
Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Common Pleas Court Judges

Salaries for common pleas court judges consist of a state share and a local share paid by the county. The local contribution varies slightly depending on a county's population as determined by the decennial census. This local amount is based on eighteen cents per capita in the county, but may not be less than \$3,500 nor more than \$14,000. The state share is equal to the total salary minus the local contribution. Am. Sub. H.B. 438 of the 121st General Assembly established common pleas court judges salaries at \$97,550 in 1999, \$100,500 in 2000 and \$103,500 for 2001 and beyond. However, these amounts may be adjusted as recent studies have indicated that Ohio's judicial salaries continue to lack behind those of judges in neighboring states. In the 1990 census, Lorain County had a population of 271,126. The county will provide \$14,000 towards the judges salary in 1999, 2000 and 2001. The 2000 census will alter the local contribution for 2002 and the remainder of the next decade. The state will provide a salary of \$83,550 in 1999, \$86,500 in 2000 and \$89,500 in 2001.

PERS estimate

State and local elected officials are exempt from membership in PERS (Public Employees Retirement System), unless they choose to become members. However, most do. Therefore, this analysis includes PERS payments assuming that the Lorain County Common Pleas Court Judges joins PERS. The state contributes at the rate of 13.31 percent of gross state salary, while the county pays 13.55 percent based upon the local contribution. In addition to PERS, the state also makes contributions for other purposes: 1.45 percent of gross state salary for Medicare for all employees hired after April 1986, 0.67 percent for worker's comp and 0.28 percent for the administration of the Central Accounting System. These costs have also been included in the State Fiscal Highlights section.

Additional Local Costs

The addition of two common pleas court judges will most likely create additional costs for the county in staffing, equipment, and physical space necessary to serve the needs of the court. Furthermore, as a result of the addition of the two judges, the Lorain County Common Pleas Court should experience an increased number of cases adjudicated. Therefore, the county could find it necessary to increase expenditures in order to fund additional prosecutors and public defenders to handle increased caseload. At present however, LBO is unable to specifically identify the amount of such additional costs.

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