reforms to uphold the integrity and functionality of the legal system.