



MDJA

MINNESOTA DISTRICT
JUDGES ASSOCIATION



Judge Lois Conroy, MDJA President

MINNESOTA DISTRICT
JUDGES ASSOCIATION

MDJA

AGENDA

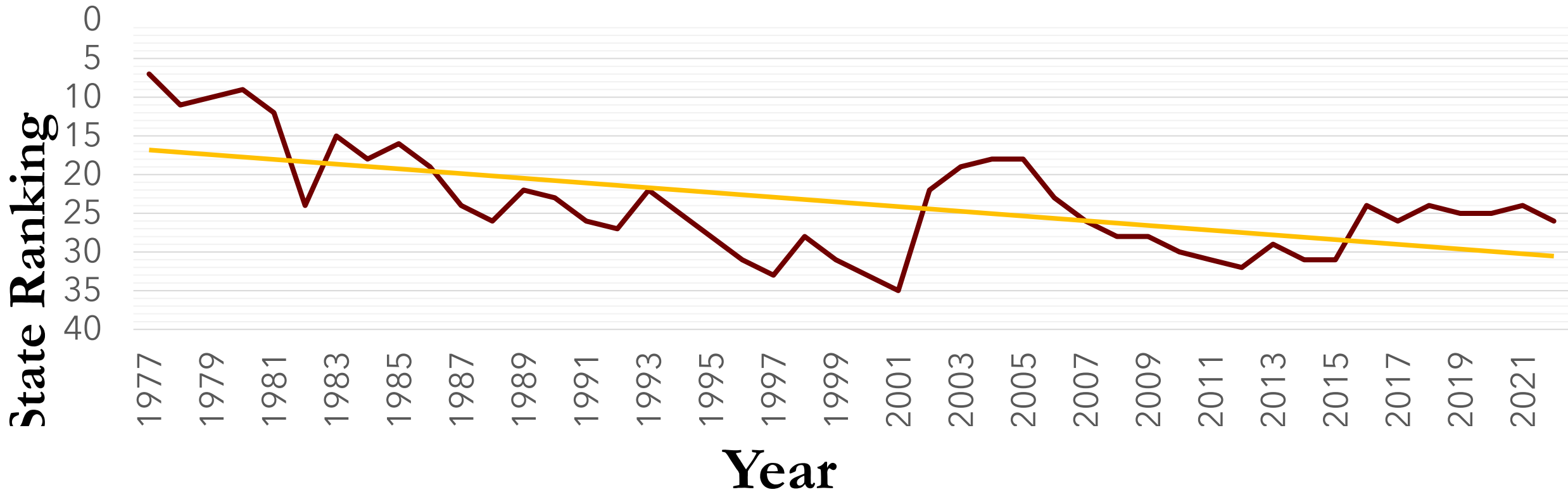
1. Judge Pay Data & Economic Forces
2. Minnesota's Competitive Corridor
3. Historical View
4. Effects of Uncompetitive Pay
5. Compensation Council Analysis



JUDGE PAY DATA & ECONOMIC FORCES

MINNESOTA'S JUDGE PAY

Trending Down



- When compared to other states, Minnesota's District Court Judge pay has steadily decreased.

ECONOMIC FORCES

Inflation



- Cumulative rate of inflation from Jan. 2021 - Dec. 2022: 13.46%

NATIONAL JUDGE PAY

Compensating for Inflation



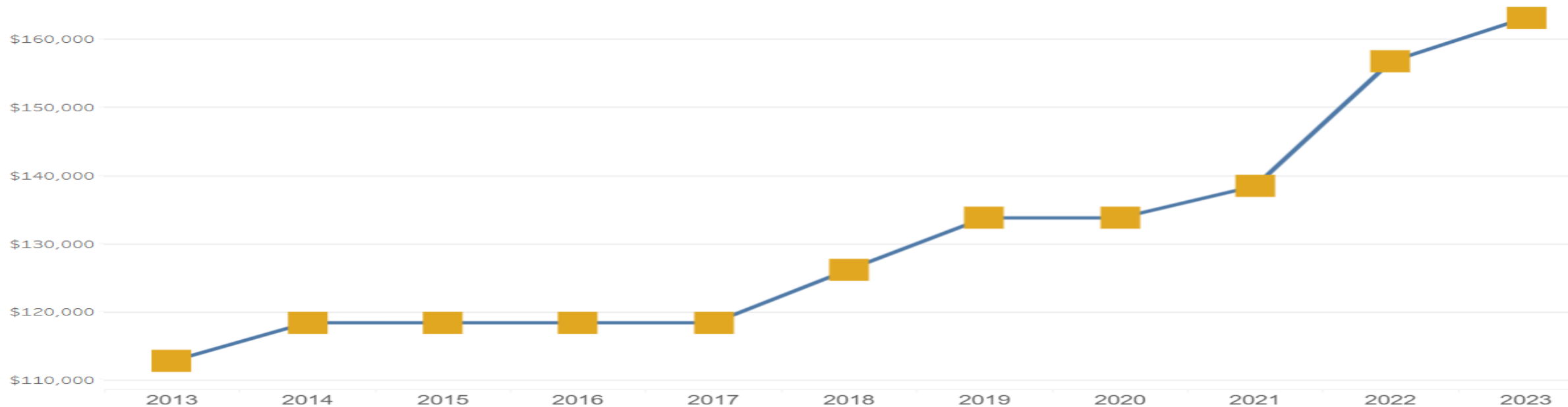
Salary History by State

Select a State

New Mexico

General Jurisdiction Judge

New Mexico



- New Mexico judicial salary increases since 2021: 17.29%

NATIONAL JUDGE PAY

Compensating for Inflation



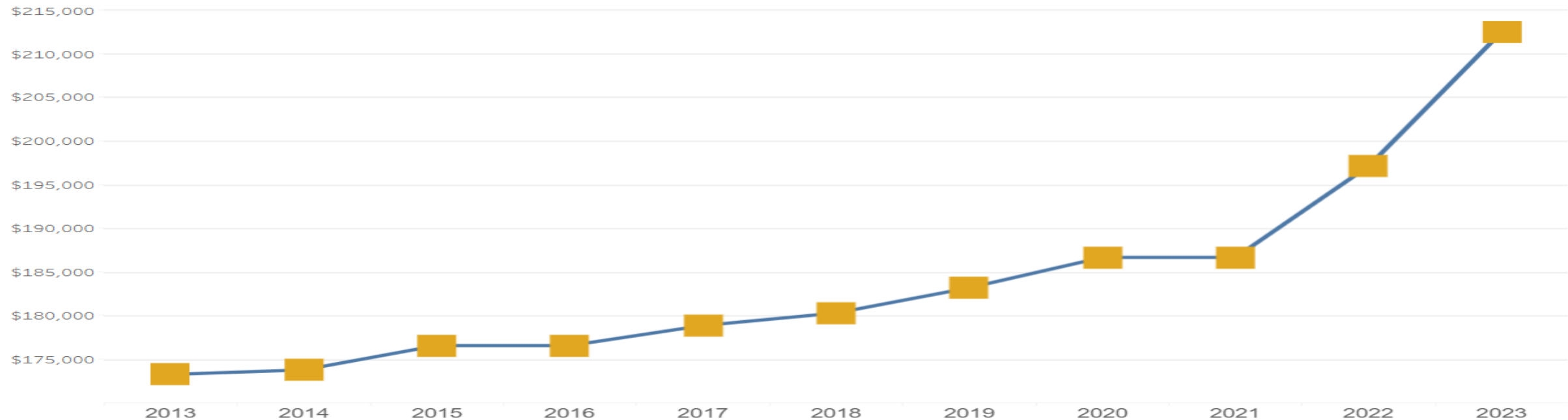
Salary History by State

Select a State

Pennsylvania

General Jurisdiction Judge

Pennsylvania



- Pennsylvania judicial salary increases since 2021: 13.4%

NATIONAL JUDGE PAY

Compensating for Inflation

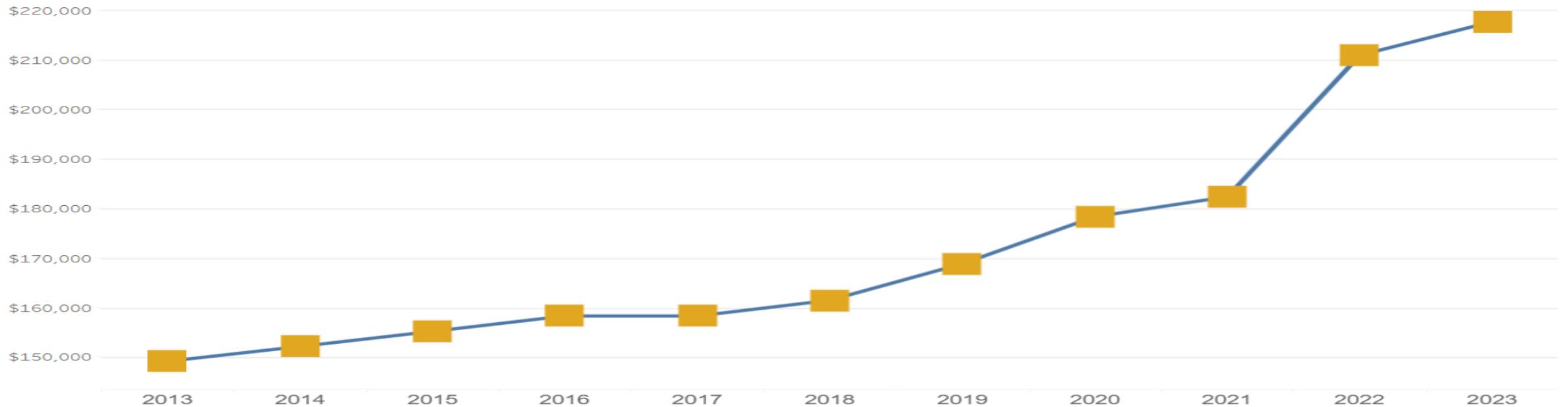


Salary History by State

Select a State

Rhode Island

General Jurisdiction Judge
Rhode Island



- Rhode Island judicial salary increases since 2021: 18.83%

NATIONAL JUDGE PAY

Compensating for Inflation

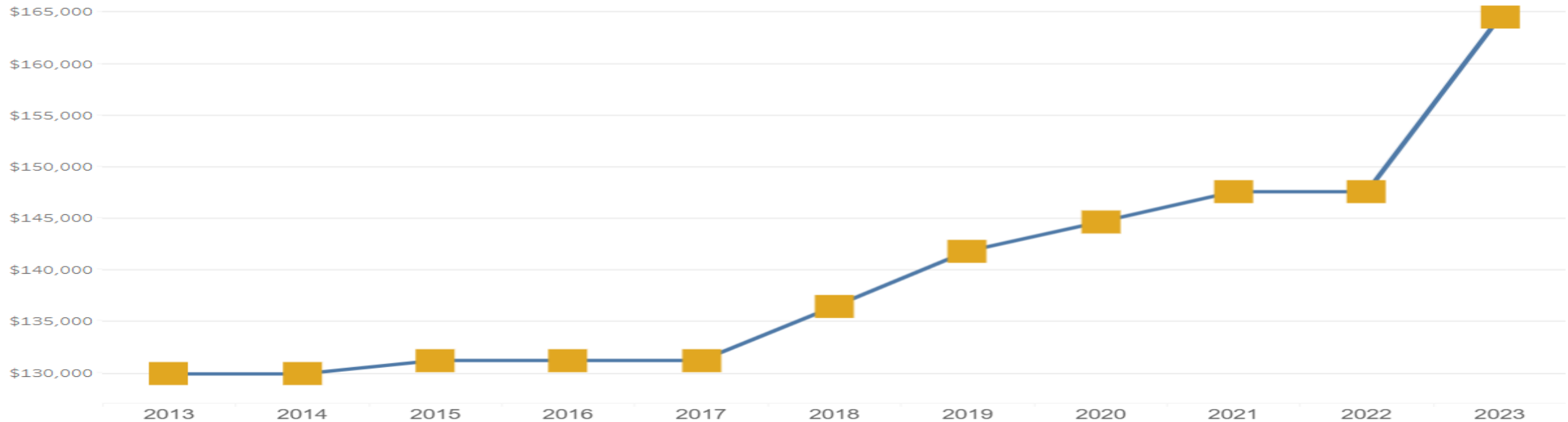


Salary History by State

Select a State

Wisconsin

General Jurisdiction Judge
Wisconsin



- Wisconsin judicial salary increases since 2021: 11.49%

MINNESOTA'S JUDGE PAY

Compensating for Inflation



MINNESOTA'S JUDICIAL SALARY INCREASES

SINCE 2021:

0%

MINNESOTA'S JUDGE PAY

Judicial Salaries

Fiscal Year	District Court	Court of Appeals	Supreme Court
2019	\$161,108	\$171,264	\$182,139
2020	\$165,136	\$175,915	\$186,692
2021	\$169,254	\$180,313	\$191,359
2022	\$169,254	\$180,313	\$191,359

Minnesota's Judge Pay



General Jurisdiction Judge 2023



Minimum	\$89,600.00
Maximum	\$232,600.00
Mean	\$174,266.97
Median	\$168,761.00



- Current District Court Judge Pay in Minnesota: **\$169,264**
- Minnesota now ranks in the bottom half of all states.



**MINNESOTA'S
COMPETITIVE CORRIDOR**

JUDICIAL SALARY TRACKING

Competitive Pay—Top 5

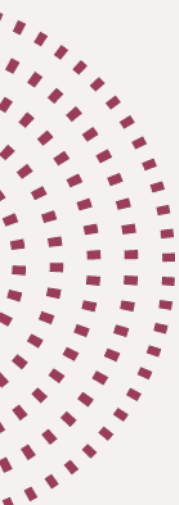
County Attorney	2022 Annual Salary
Stearns	\$200,872
Scott	\$194,378
Carver	\$192,982
Olmstead	\$188,859
Ramsey	\$185,004
Average: \$192,419	

* Data provided by the Minnesota County Attorney's Association 2022 County Attorney Salary Survey.

JUDICIAL SALARY TRACKING



Current & Competitive Pay

- District Court Judge's salary is \$169,254.
 - Average of the top-five County Attorney salaries is \$192,419.
- 

Trial Court Judges are **\$25,165** outside the competitive corridor for public law jobs.

JUDICIAL SALARY TRACKING



Decreasing Pay, Increasing Work

87% of judges stated that their workload has increased since 2020.

That increase has been dramatic. 60% of judges state that their workload has increased by more than **4 hours/week**.

One judge stated that the “**stress and intensity**” has also increased.

“While the number of hours has dramatically increased, the complexity of my work has also increased.”

“I am now regularly working between 50-55 hours/week.”

“I work every night including weekends.”



MINNESOTA'S JUDGE PAY

Disproportional to Service



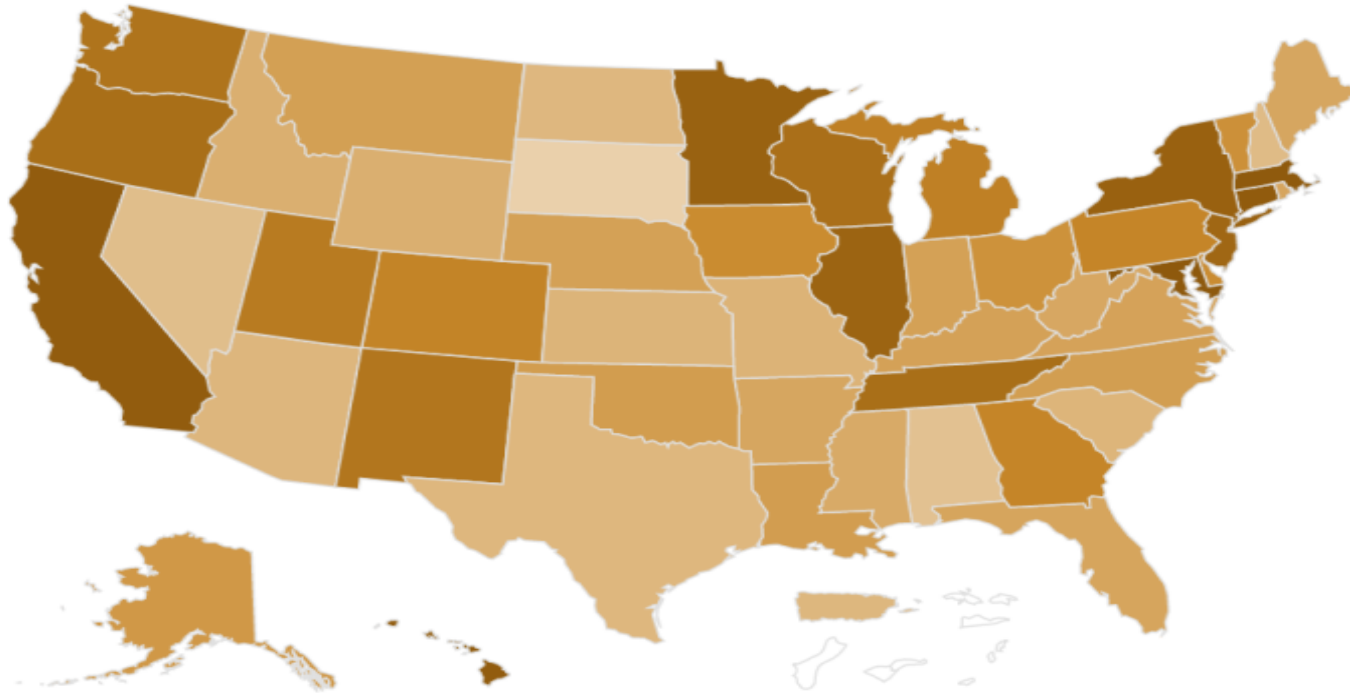
All Regions

Midwest

Northeast

South

West



Minnesota

← BACK

Overall Score

57.26 out of 100

National Ranking

7 states scored higher

44 states scored lower

*Includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico

NCAJ National Center for
Access to Justice

Justice Index

- Minnesota's courts currently rank 8th in the nation for ensuring justice.
- **Minnesota's courts rank 1st in the Midwest for ensuring justice.**



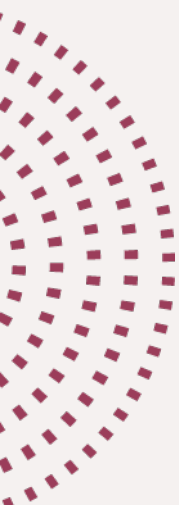
HISTORICAL VIEW



HISTORICAL VIEW

How did we get here?

Missed Opportunities:

- 
- Asking for what the Judiciary “really needs.”
 - Recognizing that requests and recommendations are a ceiling never a floor.
 - Too optimistic in predicting market forces.



HISTORICAL VIEW

Economist Recommendations



Dr. Kristine West's from St. Catherine University Assistant Professor recommendations. 2020 Report

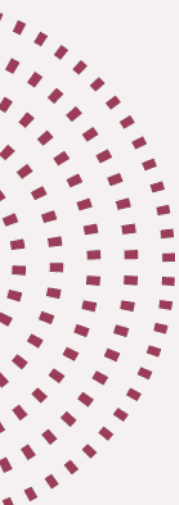
- “The gap between judges and attorneys is increasing over time.”
- “Private sector attorneys’ pay is over two times what judges may earn.”
- “Several county attorneys average of 13% more than district court judges before whom they regularly appear.”



HISTORICAL VIEW

Economist Recommendations

Dr. Kristine West's *recommendations*. 2020 Report

- 
- “...judicial salaries over the past eighteen years reflect very little real income growth after adjusting for inflation.”
 - “Additional research has shown that an increase in judicial compensation can only have a positive selection effect, enticing more high-quality candidates, but it can also improve the performance of current judges.



THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY



Judicial Recruitment

In 2021, Chair Kaplan you said it well when you wrote in your report,

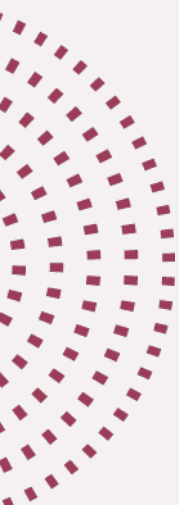


“The Compensation Council emphasizes the importance for salaries of the judiciary to be able to attract candidates from the private sector, as well as from the public sector.”

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY



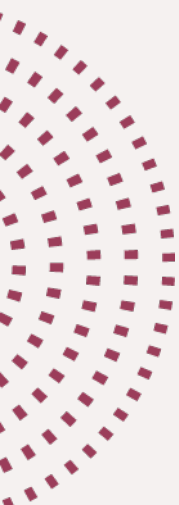
Judicial Compensation Survey

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- We share the Compensation Council's concern about recruitment and the need for data.
 - MDJA Judicial Compensation Survey was distributed to all judges statewide.
 - We received over 230 responses in less than 5 days.

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY



Judicial Recruitment

- 37% of our judges have been on the bench for six years or less.
 - 33% of our judges reported that when they were appointed to their judicial seat there were **10 or fewer applicants** that applied.
 - Compare this to a district court judge that was appointed in 2008 and there were **55 applicants**.
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THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY

Early Retirements

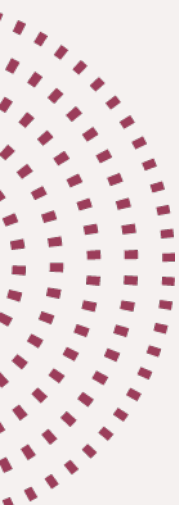
“I am regularly working weekends and into the evenings to handle complex civil matters. I should be paid as much as a first year associate within the law firms whose cases I handle. I would no longer encourage successful private civil attorneys to leave such position to work as a judge.”

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY



Judicial Retention

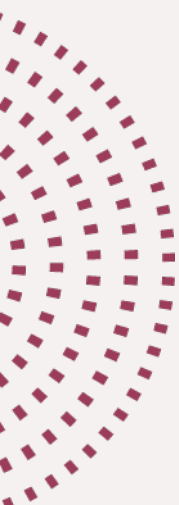
We are not going to keep the judges we have.

- **23% of judges** are presently exploring other jobs outside the judicial branch.
 - **42% of judges** have been recruited for jobs outside the judicial branch in the last 3 years.
- 

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY



Judicial Recruitment



“For those of us near retirement age (past 60) it is disheartening to be paid less than an attorney in government practice while performing such difficult and challenging work. It is very tempting to retire earlier than planned and be able to earn about the same while working at a less stressful part-time position. For judges in their 50s, there are numerous opportunities to leave the bench and earn substantially more.”



COMPENSATION COUNCIL ANALYSIS

PAY MATTERS



When judges were about asked how much pay matters, we posed the following question,

**“Is the proposed raise of 9% and 6%
in the next biennium necessary for you
to continue working as a judge?”**



PAY MATTERS



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**“Is the proposed raise of 9% and 6%
in the next biennium necessary for you
to continue working as a judge?”**

51% said Yes



PAY MATTERS

Minnesotans deserve a strong judicial branch that is fully funded.

*“This is less about sitting judges and more about recruiting top candidates from across the legal profession in the future. If a group of lower-quality judges is appointed, **that is a problem that will take a generation to repair.**”*

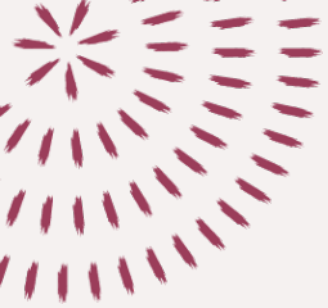
YOUR RECOMMENDATION

To Attract Attorneys:

Pay commensurate to recruit the best, brightest and most diverse attorneys.

To Retain Judges:

Regular judicial pay increases to keep quality judges. This sends the necessary message that judges and their work is appreciated and valued.



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