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GENERAL NOTICES • ALGEMENE KENNISGEWINGS

THE PRESIDENCY

NOTICE 3711 OF 2025

Enquiries: Mr. PM Makapan
 Tel: 012 308 1707
 Fax: 012 300 5735
 E-mail: Peterm@presidency.gov.za



The Presidency
 Private Bag X1000
 PRETORIA
 0001

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR THE REMUNERATION OF PUBLIC OFFICE BEARERS

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM FOR ANNUAL REMUNERATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025/2026

INTRODUCTION

1. In terms of sections 219(1), (2) and (5) of the Constitution, read together with sections 8(4) and (5) of the Independent Commission for the Remuneration of Public Office-Bearers Act, 1997 (Act No 92 of 1997) (Commission Act), the Commission is mandated to make annual recommendations relating to the salaries and/or the upper limits of the salaries, allowances, benefits, and the resources required by defined Public Office-Bearers (POBs), to enable them to perform their respective duties effectively.
2. This explanatory memorandum sets out the Commission's recommendations on the remuneration of POBs for the 2025/2026 financial year. In arriving at the annual remuneration recommendations, the following factors were considered:
 - Statutory and stakeholder consultations;
 - Section 8(6) of the Commission Act;
 - Various economic factors including: Fiscal affordability, historic inflation, future inflation forecasts, wage settlement data, the Commission's prior recommendations;
 - The President's determinations for 2023/2024 as well as 2024/2025; and
 - Average annual wage increment.

STATUTORY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

3. In terms of various applicable legislation, the Determination of Remuneration of Office-Bearers of Independent Constitutional Institutions Laws Amendment Act (Act 22 of 2014) (ICI Act) and the provisions of section 12 of the Magistrates Act, (Act 90 of 1993), the Commission is required to consult with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, the Minister of Finance and the Chief Justice or a person designated by him/her, prior to the recommendations being submitted to the President, Parliament, and publication thereof.
4. The ICI Act provides that the Commission shall, when investigating or considering the salaries, allowances and benefits of members of the ICIs, consult with the Cabinet members responsible for ICIs and the Minister of Finance.

Commissioners: Judge Z Carelse (Chairperson); Mr. MP Tjie (Deputy Chairperson); Ms. JM Maisela; Dr. C Nwaila; Dr. RC Lubisi; Mr. L Modise; Ms. F Petersen-Cook and Ms. P Kekana

Head of Secretariat: Mr. PM Makapan

5. The Commission consulted with the following stakeholders on the intended recommendations:

Name of Stakeholder	
1	The Chief Justice
2	Lower Courts Remuneration Committee (LCRC)
3	Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies
4	Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
5	Minister of Finance
6	Minister of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities
7	Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development
8	Minister of Home Affairs

6. The following submissions were received:

The response from the Chief Justice

7. The Chief Justice consulted with the Heads of Court and the Judges' Remuneration Committee on the Commission's intended recommendations. The Judges support a 4.3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in line with the National Treasury's inflation forecast and that the Judges expressly reserved the right to make further representations during the upcoming major salary review.
8. The Judges stated that the future representations will focus on the continued unconstitutionality of the current annual remuneration received by Judges and that the aim will be to demonstrate the extent to which the value of Judges' remuneration has been eroded over the years.

The response from the Lower Courts Remuneration Committee

9. A detailed response was received from the Lower Courts Remuneration Committee (LCRC) representing Magistrates. The LCRC indicated that the 2025/26 annual recommendations were submitted late and deemed the deadline for response inadequate. The LCRC proposed a COLA of no less than 5.5%. They explicitly neither accept nor decline the Commission's proposed recommendation, stating that it falls short of the magistracy's expectations.
10. The LCRC argues that the affordability argument is unsustainable as legally qualified OSD employees in the public service are set to receive 5,5% + 1,5% pay progression and other improved benefits. They assert the Commission's proposed lower increase perpetuates the erosion of salaries and failure to maintain purchasing power and they view the Commission's continued inaction regarding retirement benefits as causing substantial pecuniary loss to the magistracy, deeming it unlawful and irrational.
11. The LCRC concluded that the Commission failed to comply with its legislative duty to consider all factors in Section 8(6) of the Act (e.g., unimplemented recommendations from the Major Review Report).

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The response from the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies

12. The Minister acknowledged receipt of the Commission's draft explanatory memorandum of the 2025/26 annual remuneration recommendations and confirmed that they have no additional comments to submit on the recommendations.

The response from the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

13. The Minister acknowledged receipt of the Commission's draft explanatory memorandum of the 2025/26 annual remuneration recommendations and accepted the Commission's recommendation.

The response from the Minister of Finance

14. The Minister endorsed a differentiated COLA and recommended for a 4.1 per cent increase to be implemented for the Judges, Magistrates, and members of the Independent Constitutional Institutions. The Minister further recommended a 3.5 per cent COLA for the remaining categories of POBs (politicians and traditional leadership) aligned with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as projected in the 2025 MTBPS.

SECTION 8(6) OF THE COMMISSION ACT

15. In deliberating the annual recommendations for 2025/2026, the Commission further considered, amongst others, the following factors:

The role, status, duties, functions and responsibilities of the POBs concerned

16. Section 8(6)(i) of the Commission Act provides that the Commission should consider the role, status, duties, functions and responsibilities of the POBs concerned when making its recommendations. The Commission has conducted the major review for the remuneration of all POBs, and the consolidated remuneration review report (major review report) was submitted to the President and the Presiding Officers of National Parliament on 08 and 09 October 2024 respectively. While the major review report is not yet adopted by the President, the Commission is happy to rely on it.

17. Following the submission of the major review report, the President notified the Commission on 23 July 2025 of representations received from both the Minister of Finance and the Chief Justice. In response, the President requested that the Commission address these concerns in a comprehensive report, originally due by 31 January 2026. However, following an engagement between the Commission and the President on 15 December 2025, this deadline was subsequently extended to 30 April 2026.

Affordability

18. In the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) of 30 October 2024, the Minister of Finance indicated that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, government has been working to restore economic growth and the stability of the public finances. The National Treasury forecasted

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economic growth by 1.1 % in 2024, after expanding by just 0.4% in the first half of 2024 and is projected to grow by an annual average of 1.8% over the next three years.

19. The Minister of Finance, in the Budget Speech of 12 March 2025, indicated that in 2024, the economy grew by only 0.6% (actual growth). Over the medium term, GDP growth was projected to average 1.8%.
20. The Minister of Finance emphasized that the major objective of the current administration is to accomplish the goals of redistribution, redress and structural change; that the economy needs to grow much faster and in an inclusive manner.
21. Further, the Minister of Finance announced that a three-year wage agreement has been reached with the Public Sector (see paragraph 23). Although the agreement exceeds the 2024 Budget and MTBPS projections, its duration reduces uncertainty in budget planning.
22. The Minister of Finance mentioned that South Africa's average spending on public-sector salaries is well above that of many countries. Cabinet has approved an early retirement programme to reduce government employment costs while retaining critical skills and promoting the entry of younger talent into the public service.

Current principles

Wage settlement data

23. The PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2025 provides that for the financial years 2025/26, 2026/27, and 2027/28, employees on salary levels 1 to 12, including those under OSDs, will receive pensionable salary increases as follows:
 - Financial Year 2025/26: A 5.5% increase effective April 1, 2025.
 - Projected Consumer Price Index (CPI) for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, as determined by the National Treasury during the main budget tabling.

Senior Management Services (SMS) and other Public Service Employees

24. The Minister of Public Services and Administration determined a 4.1% pensionable salary adjustment as a COLA for SMS effective from 1 April 2025.

Inflation

25. Any consideration around the COLA should consider the effects of inflation, to enable POBs to maintain their lifestyle. There is a general expectation that higher inflation implies a higher remuneration adjustment. As a starting point, the basis for consideration of salary increases and COLA would be done relative to Headline Inflation.

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26. To determine an appropriate level of inflation to be used as a starting point on which to consider any COLA, the Commission considered the following:

Historical or Forecast Inflation

27. Ideally, historical inflation should be measured at a set calendar month for an increase in a fixed month in the annual cycle, to ensure that the inflation measure captures the full inflation experience over time. A delay in the granting of the inflation increase should not result in the inflation measure for a different month being referenced, typically a more recent measure, since then it is likely that for the next increase, granted without a delay, will reference an overlapping period of inflation. We should not use hindsight as a result of a delay in the increase, since this will result in an inconsistent measure of inflation being used.

South African Reserve Bank (SARB)

28. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Statement of 20 March 2025 specified that in terms of the outlook, the forecast had more moving parts than usual, including a reweighting of the CPI by Statistics South Africa, and the proposed Value Added Tax (VAT) increases announced in the Budget. The overall result of these changes is a marginally lower inflation outlook, with headline inflation projected at 3.6% for 2025 and 4.5% for 2026.

National Treasury and South Africa's big banks

29. The average forecasts for South Africa's big banks indicate forecast inflation to average 3.9% in 2025 while National Treasury had forecast inflation to average 4.3% in 2025.

Bureau for Economic Research (BER) – University of Stellenbosch

30. According to the BER Economic prospects report 2025Q1, there have been a slight downward revision to 2024 and 2025 real GDP growth forecasts. BER's real GDP forecast for 2024 has been revised down to 0.8%.

31. In the third quarter of 2025, on average, the three social groups (analysts, business and trade unions) lowered their longer-term inflation expectations. They now expect headline inflation in the next five years to average 4.2% (compared to 4.4% before). Near-term expectations were down by 0.1% for both 2025 and 2026, to 3.8% and 4.2%. The one and five-year-ahead expectation is thus equal, at 4.2%.

32. The survey respondents also downwardly revised their forecast of wage increases. They now expect salaries to rise by 4.7% in 2025 (from 4.9%) and 4.8% (5.1%) in 2026.

Headline Inflation and Commission's base cost of living adjustment

33. While there may be motivation for the fact that inflation affects individuals in different ways, Headline Inflation as measured by the change in the CPI remains a sensible measure on which to base COLA.

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Year-on-year the Statistics SA Headline Inflation has averaged 3.0% in April 2025 and 3.3% in August 2025.

Historical Inflation measured at a consistent date

34. Historical inflation is a known, objective data point that can be independently referenced, and universally determined. Forecast inflation or inflation expectation is subjective and driven by sentiment which can change over time. Witness the reduction that has been experienced in the forecast inflation for 2025 over time, as various factors have emerged that were not anticipated early in the forecast period. Further, forecasts by entity vary, depending on the perspectives of the forecaster, and the level of prudence or conservatism in the forecast, and often driven by the purpose for which the forecaster comments on the inflation expectation. Given its objectivity, the Commission has decided to reference historical inflation.

35. Based on the above inflation data, the Commission is of the view that the realistic base range for inflation forecast for 2025/2026 should be between 3.5% and 4.5%.

Available resources

36. The Minister of Finance in 2024 MTBPS of 30 October 2024 outlines a path to stronger economic growth, supported by accelerated structural reforms and increased investment infrastructure.

37. Government's medium-term strategy remains focused on achieving fiscal sustainability, supporting economic growth and critical social services, and addressing significant fiscal and economic risks. The strategy prioritizes amongst others, controlling growth in the public-service wage bill by ensuring that public servants are compensated fairly while implementing measures to contain overall costs.

38. Medium-term changes to spending are largely driven by government's proposals to implement early retirement measures in 2025/26 and 2026/27 to manage the public service wage bill and bring in younger talent into the public service.

39. Over the past decade, the wage bill has decreased as a share of consolidated spending, falling from 35.7 % in 2013/14 to 32.1 % in 2023/24. By 2027/28, the wage bill is projected to decrease to 31.4 % of consolidated spending. To further contain public service wage costs, government is proposing to reactivate early retirement without penalties.

40. The table below shows the Commission's budget information of the recommended 4.1% adjustment

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Budget Information			
POB Category	No. of incumbents	2024/25	2025/26 including the recommended adjustment
National Executives and Deputy Ministers	75	183 890 132	191 429 627
Members of Parliament	383	533 227 706	555 090 042
Provincial Executives and Legislatures	429	688 580 853	716 812 668
Judges	237	521 765 707	543 158 101
Magistrates	1 620	2 016 411 521	2 099 084 394
Traditional Leaders	8 465	1 261 732 546	1 313 463 581
Local Government	9 331	7 800 762 024	8 120 593 267
ICIs POBs	47	71 033 000	73 945 353
Total	20 587	13 077 403 489	13 613 577 032

NATIONAL TREASURY INFLATION FORECASTS, THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATIONS: FOR THE PERIOD 2020 – 2024/25

41. The following table sets out National Treasury's previous CPI forecast relative to the Commission's recommendations and the President's determinations:

Year	National Treasury CPI	Commission's Recommendations		President's Determinations
2020/2021	4.5%	All POB positions	0%	0%
2021/2022	4.8%	All POB positions	3%	3%
2022/2023	4.8%	All POB positions	4.8%-1	3%
2023/2024	4.9%	All POB positions	3%	3%
2024/2025	4.6%	All POB positions	2.5%	2.5% All 4.7% Magistrates

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ANNUAL REMUNERATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2025/2026

42. The Commission is mindful that inflation is not the only determinant of salary adjustments. In March 2025, the National Treasury CPI is averaged at 4,3% for the year 2025, Stats SA averaged CPI at 3.0% in April 2025 and 3.3.% in August 2025.

43. There are other factors such as the state of affordability and adherence to the government's initiative of restoring economic growth and stability in managing the wage bill in the country. The Minister of Finance reiterated this in the 2025 Budget Speech relating to the public servants, along with the effect of the three-year wage agreement on budget planning procedures.

44. According to 2024 MTBPS, the Commission has observed slight economic growth. Considering the above observations, the Commission is recommending a **4,1%** cost-of-living remuneration adjustment for POBs to address the issue of salary erosion, and to maintain the purchasing power for POBs.

45. The remuneration scales are attached as schedule 1 to 8.

Signed at Johannesburg on 17/12 / 2025



JUDGE Z. CARELSE
CHAIRPERSON

Commissioners: Judge Z Carelse (Chairperson); Mr. MP Tjie (Deputy Chairperson); Ms. JM Maisela; Dr. C Nwaila; Dr. RC Lubisi; Mr. L Modise; Ms. F Petersen-Cook and Ms. P Kekana

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SCHEDULE 1					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND DEPUTY MINISTERS					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
EA	1	President	3 348 761	4.1	3 486 061
EB	1	Deputy President	3 164 654		3 294 404
EC	1	Minister	2 689 937		2 800 225
ED	1	Deputy Minister	2 215 220		2 306 044

SCHEDULE 2					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
PA	1	Speaker: National Assembly	3 164 654	4.1	3 294 404
		Chairperson: NCOP	3 164 654		3 294 404
PB	1	Deputy Speaker: National Assembly	2 215 220		2 306 044
		Deputy Chairperson: NCOP	2 215 220		2 306 044
	2	House Chairperson	2 108 472		2 194 919
PC	1	Chief Whip: Majority Party	1 792 595		1 866 092
		Chief Whip: NCOP	1 792 595		1 866 092
		Parliamentary Counsellor: President	1 792 595		1 866 092
		Parliamentary Counsellor: Deputy President	1 792 595		1 866 092
	2	Leader of Opposition	1 792 595		1 866 092
	2	Chairperson of a Committee	1 675 314		1 744 002
PD	1	Deputy Chief Whip: Majority Party	1 507 841		1 569 662
		Chief Whip: Largest Minority Party	1 507 841		1 569 662
		Leader of a Minority Party	1 507 841		1 569 662
	2	Whip	1 399 201		1 456 568
PE	1	Member: National Assembly	1 274 536		1 326 792
		Permanent Delegate: NCOP	1 274 536		1 326 792

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SCHEDULE 3					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVES AND LEGISLATURES					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
LA	1	Premier	2 531 760	4.1	2 635 562
LB	1	Member of Executive Council	2 215 220		2 306 044
		Speaker	2 215 220		2 306 044
LC	1	Deputy Speaker	1 792 595		1 866 092
		Chief Whip: Majority Party	1 675 314		1 744 002
	2	Chairperson of Committees	1 507 844		1 569 666
		Leader of Opposition	1 507 844		1 569 666
		Chairperson of a Committee	1 507 844		1 569 666
	3	Deputy Chairperson of Committees	1 418 612		1 476 775
		Deputy Chief Whip: Majority Party	1 418 612		1 476 775
		Chief Whip: Largest Minority Party	1 418 612		1 476 775
		Leader of a Minority Party	1 418 612		1 476 775
LD	1	Parliamentary Counsellor to a King	1 274 536		1 326 792
		Whip	1 274 536		1 326 792
	2	Member of Provincial Legislature	1 233 560		1 284 135

SCHEDULE 4					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 JULY 2025					
LOCAL GOVERNMENT					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Jul-24	%	01-Jul-25
MA	1	Executive Mayor	1 532 264	4.1	1 595 087
		Mayor	1 532 264		1 595 087
MB	1	Deputy Executive Mayor	1 237 484		1 288 221
		Speaker/Chairperson	1 237 484		1 288 221
		Deputy Mayor	1 237 484		1 288 221
MC	2	Member of Executive Council	1 165 692		1 213 486
		Member of Mayoral Committee	1 165 692		1 213 486
		Chairperson of a Sub-council	1 165 692		1 213 486
		Whip	1 165 692		1 213 486
MD	1	Municipal Councillor	686 752		714 909

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SCHEDULE 5					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
JUDGES					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
JA	1	Chief Justice	3 243 771	4.1	3 376 765
JB	1	Deputy Chief Justice	2 919 317		3 039 009
		President: Supreme Court of Appeal	2 919 317		3 039 009
JC	1	Deputy President: Supreme Court of Appeal	2 757 186		2 870 230
	2	Judge: Constitutional Court	2 595 054		2 701 451
		Judge: Supreme Court of Appeal	2 595 054		2 701 451
	3	Judge President: High/Labour Court	2 432 922		2 532 672
	4	Deputy Judge President: High/Labour Court	2 270 601		2 363 696
	5	Judge: High/Labour Court	2 108 470		2 194 917

SCHEDULE 6					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
MAGISTRATES					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	POSITION	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
JD	1	Special Grade Chief Magistrate	1 689 981	4.1	1 759 270
		Regional Court President	1 689 981		1 759 270
	1	Regional Magistrate	1 516 364		1 578 535
		Chief Magistrate	1 516 364		1 578 535
	1	Senior Magistrate	1 256 919		1 308 453
	1	Magistrate	1 161 674		1 209 303

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SCHEDULE 7					
REMUNERATION LEVELS WITH EFFECT 01 APRIL 2025					
INSTITUTION OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS	01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
TA	1	King/Queen	1 388 764	4.1	1 445 704
TB	1	PTL	1 277 668		1 330 052
TC	1	Senior Traditional Leader	303 467		315 909
TD	1	Headmen / Headwomen	130 394		135 740
HOUSES OF TRADITIONAL LEADERS					
GRADE	PAY LEVEL	FULL TIME POSITIONS			
THA	1	Chairperson: NHTL	1 045 305	4.1	1 088 162
	2	Full time Chairperson: PHTL	860 954		896 253
	3	Full time Deputy Chairperson: NHTL	799 501		832 280
	4	Full time Deputy Chairperson: PHTL	737 838		768 090
THB	1	Full time Member: NHTL	464 945		484 008
	2	Full time Member: PHTL	398 562		414 904
SITTING ALLOWANCE FOR PART TIME POSITIONS *					
Part time Member: NHTL		1 706	4.1	1 776	
Part time Chairperson: PHTL		2 028		2 112	
Part time Deputy Chairperson: PHTL		1 825		1 900	
Part time Member: PHTL		1 415		1 473	

* In addition to sitting allowances, part time members are entitled to their salaries as Traditional Leaders, as well as subsistence costs (reasonable and actual expenses) and transport costs (Department of Transport tariffs for the use of privately owned vehicles), for their attendance of official meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences of the respective Houses)

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SCHEDULE 8					
Independent Constitutional Institutions (ICIs)					
Institution	Position		01-Apr-24	%	01-Apr-25
Auditor-General (AG)	Auditor General		5 690 506		5 923 817
Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)	Chairperson		2 717 270		2 828 678
	Commissioner		2 365 762		2 462 758
	Part-Time: Commissioners	A daily sitting rate or hourly sitting rate calculated on a basic salary of a Judge of the High Court	6 001		6 247
Office of Public Protector	Public Protector (PP)	01-Jul-19	2 595 054		2 701 451
	Deputy Public Protector (DPP)		2 031 835		2 115 140
Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)	Chairperson		2 106 509		2 192 876
	Councillor		1 665 371		1 733 651
Finance & Fiscal Commission (FFC)	Chairperson		2 106 509		2 192 876
	Part-Time Member: Deputy Chairperson	A daily sitting rate or hourly sitting rate calculated on a first total package equivalent to Level 15 of DPSA	6 381	4.1	6 643
	Part-Time: Other Members	A daily sitting rate or hourly sitting rate calculated on a first total package equivalent to Level 14 of DPSA	5 249		5 464
Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission)	Chairperson		1 517 407		1 579 621
	Deputy Chairperson		1 289 664		1 342 540
	Commissioner		1 146 781		1 193 799
SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC)	Chairperson		1 610 096		1 676 110
	Deputy Chairperson		1 366 463		1 422 488
	Commissioners		1 252 591		1 303 947
	Part-Time Members	01-Jul-19	4 971		5 175
Commission for Gender Equality (CGE)	Chairperson		1 287 734		1 340 531
	Deputy Chairperson		1 102 306		1 147 500
	Commissioner		1 025 758		1 067 814
	Part-Time Members		4 070		4 237

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