

House Strategies Group

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RMP RILEY MCGUIRE
PARTNERS LLC

CLASSIFICATION & COMPENSATION · WORKFORCE ANALYTICS · SBA 8(A)

PROPOSAL IN RESPONSE TO RFI 010 2600000015

Kentucky Judicial Branch Salary Compensation Study

A defensible, phased compensation study for the Commonwealth's third branch of government — by the practice that does exactly this, with Kentucky roots on the ground.

Submitted to the **Kentucky Legislative Research Commission**
Office of Business Operations · Attn: Regina Long

House Strategies Group, LLC — Prime (SBA 8(a) · Classification & Compensation)

Riley McGuire Partners, LLC — Kentucky Subcontractor (SDVOSB, Louisville)

Submitted: July __, 2026



Operate the full analysis before you award — live, no login:
ky-judicial.housestrategiesgroup.com

COVER LETTER

The practice that does exactly this, with Kentucky roots on the ground.

July __, 2026

Ms. Regina Long

Kentucky Legislative Research Commission, Office of Business Operations
702 Capitol Avenue, Room 076, Frankfort, KY 40601

RE: RFI 010 2600000015 — Judicial Branch Salary Compensation Study

Ms. Long and members of the Commission,

House Strategies Group, LLC (HSG) is pleased to submit this proposal as prime contractor, with Riley McGuire Partners, LLC (RMP) as our Kentucky-based subcontractor. House Bill 503 asks for something specific and consequential: an evidence-based evaluation of what the Commonwealth pays the people who run its courts, and recommendations the General Assembly can act on. This is our practice.

HSG is an SBA-certified 8(a) firm whose specialty is public-sector compensation and classification — the exact five-objective work this RFI describes. The qualifying experience and the references the RFI asks for are our own: multi-country position classification and compensation for USDA APHIS, led by our Certified Job Evaluator, and federal advisory delivery across two decades. As prime, HSG is your single point of accountability for scope, schedule, cost, and every analytical deliverable.

Riley McGuire Partners — a Louisville-based, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business led by a Kentucky-barred attorney — joins as our Kentucky subcontractor, providing in-state stakeholder coordination, on-the-ground logistics across the Commonwealth, and veteran-owned participation. The analysis is led by the firm that does this work; the engagement stays local.

This proposal follows HSG's standard format, and it does one thing few respondents will: it points to a working portal that already runs the analysis. You can adopt a compensation philosophy, watch pay ranges move against Kentucky's real judicial pay scale, and read this entire proposal — live, before any award — at **ky-judicial.housestrategiesgroup.com**.

We affirm this proposal is valid for 90 days and that the team is available to begin within five business days of award. We welcome the opportunity to present it.

Respectfully,

Jelani House, Founder & Managing Director · House Strategies Group, LLC
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Why this team, and why now.

Kentucky pays its judiciary near the bottom of the nation, and its career court workforce operates without a modern, defensible pay structure. HB 503 asks for the evidence to fix both — and it funds it at \$1,000,000. This team pairs the practice that does exactly this work with a Kentucky presence on the ground.

The requirement

HB 503 (2026) appropriates **\$1,000,000** for an external consultant to study **roughly 3,700 judicial-branch personnel** in all 120 counties — the **412 elected** justices, judges, and circuit court clerks, and the roughly 3,300 career employees who keep the courts running — reviewing classifications, compensation levels, and market competitiveness. Results are due to the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue by July 1, 2027 (draft report June 1, final June 30, 2027).

The problem, on the record

Kentucky pays its judiciary near the bottom of the nation. Its general-jurisdiction judges rank **48th**, and by the Court of Justice’s own account earn **over 20% below the national average** and **23% below surrounding states**; judicial-branch staff earn about **17% less than executive-branch** peers (Chief Justice Lambert, November 2025). Against the NCSC national median for a trial judge of \$183,006 (July 2024), Kentucky trails every neighboring state except West Virginia. The career workforce is the sharper problem: about **82% of employees sit in the lower pay grades 7–11**. Kentucky has no standing judicial-compensation commission (a 2015 attempt, HB 469, died in committee), so this study fills a real institutional gap. The full public record is on the portal’s Evidence page.

The current Kentucky judicial pay scale (FY2026)

OFFICE	ANNUAL SALARY	OFFICE	ANNUAL SALARY
Chief Justice	\$180,151	Circuit Court Judge	\$161,262
Supreme Court Justice	\$175,151	District Court Judge	\$146,014
Court of Appeals Judge	\$168,191	Circuit Court Clerks (120, elected)	\$76,682–\$115,789

Source: Kentucky Court of Justice, Judicial Salaries (FY2026); Circuit Court Clerk schedule by county population.

What distinguishes this team

- **The prime holds the qualifying experience.** HSG’s specialty is public-sector compensation and classification — and the experience and references the RFI asks for are HSG’s own past performance, not a subcontractor’s.
- **Kentucky boots on the ground.** RMP, our Louisville-based veteran-owned subcontractor, provides in-state coordination and on-the-ground logistics the Commonwealth values.
- **A Certified Job Evaluator leads the method.** Classification is led by a CJE with 25+ years of federal position-management experience, rated Exceptional in past-performance review.
- **Auditable, AI-enhanced method.** Every figure traces to its survey source and date; AI accelerates the data work while a credentialed evaluator signs off on every crosswalk and range.
- **A working portal.** The Commission can operate the analysis before it awards — most competitors will hand you a PDF and ask you to imagine it.

REQUIREMENTS COMPLIANCE MATRIX

Every RFI requirement, and where we answer it.

RFI REQUIREMENT	WHERE ADDRESSED IN THIS PROPOSAL
§2.10(A) Compensation data analysis, public & private	§1.2 Task-level approach; §3 Qualifications
§2.10(B) Market analyses of labor markets	§1.2 Market analysis; portal market exhibits
§2.10(C) Pay ranges (min/mid/max) & policy	§1.2 Compensation administration; §2
§2.10(D) HR consulting — public-employee benchmarking	§3.2 Firm profile; §3.4 Similar projects
§2.10(E) Relevant past projects with examples	§3.4 Similar projects (five)
§2.10(F) Project management & communication	§1.3 Interaction; §4 Personnel
§2.20(A) Preliminary timeline	§1.4 Detailed timeline
§2.20(B) Cost estimate	§6 Listing of all fees
§2.30 Three references	§3.5 References (HSG's own past performance)
§3.00 Scope of work (five objectives)	§1–§2 Methods, scope & deliverables
Submission: signed solicitation, technical, cost	Signed SO_FORM (separate); §1–§2 (technical); §6 (cost)

Two populations, two methods. Elected pay is set through the legislative and constitutional process, so its analysis is about external market position and the cost of closing the gap. The career workforce is a classification-and-compensation problem — job descriptions, internal equity, grade structure, and pay ranges. We keep the tracks distinct and reconcile them into one philosophy and one budget.

SECTION 1

Methods and Approach

1.1 HSG's AI-Enhanced Methodology — the team's advantage

Every deliverable is produced with an AI-enhanced workflow under credentialed human control. This is not automation for its own sake; it is how we deliver a legislative-grade study on schedule without losing the expert authority behind each recommendation.

How AI enhances quality (the primary benefit)

It reconciles every survey source, effective date, and blend so nothing is dropped; it flags anomalies, compression, and inversion across thousands of position records; and it produces a complete source-to-recommendation lineage for every published figure.

How AI enhances efficiency (a secondary benefit)

It normalizes heterogeneous survey files into a common schema, accelerates the job-match crosswalk, and keeps the analysis current as data arrives — so the team spends its time on judgment, not data entry.

What AI does not do. It does not set the compensation philosophy, sign a classification, or make a pay recommendation. A Certified Job Evaluator signs off on every crosswalk and grade-band determination; the AI/Expert Reconciliation Log makes each decision auditable. The human owns the call.

1.2 Task-level approach — the five objectives

1 A stated compensation philosophy

Facilitate a working session with the LRC team and Judicial Branch representatives to decide, in writing, where the Judicial Branch should sit in its market — lead, match, or lag, and at what percentile — with the trade-offs and peer-state precedent laid out. Output: an adopted compensation-philosophy statement.

2 Internal-equity review

Led by our Certified Job Evaluator: review each position and its job description, evaluate positions on consistent factors, and place each correctly within the structure — flagging compression, inversion, and misclassification. Output: a position-by-position equity analysis and classification recommendations.

3 Market analysis

Select benchmark positions and comparators across public and private markets. Anchor the judiciary on the NCSC Survey of Judicial Salaries and Kentucky's neighboring states; blend and age survey data for the career workforce; and apply cost-of-labor adjustments across regions. Output: benchmark market data, market-position findings, and a documented geographic-differential model.

4 Compensation administration

Translate the analysis into pay ranges — minimum, midpoint, maximum — aligned to the adopted philosophy, plus progression logic, experience ratings, hiring-offer guidelines, and maintenance policy. Output: a complete pay structure and administration policies.

5 Overall cost analysis

Cost every recommendation as phased, optioned scenarios with fiscal impact by tier, phase, and fiscal year — built for the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue. Output: a costed recommendation set with committee-ready budget materials.

Beyond the five objectives — a governance option. Kentucky has no standing judicial-compensation commission; a 2015 attempt (HB 469) died in committee. We can offer the Commission a recommended, made-in-Kentucky governance mechanism to keep pay current after this study, drawing on the strongest precedents — New York's standing commission with explicit regional cost-of-living treatment, and the catch-up approaches used recently in North Carolina and studied in Virginia and Maine.

1.3 Anticipated interaction with the Commission

- **Single point of contact.** Jelani House (HSG, Project Director) is the Commission's one accountable contact for scope, schedule, and cost, supported by Neil Riley (RMP) for Kentucky coordination.
- **Meeting cadence.** A kick-off within five business days of award, monthly written progress reports, and oral presentations at the Commission's discretion.
- **Coordination.** We work with Judicial Branch representatives to gather information as approved by the LRC, and document all activities for LRC approval.

1.4 Detailed timeline

MILESTONE	TIMING	OUTPUT
Kick-off	Within 5 business days of award	Confirmed scope/format, schedule, PM & reporting standards, staff assignments (LRC-approved).
Phase 1	Award → Q4 2026 / Q1 2027	Compensation philosophy; job-description & internal-equity review; position placement.
Phase 2	Q1 → Q2 2027	Market analysis & geographic differentials; pay-range design; administration policy; cost analysis.
Draft report	By June 1, 2027	Findings, policy options, and recommendations for LRC review.
Final report	By June 30, 2027	Final report and Appropriations & Revenue budget materials.

SECTION 2

Scope of Work and Deliverables

Each objective produces a named artifact. The Commission receives evidence, not assertions.

OBJECTIVE	DELIVERABLE
1 · Compensation philosophy	Adopted market-position decision and rationale (written statement).
2 · Internal equity	Position-by-position equity & classification analysis; corrected placements; job-description updates.
3 · Market analysis	Benchmark market data by position; market-position findings; geographic-differential model.
4 · Compensation administration	Complete pay structure (min/mid/max); administration policies; experience ratings; hiring-offer guidelines.
5 · Cost analysis	Costed, phased budget options; committee-ready materials for Appropriations & Revenue.
Throughout	Ongoing communication; monthly written progress reports; the live analytical portal; draft (6/1/2027) and final (6/30/2027) reports.

Work products (RFI §3.10). Ongoing communications with the LRC team; monthly written progress reports; a draft report by June 1, 2027; and a final written report by June 30, 2027 detailing findings, policy options, and recommendations.

SECTION 3

Qualifications and Experience

3.1 The team, and why this structure

A clean prime/subcontract pairing: the specialized compensation-and-classification practice as prime, holding the qualifying experience and references, and a Kentucky veteran-owned firm as the in-state subcontractor.

Prime

House Strategies Group, LLC

SBA 8(a). Program management and the compensation & classification methodology, benchmarking, job architecture, geographic differentials, cost model, and analytical platform. UEI EAE1MJHMN2Z1 · CAGE 7W4Y5 · KY Vendor KS0034905.

KY Subcontractor

Riley McGuire Partners, LLC

SDVOSB, Louisville, KY. In-state stakeholder coordination, on-the-ground logistics, veteran-owned participation, and contract support. UEI LQGBKZTF81H3 · CAGE 7QNY4 · GSA Schedule holder.

3.2 HSG firm profile & minimum qualifications

House Strategies Group is an SBA-certified 8(a) firm whose practice is classification and compensation studies for public-sector and federal clients. HSG's classification methodology is led by a Certified Job Evaluator; its benchmarking is led by a Fortune-100 compensation analyst. HSG meets the RFI's experience thresholds and delivers the full five-objective scope — and the qualifying experience and references are HSG's own, not a subcontractor's.

3.3 Kentucky subcontractor — Riley McGuire Partners

RMP is a Louisville-based Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business led by a Kentucky-barred attorney who served at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Board of Veterans' Appeals. As subcontractor, RMP provides Kentucky stakeholder coordination, on-the-ground logistics across the Commonwealth's 120 counties, veteran-owned participation, and contract support, with active federal delivery on VA real-property (EUL 36C77624N0371; ORP Lease Administration 36C10F24R0031) and a GSA Schedule.

3.4 Similar projects (past five years)

PROJECT	CLIENT	RELEVANCE
Multi-country position classification & compensation	USDA APHIS International Services	Large-scale classification & grade-band determination (CJE-led).
Multi-post position classification (M-Class)	U.S. Foreign Service	Classification across a 2,000+ staff workforce.
Position classification program	U.S. Embassy South Africa	Job evaluation & position management, rated Exceptional.
Enterprise benefits & compensation administration	Constellis	Compensation-plan administration at scale.
Annual Compensation Review (ACR)	Verizon Wireless	Market benchmarking, percentile & compa-ratio analysis.

3.5 References

#	CLIENT / ENGAGEMENT	REFERENCE	RELEVANCE
1	USDA APHIS — multi-country position classification & compensation	Karen Darden, USDA APHIS	Directly comparable classification & compensation for a federal workforce (the government client).

#	CLIENT / ENGAGEMENT	REFERENCE	RELEVANCE
2	USDA APHIS & FAS — classification, compensation & organizational redesign	Sheetal Patel, Rumik Consultancy	Directly comparable; the prime on HSG's classification & compensation engagements (HSG as subcontractor).
3	HUD Office of Asset Sales — federal financial-advisory services	John W. Lucey, Director, HUD OAS	Related scope; multi-year, high-value federal advisory delivery and program quality (a ~two-decade relationship).

All three are HSG's own past performance. References 1–2 speak directly to comparable public-sector classification and compensation work; reference 3 attests to HSG's federal advisory delivery and quality. Full contact information (name, title, address, phone, and email) is provided to the Commission with the submittal.

SECTION 4

Project Personnel

A compact senior team with clear ownership. HSG leads the program and produces the analysis; RMP anchors the Kentucky presence.

HSG · Project Director (Prime)

Jelani House — Founder & Managing Director, HSG

17+ years of federal and public-sector consulting; the prime's single point of accountability for scope, schedule, cost, and the analytical platform. Pioneered HSG's AI-Enhanced methodology. MS Finance, Georgetown; BA, University of Virginia.

HSG · Classification & Internal-Equity Lead

Gilda Weech-House — Certified Job Evaluator (CJE)

25+ years of senior HR leadership in the U.S. Foreign Service, classification for missions of 2,000+ staff. Signatory on every job evaluation and grade-band determination; rated Exceptional in past-performance review.

HSG · Market Benchmarking Lead

Raina Cook — Senior Compensation Analyst

10+ years running compensation programs at Fortune-100 employers; owns survey selection, aging, and the percentile / compa-ratio analysis behind every pay range.

HSG · Data Operations & Cost Modeling

Michael Nelson — Senior Consultant

Booth MBA; 15+ years of structured data delivery. Owns survey-file normalization, the job-match crosswalk, reproducibility controls, and the cost model.

RMP · Kentucky Subcontractor Lead

Neil B. Riley — Managing Partner, Riley McGuire Partners

U.S. Army veteran and Kentucky-barred attorney; served at the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals. Leads Kentucky coordination, on-the-ground logistics with the courts and legislature, and veteran-owned participation.

Org chart. Commission → Jelani House (HSG, Project Director) → Gilda Weech-House (classification), Raina Cook (compensation), Michael Nelson (data & cost), with Neil Riley (RMP) leading Kentucky coordination. Additional HSG compensation/HR specialists scale with the workload.

SECTION 5

Availability

- **Firm-level availability.** The team has capacity to begin immediately and to hold the schedule through the June 30, 2027 final report.
- **Start.** Kick-off within five business days of award.
- **On-site availability.** RMP is in Louisville and available on-site in Frankfort for the kick-off, working sessions, and presentations; HSG specialists travel for on-site sessions as scheduled.
- **Personnel availability.** The five named staff are committed to this engagement for its duration; personnel changes follow the RFI's 30-day notice and resume-substitution provisions.

SECTION 6

Listing of All Fees

A preliminary, not-to-exceed estimate, structured with no indirect-cost reimbursement per the Commission's standard terms. Final pricing is confirmed once the AOC classification inventory is provided at kick-off.

6.1 Firm fixed-price summary by deliverable

COMPONENT	PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE
Phase 1 — Compensation philosophy & internal-equity / classification review (statewide classification inventory + elected tiers)	\$78,000
Phase 2 — Market analysis, geographic differentials, pay-range design & administration	\$52,000
Objective 5 — Cost analysis, budget modeling & committee materials	\$22,000
Program management, reporting, coordination & the analytical portal	\$18,000
Direct expenses (statewide on-site travel, survey licensing incl. NCSC/comparators)	\$15,000
Preliminary total (NTE)	\$185,000

6.2 Cost narrative

The estimate is built up from the current market for public-sector classification and compensation studies, then scaled for the genuine additional scope of a **statewide, two-population** engagement: the separate elected-official market study (NCSC and comparator states), the 120-county geographic-differential model, statewide travel and stakeholder coordination, and the legislative-grade cost and budget analysis for the Appropriations & Revenue committee. It is fully loaded (labor plus direct expenses) with no separate indirect line, consistent with the Commission's no-indirect-cost term, and lands at **well under a fifth of the \$1,000,000** HB 503 appropriated for the study. Final pricing is confirmed once the Commission provides the AOC classification inventory at kick-off — the count of distinct job classifications, not headcount, is what firms the number.

6.3 Software fees

Software fees associated with this study: **\$0**. The analytical portal is provided at no additional license cost to the Commonwealth.

6.4 Extra on-site visit pricing

Additional on-site sessions beyond those planned are billed at direct cost of travel; no markup.

6.5 Payment schedule

Invoiced on deliverable milestones (kick-off, Phase 1 completion, Phase 2 completion, draft report, final report), net terms per the contract.

6.6 Hourly rates (additional work)

A blended rate schedule for out-of-scope work is provided on request; no indirect costs are applied.

Preliminary and provided for RFI planning; not a firm offer. Final pricing confirmed with the Commission at contracting.

SECTION 7

The Live Client Portal

This proposal is accompanied by a working portal at ky-judicial.housestrategiesgroup.com — the analysis, running, before any award.

Portal capabilities

- Interactive market analysis on Kentucky's real judicial pay scale.
- A pay-range workbench — pick a position and a philosophy, watch the min/mid/max range and market position update.
- National and comparator-state context, the Circuit Clerk schedule, and regional cost-of-labor differentials.
- An Evidence page assembling the public record with citations, plus the full team, plan, and this proposal.

Security & data ownership

- Public exhibits use public and clearly-labeled illustrative data only; no confidential Commonwealth data is posted.
- All working papers, methodology, and reports produced under the study are the property of the LRC, per the RFI, with pre-existing HSG methodology identified as such.
- Records retained per the Commission's three-year requirement and the Kentucky Open Records provisions of KRS 7.119.