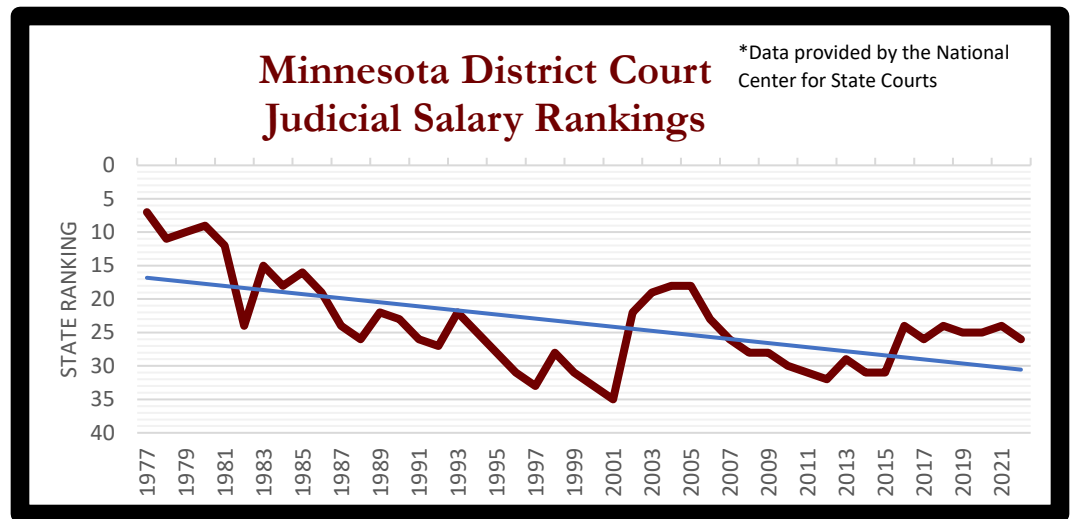


The Minnesota District Judges' Association (MDJA) membership comprises over 300 Judges across the State of Minnesota. It includes nearly every District Court Judge, most Courts of Appeals Judges and Supreme Court Justices, and many retired and Senior Judges. MDJA's 2023 Legislative priorities are Judicial & Staff Pay; Safety; Pensions; and District Court Law Clerk Pay.

Judicial & Staff Pay

- MDJA and Judicial Council jointly support a 9% judicial and staff pay increase in FY24 and a 6% judicial and staff pay increase in FY25.
- When compared to other states, Minnesota's



District Court Judge pay has steadily decreased. Minnesota's District Court Judge pay now ranks in the bottom half of all states.

Safety

- MDJA supports the Judicial and Court Staff Safety and Privacy Act.
- The safety of Minnesota's Judges, court staff, and members of their households are put at risk by the dissemination and perpetual Internet access of home addresses and personal information. The Judicial and Court Staff Safety and Privacy Act will alleviate these safety concerns.

Pensions

- MDJA supports the annual \$6 million contribution to the retirement fund in the base budget.
- Safeguarding Minnesota Judges' pension stability and ensuring the availability of pension contributions in retirement is essential to the recruitment and retention of quality judges.

District Court Law Clerk Pay

MDJA supports a one-time market adjustment to move our Law Clerks' pay into the competitive corridor of other entry-level public law attorney positions in Minnesota.

LAW CLERKS, EXPLAINED

- District Court Judges cannot capably perform their duties without quality Law Clerks. No one knows every aspect of the law in every case. Instead, Judges rely on Law Clerks to research that law. And Judges don't just call balls and strikes – they are required to explain their reasoning. Law Clerks put that reasoning to paper.
- The integrity of the Judicial Branch is inextricably tied to the quality of our Law Clerks. The public deserves and rightly expects well-reasoned and well-articulated decisions, as well as fair and timely resolutions of cases and controversies. These expectations cannot be met without quality Law Clerks.
- When asked, nearly 100% of Minnesota Judges state that Law Clerks are “essential” or “very important” to performing their duties. Much like the Legislature's nonpartisan counsel, we cannot operate without them.

\$57K—CURRENT & \$74K—COMPETITIVE PAY

- The starting salary of a District Court Law Clerk is \$57,712. Over 95% of Minnesota's Judges believe that this is too little compensation and that it does not accurately reflect a District Court Law Clerk's value.
- The lowest available average starting salary for an entry-level public law attorney in Minnesota is \$74,526.

THE EFFECTS OF UNCOMPETITIVE PAY

- Hiring quality Law Clerks has become increasingly difficult. Over 93% of Minnesota's Judges have seen a decline in qualified Law Clerk applications in the past five years. Nearly 70% of those applications were rated as “fair” or “poor.” Less than 2% were rated as “excellent.”
- Quality Law Clerks are not incentivized to stay with the Judiciary for long. Law Clerks are leaving their positions for a median salary of approximately \$85,000 – almost \$30,000 more than with the Branch.

CLOSING THE GAP: ONE-TIME MARKET ADJUSTMENT

- Closing the gap between District Court Law Clerks' current pay and the competitive corridor for other entry-level public law attorneys in Minnesota will require an appropriation for a one-time market adjustment.