

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, 01/01/2025

Compensation Ranges

January 2025

Hourly Rates

Class Title	Exempt /NE	Min.	Max.
Chief Clerk III	Exempt ¹	37.66	56.49
Chief Clerk II	Exempt ¹	33.26	49.89
Chief Clerk I	Exempt ¹	31.13	46.68
Staff Attorney	Exempt ¹	35.21	52.80
Deputy Chief Clerk	Exempt ¹	29.36	44.04
Clerk	Non-Exempt	25.48	38.21
Assistant Clerk	Non-Exempt	22.46	33.69
Court Assistant	Non-Exempt	18.59	27.89
Lead Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	37.26	55.87
Family Specialist	Exempt ¹	32.24	48.37
Security Officer ²	Non-Exempt	18.59	27.89

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

²Regional Children's Probate Courts

Office Expense Budget

FY26 Proposed Budget Assumptions

Budget Committee Meeting: December 4, 2024

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

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

November 27, 2024

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

Re: Urgent Staffing Request

Dear Budget Committee,

The Court respectfully requests an extremely necessary change in staffing from a 3.9 FTE to a 4.5 FTE. We are requesting this increase to bring the 12 hour per week part-time assistant clerk position to a full-time position. The staffing levels at the Farmington Regional Probate Court are as follows: one Chief Clerk I, one full-time clerk, one full-time assistant clerk, two part-time assistant clerks, one at 24 hours per week and one at 12 hours per week.

This request is dire due to our significant increase in Weighted Workload (WWL). Without this change in staffing, this Court's ability to remain compliant with statutory deadline requirements will be virtually impossible. Our Court has been experiencing a drastic uptick in volume which has been clearly reflected in our annual weighted workload numbers over the past 6 years. We are beyond the tipping point in that we have exceeded our capacity.

We have requested the updated WWL per full-time equivalent (FTE) number but have not received that number yet. Therefore, we will use the number used during the consolidation which was 1050 WWL per FTE. Our most recent annual WWL was 5375. This equates to 5.12 FTE.

In closing, it is my hope that this request will be seriously considered. This Court is operating in an emergency state due to a lack of proper staffing. I am concerned that it would be neglect if this staffing issue is not properly addressed. The weighted workload overwhelmingly demonstrates the urgency of rectifying the situation.

Desperately Yours,



Evelyn M. Daly, Judge

CC: Hon. Michael Brandt

Hon. Fred Anthony

Farmington Regional Probate Court Staffing Information

- Since adding Plainville in 2019, our Court's Weighted Workload has increased year over year.

Year	Weighted Workload
2018-2019	3563.5
2019-2020	3957
2020-2021	4344.5
2021-2022	4695
2022-2023	4767.5
2023-2024	Projected: 5354.5 Actual: 5375

Probate District: Farmington Regional
PD Number: 10

12/4/24 Budget Committee Submission

Position	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk I	1.0	-
Chief Clerk II	-	1.0
Clerk	1.0	1.0
Assistant Clerk	1.9	2.5
	3.9	4.5

NOTES:

12/4/24: Request by Judge Daly to add .6 FTE at the Assistant clerk level.

From: [Darby, Michael](#)
To: [Streit-Kefalas, Beverly](#)
Subject: Budget Committee
Date: Tuesday, December 3, 2024 11:29:17 AM

Judge Streit-Kefalas-

I am writing to request a matter be brought before the Budget Committee tomorrow. I would like to re-allocate my staff hours. My benchmark for the Greater Manchester Probate Court is 4.6 persons. I would request that the hours among those positions be re-allocated as follows;

Chief Clerk: From .9 to 1.0 (40 hours)

Clerk : From .9 to 1.0 (40 hours)

Assistant Clerk positions to be reduced in total from 2.8 persons to 2.6 people.

At this time, I would like my two Assistant Clerks at 40 hours each and that would leave one position at .6 persons (24 hours) which is not filled at this time.

This re-allocation keeps me within my benchmark but more accurately reflects the current status of my staff.

Please advise if you have any questions or concerns with this request.

Respectfully,

Michael M Darby
Judge, Greater Manchester Probate Court.

Probate District: Greater Manchester
PD Number: 13

12/4/24 Budget Committee Submission

Position	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk II	0.9	1.0
Clerk	0.9	1.0
Assistant Clerk	2.8	2.6
	4.6	4.6

NOTES:

12/4/24: Request by Judge Darby to reallocate hours from the Assistant Clerk position to Chief Clerk and Clerk positions to increase from 0.9 to 1.0 FTE. No change to total benchmark.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COURT OF PROBATE
DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT
TEL: (203) 576-3945
FAX: (203) 576-7898

PAUL J. GANIM
JUDGE

September 16, 2024

CITY HALL ANNEX
999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604

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

Dear Judge Streit-Kefalas,

I hope this letter finds you well. It has been my honor to serve the community of Bridgeport as Probate Judge for the last 25 years. I am reaching out to you because my clerks and I have been experiencing a tremendous increase in workload for quite some time.

One of the biggest issues is the increase in the number of decedent estate applications combined with the short time frame required for notifying the Department of Administrative Services has resulted in unavoidable delays. In addition, we are experiencing another dramatic increase in the number of time-sensitive Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) applications which have besieged the clerk who focuses exclusively on children's matters – once again resulting in unavoidable delays. Another clerk (who assists at the window and processes innumerable free name changes and GID petitions) will find herself translating during our countless SIJ hearings – causing delays in her workload. For the last year, other clerks have been continuously assisting the overwhelmed clerks and it seems that we are merely trading water. We cannot continue to operate at this level as it is the community of Bridgeport which ultimately suffers.

The standard of weighted workload for staffing levels also does not address the unique situational needs of Bridgeport, and that our typically pro se population requires more time, care and cultural sensitivity which my diverse staff can best address. That said, Bridgeport's weighted workload has increased with some significance: from 4841 in early 2021 to 6050.5 in late 2023.

Therefore, I am asking that the Bridgeport Probate Court be assigned two additional full time assistant clerk positions.

Would you kindly call me to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,



Hon. Paul J. Ganim



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COURT OF PROBATE
DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT
TEL: (203) 576-3945
FAX: (203) 576-7898

PAUL J. GANIM
JUDGE

November 19, 2024

CITY HALL ANNEX
999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604

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

Dear Judge Streit-Kefalas,

The Bridgeport Probate Court is requesting two additional full time Assistant Clerk positions as a result of the tremendous increase in workload we have been experiencing for quite some time. Bridgeport's weighted workload has increased with some significance: from 4841 in early 2021 to 6050.5 in late 2023.

The standard of using weighted workload to justify benchmark staffing levels must be re-evaluated as it only measures what work is actually being done and it completely disregards the workload that still needs to be processed. We are currently 71 days behind in processing children's matters (approx. 40 apps) and 60 days behind in processing full decedent estates (approx. 35 apps). The number of name changes processed has tripled since they became free.

For the last year, other clerks have been continuously assisting the overwhelmed clerks and we are not merely treading water but falling further behind. I draw your attention to the number of SIJ petitions that were able to be processed in the last half of 2023 when we had two clerks working continuously on children's matters (one clerk was able to process 70 petitions alone, but when we had 2 clerks designated to children's matters the number more than doubled to 163).

The one-day turnaround for decedent estate petitions and recommended 10-day turn-around for the processing of all other petitions is just not achievable at this staffing level. Please re-evaluate the staffing needs of the Bridgeport Probate Court as we cannot continue to operate at this level as it is the community of Bridgeport which ultimately suffers. Additionally, this reflects poorly on the administration of the probate court system as standards are being set for one-day turn around for the processing of petitions, but the administration is failing to provide adequate staffing to meet these obligations. This is tantamount to unfunded mandate often imposed by government. We seek and request your support as we are struggling to meet the needs and requirements of the probate court system and the community which we serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Paul J. Ganim

Probate District: Bridgeport
 PD Number: 48

12/4/24 Budget Committee Submission

Position	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III	0.9	0.9
Chief Clerk II		
Chief Clerk I		
Staff Attorney	0.9	0.9
Deputy Chief Clerk	0.9	0.9
Clerk	2.7	2.7
Assistant Clerk	3.6	5.6
Court Assistant	1.8	1.8
Family Specialist	2.0	2.0
	12.8	14.8

NOTES:

12/4/24: Request by Judge Ganim to add 2.0 FTE at the Assistant clerk level.

From: [Wexler, Lisa](#)
To: [Streit-Kefalas, Beverly](#)
Cc: [Williams, Audrey](#)
Subject: Request for Asst Clerk- THANK YOU!
Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2024 4:33:17 PM

Dear Judge Streit-Kefalas and Members of the Budget Committee:

I am writing to request an increase in benchmark for 7 hours to hire an assistant clerk for a 19 hour per week job. We currently only have an opening for a 12 -hour position and that is inadequate to accomplish the work that we do. I have a specific person in mind who is willing to take the job despite the absence of benefits.

When I became judge in 2013, I inherited a benchmark status that was assigned to the court in 2011. That was based on a workload that averaged approximately 2800 in weighted workload points for activities.

For the calendar year 2023, our weighted workload was 3401. This represents over 600 points of additional work, *over a twenty percent increase*.

For the six months between January and June of 2024, we totaled over 1871 points, a record total. The workload continues to grow.

The primary reason for the increase in workload is that St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Hospital contains 78 beds devoted exclusively to in-patient psychiatric stays. Due to our mental health crisis and the closing of other psychiatric units, the beds are always full. Moreover, two years ago Hartford Health purchased St. Vincent's. They place patients there from all over the state on a regular basis. Sometimes I need to devote two or three afternoons per week to these hearings.

The other reasons for the increase in workload include our own attempts at keeping up with conservatorships and guardianships, and the influx of trust matters since the jurisdiction of probate courts expanded.

One reason for our productivity, despite the status of our benchmark, is due to the volunteer efforts of outstanding summer and part-time interns throughout the year. I will continue to train and mentor these young people. Another reason is that Judge Streit-Kefalas has kindly approved the hiring of temporary clerks to help us do the work.

In order to maintain our productivity and level of service, I believe it is necessary to increase our benchmark status so that I can hire an assistant clerk at 19 hours per week. I would greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Thank you very much,
Judge Lisa Wexler

Hon. Lisa K. Wexler
Westport-Weston Probate Court
110 Myrtle Avenue
Westport, CT 06880
(203) 341-1100

Probate District: Westport
PD Number: 50

12/4/24 Budget Committee Submission

Position		
	Approved Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk I	1.0	1.0
Clerk	0.8	0.8
Assistant Clerk	0.9	1.1
	2.7	2.9

NOTES:
12/4/24: Request by Judge Wexler to add .2 (7 hours) FTE to part-time Assistant Clerk position