



Judicial Officer Salaries

State Mandate Explainer

A \$3.3M state budget item will lead to at least **\$7.7M** in increased county costs in FY 2027.

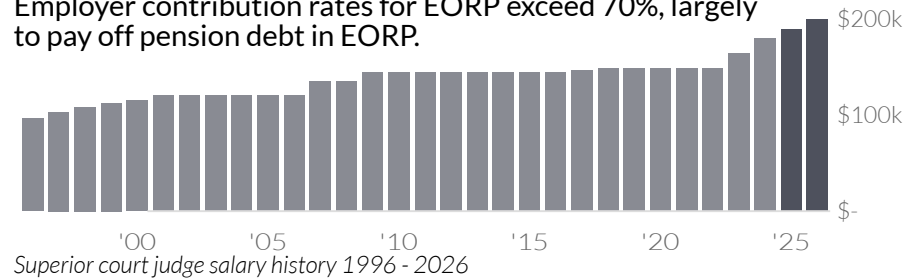
When state lawmakers increase superior court judge salaries other judicial officer salaries are automatically increased - **which drives hidden costs for counties.**

Superior court judge salaries and cost sharing requirements are governed by A.R.S. §12-128 and §41-1904. In practice, the salaries are set by the legislature and governor in session law - typically in the state budget.

They were last adjusted by Laws 2024, Ch. 209 Sec. 126, increasing salaries from \$180,000 to \$200,000 over two years.

Generally, judges are members of the Elected Officials Retirement or Defined Contribution Plans (EORP & EODCRS), unless they have previous service in ASRS.

Employer contribution rates for EORP exceed 70%, largely to pay off pension debt in EORP.



183 SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE \$200,000

annual salary effective Jan. 1, 2026

Salary cost share - A.R.S. §12-128

County, 50% State, 50%

EORP cost share - A.R.S. §12-128

County, 50% State, 50%

25% to 70%
of judge salary

80 JUSTICE OF THE PEACE \$50,000 to \$140,000

annual salary effective Jan. 1, 2026

Salary cost share - A.R.S. §22-117

Maricopa County, 100%

Other Counties, 60% State, 40%

EORP cost - A.R.S. §22-117

County, 100%

Up to 90%
of judge salary

~102 COURT COMMISSIONER up to \$180,000

annual salary effective Jan. 1, 2026

Salary cost - A.R.S. §12-213

County, 100%

EORP cost

County, 100%

100% of judge salary
or volunteer

JUDGE PRO TEMPORE \$200,000

annual salary effective Jan. 1, 2026

Salary cost - A.R.S. §12-142

County, 50% State, 50%

Justice of the peace (JP) salaries are set by A.R.S. §22-125 as a percentage of superior court judge salaries. The percentage ranges from 25% to 70% and is determined by the precinct's Judicial Productivity Credits (JPCs). JPCs are calculated based on the number and type of filings and petitions in the precinct.

JPs are also members of EORP or EODCRS, however unlike superior court judges, there is no cost share for pension costs and A.R.S. § 22-117 requires counties to pay the full cost.

Justice of the peace pro tempore, pursuant to A.R.S. §22-121 and §22-122, may be appointed by the presiding judge and are paid the same as the precinct's elected justice of the peace, or may volunteer all or part of their services.

Court commissioners in counties with 3 or more superior court judges are appointed by the presiding judge of the superior court and have their salary capped at 90% of a superior court judges' salary. A.R.S. § 12-213 requires that the county pay 100% of their salary.

A.R.S. § 12-211 and 12-212 allow for the judicial appointment of commissioners in counties with fewer than 3 superior court judges. Salaries for these commissioners are at the discretion of the court and the state and county are each responsible for 50%.

Full-time commissioners are also members of EORP or EODCRS, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-801.

Judges pro tempore, pursuant to § 12-141, are appointed on the request of the presiding judge to the chief justice of the Supreme Court, and subject to approval by the county board of supervisors. Appointments are for 12 month periods and judges can be reappointed.

A.R.S. § 12-142 allows judges pro tempore to donate their services, or be paid the salary of a superior court judge (pro rated for the length of service). Salary costs are subject to a 50% cost share between the state and county. However, in practice, the state has not appropriated funds to meet its statutory obligation. The county is required to provide all other support staff and facilities.

A.R.S. § 12-142 stipulates that judges pro tempore are not eligible for EORP or EODCRS.

FY 2023 # of Precincts
by Salary Tier

