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Court of Appeals

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<https://www.mncourts.gov/>

AT A GLANCE

The 19 judges serving on the Court of Appeals hear cases in three-judge panels in courthouses throughout the state. In 2021, 1,558 cases were filed with the Court of Appeals.

Court of Appeals decisions are the final ruling in about 95 percent of the appeals filed each year. Only about five percent of the Court's dispositions are accepted by the Minnesota Supreme Court for further review.

The Court of Appeals serves all Minnesota citizens.

PURPOSE

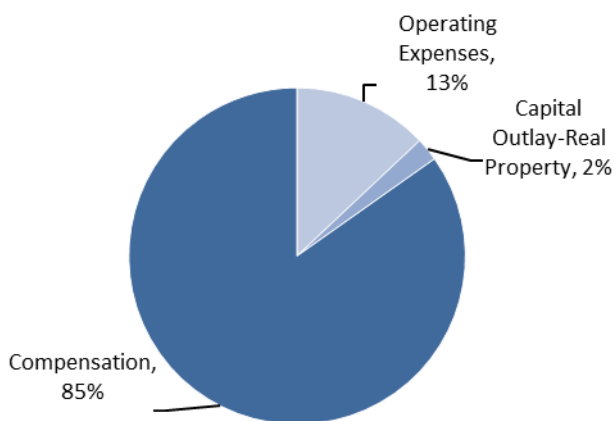
The mission of the Judicial Branch is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides the citizens of Minnesota with prompt and deliberate review of all final decisions of the trial courts, state agencies and local governments.

- The Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over all final decisions of the district courts, except first degree murder convictions, which are appealed directly to the Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals also has jurisdiction to review certain decisions of administrative agencies and local governments.

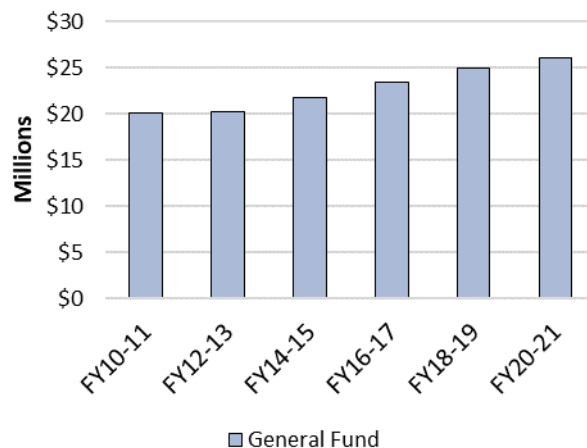
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2021 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Court of Appeals' fiscal year (FY) 2021 expenditures were \$13,383,000. The budget is funded 100% through the state general fund.

STRATEGIES

The mission of the Judicial Branch is *"To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies."* The Court of Appeals conducts its functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission:

1. Access to Justice - *A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.*

Ensuring access to justice for all is an enduring commitment for Minnesota's court system. It is also an increasingly challenging concern given changing court customer expectations, shifting demographics, and increased competition for scarce resources.

2. Effective Administration of Justice - *A justice system that adopts approaches and processes for the fair and just resolution of all cases.*

Over the last two decades, Minnesota courts have worked diligently to become increasingly efficient and effective. The Judicial Branch is focused on being a well-managed court system that seeks innovative ways to promote justice for individual litigants in individual cases.

3. Public Trust and Accountability - *A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.*

The Judicial Branch is accountable to the public. It is critical that the Branch maintain and continuously improve public trust and accountability, and it must meet this challenge by collaborating with court customers to eliminate disparities in the court system.

As part of the court's effort to expedite justice and to make access to the appellate system less burdensome and expensive, the court's 19 judges sit in three-judge panels and travel to locations throughout Minnesota to hear oral arguments.

By law, the Court must issue a decision within 90 days after oral arguments. This deadline is the shortest imposed on any appellate court in the nation. The Court expedites decisions on child protection cases, child custody cases, mental health commitments and other requested matters.

The Court of Appeals issues a published opinion, unpublished opinion, or order opinion on each case it considers on the merits.

RESULTS

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to establish core performance goals and to monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals in order to ensure accountability of the Branch, improve overall operations of the court and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Judiciary. Throughout the year the Court of Appeals reviews performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch's governing body) twice a year.

The Court of Appeals has adopted the American Bar Association (ABA) standards for intermediate appellate courts, which measure cases from beginning (filing) to end (disposition). The goals are to have 75% of the cases disposed within 290 days of filing and 90% of cases disposed within 365 days of filing.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on the Minnesota Judicial Branch and statewide court operations. In early March 2020, most in-person court proceedings were suspended, public access to court facilities was limited, and courthouse service windows were restricted to only telephone and email support. Currently all courthouses are open, and efforts are underway to address the significant challenges to the Judicial Branch's timeliness goals as a result of the pandemic.

Court of Appeals Cases Disposed Within 290 Days of Filing, 2019 - 2021

Court of Appeals Percentage of Cases Disposed Within 290 Days of Filing Goal = 75% of Cases						
	FY2019		FY2020		FY2021	
	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective
Civil	984	84%	957	92%	858	86%
Criminal	828	48%	892	52%	702	44%
Juvenile Protection	95	99%	87	99%	61	100%
Juvenile Delinquency	18	100%	15	100%	18	94%
Total Cases	1,912	69%	1,951	74%	1,639	68%

Percent of Court of Appeals Cases Disposed Within 365 Days of Filing

Court of Appeals Percentage of Cases Disposed Within 365 Days of Filing Goal = 90% of Cases						
	FY2019		FY2020		FY2021	
	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective
Civil	971	97%	957	99%	858	97%
Criminal	828	88%	892	88%	702	78%
Juvenile Protection	95	100%	87	100%	61	100%
Juvenile Delinquency	18	100%	15	100%	18	100%
Total Cases	1,912	93%	1,951	94%	1,639	89%

Data are from the *Judicial Branch 2021 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Report*. The report can be found at www.mncourts.gov.

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI, provides the legal authority for the Court of Appeals; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6. Minn. Stat. Chapter 480A; <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480A> provides the authority for Court of Appeals operations.

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Enacted Budget	
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>								
1000 - General	12,617	13,383	12,938	14,126	13,574	13,574	14,559	15,259
Total	12,617	13,383	12,938	14,126	13,574	13,574	14,559	15,259
Biennial Change				1,064		84		2,754
Biennial % Change				4		0		10
Enacted Budget Change from Base								2,670
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								10

Court of Appeals

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Enacted Budget	
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
1000 - General								
Balance Forward In		220		552				
Direct Appropriation	12,831	13,163	13,490	13,574	13,574	13,574	14,559	15,259
Balance Forward Out	214		552					
Expenditures	12,617	13,383	12,938	14,126	13,574	13,574	14,559	15,259
Biennial Change in Expenditures				1,064		84		2,754
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				4		0		10
Enacted Budget Change from Base								2,670
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								10

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2023 Appropriations	13,574	13,574	13,574	27,148
Forecast Base	13,574	13,574	13,574	27,148
Change Items				
Maintain Core Justice Operations		985	1,685	2,670
Total Enacted Budget	13,574	14,559	15,259	29,818

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
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Maintain Core Justice Operations

This provision provides additional operating funds to maintain the current level of service delivery at the Court of Appeals.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	985	1,685	2,670	1,685	1,685	3,370
Expenditures	0	985	1,685	2,670	1,685	1,685	3,370