



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

**FY 2026-27 Budget Request: Compensation
Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator**

March 14, 2025

Minnesota Judicial Council

- Administrative policy-making authority for the Minnesota Judicial Branch
- Responsible for developing the Judicial Branch biennial budget request
- 25 members
 - 19 judges (voting members)
 - 6 administrators (non-voting members)
- Chaired by the Chief Justice



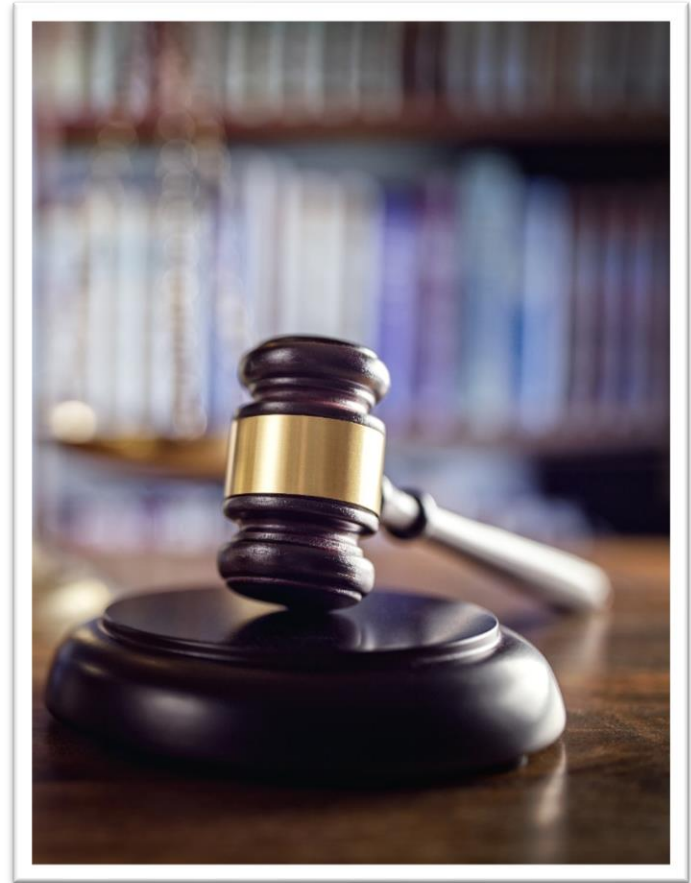
Judicial Branch Workforce Challenges



- Like many employers, the Minnesota Judicial Branch is facing significant issues with judge and employee recruitment and retention.
- **Key Challenge: Compensation Gap**
 - Judicial and staff salaries remain significantly behind other public-sector employers in Minnesota, creating competitive disadvantages.
 - A recent market study showed average Judicial Branch wages are 6% behind similar public sector employers.

Judge Compensation Falling Behind

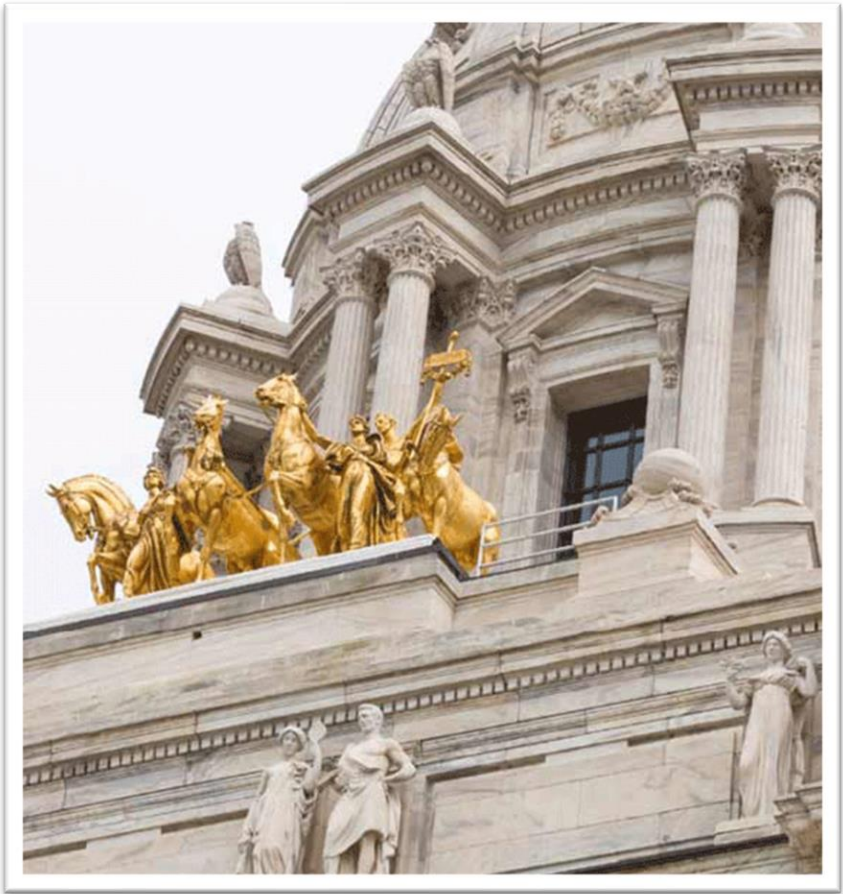
- District court judges earn less than many county attorneys and, in some counties, less than assistant county attorneys.
 - Creates a financial incentive to pursue a career in a county attorney office, rather than the judiciary.
- Based on National Center for State Court rankings, without a competitive increase, Minnesota district court judge pay would fall in the bottom half of all states.



Recent Market Impacts

- Judicial officers did not receive a salary increase in FY 2023.
- Legislature increased judge salaries by 8% in FY24 and 4% in FY25.
- While significant, those recent increases came at a time when:
 - Wages across the US job market grew at historically high levels (4-6% growth the last two years)
 - Minnesota set a record for the lowest unemployment rate of any state since data's been recorded
 - Historically high inflation. Prices are 23% more expensive today than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic recession began in February 2020

FY26-27 Biennial Budget Request



- **\$77,301,000 in FY 26-27 to:**
 - Increase judicial officer salaries by 6%
 - Create a 6% employee compensation increase pool
 - Fund the employer share of anticipated health care cost increases

THANK YOU!

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**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH**