SUPPORT NORTH DAKOTA'S JUDGES

The North Dakota Judges Association ("NDJA") was formed to foster participation of district court judges and supreme court justices in the improvement of the judicial branch of government and for the education and welfare of its members. NDJA supports increasing North Dakota's judicial salaries to the national average to help attract and retain highly-qualified judges.

Judges are Compensated Below the National Average

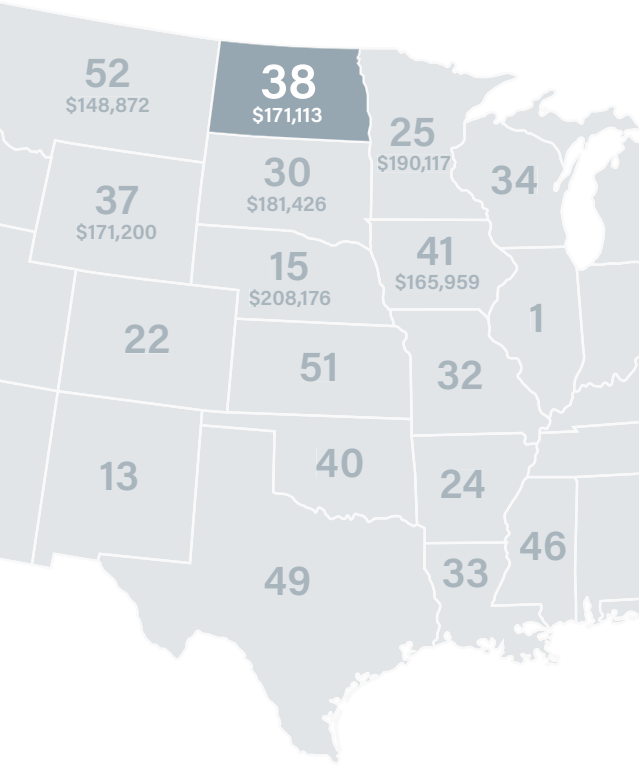
North Dakota pays its judges less than most judges nationally and many of its peer states.

North Dakota Judges & Justices are, respectively, paid the

38th & 41st

LOWEST SALARIES IN THE NATION.[1]

Their salaries have fallen behind other nearby states such as South Dakota, Wyoming, Minnesota, and Nebraska.



Judicial Recruitment and Retention are at Risk

North Dakota's judicial compensation is inadequate to attract highly qualified individuals from a diversity of life and professional experiences to serve in the judiciary.

Declining Applicants

The number of judicial applications has declined in recent years, particularly from private practitioners.

No Specialized Courts

North Dakota does not have specialized courts such as for family law, probate, or business, leaving judges with heavier workloads on a wider variety of cases than peer states.

Less Staff, More Work

Experienced attorneys who leave private practice to become a judge must learn new skills and law with less support staff, creating more work for less money.

Quality Retention at Risk

Among its peer states, North Dakota has some of the shortest terms for district court judges at 6 years, and no retention process other than primary and general elections. North Dakota's Judge pay fails to adequately compensate for this time, expense, and employment risk.

	Supreme Court Chief Justice	Supreme Court Justice	District Court Presiding Judge	District Court Judge	Total
National Avg. Judicial Salaries	$214,896	$207,249	$189,528	$184,366	
ND Judicial Salaries as of July 2024	$191,758	$186,484	$175,975	$171,113	
Salary Difference	**$23,138**	**$20,765**	**$13,553**	**$13,253**	
Number of ND Justices & Judges	1	4	8	47	
Total Annual Cost of Salary Adjustment	**$23,138**	**$83,060**	**$108,424**	**$622,891**	**$837,513**
Additional Cost of Fringe Benefits	$4,526	$15,977	$22,640	$129,363	$172,506
Total Cost to Bring to Average Salary	**$27,664**	**$99,037**	**$131,064**	**$752,254**	**$1,010,019**

North Dakota should increase judicial pay to the national average to help attract and retain highly-highly-qualified judges.

TOTAL COST TO THE STATE LESS THAN $2.1M

[1]Survey of Judicial Salaries, National Center for State Courts, Vol. 49 No. 2 (July 1, 2024): https://www.ncsc.org/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/98230/Judicial-Salary-Survey-2024-V2_F.pdf