

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **Senate Bill 622**

**FISCAL  
NOTE**

By Senator Willis

[Introduced February 27, 2025; referred  
to the Committee on the Judiciary; and then to the  
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §50-1-8, §50-1-9, §50-1-9a, and §51-2A-6 of the Code of West  
2 Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to authorizing compensation for certain lower court  
3 staff; and providing that the annual salary for magistrate court clerks, magistrate  
4 assistants, magistrate court deputy clerks, secretary-clerks of family court judges, and  
5 family case coordinators shall be determined by a pay scale established by the  
6 Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## CHAPTER 50. MAGISTRATE COURTS.

### ARTICLE 1. COURTS AND OFFICERS.

#### §50-1-8. Magistrate court clerks; salaries; duties; duties of circuit clerk.

1 (a) In each county having three or more magistrates, the judge of the circuit court or the  
2 chief judge of the circuit court, if there is more than one judge of the circuit court, shall appoint a  
3 magistrate court clerk. In all other counties the judge may appoint a magistrate court clerk or may,  
4 by rule, require the duties of the magistrate court clerk to be performed by the clerk of the circuit  
5 court, in which event the circuit court clerk ~~is entitled to~~ may receive additional compensation in the  
6 amount of \$2,500 per year. The magistrate court clerk serves at the will and pleasure of the circuit  
7 judge.

8 (b) Magistrate court clerks shall be paid at least twice per month by the state. The annual  
9 salary of all magistrate court clerks ~~is \$52,296. Beginning July 1, 2023, the annual salary of a~~  
10 ~~magistrate court clerk shall be \$54,596. shall be determined by a pay scale established by the~~  
11 Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals. Magistrate court clerks may receive any  
12 general salary increase granted to state employees, whose salaries are not set by statute,  
13 expressed as a percentage increase or an across-the-board increase, implemented after July 1,  
14 2023.

15 (c) In addition to other duties that may be imposed by the provisions of this chapter or by

the rules of the Supreme Court of Appeals or the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court, it is the duty of the magistrate court clerk to shall establish and maintain appropriate dockets and records in a centralized system for the magistrate court, to assist in the preparation of the reports required of the court and to carry out on behalf of the magistrates or chief magistrate if a chief magistrate is appointed, the administrative duties of the court.

22 (d) The magistrate court clerk, or if there is no magistrate court clerk in the county, the clerk  
23 of the circuit court, may issue all manner of civil process and require the enforcement of  
24 subpoenas and subpoenas duces tecum in magistrate court.

**§50-1-9. Magistrate assistants; salary; duties.**

(a) In each county there shall be at least one magistrate assistant for each magistrate; however, the Supreme Court of Appeals may authorize additional magistrate assistants if the workload of a county's magistrate court requires extra staff support. Each magistrate assistant shall be appointed by the magistrate under whose authority and supervision and at whose will and pleasure he or she shall serve. If more than one magistrate assistant per magistrate is approved by the Supreme Court of Appeals, then the chief magistrate, or chief circuit judge if no chief magistrate is designated, shall appoint, supervise, and assign job duties for any additional magistrate assistant as needed for that county. The assistant shall may not be a member of the immediate family of any magistrate and shall may not have been convicted of a felony or any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude and shall reside in the State of West Virginia. For the purpose of this section, "immediate family" means the relationships of mother, father, sister, brother, child, or spouse.

(b) A magistrate assistant shall have the duties, clerical or otherwise, assigned by the magistrate and prescribed by the rules of the Supreme Court of Appeals or the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court. In addition to these duties, magistrate assistants shall perform and are accountable to the magistrate

17 court clerks with respect to the following duties:

18 (1) The preparation of summons in civil actions;

19 (2) The assignment of civil actions to the various magistrates;

20 (3) The collection of all costs, fees, fines, forfeitures, and penalties which are payable to  
21 the court;

22 (4) The submission of moneys, along with an accounting of the moneys, to appropriate  
23 authorities as provided by law;

24 (5) The daily disposition of closed files which are to be located in the magistrate clerk's  
25 office;

26 (6) All duties related to the gathering of information and documents necessary for the  
27 preparation of administrative reports and documents required by the rules of the Supreme Court of  
28 Appeals, the judge of the circuit court or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one  
29 judge of the circuit court;

30 (7) All duties relating to the notification, certification, and payment of jurors serving  
31 pursuant to the terms of this chapter; and

32 (8) All other duties or responsibilities whereby the magistrate assistant is accountable to  
33 the magistrate court clerk as determined by the magistrate.

34 (c) Magistrate assistants shall be paid at least twice per month by the state. The annual  
35 salary of all magistrate assistants is ~~\$46,932. Beginning July 1, 2023, the annual salary of a~~  
36 ~~magistrate assistant shall be \$49,232.~~ shall be determined by a pay scale established by the  
37 Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals. Magistrate assistants may receive any  
38 general salary increase granted to state employees, whose salaries are not set by statute,  
39 expressed as a percentage increase or an across-the-board increase enacted after July 1, 2023.

**§50-1-9a. Magistrate court deputy clerks; duties; salary.**

1 (a) Whenever required by workload and upon the recommendation of the judge of the  
2 circuit court, or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court,

the Supreme Court of Appeals may provide by rule for the appointment of magistrate court deputy clerks. The magistrate court deputy clerks shall be appointed by the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge of the circuit court if there is more than one judge of the circuit court, to serve at his or her will and pleasure under the immediate supervision of the magistrate court clerk.

(b) Magistrate court deputy clerks shall have the duties, clerical or otherwise, as may be assigned by the magistrate court clerk and as may be prescribed by the rules of the Supreme Court of Appeals, the judge of the circuit court, or the chief judge of the circuit court, if there is more than one judge of the circuit court. Magistrate court deputy clerks may also exercise the power and perform the duties of the magistrate court clerk as may be delegated or assigned by the magistrate court clerk.

(c) A magistrate court deputy clerk may not be an immediate family member of any magistrate, magistrate court clerk, magistrate assistant, or judge of the circuit court within the same county; may not have been convicted of a felony or any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude; and must reside in this state. For purposes of this subsection, "immediate family member" means a mother, father, sister, brother, child, or spouse.

(d) Magistrate court deputy clerks shall be paid at least twice per month by the state. The annual salary of all magistrate court deputy clerks is ~~\$46,932. Beginning July 1, 2023, the annual salary of a magistrate court deputy clerk shall be \$49,232.~~ shall be determined by a pay scale established by the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals. Magistrate court deputy clerks may receive any general salary increase granted to state employees whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage increase or an across-the-board increase implemented after July 1, 2023.

## **CHAPTER 51. COURTS AND THEIR OFFICERS.**

### **ARTICLE 2A. FAMILY COURTS.**

#### **§51-2A-6. Compensation and expenses of family court judges and their staffs.**

1 (a) A family court judge ~~is entitled to~~ may receive as compensation for his or her services  
2 an annual salary of \$62,500: *Provided*, That beginning July 1, 2005, a family court judge ~~is entitled~~  
3 ~~to~~ may receive as compensation for his or her services an annual salary of \$82,500: *Provided*,  
4 *however*, That beginning July 1, 2011, the annual salary of a family court judge shall be \$94,500:  
5 *Provided further*, That beginning July 1, 2020, the annual salary of a family court judge shall be  
6 \$103,950.

7 (b) The secretary-clerk of the family court judge is appointed by the family court judge and  
8 serves at his or her will and pleasure. The secretary-clerk of the family court shall be paid at least  
9 twice per month by the state. The annual salary of all secretary-clerks of the family court is  
10 ~~\$42,576. Beginning July 1, 2023, the annual salary of a family court secretary clerk shall be~~  
11 ~~\$44,876. shall be determined by a pay scale established by the Administrative Director of the~~  
12 Supreme Court of Appeals. Family court secretary-clerks may receive any general salary increase  
13 granted to state employees, whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a percentage  
14 increase or an across-the-board increase enacted after July 1, 2023.

15 (c) The family court judge may employ not more than one family case coordinator who  
16 serves at his or her will and pleasure: *Provided*, That the Supreme Court of Appeals may authorize  
17 additional family case coordinators if the workload of a circuit's family court requires extra staff  
18 support. The annual salary of the family case coordinator of the family court judge ~~shall be~~  
19 ~~established by the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals but may not exceed~~  
20 ~~\$54,576. Beginning July 1, 2023, the annual salary of a family court case coordinator shall not~~  
21 ~~exceed \$56,876. shall be determined by a pay scale established by the Administrative Director of~~  
22 the Supreme Court of Appeals. Family court case coordinators may receive any general salary  
23 increase granted to state employees, whose salaries are not set by statute, expressed as a  
24 percentage increase or an across-the-board increase enacted after July 1, 2023. If more than one  
25 family case coordinator is approved by the Supreme Court of Appeals, then the chief family court  
26 judge of that circuit shall appoint, supervise, and assign job duties for any additional family case

27 coordinator as needed for that circuit.

28 (d) The sheriff or his or her designated deputy shall serve as a bailiff for a family court  
29 judge. The sheriff of each county shall serve or designate persons to serve so as to assure that a  
30 bailiff is available when a family court judge determines the same is necessary for the orderly and  
31 efficient conduct of the business of the family court.

32 (e) Disbursement of salaries for family court judges and members of their staffs are made  
33 by or pursuant to the order of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of  
34 Appeals.

35 (f) Family court judges and members of their staffs staff are allowed their actual and  
36 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The expenses and compensation  
37 will be determined and paid by the Director of the Administrative Office of the Supreme Court of  
38 Appeals under such guidelines as he or she may prescribe, as approved by the Supreme Court of  
39 Appeals.

40 (g) The Supreme Court of Appeals ~~is authorized to~~ may create additional classifications of  
41 support staff that it deems necessary to adequately and efficiently staff the family courts of this  
42 state, including, but not limited to, receptionists, assistant case coordinators, and assistant  
43 secretary-clerks. The Supreme Court of Appeals may determine the authority to hire and  
44 terminate, supervise, and assign job duties for these positions pursuant to its own employment  
45 rules, policies, and procedures. The annual salary of additional support staff authorized by this  
46 section ~~shall~~ may not exceed the regular annual salary of a secretary-clerk and shall be paid by the  
47 state on the same basis established for secretary-clerks as provided in this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to authorize compensation for certain lower court staff; and annual salary for magistrate court clerks, magistrate assistants, magistrate court deputy clerks, secretary-clerks of family court judges, and family case coordinators established by the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.