

PCA Policy Manual
101 STAFF COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS

POLICY

The Probate Court Budget Committee may periodically authorize cost of living adjustments (COLA) and merit increases for court staff. Each judge is responsible for the implementation of COLA and merit increases for the staff of the judge's court in accordance with the budget committee's guidelines.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Generally, all court staff, except temporary employees, rehired retirees, and those whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions, are eligible to receive compensation adjustments in the form of COLA and merit increases. The total pool of funds for compensation adjustments will be determined by the budget committee, provided that approved COLA and merit increases will be implemented only if the Chief Court Administrator approves a budget for the Probate Court system that includes funding for the increases. Planned compensation adjustments may be withheld or postponed by action of the budget committee.

PROCEDURES

COLA

A COLA is a periodic compensation increase intended to maintain employees in an equivalent position as inflation increases the cost of purchasing goods and services. When a COLA is authorized, all court staff, except temporary employees, rehired retirees and those whose existing rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions, receive the same percentage increase. In addition, the minimum and maximum rates of pay for each position are increased by the amount of the COLA.

Merit Increases

In addition to COLA, the budget committee may periodically authorize merit increases for court staff. When the budget committee authorizes a merit increase, all court staff who were employed by a court as of the end of the applicable performance evaluation period, except temporary employees, rehired retirees and those whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions by 2% or more, are eligible for an increase. If the sum of the employee's current pay and merit increase would exceed the maximum for their position, the sum is capped at maximum plus 2%. Any amount of merit pay that exceeds maximum is not added to the employee's base pay. The performance evaluation system calculates the amount of each employee's increase, if any, based on their performance evaluation for the applicable evaluation period. The budget committee may establish additional guidelines for the implementation of merit increases.

Promotions

An employee who is promoted will be paid minimum for the new position or 3.5% more than the employee's rate of pay before the promotion, whichever is higher. If, however, the employee's rate of pay before the promotion exceeds the maximum for the pre-promotion position, the promoted employee will be paid the greatest of the current rate of pay, the minimum for the new position, or 3.5% more than the maximum for the pre-promotion position. A promoted employee is eligible for any merit increase or COLA that the budget committee authorizes for implementation after the date of promotion.

Transfers

See Policy No. 306 for general information on applicable policies when a judge hires a court staff member from another court to fill a vacant position that is authorized under the court's benchmark staffing level. A transfer employee who is hired to continue in the same position (e.g., an assistant clerk at another court is hired as an assistant clerk) will be paid at the same rate that they were receiving prior to the transfer. A transfer employee who is promoted to another position (e.g., an assistant clerk at another court is hired as a clerk) will be paid in accordance with the promotions policy set forth above. A transfer employee who accepts a position with a lower pay range (e.g., a clerk at another court is hired as an assistant clerk) will be paid the maximum for the new position or the rate that they were receiving prior to the transfer, whichever is lower.

Progressions

Advancement from assistant clerk to the clerk level is available to incumbents after strong performance of four years of experience in the Probate Court system. Advancement is not automatic and requires judge approval. Progressions do not change approved court benchmark staffing level.

An incumbent must be in full-time status (35+ scheduled work hours per week) to be eligible. Rehired retirees and part-time employees (those working less than 35 hours per week) are not eligible. Cumulative hours over a four-year period must equal or exceed 7,280 hours (35 hours per week x 52 weeks x 4 years).

After the initial implementation in 2020, employees may be considered for progression in the first payroll following the first full month after month of eligibility.

Questions on this policy: Contact PCA Financial Services Department at (860) 231-2442

Forms for this policy: Compensation Ranges

Date Issued: 01/01/2011

Revisions: 12/01/2011, 01/01/2013, 07/01/2013, 01/01/2014, 01/01/2015, 11/01/2015, 01/01/2017, 01/01/2018, 07/01/2019, 01/01/2020, 01/01/2021, 01/01/2022, 01/01/2023, 01/01/2024

Compensation Ranges

January 2024*

Hourly Rates

Class Title	Exempt /NE	Min.	Max.
Chief Clerk III	Exempt ¹	36.56	54.84
Chief Clerk II	Exempt ¹	32.29	48.44
Chief Clerk I	Exempt ¹	30.22	45.32
Staff Attorney	Exempt ¹	34.18	51.26
Deputy Chief Clerk	Exempt ¹	28.50	42.76
Clerk	Non-Exempt	24.74	37.10
Assistant Clerk	Non-Exempt	21.81	32.71
Court Assistant	Non-Exempt	18.05	27.08
Lead Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	36.17	54.24
Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	31.30	46.96
Security Officer ²	Non-Exempt	18.05	27.08

¹Rehired retirees are classified as non-exempt regardless of position.

²Regional Children's Probate Courts

*3.0% COLA plus 3.5% one-time salary compression adjustment

Office Expense Budget

FY25 Proposed Budget Assumptions

Budget Committee Meeting: December 6, 2023

Description	Proposal
Education / Seminars / Meetings	\$600 per district \$600 per RCPC, plus \$200 per Family Specialist
Dues	Other = \$25 per person
Subscriptions	Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 maximum
Other Expenses	\$500 per district

Probate District: Madison-Guilford

PD Number: 34

12/6/23 Budget Committee Submission

Position		
	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III		
Chief Clerk II		
Chief Clerk I	0.9	1.0
Staff Attorney		
Deputy Chief Clerk		
Clerk	0.9	0.9
Assistant Clerk	0.6	0.6
	2.4	2.5

NOTES:

12/6/23: Request for Budget Committee to increase the benchmark hours for the Chief Clerk I by 2.5 from 37.5 to 40. Currently, the Chief Clerk is working 40 hours per week with 2.5 of them being temporary.

Probate District: Branford-North Branford

PD Number: 35

12/6/23 Budget Committee Submission

Position		
	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III		
Chief Clerk II		
Chief Clerk I	0.9	0.9
Staff Attorney		
Deputy Chief Clerk		
Clerk	0.9	1.0
Assistant Clerk	0.9	0.9
	2.7	2.8

NOTES:

12/6/23: Request for Budget Committee to increase the benchmark hours for the Clerk by 4.0 from 36 to 40. Currently, the Clerk is working 40 hours per week with 4.0 of them being temporary.



State of Connecticut

COURT OF PROBATE
DISTRICT OF HARTFORD

FOYE A. SMITH
JUDGE

250 CONSTITUTION PLAZA
THIRD FLOOR
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103-2800
TELE (860) 757-9150
FAX (860) 724-1503

July 26, 2023

Hon. Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas, Administrator
Budget Committee Chair
Office of the Probate Court Administration
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06110

Re: Urgent Staffing

Dear Budget Committee:

The staffing levels at Hartford Probate Court are as follows one (1) Chief Clerk, one (1) Deputy Chief Clerk, one (1) Staff Attorney, two (2) Clerks, and five (5) Assistant Clerks. Currently, we have an opening for a deputy chief clerk position.

The Court respectfully requests a change in staffing level from one Deputy Chief Clerk to one Clerk and one Assistant Clerk in its place. More specifically, this Court's experience is that the Deputy Chief Clerk has been continuously functioning as a Clerk and we would be better served by a replacement of the one position for two (2) clerks to assist with the required workload.

As evidenced by audits and court visits over several years, this court has shown deficiency in being able to conduct mandatory reviews, process filed petitions, and issuance of decrees in a timely manner. It is clear that the addition of staffing would address these serious concerns immediately. Further, the ability to retain staff is a serious concern due to the high workload clerks are currently required to carry. It is impossible for the current staffing level to address the processing of current petitions and address the serious backlog issue that has been an ongoing concern and continues to increase at a steady pace.

This request is not only urgent to our needs, but it has been so skillfully identified as a major concern in our most recent audit conducted thanks to Probate Court Administration. In fact, the latest recommendation is alarming and requires this court to implore your immediate consideration of this request. Despite the recommendation, this court has been able to maintain afloat only due to staff working after hours.

In an attempt to provide a complete picture of the opportunity to address this matter immediately, we are providing a numerical summation of the benefits to increasing the staffing now.

The current salary of the clerk vacating the Deputy Chief Clerk position is \$57,220.

The salary for the most recently vacated Clerk position was \$72,000

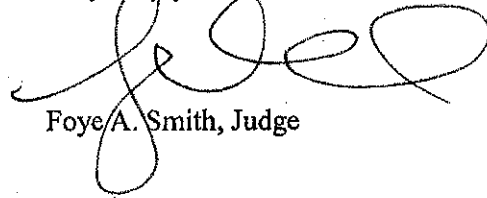
The above combined salaries totaled \$129,220.

Our proposal would utilize the savings from eliminating the Deputy Clerk position and hiring an assistant clerk at \$42,598 and a clerk at \$48,318 at starting salaries. Thus, a savings and a solution all at once.

In closing, it is the hope that these suggestions are seriously considered due to the emergent state of which this court is operating due to a lack of appropriate staffing levels. Moreover, it could be considered neglectful if something is not done to address the issues. As we know, the audit conducted by Probate Court Administration is public.

Thank you for your time. I am available to address any further concerns or questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foye A. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Foye A. Smith, Judge

Cc: Hon. Fred Anthony
Hon. Michael R. Brandt

Probate District: Hartford
 PD Number: 01

12/6/23 Budget Committee Submission

Position		
	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III	1.0	1.0
Chief Clerk II		
Chief Clerk I		
Staff Attorney	1.0	1.0
Deputy Chief Clerk	1.0	1.0
Clerk	2.0	3.0
Assistant Clerk	5.0	7.0
	10.0	13.0

NOTES:

12/6/23: Reallocation due to decentralization from HRCPC of 2.0 FTE at the Assistant Clerk level and 1.0 FTE at the Clerk level .

FARMINGTON REGIONAL PROBATE COURT

Evelyn M. Daly, Judge

One Monteith Drive

Farmington, CT 06032

TEL (860) 675-2360, FAX (860) 673-8262

EMAIL probate@farmington-ct.org

WEBSITE www.ctprobate.gov

Dear Budget Committee Members,

The Farmington Probate Court has grown considerably in recent years due to the additions of the town of Burlington in 2010 and, more notably, the town of Plainville in 2019. Accordingly, with this growth, the court's case load has escalated dramatically, not only the sheer volume of the work, but also the type of cases and their complexity. Due to this, I am requesting a critical staffing increase.

Our caseload has increased with the addition of both towns but most notably with the more recent acquisition of Plainville, we have experienced a large increase of new and ongoing files. This vast growth was anticipated by the previous Probate Court Administrator, who knew we would need additional staffing once Plainville was totally absorbed by the Farmington Court. This committee last increased our benchmark on December 14 of 2022. The Farmington Regional Probate Court has always prided itself on high efficiency and adherence to the 10-day rule. This has become increasingly difficult due to understaffing. I request a 0.6 FTE increase at this time. Three of our clerks work 40 hours per week. One clerk works 24 hours per week, and does not take benefits. One additional clerk works 12 hours per week, without benefits.

Our district has a population of about 53,709. John Dempsey Hospital is within our jurisdiction and contains a sizeable psychiatric ward that impacts the court greatly. On an average, they petition the Court 3 - 5 times per week. The nature of their hearings are time sensitive and use extra court time for travel. If our FTE were to be established by population, we would have an FTE of 3.28. Realistically, an FTE of 3.28 can handle a weighted workload of 3,444 (3.28 X 1050). At our current benchmark of 3.6 our weighted workload should be 3,780. Our last certified weighted workload was 4,767.5. This weighted

FARMINGTON REGIONAL PROBATE COURT

Evelyn M. Daly, Judge

One Monteith Drive

Farmington, CT 06032

TEL (860) 675-2360, FAX (860) 673-8262

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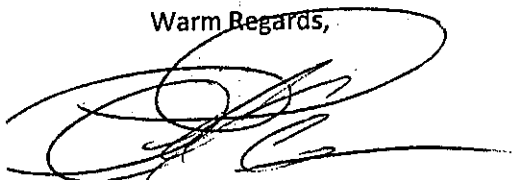
WEBSITE www.ctprobate.gov

workload equates to 4.54 FTE. I am asking for an increase to 4.50 FTE in order to adhere to the system-wide goal of filling positions with full-time employees.

You will note that our weighted workload has increased from 3,563.50 to the most recent certified workload of 4,767.50 over the past 5 years. This is an increase of 1,204 in just 5 years. Our numbers would be even higher, if we were not limited by the hours of our staff.

We greatly appreciate your consideration and request a meeting with you to discuss this urgent matter in person.

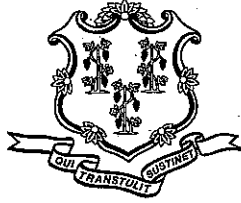
Warm Regards,



Evelyn M. Daly, Judge.

Staffing Plan		
Probate District:	Farmington Regional	
District No:	10	
Positions	Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III		
Chief Clerk II		1
Chief Clerk I	1	
Deputy Clerk		
Clerk	1	1
Assistant Clerk	1.9	2.5
Court Assistant		
Court Staff Attorney		
Temporary Staff		
Family Specialist		
Security Officer		
Total	3.9	4.5

Notes: 11-10-2023 Request by Judge Daly to present her proposal to add .6 FTE to an existing Assistant Clerk position at the December 2023 Budget Committee meeting. Per PCA Policy 201, total court benchmark will now be between 4.0 and 7.9, reclassifying the Chief Clerk I to Chief Clerk II.



JOHN J. MCGRATH, JR.
JUDGE

COURT OF PROBATE
DISTRICT OF WINDHAM-COLCHESTER
DISTRICT PD28

HEATHER R. ROBINSON
CHIEF CLERK

November 20, 2023

Hon. Beverly Streit-Kefalas
Probate Court Administration
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06110

RECEIVED

NOV 22 2023

Probate Admin.

RE: Windham-Colchester Probate Court – Budget Adjustment Request

Hon. Beverly Streit-Kefalas,

I have reviewed the most recent three years of weighted workload reports. Based upon the steady increase over these years in the weighted workload of the Windham-Colchester Probate Court, I am requesting that the Budget Committee review my request for additional personnel specifically 40 hours.

I also want to point out that the weighted workload system does not portray the full picture of a court's activity level. This Court has a high number of people who come to the court window asking questions and looking for assistance. These people deserve our attention and receive our assistance to the extent possible. The management of these requests takes a significant amount of staff time and is not reflected at all in the weighted workload numbers.

Our Court has fallen behind by as much as 90 days in our response time to petitions and other court filings. We have seen some benefit from a part-time staff person we were given permission to hire earlier this year, but we have not been able to keep up with the demand. I believe that it is an extremely bad reflection on our probate system to be this far behind for so long, therefore I am seeking the permission of the Budget Committee to fund this additional staffing.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

John J. McGrath, Jr.
Judge