

STATE COURTS SYSTEM STAFF PARITY ISSUE: A BUSINESS CASE

State Courts System Turnover for Sample Classes

Classes of Employees	2013 Turnover Rate for State Courts System
Trial Court Law Clerks	26%
Administrative Services Managers and Directors of Administrative Services	18%
Administrative Assistants	17%
Court Program Specialists (Case Managers)	15%
Operations and Business Analysts	14%
Information Systems Analysts	12%
Budget Analysts, Managers, and Specialists	12%
Magistrates and Hearing Officers	7%
Court Reporters	7%
Court Interpreters	7%

Salary Comparison: Courts System and Florida State Government

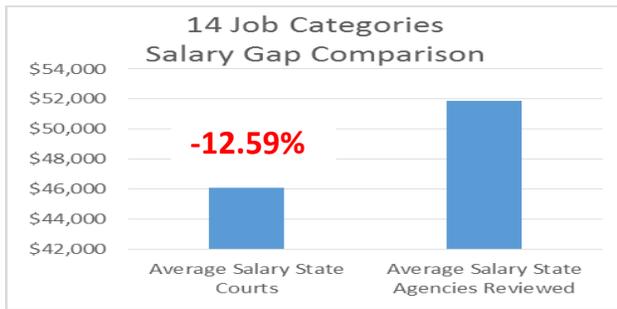
In an updated analysis completed in February 2014, the Office of the State Courts Administrator reviewed 14 broad job categories^[1] to **compare salaries of the State Courts System to salaries of other State of Florida government agencies**. For those 14 job categories, 80 class titles and 1,819 employees' salaries in the State Courts System were analyzed and compared to 605 class titles and 13,314 employees' salaries within Career Service, Select Exempt Service, Senior Management Service, Justice Administrative Commission, Florida Lottery, Legislature, School for the Deaf and the Blind, and Florida National Guard.^[2] The findings reflect that the **average salary of employees within the State Courts System is 12.59% below the average salary of other State of Florida government employees** within the 14 broad job categories analyzed.

This table shows the percentage difference in the average salary of employees of the courts system in specific job categories compared with the average salary for other state employees in those same categories.

Job Categories	Percentage Difference in Court Employees' Average Salary
Magistrates, Hearing Officers, and Admin. Law Judges	-44.67%
Administrative Services Managers	-14.34%
Budget – Analysts, Managers, and Specialists	-11.96%
Information Systems Analysts	-11.87%
Attorneys	-10.79%
Human Resources – Specialists and Analysts	-8.15%
Chiefs (e.g., Chief of Accounting, Chief of Support Services)	-6.85%
Analysts – Operations and Business	-6.17%
District and Regional Administrators/Directors	-2.15%
Judicial Assistants, Paralegals, and Legal Assistants	-.14%
Administrative Assistants	.28%
Database, Network, Web, and Information Systems	.41%
Purchasing	6.84%
Accountants	9.45%

^[1] Not all class titles throughout the entire State Courts System were analyzed, primarily because they could not be comparably matched with those in other state government agencies due to the unique nature of some court work.

^[2] Data Source: http://www.floridahasarighttoknow.com/search_state_payroll.html. Full-time FTE only.



Average Salary – State Courts = \$46,088

Average Salary – Other State of Florida Government Agencies Reviewed = \$51,890

The top priority of the judicial branch’s fiscal year 2014-15 Legislative Budget Request is a pay issue for State Courts System non-judge employees. The judicial branch requests \$9,866,302 in recurring salary dollars branchwide, effective July 1, 2014, to address a wide range of salary issues affecting court staff and the timely disposition of cases.

- To retain highly skilled employees and to experience more equity with other government salaries, the courts **need approximately \$18,828,193 in recurring salary appropriation**. However, recognizing the considerable size of such a request, the courts system proposes a **two-year implementation period**.
- The **loss of key managers and other high performers**, who had developed broad knowledge bases of critical judicial branch operations, **results in an essential need to develop and retain existing employees** to ensure expertise. Filling knowledge gaps ensures the continued development of efficiencies in the work of the courts system, for the benefit of the individuals and businesses that turn to the courts system for the peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Since January 2011, in the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) 17 employees (**10% of the OSCA workforce**) have been **lost to the executive and legislative branches** for comparable positions performing work at a similar level. The **average increase for these employees was \$5,321** (an average of 12% above their salary upon leaving). Three of these employees experienced an increase of more than \$10,000.
- An analysis of trial court **judicial assistant** pay reveals that the **average salary has decreased** over the past seven years by 1.7 percent.
- Various judicial circuits of all sizes from across the state report **difficulties with recruitment and retention of law clerks**. In the trial court law clerk class, the **turnover rate was 26%** for calendar year 2013.
- Turnover among court staff who assist judges, inside and outside the courtroom, **disrupts the timely and efficient processing of cases**, to the detriment of businesses and individuals anxious to have matters heard and resolved. In addition, as private sector employers well understand, **turnover is costly** – from the recruitment process to the training of new hires – **and impedes productivity**.
- The courts system’s mission is to protect rights and liberties, uphold and interpret the law, and provide for the peaceful resolution of disputes. Our vision is that justice in Florida will be accessible, fair, effective, responsive, and accountable. When the courts system is not competitive with other governmental employers in the recruitment and retention of personnel, there is **a risk of delays in processing cases that are important to individuals’ lives and to the livelihood of businesses**.