

Salaries for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, state auditor, secretary of state, and judges are established by state law or by the legislature, depending on the position. Salaries for legislators are prescribed by a Legislative Salary Council in each odd-numbered year.

Salaries for Constitutional Officers

As required by the Minnesota Constitution, salaries for constitutional officers are prescribed by law. [Art. V, § 4](#). The 2013 Legislature passed legislation increasing the governor's salary by 3 percent on January 1, 2015, and by 3 percent on January 1, 2016. [Laws 2013, ch. 142, art. 6, § 12](#). Salaries of the other constitutional officers are a specified percentage of the governor's salary, so those salaries also increased by 3 percent in 2015 and 3 percent in 2016. [Laws 2001, 1st spec. sess., ch. 10, art. 1, § 2](#). The salaries of the constitutional officers have not increased since 2016.

Officer	% of Governor's Salary	Current Salary
Governor	—	\$127,629
Attorney General	95%	\$121,248
State Auditor	85%	\$108,485
Secretary of State	75%	\$95,722
Lt. Governor	65%	\$82,959

The governor can veto legislation establishing compensation for constitutional officers because, according to the constitution, the compensation is set "by law."

Salaries for Judges

The Minnesota Constitution stipulates that the legislature must establish compensation for judges and that judges' salaries cannot be reduced while they are in office. [Art. VI, § 5](#). The most recent salary increases for judges were 2.5 percent on July 1, 2017, and 2.5 percent on July 1, 2018. These increases were funded in [Laws 2017, ch. 95, art. 1, sections 2, 3, and 4](#). Annual salaries for various judges are as follows.

Official	Current Salary
Supreme Court, chief	\$195,467
Supreme Court, justice	\$177,697
Court of Appeals, chief	\$175,808
Court of Appeals, judge	\$167,437
District Court, chief	\$165,037
District Court, judge	\$157,178

The constitutional provisions governing judges have been interpreted to mean that the governor may not veto provisions setting judges' compensation because their compensation is prescribed "by the legislature." *Gardner v. Holm*, 241 Minn. 125, 62 N.W. 2d 52 (1954).

Salaries for Legislators

Prior to 2016, the Minnesota Constitution provided that legislators' compensation was set by law. Under that structure, the annual salary for representatives and senators was \$31,140 and had remained at that amount since 1999.

At the 2016 state general election, the voters ratified a constitutional amendment requiring that legislator salaries be set by a newly established Legislative Salary Council. The council consists of members appointed by the governor and chief justice of the Supreme Court. Council members are prohibited from communicating with legislators during the period beginning when the council convenes its first meeting and ending the date it submits its salary determinations.

The council must report its determinations, and the rationale used to reach them, by March 31 of each odd-numbered year. If it directs a salary adjustment, the adjustment takes effect July 1 of that year.

On March 17, 2017, the Legislative Salary Council prescribed a salary of \$45,000 for legislators. The new salary became effective July 1, 2017.

The Compensation Council's role in establishing salaries for constitutional officers and judges

A 16-member Compensation Council exists to assist the legislature in establishing the compensation of constitutional officers and judges. [Minn. Stat. § 15A.082](#). Members of the Compensation Council are appointed in January of each odd-numbered year. The council must make its recommendations to the legislature by April 15 of that year.

By law, the council's recommendations take effect if an appropriation to pay the recommended salaries is enacted after the recommendations are submitted and before their effective date.

Insurance benefits and pension plans

Constitutional officers, legislators, and judges all are members of the state employee group insurance plan and receive the same insurance benefits as state employees.

Most legislators (those first elected after July 1, 1997, and some elected before then) and all constitutional officers are members of a defined contribution pension plan. Under this plan, the member contributes a percent of his or her salary (5.75 percent in fiscal year 2019, and 6 percent beginning in fiscal year 2020) and the state contributes separately (6 percent of salary in fiscal year 2019 and 6.25 percent beginning in fiscal year 2020). This money is invested, and upon leaving state service, the elected official is eligible to receive whatever money is in the account.

Judges belong to a defined benefit pension plan, in which the benefit is determined by multiplying years of service times a service-credit percentage and applying this percentage to the judge's average high-five years of salary.



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