

Subject:

Urban Counties News, June 18, 2013; Judicial Salaries Increased 12%

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To All Urban Counties:

Governor Perry recently signed Senate Bill 1, the General Appropriations Act for the next two years. Included was a 12% increase in judicial compensation effective on 9/1/13. Because of the increase in state compensation, counties will need to review compensation for all district and statutory county judges prior to 9/1/13.

County Court at Law Judges' salaries are required by statute to be not less than \$1,000 less than the total salary (from both the state and county supplements) provided to a District Judge in the county. If the county provides the district judges with the full supplement of \$18,000 under the new appropriations act, the salary of a county court at law judge would have to be at least \$157,000.

If a county court at law judge is not already making the minimum amount, they are entitled to a salary increase effective 9/1/13.

While many counties budgets are already set through 9/30/2013, [Attorney General Opinion JM - 1138](#) concluded that because the judge's salary was a budgeted item, the commissioners court had the authority to transfer money from one or more budgeted items to judicial salaries in order to accomplish the required increase in judicial salaries mid-budget. The opinion also stated that if there were not sufficient funds in any other budgeted items to cover the expense, judicial claims for the additional salary could be included in the next year's budget. The AG also concluded a commissioners court is not required to publish notice of judicial salary increases under Chapter 152, Local Government Code.

Here is a chart showing state judicial compensation and maximum county supplements effective 9/1/13.

Judge	Proposed State Salary	Maximum Supplement
Supreme Court Chief Justice/ Court of Criminal Appeals Presiding Judge	\$170,500	n/a
Supreme Court Justice/ Court of Criminal Appeals Judge	\$168,000	n/a
Court of Appeals Chief Justice	\$156,500	\$9,000
Court of Appeals Justice	\$154,000	\$9,000
District Court Judge	\$140,000	\$18,000

Windy Johnson
Texas Conference of Urban Counties