

Judgeships

There are currently seven Supreme Court Justices, nine Court of Appeals Judges, and 189 full-time judges in the District Courts.

Supreme Court – The Supreme Court consists of one Chief Justice and six justices. The court has general appellate jurisdiction for criminal and civil cases, and exercises supervisory and administrative control over the Iowa court system pursuant to Article V, Constitution of Iowa. All appeals from the District Courts are filed in the Supreme Court, which determines the cases it will refer to the Court of Appeals and which ones it will decide without referral. The court also has discretion to accept applications for further review of decisions by the Court of Appeals.

Court of Appeals – The Court of Appeals consists of one Chief Judge and eight Associate Judges. Working primarily in panels of three, the court hears cases referred by the Supreme Court.

District Courts – Iowa has a unified trial court system, referred to as the District Courts. There is one District Court in each county (two in Lee County) and the counties are organized into eight judicial districts. Each district has a Chief Judge. The District Courts handle all types of civil, criminal, juvenile, and probate cases. In addition, there are six types of judgeships with differing levels of jurisdiction. These include:

- **District Court Judges.** There are currently 116 District Court Judges that handle all types of cases, including civil, criminal, domestic relations, juvenile, and probate. Although [Iowa Code section 602.6201\(3\)](#), authorizes the Supreme Court to determine the number of District Judges needed by using a caseload formula that accounts for case-related works, administrative duties, and travel time, [Iowa Code section 602.6201\(10\)](#) has limited the number of District Court judges to 116 since July 1, 1999. When a district court judgeship position becomes vacant and there is evidence of a substantial disparity in district judge resources among the judicial districts, the Judicial Branch has the authority to move a district court judgeship position to a different judicial district if the move is approved by the Judicial Council.
- **District Associate Judges.** There are currently 62 District Associate Judges that handle serious and aggravated misdemeanors, Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) felonies, civil actions involving \$10,000 or less, juvenile cases, and anything a magistrate can handle (see below). The number of district associate judges is determined by a statutory formula based on the population of a county ([Iowa Code section 602.6301](#)). [Iowa Code section 602.6302](#) also allows for the conversion of three part-time judicial magistrate positions into one full-time district associate judgeship.
- **Associate Juvenile Judges.** There are currently eight Associate Juvenile Judges that handle only juvenile matters, including delinquency proceedings, children in need of assistance, abuse and neglect, and termination of parental rights proceedings. The number of judges is not determined by a formula. These positions used to be referred to as juvenile court referees. Some were full-time and some were part-time. Eventually, the full-time positions became Associate Juvenile Judges. Most serve multiple counties in a judicial election district. As these judges retire, they are being replaced with District Associate Judges that maintain a juvenile docket.
- **Associate Probate Judge.** There is currently one judge located in Polk County. This judge is authorized to handle only probate cases.
- **Senior Judges.** There are currently 49 Senior Judges that work a minimum of 13 weeks, or one-fourth of the year. They are assigned temporary judicial duties within the court as needed. A Senior Judge must retire at the end of a twelve-month period when the judge attains 78 years of age.
- **Magistrates.** There are currently 146 magistrates that are part-time judicial officers. Magistrates can handle simple misdemeanors, small claims (\$5,000 or less), mental health commitment proceedings, initial appearances in any criminal case, and search warrants. Of the 206 part-time magistrate positions, 60 have been exchanged for 20 full-time District Associate Judge positions (three for one exchange) leaving the remaining 146 magistrates. Pursuant to statute, each county has at least one magistrate and the State Court Administrator is required to reallocate magistrate positions among the counties every four years. There is no specific numeric formula for allocating magistrate positions, but the State Court Administrator is required to consider population and caseload.

More Information

Iowa Judicial Branch: <http://www.iowacourts.gov/>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

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Salaries

Judicial salaries are set by the General Assembly pursuant to [Iowa Code section 602.1501](#) and are funded from the State General Fund.¹ The amount of the salary is set in Session Law.² The following chart shows the most recent salaries for all judgeship positions.

FY 2014 Judicial Salaries	
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court	\$ 178,538
Supreme Court Justice	170,544
Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals	159,885
Associate Judge of the Court of Appeals	154,556
Chief Judge of a Judicial District	149,226
District Judge	143,897
District Associate Judge	127,908
Associate Juvenile Judge	127,908
Associate Probate Judge	127,908
Judicial Magistrates	39,438
Senior Judges	8,527

¹ Also located in Article V, Section 18 of the Iowa Constitution

² 2013 Iowa Acts, SF 452, Section 40