

Administrative Office of the Courts

Supreme Court of New Mexico

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DATE: May 27, 2026

TO: Chief Judges, Court Executive Officers, Human Resource Professionals

THRU: Karl W. Riefsteck, AOC Director
Sarah Jacobs, AOC Deputy Director

FROM: Tamara A. Roybal, AOC HR Director

RE: **FY2027 JUDICIAL BRANCH COMPENSATION INITIATIVE & SALARY INCREASE GUIDANCE**

For the Fiscal Year 2027, the 2026 State Legislature has authorized a one percent (1%) salary increase for all state employees, and judicial officers (Justices, Judges, including Magistrate Judges) [General Appropriation Act of 2026, Section 4. & House Bill 151, Section 10].

The New Mexico Judicial Branch implements the Workforce Investment Plan (WIP) Target Pay Rate Step Increases, including the TCAA and Law Clerk step increases, if applicable, immediately prior to any legislative increase.

This memorandum outlines the eligibility requirements for employees and Judicial Officers, as well as the process for implementing salary increases.

ELIGIBILITY PARAMETERS FOR THE FY2027 1% LEGISLATIVE INCREASE:

- Employees who have completed their probationary period by June 30, 2026, and achieved at least a "Meets Requirements" on their FY2026 performance evaluation are eligible to receive the 1% increase. This includes STRM (TERM) employees.
- At-will employees, including the at-will staff of Judges, are eligible to receive the 1% increase.
- Hearing Officers, Domestic Relations Hearing Officers, Special Commissioners, and Child Support Hearing Officers are eligible for the 1% increase or the maximum of \$78.618 per hour. **AOC HRD will enter increases manually to ensure Hearing Officers,**

Domestic Relations Hearing Officers, Special Commissioners, and Child Support Hearing Officers do not exceed the maximum hourly rate of \$78.618 per hour.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

- The effective date for the 1% salary increases is July 4, 2026, or the first full pay period upon satisfactory completion of the employee's probationary period.
- Eligible employees, Magistrate Judges, Judicial Officers, and Justices will receive this salary increase on their paycheck pay date on July 24, 2026.

MULTIPLE COMPONENTS OF PAY:

- The compensation increase is to an employee's base pay and is separate from any Multiple Components of Pay (MCOPs), e.g., Bilingual Pay, TSI, etc. Percentage based MCOP rates will not change; however, the dollar value of the MCOP will automatically recalculate in SHARE off an employee's higher base hourly rate when the FY2027 increase is implemented.

EMPLOYEES WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR THE FY2027 LEGISLATIVE INCREASE:

- Employees who are classified as TEMP or temporary are not eligible for the increase.
- Employees who do not achieve at least an overall "meets requirements" on the required performance evaluation will not be eligible for the increase.

PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES:

- Employees who complete their probationary period after June 30, 2026, but on or before June 30, 2027, and who receive at least a "meets requirements" on their FY2027 performance evaluation will receive the 1% increase.
- The employee's FY2027 performance evaluation rating must be entered into SHARE by the employee's probation completion date.
- The employee will receive the salary increase effective the first full pay period after they achieve non-probationary / classified or career status.
- Continuous time served in the New Mexico Judicial Branch (AOC salary plan) counts towards an employee's probationary status (excluding temporary employees or as outlined in this memorandum).
- Time served in other branches of government (Executive Branch, GOVEX, Legislature) or as a temporary employee does not count towards an employee's probationary status.

- Employees currently on probation due to a transfer from an at-will position to a classified position are eligible when and if their probationary period ends by June 30, 2027.
- Employees who hold an at-will job classification, other than a temporary or non-benefited temporary position, do not complete a probationary period and are eligible for the increase.

ACTION REQUIRED PRIOR TO AND FOLLOWING JULY 4, 2026:

- **Any promotions, transfers, pay rates, or position changes effective July 4, 2026, or earlier must be entered into SHARE no later than July 1, 2026.**
- All STRM (TERM) extensions must be entered prior to July 1, 2026, and no later than July 2, 2026. Actions should be effective July 1, 2026, with the new position end date of June 30, 2027 (or as appropriate based on the contract or MOU).
- Any employee whose position has an end date less than or equal to June 30, 2026, will not receive the increase.
- Please run the following query (NMS_HR_JOB_END_DATE) in SHARE to assist with determining which employees' STRM/TERM extension end dates may need to be updated.
- Any future dated rows beyond July 4, 2026, must be removed.
- Any employee changing status from TERM to PERM must have the job's expected end date removed from SHARE.

PERFORMANCE PLAN EVALUATION RATING - ELIGIBILITY PARAMETERS FOR THE FY2027 1% LEGISLATIVE INCREASE:

- Employees who are subject to an annual performance appraisal must have satisfactory performance, as interpreted to mean a completed Judicial Branch performance appraisal, and a final evaluation rating of "C - Meets Requirements", "D - Surpasses", or "E - Exemplary".
- Employees who receive a "B - Needs Improvement" or an "A - Fails to Meet Requirements" rating are **not** eligible for the 1% Legislative Increase.

NMJB SALARY RANGE MOVEMENT:

- The NMJB job classification pay ranges are moving upwards by 1%, effective July 4, 2026.
- Employees may not exceed the maximum of their pay range.

WIP INCREASE: INCREASES UNDER THE NMJB COMPENSATION POLICY SECTION 9. MINIMUM TARGET PAY RATE STEP INCREASE BASED ON SUCCESSFUL CONTINUOUS SERVICE IN A JOB CLASSIFICATION (Manual entry by AOC HRD entered prior to DoIT programming)

- The Minimum Target Pay Rate Step Increase is effective the first full pay period in the new fiscal year, and prior to the 1% Legislative Increase.
- **AOC HRD will manually enter the WIP Increases into SHARE no later than Thursday, July 2, 2026.**

STEP INCREASES FOR TCAAs

- The TCAA annual tier step increase is effective the first full pay period in the new fiscal year, and prior to any legislative increases.
- AOC HRD will enter the annual step increases manually into SHARE no later than Thursday, July 2, 2026, and prior to the legislative increases processing.

AT-WILL STAFF OF JUDGES FY2027 1% LEGISLATIVE INCREASE:

The following are the at-will staff of Judges FY2027 hourly rates with the 1% increase:

At-will Staff of Judges	Hourly Rate after 1% increase
Certified Court Monitor (at-will)	\$25.919
Bailiff (at-will)	\$20.617
Bailiff Security (at-will)	\$21.684
TCAAs (at-will)	Hourly Rate after 1% increase
Tier 1 (< 4 yrs. exp.)	\$32.584
Tier 2 (4 yrs. < 8 yrs. exp.)	\$35.197
Tier 3 (8 yrs. < 12 yrs. exp.)	\$36.988
Tier 4 (12 or more yrs.)	\$38.017

AT-WILL LAW CLERK 1 AND APPELLATE LAW CLERK 2 & 3:

The following are the Law Clerks, and Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Appellate Law Clerks' hourly rates with the 1% increase:

Supreme Court Law Clerks (U = at-will)	FY2027 Hourly Rate
Law Clerk 1 (U): Tier 1 (< 2 yrs. Exp)	\$42.116
Appellate Law Clerk 2 (U): Tier 2 (2 yrs < 4 yrs exp.)	\$47.599
Appellate Law Clerk 3 (U): Tier 3 (4 or more yrs. Exp.)	\$49.715
Court of Appeals Law Clerks (U = at-will)	FY2027 Hourly Rate
Law Clerk 1 (U): Tier 1 (< 2 yrs. Exp)	\$40.109
Appellate Law Clerk 2 (U): Tier 2 (2 yrs < 4 yrs exp.)	\$45.332
Appellate Law Clerk 3 (U): Tier 3 (4 or more yrs. Exp.)	\$47.229
District Court Law Clerk 1s (U=at-will)	FY2027 Hourly Rate
Law Clerk 1 (U)	No more than \$35.799
Rural Justice Initiative Law Clerks (U=at-will)	FY2027 Hourly Rate
Law Clerk 1 (U)	\$37.875

- The District Courts cannot compensate a law clerk more than 85% of the Supreme Court's Law Clerk 1.
- The Appellate Law Clerk Series tier step increase is effective in the first full pay period after the incumbent meets the next step with related experience.
- If an incumbent is currently over the maximum allowed by the Order, their pay rate will remain frozen and they will not be eligible for increases other than those required by statute (i.e., the legislatively approved pay rate increases).

MAGISTRATE JUDGES:

- Effective July 4, 2026, all Magistrate Judges' pay rates will be \$64.11 and will be entered in SHARE through the automated process.

FY2027 SALARY FOR JUSTICES & JUDGES effective July 4, 2026:

Job Code	Job Title	Hourly Rate
9846JB	Chief Justice	\$121.95
9844JB	Associate Justices	\$120.99
9845JB	Chief Judge Court of Appeals	\$115.85

9843JB	Court of Appeals Judge	\$114.94
9839JB	Chief District Judge	\$110.06
9842JB	District Court Judge	\$109.19
9565JB	Chief Metro Judge	\$104.56
9566JB	Metropolitan Judge	\$103.73

VALIDATION OF WIP DATA:

- Each judicial entity will receive an updated and individualized spreadsheet for their judicial entity that includes the WIP Target Pay Rate Step Increases and the legislatively authorized increases by **Wednesday, June 24, 2026.**
- Please review and provide back to AOC HRD the finalized updated spreadsheets no later than **Tuesday, June 30, 2026.**
- Please note in the spreadsheet any employee who **should not receive** the 1% legislative increases due to not achieving at least a “meets requirements” on their FY2026 performance evaluation.
- To find employees who do not have an up-to-date performance evaluation rating, you can run the following query: NMS_HR_EDA_NOT_DONE_FY25_INCR.
- Satisfactory performance ratings in SHARE include the following:
 - C – Meets Requirements
 - D – Surpasses
 - E – Exemplary
- The final FY2026 performance rating must be entered into SHARE no later than June 30, 2026, with an evaluation date between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

POST AUDIT:

- Once DoIT has run the automated process, salary reports will be sent to AOC HRD for the judiciary. One report will identify which employees received the increases, and the other will identify those employees who did not receive the increase due to either no performance evaluation rating being entered, a less than satisfactory performance evaluation rating, or an incomplete probationary period.
- AOC HRD will provide individual judicial entities with a copy of the relevant portion of the report to conduct a post-audit check.
- Please conduct a thorough post audit against your master spreadsheet to ensure all raises are processed accurately, and that, for example, probationary employees or employees who receive a “Needs Improvement” or “Fails to Meet Requirements” performance rating for FY2026 did not inadvertently receive an increase. Call AOC

HRD if we can assist you or answer any questions.

EMPLOYEES ON EXTENDED APPROVED LEAVE:

- Employees on Military Leave for any part or all of FY2026 are eligible for this salary increase as defined under USERRA federal guidelines.

Attachments: FY2027 Maximum Pay Rate Table for Attorneys, Appellate Technical Legal Editors, Paralegals, and Law Clerks