

JC Ad Hoc Committee on Judicial Salaries & Supplements

Compensation Plan Proposal

1. Setting a Base Salary Rate

- a. Supreme Court salary would be tied to 100% of Federal District Court pay at a set point (e.g., July 1 of the FY preceding the applicable year)

	% of Federal District Court	Potential Salary	Current Salary (FY24)
Supreme Court	100%	\$223,400	\$186,112
Court of Appeals	95%	\$212,230	\$184,990
State-wide Business Court	92%	\$205,528	\$184,990
Superior Court	90%	\$201,060	\$141,970

2. Maximum Authorized State Salary Concept

- a. Provides for a maximum authorized salary so as to not bind future legislatures, as constitutionally required.
- b. Compensation could not be reduced from that established for a prior year.
- c. The legislature would have the authority to fund an increase in State Salary up to the maximum authorized percentage increase in District Court salary. For example, the Legislature could fund \$209,340 in FY2025 or an amount between that and \$201,060.
- d. The Statute would be amended to set out the above formula, rather than a specified statutory salary. Increases in State Salary would be accomplished by the legislature's approval of a Judicial Budget including requested increases up to the maximum allowed.

FY	Maximum Authorized Salary
2024	\$201,060
2025	\$209,340

3. Locality Pay

- a. Would allow local governments to pay up to 10% of the State-paid salary to account for any cost-of-living differences (10% is the circuit wide max).
- b. Permissive for Counties, not required.
- c. Retirement benefits on locality pay at the discretion of the county.

Example based on most recent increase in District Court compensation:

FY	Maximum Authorized Salary	10% Locality Pay	Total Salary
2024	\$201,060	\$20,106	\$221,166
2025	\$209,340	\$20,934	\$230,274

4. Grandfathering

- a. Opt-in: all sitting judges will have the option to either opt-in to the new plan at the time of its effective date, or to remain under their current compensation plan for the duration of their service.
- b. Circuits would be authorized to increase the amount of the supplement for any judges who do not elect to opt-in to the new plan to the maximum supplement currently paid (\$80,200.00).
- c. To ensure that judges do not suffer a reduction in total compensation, judges who opt-in will receive a supplement from their county calculated as the amount of their current total compensation, less the newly established amount of State pay, including any locality pay. In those instances where the amount of the increased State pay and the locality pay total less than the Judge's prior total compensation, the county would pay the difference until such time as the State salary and locality combined exceed the judge's total compensation at the time of enactment of the legislation. This will ensure that even judges who opt-in will not have a reduction in total compensation.
- d. Retirement benefits vested prior to the effective date of the statute would be paid, whether a judge opts-in to the new system or not.
- e. Sitting judges would be permitted to continue to participate in their existing county retirement systems after their opt-in.

5. Compensation Commission

- a. Create a permanent body, including membership from all three branches of government as well as the general public, to collect more information on other aspects of the judicial compensation system including courts of limited jurisdiction, DAs, and CPDs.
- b. Continually and regularly evaluate the judicial compensation landscape and ensure continued viability of the plan.