

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court
Administrative Office of the Courts



Contact: Alberto Rodriguez
Phone: 602-452-3656
Mobile: 602-448-8412
Email: arodriguez@courts.az.gov

July 3, 2023

Arizona's Updated Spousal Maintenance Guidelines Adopted

PHOENIX – The Arizona Supreme Court has adopted for the first time, Spousal Support Guidelines, as proposed by the Spousal Maintenance Guidelines Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the Arizona Supreme Court's Family Court Improvement Committee. The Court implemented the guidelines by Administrative Order effective July 10, 2023.

In 2022, the Arizona Legislature amended A.R.S. § 25-319 regarding spousal maintenance orders, effective September 24, 2022, and required the Supreme Court to establish guidelines. The Supreme Court established the Subcommittee and tasked it with studying and recommending statewide spousal maintenance guidelines.

Recommendations by the Subcommittee for the new spousal support maintenance guidelines are intended to provide more predictive spousal maintenance awards. "Currently if you gave 10 different judges the same set of facts, you would likely get 10 different awards," said Paul McMurdie, chairman of the Subcommittee.

The statute as passed requires that spousal maintenance be awarded only for a period needed to achieve self-sufficiency of the receiving spouse. This is a departure from current practices. The Subcommittee also launched [a calculator](#) to help users determine the amount and duration ranges specific to individual cases.

The calculator will consider the parties' combined annual income to determine the annual expenditures for that family, based on the family size entered. It will generate an amount for indivisible costs and individual expenditures for one adult. Indivisible expenditures include housing, shelter, owned dwellings, mortgage interest and charges, property taxes, maintenance, repairs, insurance, rent, utilities and housekeeping supplies, and other expenses.

"The newly introduced guidelines and calculator will help determine spousal maintenance in Arizona," said Dave Byers, Director of the Supreme Court's Administrative Office of the Courts. "To ensure the new guidelines are working as intended, we plan to collect data and survey parties after their implementation and make appropriate adjustments if needed."

The Subcommittee considered statistically sound data during its review, including more than 900 pages of statutes and guidelines from nine other states and Canada, as well as research from leading subject-matter experts. The Subcommittee ultimately recommended using the Bureau of

Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey dataset and the Sims Methodology “range” process to determine spousal maintenance awards.

Subcommittee meetings were open to the public and held in-person and online via video conference. The public was invited to comment during Subcommittee meetings, as well post written comments via the online forum. The Subcommittee received and considered 11 written comments and held a townhall where seven people offered feedback. Additional outreach to judges and attorneys was conducted statewide.

The Arizona Supreme Court provided final approval through Administrative Order 2023-119, making the spousal maintenance support guidelines effective on July 10, 2023. The Subcommittee’s materials are posted [here](#). The final spousal maintenance support guidelines are included in the Administrative Order, posted online [here](#).

The Family Court Improvement Committee (FCIC) is a standing committee of the Arizona Judicial Council and was created to assist in the development and implementation of policies designed to improve the quality of justice, access to family courts, and efficiency in court operations.

The FCIC-SMGS was established in July 2022 to study and make recommendations for the spousal maintenance guidelines. The FCIC was tasked with submitting a final report to the Arizona Judicial Council in their June 2023 meeting.

###

Learn more about Arizona’s judicial branch by visiting azcourts.gov. Follow us on Twitter: @AZCourts and on Facebook: @ArizonaSupremeCourt.