



Civil Judge — the pay nobody tells you about, the ceiling everyone misunderstands



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Win the PCS-J, sit in your own court within a year, and earn more on day one than most government officers do in a decade. Just know the truth about High Court: it is not a promotion — and you will need three years at the bar before you can even apply.

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THE 30-YEAR JOURNEY

The first twelve years are largely time-bound: join as a Civil Judge (Junior Division), earn an ACP pay jump at year five without even needing a vacancy, then move to Senior Division on seniority. After that the path splits. Most officers work through Additional District Judge to District & Sessions Judge, a respected finish to a 30-year career. A driven few reach District Judge (Selection Grade), the highest rung inside the judicial service. High Court is constitutionally possible after ten years in the cadre, but it is a separate collegium appointment, not a promotion, and far fewer judicial officers reach it than coaching content implies.

SALARY PROJECTION

If you joined today

Figures as of June 2026

2nd NJPC Pay Matrix (SNJPC); DA @ 60% (central rate, w.e.f. 01.01.2026); HRA 24% (Class X city); NPS deducted at 10% of basic; orderly allowance ₹7,000/month. All figures approximate.. Judicial officers follow the SNJPC Pay Matrix — not the 7th CPC scale used by IAS, SSC or banking cadres. The 2.81x multiplier applied at the 2016 revision placed entry judicial pay well above most central government starting salaries. ACP increments move pay to J-2 (₹92,960) and then J-3 (₹1,11,000) automatically without needing a promotion. The split at year twelve reflects the two paths for entering the Higher Judicial Service (ADJ/DJ cadre): the seniority-based 50% channel (slower but more certain) versus the competitive LCE 25% channel (faster for those who clear it). Selection Grade DJ is the salary peak within the judicial service. The Supreme Court's 2022 SNJPC order directed all states to implement these pay scales and pay arrears from 1 January 2016. DA follows the central government rate and revises approximately every six months. We update this every year.

YEAR	MILESTONE	SENIORITY ROUTE Most civil judges — ADJ to District Judge	COMPETITIVE + SELECTION LCE route to Selection Grade DJ
0	Joining (CJ Jr.)	J-1 · ₹1.38L Both paths identical so far · Civil Judge (Junior Division)	
12	Civil Judge (Senior Div.)	J-3 · ₹1.92L Both paths identical so far · Civil Judge (Senior Division)	

YEAR	MILESTONE	SENIORITY ROUTE Most civil judges — ADJ to District Judge	COMPETITIVE + SELECTION LCE route to Selection Grade DJ
22	Paths split	J-5 · ₹2.5L Additional District Judge	J-5 · ₹2.5L Additional District Judge (LCE)
32	Retirement range	J-5 · ₹2.75L District & Sessions Judge	J-6 · ₹3.05L Dist. Judge (Selection Grade)

In-hand figures, Class X city HRA (24%), DA 60%, NPS deducted. ACP increments move pay forward automatically. Both paths go through CJ (Sr. Div.) before diverging; the split reflects when each path reaches the ADJ/DJ cadre. Snapshot dated June 2026. State-specific; verify against your state's SNJPC implementation notification.

Sarkari Job Guide does not claim this salary structure. The figures come from the verified sources listed on the career page.

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Visual career maps for government jobs in India. Each map shows the full 30-year path: pay at every stage, promotion timelines, and the costs nobody mentions.

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