

# WASHINGTON CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON SALARIES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS JUDICIARY PRESENTATION



2018

August 3, 2018

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of the 430 judges across Washington State, we are pleased to submit these materials to you. Our goal in providing this information is to give you an overview of the Washington Judiciary and highlight some of the most significant factors we would like you to consider when setting salaries.

Recruiting and retaining high quality judges for the bench is why your work is so important this year. Half of all judges in our state are sixty years of age or older. With so many judges retiring and getting close to retirement age, we need to be able to attract a large number of high caliber individuals to serve. A competitive salary that does not erode with inflation or fall substantially below our counterparts in the Federal Judiciary is crucial to this effort.

We look forward to meeting you in October when we will have time to answer your questions and make an in-person presentation. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like additional information.

Thank you for all of the time and energy you will spend in the next few months setting elected official salaries. We know it is not an easy task.

Sincerely,

Mary Fairhurst  
Chief Justice  
Washington Supreme Court

Laurel Siddoway  
Presiding Chief Judge  
Washington Court of Appeals

Blaine Gibson  
President Judge  
Superior Court Judges' Association

Rebecca Robertson  
President Judge  
District & Municipal Court  
Judges' Association

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## Executive Summary

- The Salary Commission's mandate is to base salaries on realistic standards in order to pay elected officials according to the duties of their office and to attract citizens of the highest quality to public service.
- Attracting and retaining high quality judicial candidates requires a competitive salary that does not erode with inflation. This is especially important as we face increasing retirements over the next several years.
- The salaries of judges in Washington State should move toward and maintain a degree of parity with the federal judiciary. *Parity* means "equality or equivalence."
- The Salary Commission itself has recognized this federal salary parity goal in its most recent salary setting decisions. It is also addressed in the 2004 Owen-Pottier report prepared for the Commission and is an adopted policy of the American Bar Association.
- Retirement cost is a significant factor that the Salary Commission should consider when setting salaries. Federal judges do not contribute to their own retirement, while Washington State judges pay nearly 16% of their paychecks for their benefits (it is 18.45% for district and municipal court judges).
- Since 2002, the pension deduction for judges has increased from less than 1% to nearly 16%. It is expected to increase to 17.25% in 2019.
- These pension deduction increases, along with inflation, have had a huge impact on judges' net salaries. For example, when comparing superior court judges' net salaries to federal salaries, the gap has widened substantially since 2002 when it was just under 26%. Now that difference is over 45%. *See page 14 for a more detailed discussion.*
- Adjusted for inflation, and after the pension deduction, superior court judges make less now than they did in 2002. Judges in other court levels face a similar situation.

## A Primer on the Washington Judiciary and the Role of Judges

Judges at each level of court play critical and distinct roles in the administration of justice in our state. Judges are expected to preside at criminal trials, impose punishment for crimes, preside over civil cases, decide complex issues on appeal, manage growing caseloads, and see that the courts' orders are enforced. Our communities expect judges to resolve disputes that involve violence, family abuse, and juvenile crime, as well as settle civil conflicts among individuals, businesses, and government agencies. The duties of judges require them to remain impartial and to make difficult, often unpopular decisions. Judges also have an administrative responsibility—they must make sure the courts run efficiently and safely, and that citizens have access to the justice system.

In addition to their case related work, judges are involved in local and statewide efforts to improve the justice system. Judges routinely participate on statewide task forces and commissions, provide input to legislators and other government officials on court issues, and work in their local communities to find better ways to administer justice and instill public trust and confidence in the justice system.

### Supreme Court

*9 justices (elected to six-year terms)*

- Appeals from the Court of Appeals
- Direct appeals when action of state officers is involved, the constitutionality of a statute is questioned, there are conflicting statutes or rules of law, or when the issue is of broad public interest
- Administers the state court system
- Supervises attorney discipline statewide

### Court of Appeals

*22 judges (elected to six-year terms) in Seattle (Division I), Tacoma (Division II), and Spokane (Division III)*

- Decisions on most appeals filed from superior courts
- Review of administrative agency decisions
- Accelerated review of appeals involving parental termination, dependency, and juvenile cases
- Petitions for discretionary review
- Personal restraint petitions (a process to challenge a conviction or sentence, different from a traditional appeal)

### Superior Courts

*193 judges (elected to four-year terms) in 32 judicial districts, each composed of one or more counties*

- Exclusive original jurisdiction over civil cases involving more than \$100,000
- Original jurisdiction in real property cases, tax legality, probate, and domestic matters
- Original jurisdiction in all felony criminal cases
- Exclusive original jurisdiction over juvenile matters
- Issue domestic violence protection orders

### District and Municipal Courts (Courts of Limited Jurisdiction)

*206 judges (district court judges elected to four-year terms; municipal court judges elected or appointed)*

- Concurrent jurisdiction with superior courts over civil actions involving \$100,000 or less
- Concurrent jurisdiction with superior courts of all misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors
- Hear small claims cases (\$5,000 or less)
- Original jurisdiction in all traffic infraction matters
- Issue temporary domestic violence protection orders and other civil anti-harassment orders
- Orders for name changes



### ***District and Municipal Courts (Courts of Limited Jurisdiction)***

Courts of limited jurisdiction include district and municipal courts. District courts are county courts and serve defined territories within the counties. Municipal courts are those created by cities and towns. There are 206 district and municipal court judges in Washington.

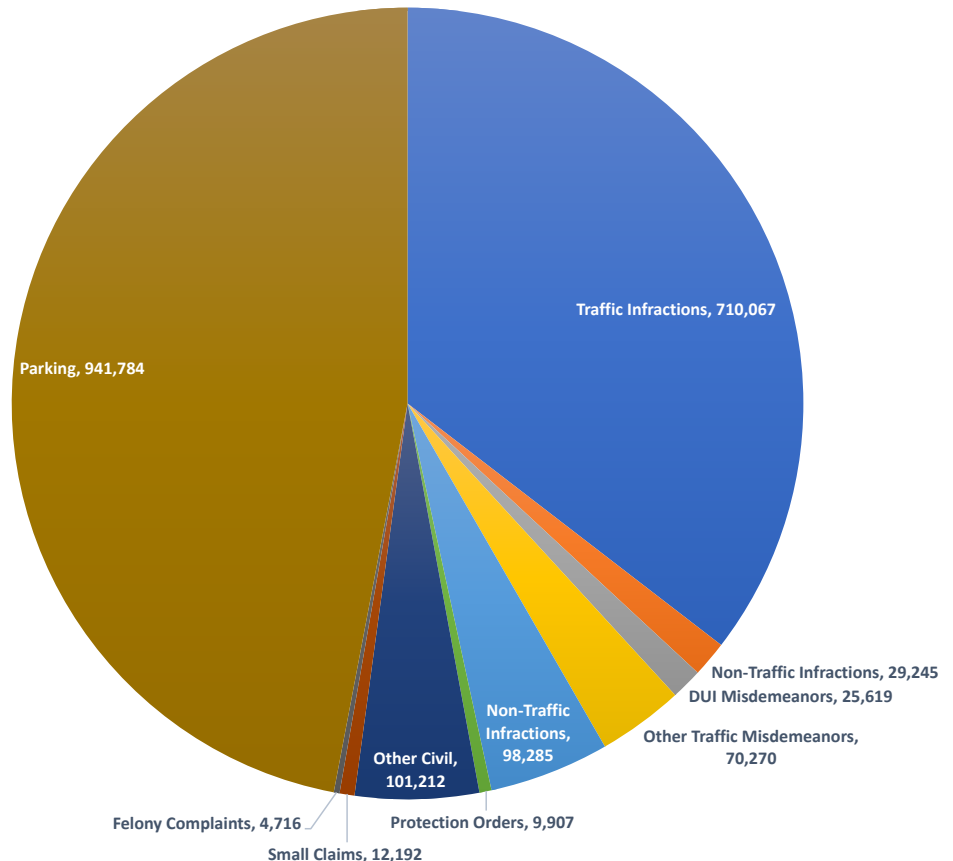
More than two million cases are filed annually in district and municipal courts. Excluding parking infractions, seven out of every eight cases filed in all Washington state courts are filed at this level. This is due primarily to the broad jurisdiction that these courts have over traffic violations and misdemeanors.

District courts have jurisdiction over both criminal and civil cases. Criminal jurisdiction includes misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor cases that involve traffic or non-traffic offenses. Jurisdiction in civil cases includes damages for injury to individuals or personal property and contract disputes in amounts of up to \$100,000. District courts also have jurisdiction over traffic and non-traffic infractions, civil proceedings for which a monetary penalty – but no jail sentence – may be imposed. District courts also handle small claims cases.

Violations of municipal or city ordinances are heard in municipal courts. A municipal court's authority over these ordinance violations is similar to the authority that district courts have over state law violations. Like district courts, municipal courts only have jurisdiction over gross misdemeanors, misdemeanors, and infractions. Municipal courts can also issue domestic violence protection orders and no-contact orders.

District court judges are elected to four-year terms. Municipal court judges may be elected or appointed to a four-year term, depending on state law provisions. Judges of courts of limited jurisdiction belong to the District and Municipal Court Judges' Association. The association was created by state statute to study and make recommendations concerning the operation of courts served by its members.

Courts of Limited Jurisdiction Filings by Case Type (2017)



## Superior Courts

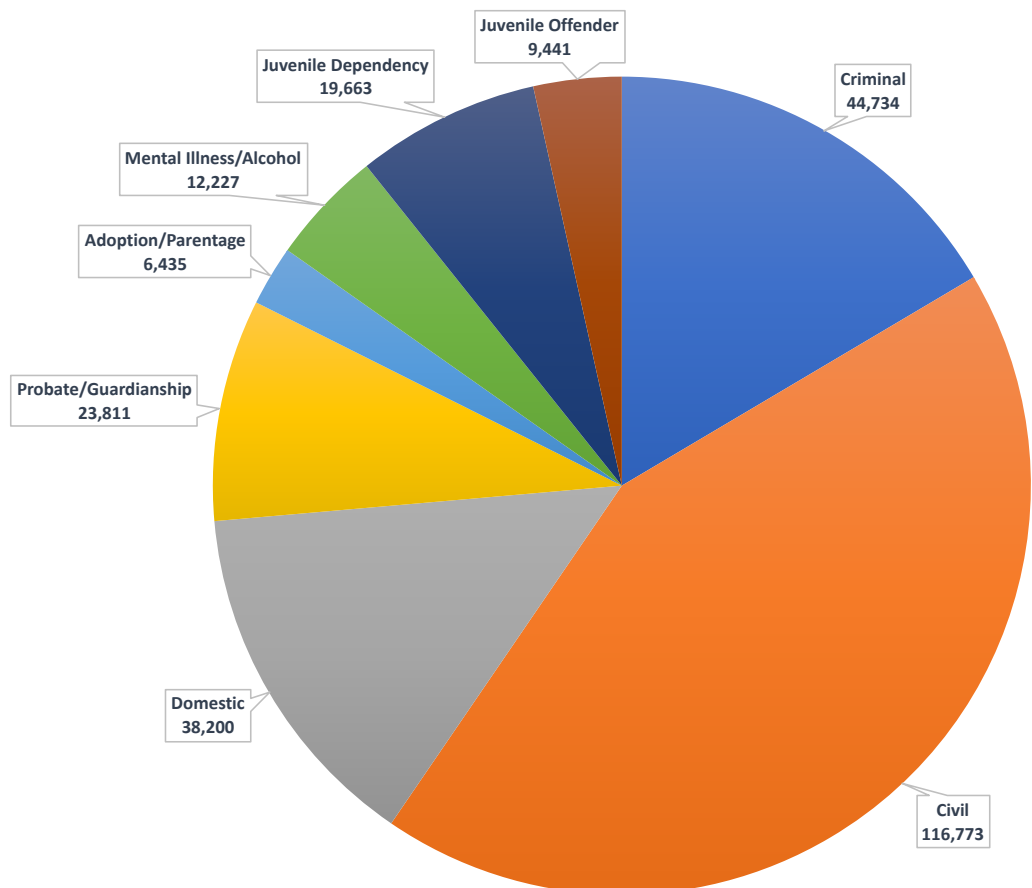
Superior courts are trial courts and are frequently referred to as “general jurisdiction” courts because there is no limit on the types of civil and criminal cases they can hear. Superior courts also have jurisdiction over cases appealed from district and municipal courts. There are 193 superior court judges statewide.

All superior courts are grouped into single or multi-county districts. There are 32 such districts in Washington. Counties with large populations usually comprise one district, while in less-populated areas, a district may consist of two or more counties. A superior courthouse is located in each of Washington’s 39 counties. In rural districts, judges rotate between their counties as needed.

Superior court judges are elected to four-year terms. To qualify for the position, a person must be an attorney admitted to practice in Washington. There is a presiding judge in each county or judicial district who handles specific administrative functions and acts as spokesperson for the court.

Superior court judges belong to an organization established by law, called the Superior Court Judges’ Association. Specific committees of the association work throughout the year to improve the court system and to communicate with other court levels, the Legislature, bar associations, the media, and the public. Officers of the organization are elected each year at the association’s annual spring conference.

Superior Court Filings by Case Type (2017)



## Court of Appeals

Litigants have a constitutional right to file a direct appeal in the Court of Appeals. The Court of Appeals considers and decides appeals from final Superior Court judgments and orders, except those rendered in death penalty cases. The Court of Appeals also decides appeals from final government agency administrative decisions.

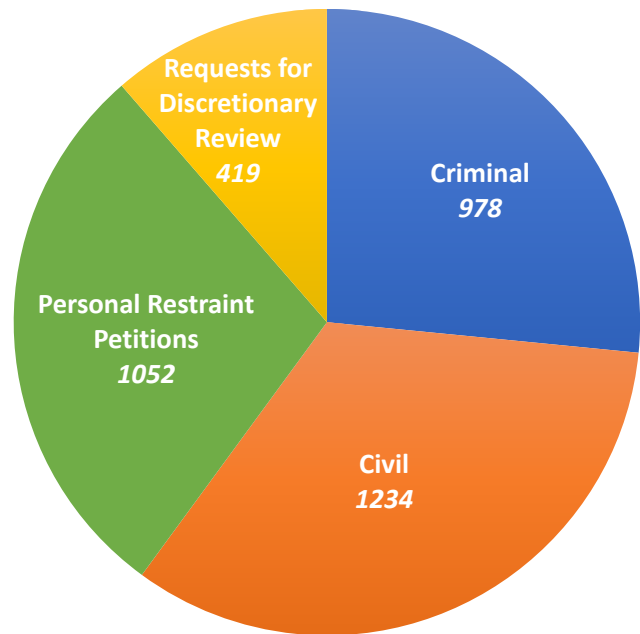
Court of Appeals judges read the briefs and excerpts of the record submitted in the cases, research the legal issues necessary to resolve the cases, hear oral argument on selected cases, and then conference (discuss) every case in panels of three judges.

After the case is conferenced, the writing judge drafts an opinion that is read and edited by other panel members. Sometimes the judges draft concurring or dissenting opinions. Published Court of Appeals decisions are binding precedent in the state. Unpublished opinions are considered "persuasive authority" in the state. The published opinions are available in bound form in law libraries across the country and online.

In addition to deciding cases that result in formal opinions, Court of Appeals judges decide personal restraint petitions and various motions such as motions for discretionary review, motions for reconsideration, and motions to modify commissioner rulings, as well as procedural motions. Court of Appeals judges are also responsible for the oversight of the Court's budget and personnel and the management and processing of cases. They participate on statewide judicial administration committees and in community or school activities. They also sit as pro tem judges in trial courts and on the Supreme Court.

The Court of Appeals in Washington is divided into three divisions. Each division serves a specific geographic area of the state. Division I is located in Seattle and has 10 judges. Division II in Tacoma has seven judges. Division III has five judges and is located in Spokane. These divisions consider appeals from trial courts in their respective divisions.

Court of Appeals Filings by Case Type (2017)





## Supreme Court

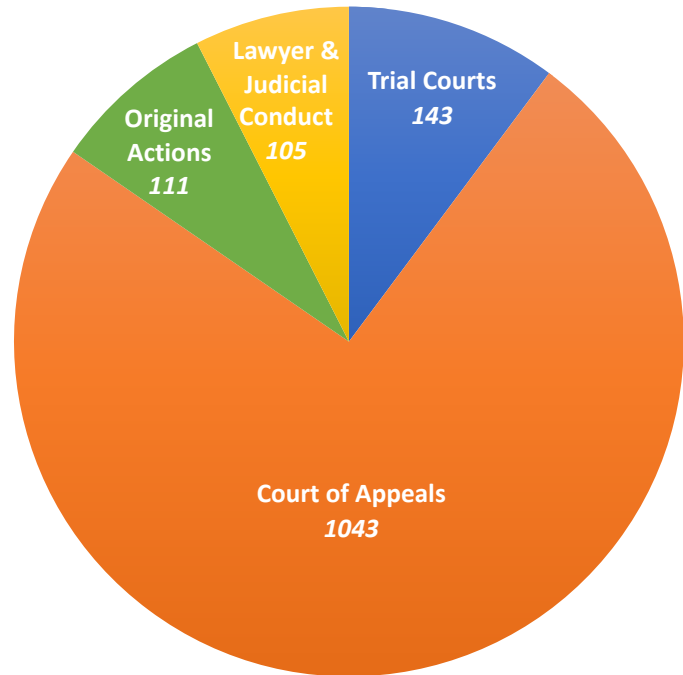
The Supreme Court is the state's highest court. Its opinions are published, become the law of the state, and set precedent for subsequent cases decided in Washington. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court who are elected by the voters statewide to six-year terms. Terms are staggered to maintain continuity of the Court. The justices select a Chief Justice to lead the Court.

Legal cases do not start at the Supreme Court. Cases begin at the trial court level and usually go to the Court of Appeals before making their way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court will typically review a trial court decision directly if the action involves a state officer, a trial court has ruled a statute or ordinance unconstitutional, conflicting statutes or rules of law are involved, or the issue is of broad public interest and requires a prompt and ultimate determination. All cases in which the death penalty has been imposed are reviewed directly by the Supreme Court. In all other cases, the decision on whether to review a Court of Appeals decision is left to the discretion of the court.

All nine justices hear and dispose of cases argued throughout the year. Each case is decided on the basis of the record, plus written and oral arguments. Exhibits are generally not allowed and no live testimony is heard, unlike trial courts.

As leaders of the state judicial branch, the justices frequently preside over efforts to improve the judicial system by serving as chairs or members of the Board for Judicial Administration, the Gender and Justice Commission, the Minority and Justice Commission, the Interpreter Commission, the Judicial Information System Committee, the Bench-Bar-Press Committee, and many others. The Supreme Court also governs the Pattern Forms Committee, the Pattern Jury Instruction Committee, and the Certified Professional Guardian Board. The Supreme Court governs the certification and discipline of professional guardians, also hears cases involving the suspension or removal of a judge, and hears matters involving lawyer discipline.

Supreme Court Filings by Source (2017)



## Federal Judge Salaries

Parity with federal judge salaries has long been considered an important factor to consider when setting state judge salaries. In 2004, a study prepared by Owen-Pottier Human Resource Consultants for the Salary Commission addressed the issue:

*A reasonable course of action for the Commission to follow is to move toward a degree of parity with the federal bench over time. Such action can be justified in part by the fact that federal judges perform substantially similar work as our state judges but have significantly more job security since they are appointed for life, while state judges must run for reelection.*

The Salary Commission in its most recent salary increase decision in 2017 explicitly recognized the increases were to maintain working toward the benchmark of federal judge salaries. The use of the word “parity” is significant. It means “equality or equivalence.

The American Bar Association (ABA) has also adopted the following policy on the issue:

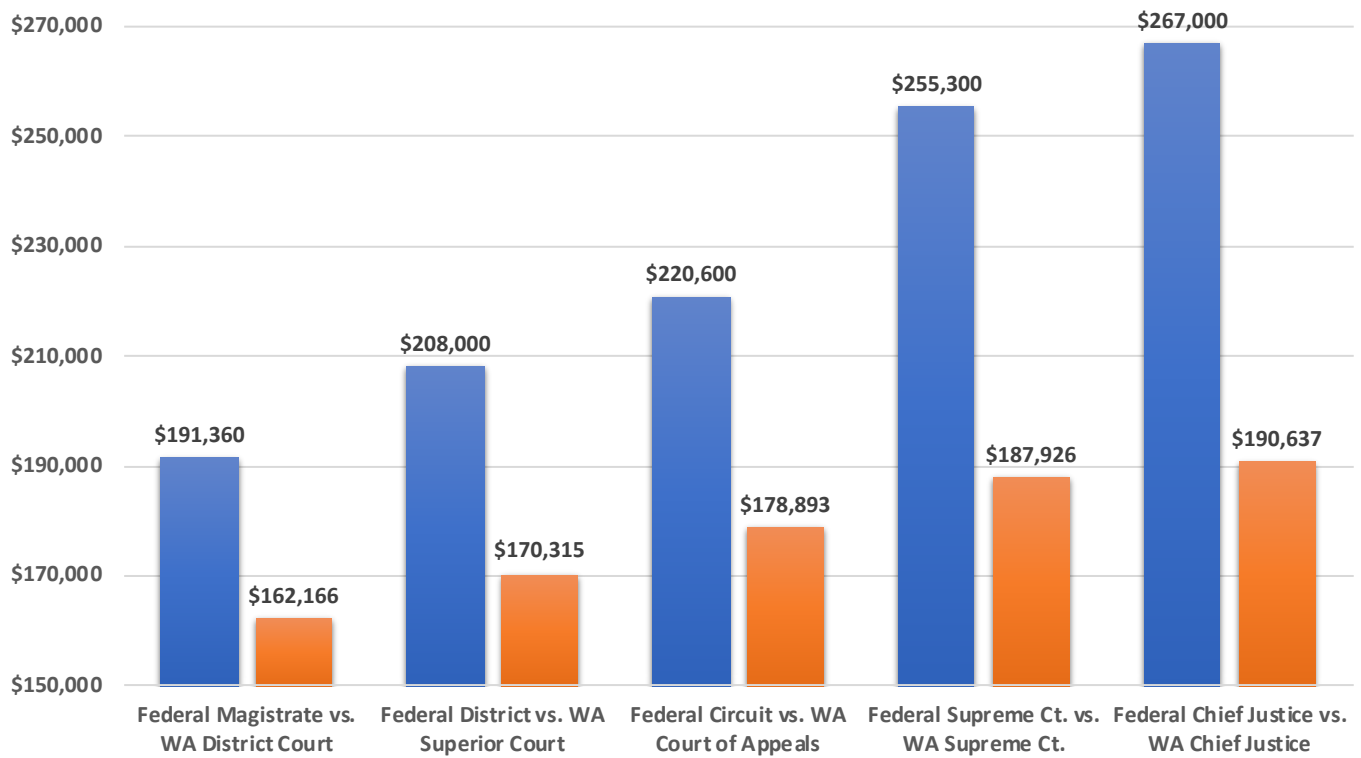
*Be it resolved that the American Bar Association recommends that salaries of justices of the highest courts of the states should be substantially equal to the salaries paid to judges of the United States court of appeals, and the salaries of the state trial judges of courts of general jurisdiction should substantially equal the salaries paid to judges of the United States district courts.*

The ABA went on to recognize that state court judges are called on to decide many more disputes than the judges of the federal courts. Their decisions affect the “life, liberty and property” of millions of citizens every year. While only on rare occasions do their decisions achieve the publicity accorded by the media to many decisions of the United States Supreme Court, the quality of justice accorded in state courts is in reality the quality of justice in the United States. *Annual Report of the American Bar Association, 1981.*

The U.S. Supreme Court and appellate courts are similar in function to the Washington Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. The federal district courts are similar to Washington superior courts. The work of federal magistrates are most similar to Washington district courts, hearing misdemeanor cases, preliminary hearings and civil trials. These federal positions draw from the same pool of attorneys as state judicial offices. There are federal courts in several locations in Washington including Seattle, Tacoma, Bellingham, Vancouver, Spokane, Yakima, and Richland.

The gap between federal and state judge salaries was at its lowest point in 2013 after years of progress. In 2014, federal judge salaries were all adjusted and increased substantially, causing the gap to widen again. The chart on the next page shows how Washington judges’ salaries compare to their federal counterparts.

## Comparison Between Federal and State Court Judge Annual Salaries (2018)



## Years of Service, Age, and Turnover in the Judiciary

Washington State has had a very experienced judiciary for many years. As the state population ages, however, so too do our judges. More than half of all judges in Washington are 60 years of age or older. This means significant turnover in the judiciary will continue, making recruitment and retention all the more important.

The tables below show key age and turnover data for each level of court.

<b>Supreme Court</b>	
Total Justices	9
Avg. Age	62
Median Age	62
Avg. Years on Court	14.4
% Greater than 10 Years on Bench	67%
% Greater than 15 Years on Bench	56%
New Justices Since 1/1/16	0

<b>Court of Appeals</b>	
Total Judges	22
Avg. Age	61
Median Age	61
Avg. Years on Court	8
% Greater than 10 Years on Bench	30%
% Greater than 15 Years on Bench	17%
New Judges Since 1/1/16	5 (23%)

<b>Superior Courts</b>	
Total Judges	193
Avg. Age	58
Median Age	60
Avg. Years on Court	11
% Greater than 10 Years on Bench	30%
% Greater than 15 Years on Bench	16%
New Judges Since 1/1/16	44 (23%)

<b>District &amp; Municipal Courts</b>	
Total Judges	206
Avg. Age	60
Median Age	60
Avg. Years on Court	7
% Greater than 10 Years on Bench	27%
% Greater than 15 Years on Bench	15%
New Judges Since 1/1/16	36 (18%)

## Retirement Benefits

In Washington, judges participate in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). Judges pay a significant portion of their salary for this benefit, however. Judges also typically come onto the bench later in their careers, limiting the number of years these benefits actually accrue. Members of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and Superior courts currently have 15.95% of their income deducted from their paychecks for their pension. District and municipal court judges currently have 18.45% deducted. These rates have increased substantially over the last several years and are expected to increase again in 2019.

Federal judges, on the other hand, do not contribute any portion of their salary towards their own retirement. They can retire as early as age 65 with 15 years of service and receive their full salary for life. Federal judges also never have to run for election, as state court judges do. These are important factors to consider when comparing state and federal salaries, as a straight comparison of total salaries does not tell the whole story.

The table below shows the retirement contribution rates for justices and judges since 2002.

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>District/Municipal Court</b>	<b>Superior/Appels/Supreme</b>
4/1/02-4/30/02	0.65%	0.65%
5/1/02-6/30/03	0.65%	0.65%
7/1/03-8/31/04	1.18%	1.18%
9/1/04-6/30/05	1.18%	1.18%
7/1/05-6/30/06	2.25%	2.25%
7/1/06-12/31/06	3.50%	3.50%
1/1/07-6/30/07	8.75%	6.25%
7/1/07-8/31/07	10.38%	7.88%
9/1/07-6/30/08	10.38%	7.88%
7/1/08-6/30/09	13.63%	11.13%
7/1/09-8/31/09	9.73%	7.23%
9/1/09-6/30/11	9.75%	7.25%
7/1/11-8/31/11	11.48%	8.98%
9/1/11-3/31/12	11.60%	9.10%
4/1/12-6/30/12	11.60%	9.10%
7/1/12-6/30/13	11.60%	9.10%
7/1/13-8/31/13	12.30%	9.80%
9/1/13-6/30/15	12.30%	9.80%
7/1/15-6/30/17	15.30%	12.80%
7/1/17-8/31/18	18.45%	15.95%
Effective 9/1/18	18.53%	16.03%

## Judiciary Salary History

To attract high quality judicial candidates to the bench, and to retain these individuals, establishing and maintaining an adequate salary is essential. Having salaries that are sufficient to attract talented people is a common problem throughout government; however, it is especially difficult for the judiciary. When experienced lawyers consider trading private practice for public service on the bench they know that they will be prohibited from practicing law and must forego all outside business and professional interests as a condition of holding office.

Unlike other public servants, judges must curb most other financial endeavors in order to preserve their impartiality. At the same time, they know that the potential monetary benefits of private practice usually exceed that of public service in the judiciary. Therefore, adequate salaries, which do not erode with inflation, become crucial for attracting and retaining high quality candidates.

The chart below shows calendar year judge salaries since 2002.

Year	District Court	Superior Court	Appeals Court	Supreme Court	Chief Justice
2002	\$114,394	\$120,144	\$126,196	\$132,567	\$132,567
2003	\$116,135	\$121,972	\$128,116	\$134,584	\$134,584
2004	\$116,909	\$122,785	\$128,970	\$135,481	\$135,481
2005	\$119,643	\$125,655	\$131,985	\$138,649	\$138,649
2006	\$123,232	\$129,425	\$135,944	\$142,808	\$142,808
2007	\$128,525	\$134,985	\$141,784	\$148,943	\$148,943
2008	\$136,725	\$143,597	\$150,829	\$158,444	\$158,444
2009	\$141,710	\$148,832	\$156,328	\$164,221	\$164,221
2010	\$141,710	\$148,832	\$156,328	\$164,221	\$164,221
2011	\$141,710	\$148,832	\$156,328	\$164,221	\$164,221
2012	\$141,710	\$148,832	\$156,328	\$164,221	\$164,221
2013	\$142,655	\$149,824	\$157,370	\$165,316	\$165,316
2014	\$145,990	\$153,327	\$161,049	\$169,180	\$169,180
2015	\$150,866	\$158,448	\$166,428	\$174,831	\$175,694
2016	\$155,868	\$163,702	\$171,947	\$180,628	\$183,234
2017	\$158,986	\$166,976	\$175,385	\$184,241	\$186,899
2018	\$162,166	\$170,315	\$178,893	\$187,926	\$190,637



## Where Salaries Stand Today

Thanks to the Salary Commission judicial salaries have increased over the last five years, however, inflation and pension deduction rate increases have substantially reduced the buying power of those salaries. Despite the Salary Commission's efforts to bring about parity, these steadily increasing pension deductions have widened the gap between federal and state judicial salaries.

Housing costs are another factor worth considering. In the Puget Sound region, where more than half of all judges reside, housing costs have increased 94% since 2012 according to the Puget Sound Regional Council. This is especially significant as we work to recruit new judges.

When compared nationally, Washington salaries rank 21st in the country when adjusted for cost of living. These rankings do not take into consideration the large deductions that are taken from the salaries of Washington judges to pay for their pensions. See Appendix 1 for the Survey of Judicial Salaries from the National Center for State Courts for additional information.

The chart and graphs below use Superior Court salary data to demonstrate where salaries stand when adjusted for inflation and pension deduction rate increases. When adjusted for these factors, the buying power of the net salary is less than it was in 2002. All court levels, not just Superior Court, are facing a similar situation.

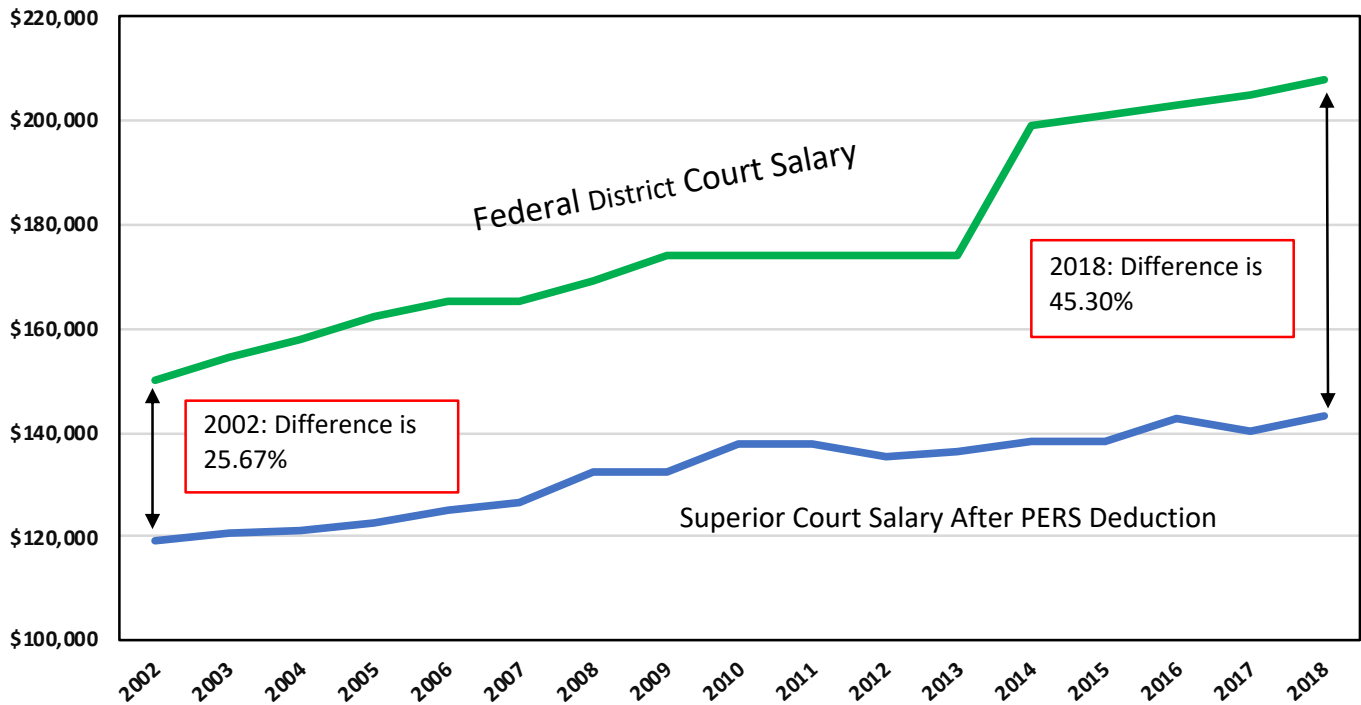
Year	Actual Annual Salary <sup>1</sup>	PERS Deduction Rate	Salary After PERS Deduction	Salary Comm. Increase %	Inflation % <sup>2</sup>	Net % Change (Inflation Adjusted)	Real Dollar Value of Salary Net of PERS	Fed. Dist. Ct. Salary	Diff Between Fed & Sup Ct (Net of PERS)	% Diff Between Fed & Sup Ct (Net of PERS)
2002	\$120,144	0.65%	\$119,363	2.30%	1.90%		\$117,137	\$150,000	\$30,637	25.67%
2003	\$121,972	1.18%	\$120,533	0.00%	1.60%	-0.38%	\$115,293	\$154,700	\$34,167	28.35%
2004	\$122,785	1.18%	\$121,336	2.00%	1.20%	-0.93%	\$116,204	\$158,100	\$36,764	30.30%
2005	\$125,655	2.25%	\$122,828	3.00%	2.80%	1.14%	\$116,430	\$162,100	\$39,272	31.97%
2006	\$129,425	3.50%	\$124,895	3.00%	3.70%	0.20%	\$115,644	\$165,200	\$40,305	32.27%
2007	\$134,985	6.25%	\$126,548	6.81%	3.90%	0.60%	\$118,885	\$165,200	\$38,652	30.54%
2008	\$143,597	7.88%	\$132,281	5.57%	4.20%	2.48%	\$120,449	\$169,300	\$37,019	27.98%
2009	\$148,832	11.13%	\$132,267	0.00%	0.60%	-0.55%	\$119,730	\$174,000	\$41,733	31.55%
2010	\$148,832	7.25%	\$138,042	0.00%	0.30%	-0.60%	\$119,372	\$174,000	\$35,958	26.05%
2011	\$148,832	7.25%	\$138,042	0.00%	2.70%	-0.30%	\$116,234	\$174,000	\$35,958	26.05%
2012	\$148,832	9.10%	\$135,288	0.00%	2.50%	-2.70%	\$113,399	\$174,000	\$38,712	28.61%
2013	\$149,824	9.10%	\$136,190	2.00%	1.20%	-1.83%	\$114,296	\$174,000	\$37,810	27.76%
2014	\$153,327	9.80%	\$138,301	3.00%	1.80%	1.14%	\$115,643	\$199,100	\$60,799	43.96%
2015	\$158,448	12.80%	\$138,167	4.00%	1.40%	1.54%	\$118,608	\$201,100	\$62,933	45.55%
2016	\$163,702	12.80%	\$142,748	2.00%	2.20%	1.92%	\$118,376	\$203,100	\$60,352	42.28%
2017	\$166,976	15.95%	\$140,343	2.00%	3.10%	-0.20%	\$117,113	\$205,100	\$64,757	46.14%
2018	\$170,315	15.95% <sup>3</sup>	\$143,150	2.00%	3.10%	-1.10%	\$115,863	\$208,000	\$64,850	45.30%

<sup>1</sup> Actual gross salary received in the given year

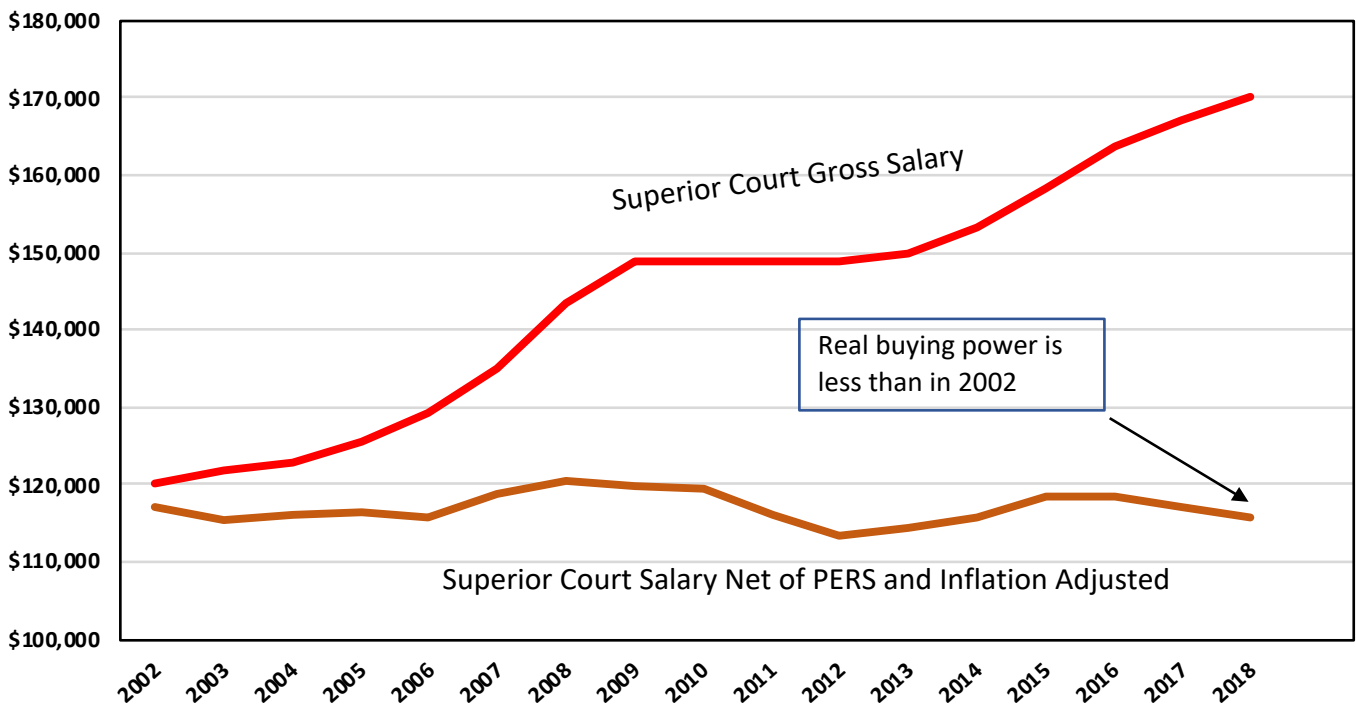
<sup>2</sup> Inflation rate = year over year percentage increases in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue CPI-U (Assumes inflation rate of 3.10% for 2018)

<sup>3</sup> Due to legislative changes, this rate will increase to 16.03% effective September 1, 2018

### Federal District Court Salary vs. Superior Court Salary (Net of PERS)



### Superior Court: Gross Salary vs. Salary Net of PERS and Adjusted for Inflation



## Appendices

1. 2018 Survey of Judicial Salaries, National Center for State Courts
2. Puget Sound Trends – Housing Affordability, Puget Sound Regional Council
3. 2018 State of the Judiciary, Washington Courts

## **Appendix 1**

### **2018 Survey of Judicial Salaries, National Center for State Courts**

*This Appendix is included because, in the past, the Commission has asked us for information about the salaries of judges in other states. Unfortunately, we cannot locate any surveys that produce an informed comparison of judicial salaries. No survey we can find takes into consideration the nature of the judges' pensions, or how much is deducted from a judge's paycheck to pay for the pension. There are also other factors that affect the total financial picture for judges, making interstate comparisons difficult. Washington judges have to regularly run for re-election every four or six years, while other states' judges may hold office for longer terms, or for life. In some other states judicial offices are partisan, which means a judicial candidate may receive substantial financial support from his or her political party when running for election. Washington judicial offices are non-partisan, so most of our judicial candidates have to pay the bulk of their campaign expenses themselves.*

# SURVEY OF Judicial Salaries

Published January 2018, Vol. 43 No. 1  
Data and Rankings as of January 1, 2018

## Rankings as of January 1, 2018

This graphic depicts the rankings of judicial salaries, with the highest salary for each of the three positions having a rank of "1." General jurisdiction judge salaries, adjusted for cost of living, are also included in this graphic. Empty squares represent states without intermediate appellate courts.



### Judicial Salaries at a Glance

	Mean	Median	Range	
Chief, Highest Court	\$178,049	\$175,600	\$133,174	to \$256,059
Associate Justice, COLR	\$172,026	\$170,000	\$131,174	to \$244,179
Judge, Intermediate Appellate Court	\$166,263	\$164,865	\$124,616	to \$228,918
Judge, General Jurisdiction Trial Courts	\$155,113	\$151,943	\$118,384	to \$208,000
State Court Administrators	\$155,163	\$146,494	\$107,000	to \$288,888



[www.ncsc.org/salarytracker](http://www.ncsc.org/salarytracker)

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## Salaries and Rankings for Appellate and General-Jurisdiction Judges - Listed Alphabetically by State Name

The table below lists the salaries and rankings for associate justices of the courts of last resort, associate judges of intermediate appellate courts, and judges of general jurisdiction trial courts (actual salaries and cost-of-living-adjusted salaries as of January 1, 2018). Salaries are ranked from highest to lowest, with the highest salary for each position having a rank of "1." The lowest salary has a rank of "51" except for intermediate appellate courts, which exists in only 40 states.

	Highest Court		Intermediate Appellate Court		General-Jurisdiction Court		General-Jurisdiction Court Adjusted for Cost-of-Living Index		
	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Salary	Rank	Factor	Salary	Rank
Alabama	\$167,685	30	\$178,878	10	\$134,943	40	96.77	\$139,454	25
Alaska	\$205,176	7	\$193,836	6	\$189,720	6	136.16	\$139,334	26
Arizona	\$159,685	35	\$154,534	29	\$149,383	30	110.07	\$135,721	32
Arkansas	\$169,830	27	\$164,730	21	\$163,200	17	95.10	\$171,611	3
California	\$244,179	1	\$228,918	1	\$200,042	3	142.78	\$140,108	24
Colorado	\$177,350	17	\$170,324	16	\$163,303	16	110.31	\$148,037	17
Connecticut	\$185,610	12	\$174,323	14	\$167,634	14	138.09	\$121,397	44
Delaware	\$195,245	9			\$183,444	7	110.43	\$166,119	5
District of Columbia	\$220,600	4			\$208,000	1	150.73	\$137,991	27
Florida	\$178,420	16	\$169,554	17	\$160,688	19	106.44	\$150,964	12
Georgia	\$175,600	20	\$174,500	13	\$169,265	12	100.10	\$169,091	4
Hawaii	\$223,200	3	\$206,652	3	\$201,060	2	149.08	\$134,863	33
Idaho	\$146,700	42	\$137,700	37	\$131,700	44	96.08	\$137,069	28
Illinois	\$229,345	2	\$215,856	2	\$198,075	4	111.77	\$177,217	2
Indiana	\$173,599	24	\$168,752	18	\$144,137	34	96.39	\$149,534	14
Iowa	\$174,808	21	\$158,420	26	\$147,494	32	99.00	\$148,984	16
Kansas	\$139,303	46	\$134,806	38	\$123,038	50	100.47	\$122,460	43
Kentucky	\$135,504	48	\$130,044	39	\$124,620	49	93.92	\$132,689	35
Louisiana	\$169,125	28	\$158,147	27	\$151,943	26	100.24	\$151,579	11
Maine	\$134,056	50			\$125,632	48	123.04	\$102,106	51
Maryland	\$176,433	18	\$163,633	22	\$154,433	23	127.83	\$120,810	45
Massachusetts	\$194,734	10	\$183,837	7	\$178,444	9	137.11	\$130,146	38
Michigan	\$164,610	32	\$157,544	28	\$145,578	33	96.54	\$150,790	13
Minnesota	\$173,363	25	\$163,354	23	\$153,345	24	106.03	\$144,620	19
Mississippi	\$152,250	38	\$144,827	32	\$136,000	38	91.14	\$149,214	15
Missouri	\$173,742	22	\$158,848	24	\$149,723	29	97.98	\$152,809	10
Montana	\$144,061	45			\$132,558	42	103.40	\$128,195	39
Nebraska	\$173,694	23	\$165,009	19	\$160,667	20	99.47	\$161,527	6
Nevada	\$170,000	26	\$165,000	20	\$160,000	21	111.18	\$143,909	20
New Hampshire	\$162,240	34			\$152,159	25	128.20	\$118,687	48
New Jersey	\$185,482	13	\$175,534	12	\$165,000	15	126.67	\$130,264	37
New Mexico	\$131,174	51	\$124,616	40	\$118,384	51	105.57	\$112,135	50
New York	\$215,700	5	\$205,400	4	\$194,000	5	145.65	\$133,200	34
North Carolina	\$146,191	43	\$140,144	34	\$132,584	41	100.35	\$132,122	36
North Dakota	\$157,009	37			\$143,869	35	105.90	\$135,853	31
Ohio	\$164,000	33	\$152,850	30	\$140,550	37	98.74	\$142,340	22
Oklahoma	\$145,914	44	\$138,235	36	\$131,835	43	96.23	\$136,998	29
Oregon	\$147,560	40	\$144,536	33	\$135,776	39	116.26	\$116,787	49
Pennsylvania	\$207,203	6	\$195,978	5	\$180,299	8	111.82	\$161,236	7
Rhode Island	\$175,870	19			\$158,340	22	127.75	\$123,943	42
South Carolina	\$148,794	39	\$145,074	31	\$141,354	36	103.42	\$136,686	30
South Dakota	\$135,270	49			\$126,346	46	105.99	\$119,208	47
Tennessee	\$185,064	14	\$178,908	9	\$172,740	10	96.34	\$179,298	1
Texas	\$168,000	29	\$158,500	25	\$149,000	31	101.67	\$146,556	18
Utah	\$178,500	15	\$170,350	15	\$162,250	18	103.26	\$157,121	8
Vermont	\$158,558	36			\$150,738	27	125.39	\$120,215	46
Virginia	\$197,827	8	\$181,610	8	\$171,120	11	109.17	\$156,748	9
Washington	\$186,681	11	\$177,708	11	\$169,187	13	117.95	\$143,437	21
West Virginia	\$136,000	47			\$126,000	47	99.85	\$126,184	41
Wisconsin	\$147,403	41	\$139,059	35	\$131,187	45	103.94	\$126,219	40
Wyoming	\$165,000	31			\$150,000	28	106.79	\$140,464	23
<b>Mean</b>	<b>\$ 172,026</b>		<b>\$ 166,263</b>		<b>\$ 155,113</b>				
<b>Median</b>	<b>\$ 170,000</b>		<b>\$ 164,865</b>		<b>\$ 151,943</b>				
<b>Range</b>	<b>\$ 131,174 to \$ 244,179</b>		<b>\$ 124,616 to \$ 228,918</b>		<b>\$ 118,384 to \$ 208,000</b>				

The figures presented use the C2ER Cost-of-Living Index. The Council for Community and Economic Research-C2ER is the most widely accepted U.S. source for cost-of-living indices, with nearly 400 reporting jurisdictions across America. Due to the rounding of C2ER factors to the nearest hundredth for publication purposes, user calculations of our adjusted salary figures may not equate to the published totals. More detailed information can be found at [www.c2er.org](http://www.c2er.org).





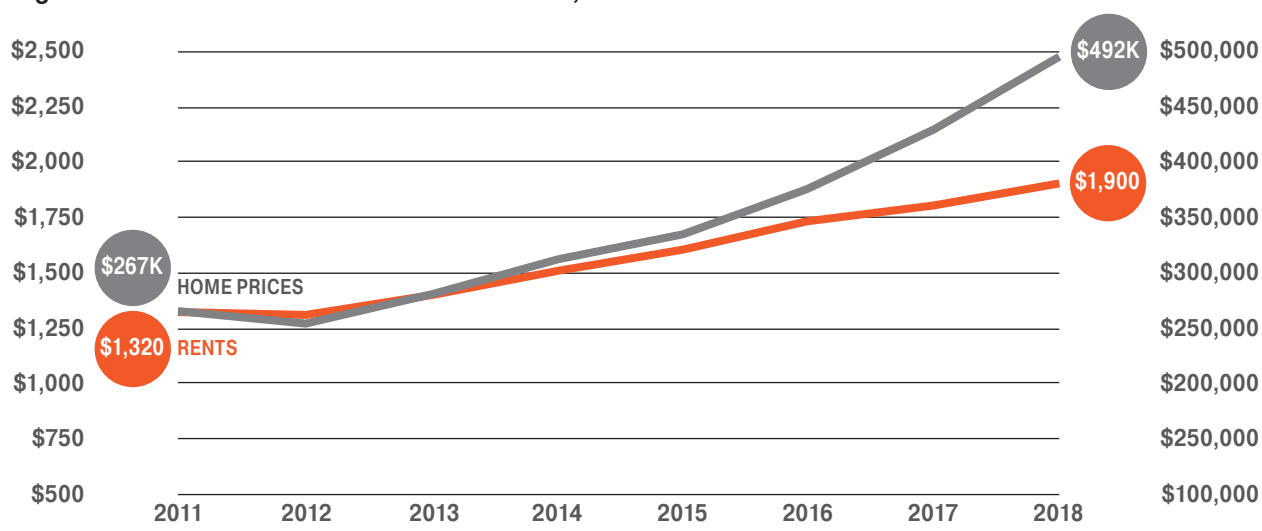
## Housing Affordability

Home prices and rents in the central Puget Sound have been rising at some of the highest rates in the nation over the past few years.

Among the 50 largest U.S. metro areas, the central Puget Sound region experienced the third fastest increase in home prices (15%) and the sixth fastest increase in rents (5%) over the last year (March 2017 to March 2018).

For home price increase, San Jose and Las Vegas came in first and second, respectively. For rent increases, the top five ahead of central Puget Sound were Las Vegas, Sacramento, Richmond (Virginia), Riverside (California), and Atlanta.

**Figure 1. Metro Area Home Prices and Rents, 2011–2018**



Source: Zillow.

Note: Data represent March estimates for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue MSA; median rents are for the multifamily (5+ unit) rental stock; median home prices are for all homes, including single family homes and condominiums.

Robust job and wage growth driven by the region's technology sector, along with population growth, have created strong housing demand pressures, while historically low inventory of homes for sale has constrained supply.

The combination of these factors together has resulted in a near-doubling of home prices since the last recorded low in early 2012. The median home price for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area has increased by 94% since then to \$492,000.

There is wide variability in home prices among the region's four counties, with prices in Kitsap and Pierce counties notably lower than the metro area median, while prices in King County are substantially higher.

Housing affordability indices for King County indicate that the price of the typical home surpassed levels affordable to the typical family in early 2016, and affordability has continued to erode since then.

First-time buyers in all four of the region's counties are experiencing significant hurdles to establishing homeownership.

**Figure 2. Housing Cost and Affordability Indicators**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Median Home Price (all homes)</b>									
King	\$340,100	\$317,000	\$309,600	\$344,100	\$378,500	\$416,400	\$475,000	\$548,700	\$648,000
Kitsap	\$249,000	\$239,800	\$236,100	\$231,600	\$247,000	\$253,500	\$282,100	\$314,300	\$348,200
Pierce	\$224,600	\$209,700	\$194,000	\$201,200	\$220,600	\$234,700	\$258,400	\$288,900	\$329,200
Snohomish	\$273,100	\$239,600	\$232,200	\$256,700	\$288,400	\$313,000	\$353,100	\$399,900	\$460,300
<b>Housing Affordability Index (all buyers)</b>									
King	110.5	124.0	131.9	121.9	105.9	103.0	92.3	79.4	
Kitsap	146.2	153.7	170.7	176.9	165.4	163.0	151.1	133.7	
Pierce	150.6	175.9	201.0	187.3	165.7	158.8	148.8	130.5	
Snohomish	137.5	165.6	173.3	158.9	134.6	129.8	124.6	108.9	
<b>Housing Affordability Index (first time buyers)</b>									
King	61.1	66.4	72.7	66.9	59.2	58.5	53.2	46.5	
Kitsap	88.4	90.0	96.4	103.5	102.9	107.2	104.6	97.1	
Pierce	86.2	98.4	117.9	100.9	86.9	80.8	73.5	62.6	
Snohomish	78.2	92.2	98.6	86.8	73.7	71.1	68.4	59.8	
<b>Median Rent (multifamily 5+ units)</b>									
King	n/a	\$1,380	\$1,390	\$1,470	\$1,610	\$1,730	\$1,870	\$1,960	\$2,020
Kitsap	n/a	\$920	\$1,020	\$950	\$1,030	\$1,120	\$1,190	\$1,280	\$1,350
Pierce	n/a	\$1,160	\$1,120	\$1,120	\$1,200	\$1,220	\$1,260	\$1,360	\$1,440
Snohomish	n/a	\$1,260	\$1,240	\$1,290	\$1,350	\$1,440	\$1,530	\$1,640	\$1,710

Source: WCRER/UW Runstad Center, Zillow.

Note: The all buyers affordability index measures the ability of a typical family to make payments on median price resale home. It assumes a 20% downpayment and 30-year amortizing mortgage. The first-time buyer affordability index assumes a less expensive home, lower downpayment, and lower income. An index of 100.0 indicates balance between home prices and income. A higher index indicates greater affordability, while a lower index indicates less affordability.

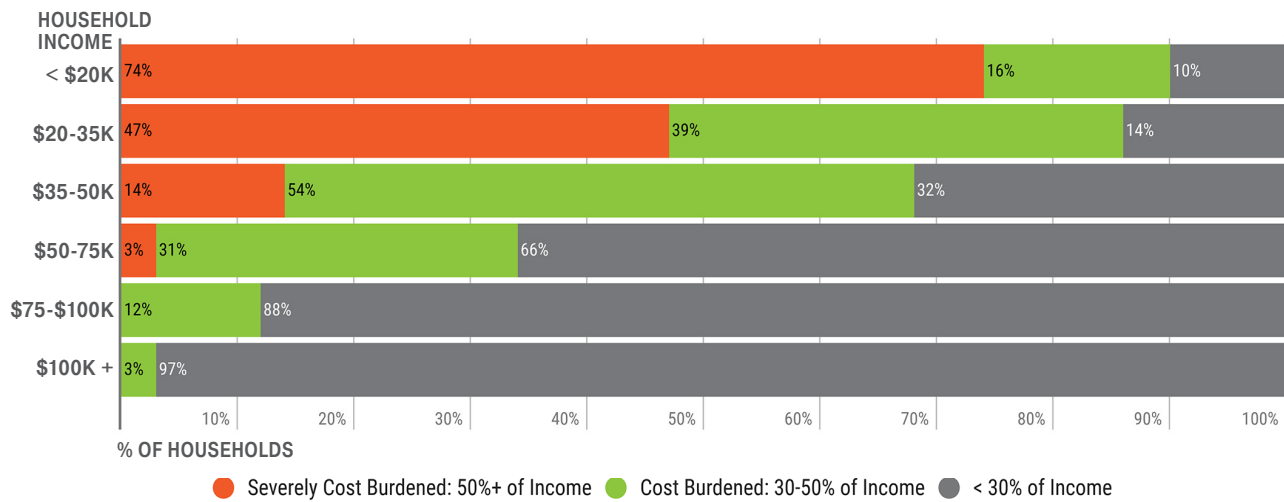
Monthly median rent for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue metro area has increased by 45% to \$1,900 since March 2012.

As with home prices, there is significant variation in median rents and the pace of rent increases between the region's four counties, with median rent in King County substantially more expensive and increasing at a much faster rate.

Multiple data sources suggest that the recent boom in apartment construction has finally produced enough new supply to relieve the demand pressures on rental prices. However, the rapid and sustained annual increases in rents over the past several years have resulted in serious housing cost burden for many of the region's renter households, with the biggest impact falling on lower income renters.

Households are considered "housing cost burdened" if they spend more than 30% of their gross annual income on housing costs, including utilities. A household is defined as "severely cost burdened" if its housing costs constitute more than 50% of gross annual income.

**Figure 3. Renter Housing Cost Burden**



Source: 2016 American Community Survey.

Fully one-third of moderate income renter households earning \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year are housing cost burdened, with 3% experiencing severe cost burden. The share of cost burdened and severely cost burdened households is much larger for lower income households.

Housing affordability is a key topic that will be addressed in the update to the region's VISION 2050 growth strategy.