



OFFICE OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY ATTORNEY
JOHN J. CHOI, COUNTY ATTORNEY

November 27, 2023

Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
Courthouse, Room 220
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Commissioners:

As you know, Minnesota law requires that the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners set the annual salary of the Ramsey County Attorney. The past practice has been for the County Attorney to make an annual written request to the Board of Commissioners regarding a proposed salary rate each December for the following year.

For 2024, I am requesting a two and one quarter percent (2.25%) increase of my present salary to \$197,284.49, to be effective the first full pay period following January 1, 2024. This increase is the same general wage adjustment agreed to by the AFSCME Attorney bargaining group for Assistant County Attorneys.

I am also requesting the continuation of the contribution to deferred compensation consistent with the Local 8 Assistant County Attorneys agreement, the continuation of the administrative allowance of \$110 per month, continuation of the transportation allowance of \$150 per month, and the continuation of the \$55 per month cell/phone wireless service allowance.

I also want to use this letter to reiterate a critical concern, that I first shared with you during my budget presentation in September 2023, about the rapidly growing disparity between the salaries of RCO attorneys, and their attorney counterparts in other Twin Cities-based public law offices, including the Office of the Ramsey County Public Defender. Just during 2023, 14 attorneys have left the RCO, many leaving to accept higher paying jobs in other public law offices. Moreover, this problem is not limited to our attorneys, as we have also seen a growing recent trend of legal support staff and other paraprofessionals leaving the RCO for better paying similar jobs in other public offices.

I have attached for your reference as Attachment A, assistant county attorney salary information from other Minnesota offices that was in response to the Minnesota County Attorney's Association's 2023 Salary Survey, along with current salary information from the Minnesota Board of Public Defense and

Ramsey County Board of Commissioners

Page 2

November 27, 2023

the Office of Attorney General. During the past year, the state and other counties have taken action to increase salaries in their respective county attorney's offices, and the result is that we have been losing an unprecedented number of employees to those offices.

While I am very grateful that Dr. Annie Porbeni and her staff also recognize this growing salary disparity and have recently been working well with my office on ways to address it, I am concerned that without swift action, the RCO will no longer be an employer of choice among the many other public law offices in the metro area. I am equally concerned that without an expeditious equity salary adjustment for our most affected employees, our ability to continue the hard work of delivering justice and safety in a way that reflects your values and those of our community will be impeded. It is for this reason that I again bring this matter to your attention and ask for your support in helping me to resolve it prudently and responsibly.

Finally, my top priority is to address the salary disparities of my employees as described above. But as I mentioned earlier, as I enter my 13th year of service as the elected Ramsey County Attorney, I realize that despite being one of the most senior in terms of years of experience among my elected county attorney counterparts in the ten largest county attorney's offices in the state, my salary has fallen behind all but one of those other elected officials. For your reference, I have attached Attachment B to this letter which provides elected County Attorney salary information from the MCAA's 2023 County Attorney Salary Survey. Accordingly, assuming that we can successfully address the above-described salary disparities of my employees, I anticipate that I will also make a request to the Board for an equity adjustment to my salary.

I truly consider myself to be the luckiest county attorney in Minnesota to be able to work with such a thoughtful and supportive Board of Commissioners. I thank you for your consideration of my request and for your continued strong partnership and support.

Sincerely,



John J. Choi
Ramsey County Attorney

Attachment A

Assistant County Attorney Salary rates
Salary Information from the 2023 MCAA Salary Survey except for
Salary Information provided directly by MN Board of Public Defense and Office of Attorney General

1. Stearns County

Full Time Attorney	\$131,736 – \$193,348
Full Time Attorney	\$125,463 – \$184,141
Full Time Attorney	\$113,799 – \$167,022
Full Time Attorney	\$108,380 – \$159,068
Full Time Attorney	\$98,304 – \$144,280
Full Time Attorney	\$80,875 – \$118,699

2. Office of Attorney General

Assistant Attorney General S3	\$113,000 - \$174,500
Assistant Attorney General S2	\$105,500 - \$163,500
Assistant Attorney General S1	\$76,000 - \$120,000

3. Carver County

Assistant Attorney	\$124,800 - \$170,851
--------------------	-----------------------

4. Anoka County

Attorney IV	\$158,080 – \$164,400
Attorney III	\$114,400 – \$155,501
Attorney II	\$97,760 – \$110,240
Attorney I	\$79,040 – \$91,520

5. Dakota County

Attorney IV	\$103,086 - \$161,073
Attorney III	\$92,042 - \$143,815
Attorney II	\$82,180 - \$128,406
Attorney 1/SSA	\$73,375 – \$114,649

6. Hennepin County

Senior Attorney	\$99,222 – \$160,208
Attorney	\$76,314 – \$148,670
Associate Attorney	\$79,492 – \$108,329

- 7. MN Board of Public Defense
 - Public Defender \$88,380 – \$158,500

- 8. Scott County
 - Assistant Attorney \$78,470 – \$156,828

- 9. Ramsey County
 - Assistant Attorney 3 \$103,252 - \$153,738
 - Assistant Attorney 2 \$83,911 - \$124,919
 - Assistant Attorney 1 \$70,019 - \$104,162

- 10. Olmsted County
 - Sr Asst Attorney \$109,819 - \$146,579
 - Associate Attorney \$99,258 - \$84,760
 - Assistant Attorney \$78,048 - \$74,880

- 11. St. Louis County
 - Assistant Attorney \$69,030 - \$137,124

- 12. Washington County
 - Attorney \$77,688 – \$100,984

Attachment B

Current County Attorney Salaries

Taken from the 2023 MCAA Salary Survey of the Ten Largest County Attorney's Offices in Minnesota

1. Stearns County Attorney	\$215,298
2. Dakota County Attorney	\$206,397
3. Carver County Attorney	\$200,720
4. Scott County Attorney	\$200,695
5. Washington County Attorney	\$199,080
6. Olmsted County Attorney	\$197,453
7. Hennepin County Attorney	\$195,065
8. Anoka County Attorney	\$193,731
9. Ramsey County Attorney	\$192,943.26
10. St. Louis County Attorney	\$182,811.20