

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE March 18, 2019

TO Honorable Members of the Ad Hoc Judicial Nominations Committee:
B. Adam McGough (Chair), Philip T. Kingston (Vice Chair), Council Member Jennifer S. Gates, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Adam Medrano, Council Member Sandy Greyson, Council Member Kevin Felder

SUBJECT Recommendation for Judicial Compensation

Section 13-5.2(a)(3) of the Dallas City Code provides that the Judicial Nominating Commission (the “JNC”) shall review and make recommendations to the City Council Ad Hoc Nominations Committee on the salary structure for municipal judges. The JNC convened and voted to recommend adjustments to judicial salaries as follows:

	Current		Proposed	
	<2 Years of Experience	>2 Years of Experience	<2 Years of Experience	>2 Years of Experience
Associate Judges	\$ 90,043.00	\$ 101,198.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
Administrative Judge	\$ 109,242.00	\$ 109,242.00	\$ 140,000.00	\$ 140,000.00

The JNC requested and received a briefing from Carmel Fritz, the Compensation Manager for the City of Dallas. Ms. Fritz reported the following:

- Judicial salaries have not been adjusted since 2006. Accordingly, our judges have not received a cost of living increase in 13 years.
- Salaries for municipal judges in Dallas are approximately 80.45% of the average paid to municipal judges in other Texas cities that were reviewed for comparables.
- Salary for the Administrative Judge in Dallas is approximately 82.06% of the average paid to administrative or chief judges in other Texas cities that were reviewed for comparables.
- The city of Dallas regularly makes pay increases retroactive to the beginning of an annual pay period.

The JNC voted to recommend an increase in salary for full-time municipal judges to \$125,000 to approach the market average for similar positions. Full-time municipal judges with less than 3 years would receive a salary of \$115,000. The JNC also recommends that full-time judges who were previously part-time associate judges receive experience credit equal to half the years

served as a part-time associate judge for purposes of determining whether a full-time municipal judge will receive the regular salary of \$125,000 or the lower salary of \$115,000.

The JNC voted to recommend an increase in salary for the Administrative Judge to \$140,000, which is approximately the same as the Chief Judge in Fort Worth, yet less than the amount earned by chief judges in smaller cities such as Austin and Plano.

City staff compiled the following information relating to base salaries for municipal court judges.

Municipality	Chief Judge	Municipal Judge
Dallas, TX	\$109,242	\$101,199
Allen, TX	N/A	\$125,000
Arlington, TX	\$126,248	\$114,644
Austin, TX	\$150,384	\$130,437
Carrollton, TX	N/A	\$127,000
Denton, TX	\$129,000	N/A
Frisco, TX	N/A	\$128,420
Fort Worth, TX	\$139,090	\$111,438
Garland, TX	\$121,701	\$132,806
Grapevine	N/A	\$130,766
Houston, TX	\$131,239	\$113,499
Lewisville, TX	No match	144950
McKinney, TX	No match	124800
Mesquite, TX	\$117,000	N/A
Plano, TX	\$150,386	N/A
AVERAGES	\$133,131	\$125,796

In 2018, the City Council voted to reduce the number of full time municipal judges from 12 to 10, freeing up approximately \$202,000 previously budgeted for full-time municipal judge salaries. The proposed salary increases will cost the city approximately \$300,000, inclusive of increased pension contribution costs. Accordingly, the incremental cost to the city to bring municipal judge salaries to a market level is approximately \$98,000.

The JNC voted to recommend that the City Council make these salary changes retroactive to August 1, 2018, which is the date the current judicial term began.

On behalf of the JNC, thank you for the opportunity to be of service. Please contact me if you have any questions.



Mark Melton, Chair
Judicial Nominating Commission

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, Interim City Attorney
Carol A. Smith, Interim City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief of Resilience
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
Laila Aleqresh, Chief Innovation Officer
Michael Mendoza, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services
Directors and Assistant Directors