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

AT A GLANCE

- In 2021, 860,604 cases were filed in district court.
- District Court proceedings are held in 104 locations throughout all 87 Minnesota counties.
- District Courts are organized into ten judicial districts for administrative purposes.
- There are 296 judges at the District Court level.
- District Courts serve all Minnesota citizens.

PURPOSE

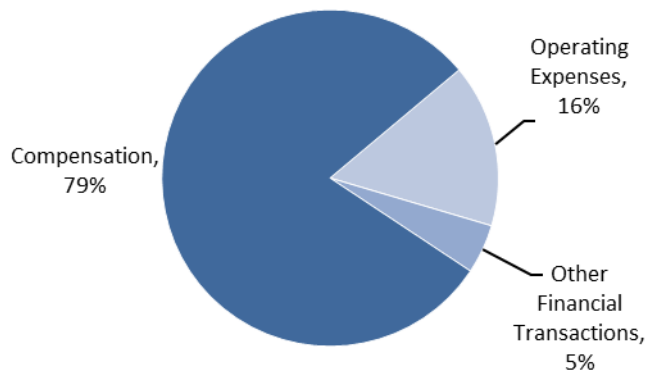
The mission of the Judicial Branch is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

District courts are the backbone of the state's court system. District courts provide access to the justice system across the state, with courthouses located in all 87 counties. For administrative purposes, district courts are divided among ten judicial districts. A chief judge serves as the administrative head in each judicial district. Judicial District Administrators assist the Chief Judge in carrying out his/her responsibilities. Court administration staff at the county level manage scheduling, case flow, finance, personnel and juries.

District Court judges hear everything from traffic tickets, civil and family conflicts, and first-degree murder trials. Some district courts may have separate divisions, such as criminal, civil, probate, family, and juvenile courts.

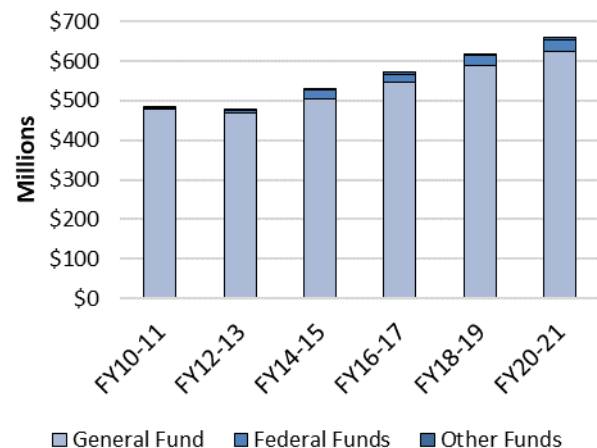
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2021 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The District Courts spent \$349 million in fiscal year (FY) 2021. Of this amount, \$332 million (95%) was from state general fund appropriations, while the remaining \$17 million (5%) of funding was received from various sources, such as federal and local government grants and donations from foundations.

STRATEGIES

The District Court 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.

In recent years, the Judicial Branch has begun implementing an ambitious reform agenda involving the use of technology and the re-engineering of business practices in a system-wide effort to expand services and ensure equal access to justice. The centerpiece of this effort – the eCourtMN Initiative – transformed Minnesota's courts from a paper-based environment to an electronic information environment that will ensure convenient, timely, and appropriate access to case information for all stakeholders, and result in more timely and efficient processing of cases. Electronic filing of cases, at both the trial and appellate levels, became mandatory on July 1, 2016. 2021 was a transformative year in the history of the court system. A year in which judges and staff not only stepped up to keep the courts open during a time of crisis, but in which the Branch laid the foundation for a more robust, efficient, effective, and accessible court system into the future. Current efforts focus on leveraging technology to provide high-quality, consistent, and convenient court administration services anywhere in the state.

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 Judicial Branch, improve overall operations of the court and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Judiciary. Throughout the year, the district courts are directed to review performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch's governing body) twice a year. An important goal is whether courts handle cases in a timely manner. 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.

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Results	Statewide Clearance Rate – The Clearance Rate measures whether courts are disposing of as many cases as are filed in the same year.	95%	102%	FY2020 and FY2021
Results	Statewide Time to Disposition - Time to Disposition assesses the length of time it takes a court to process cases.	93% disposed of within Judicial Branch time objectives.	88% disposed of within Judicial Branch time objectives.	FY2020 and FY2021
Results	Statewide Pending Rate for Juvenile Delinquency Cases – Assesses the number of cases that have not been disposed of during the timing objective standard of 99% disposition within 6 months.	19.9% of cases are pending after 6 months.	24% of cases are pending after 6 months.	FY2020 and FY2021

Data are from the Judicial Branch 2020 and 2021 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Reports. The reports can be found at <http://www.mncourts.gov>.

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6, provides the authority for the District Court. Minn. Stat Chapters 484, 485, 486, 491, 491A, 492, and 493; <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/part/JUDICIARY>, provide the legal authority for district court operations.

District Courts

Agency Expenditure Overview

(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	294,249	332,127	306,179	349,340	333,988	333,988	372,410	383,090
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	1,911	1,578	1,704	4,019	1,786	1,786	1,786	1,786
2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue		25	27	5	2	2	2	2
2403 - Gift	121	123	135	293	20	20	20	20
3000 - Federal	15,056	7,569	12,606	18,339	11,071	11,071	11,071	11,071
3010 - Coronavirus Relief	518	5,900						
3015 - ARP-State Fiscal Recovery			5,154	4,807				
6000 - Miscellaneous Agency	2,082	2,216	2,563	2,550	1,937	1,025	1,937	1,025
Total	313,937	349,539	328,366	379,353	348,804	347,892	387,226	396,994
Biennial Change				44,244		(11,023)		76,501
Biennial % Change				7		(2)		11
Enacted Budget Change from Base								87,524
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								13

District Courts

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		15,444		20,194				
Direct Appropriation	309,002	317,202	326,372	329,146	333,988	333,988	372,410	383,090
Transfers In	4,116	6,212	3,998	129	449	449	449	449
Transfers Out	4,116	6,712	3,998	129	449	449	449	449
Cancellations		19						
Balance Forward Out	14,753		20,193					
Expenditures	294,249	332,127	306,179	349,340	333,988	333,988	372,410	383,090
Biennial Change in Expenditures				29,143		12,457		99,981
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				5		2		15
Enacted Budget Change from Base								87,524
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								13

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	1,906	2,020	2,237	2,232				
Receipts	1,948	1,731	1,649	1,712	1,711	1,711	1,711	1,711
Transfers In	71	43	51	75	75	75	75	75
Balance Forward Out	2,014	2,217	2,234					
Expenditures	1,911	1,578	1,704	4,019	1,786	1,786	1,786	1,786
Biennial Change in Expenditures				2,233		(2,151)		(2,151)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				64		(38)		(38)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In		5	5	4				
Receipts		24	27	1	2	2	2	2
Transfers In	5							
Balance Forward Out	5	5	5					
Expenditures	25	27	5	5	2	2	2	2
Biennial Change in Expenditures				7		(28)		(28)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						(87)		(87)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

District Courts

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Enacted Budget FY24 FY25	
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2403 - Gift

Balance Forward In	233	247	234	243				
Receipts	130	111	144	50	20	20	20	20
Balance Forward Out	241	234	243					
Expenditures	121	123	135	293	20	20	20	20
Biennial Change in Expenditures				184		(388)		(388)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				75		(91)		(91)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

3000 - Federal

Balance Forward In	9,538	6,038	9,195	6,916	48	48	48	48
Receipts	10,971	10,706	10,327	11,471	11,071	11,071	11,071	11,071
Balance Forward Out	5,454	9,174	6,917	48	48	48	48	48
Expenditures	15,056	7,569	12,606	18,339	11,071	11,071	11,071	11,071
Biennial Change in Expenditures				8,319		(8,803)		(8,803)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				37		(28)		(28)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

3010 - Coronavirus Relief

Direct Appropriation	518	5,900						
Expenditures	518	5,900						
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(6,418)		0		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(100)				
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								

3015 - ARP-State Fiscal Recovery

Balance Forward In				4,807				
Direct Appropriation			9,961					
Balance Forward Out			4,807					

District Courts

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Enacted Budget FY24 FY25	
Expenditures			5,154	4,807				
Biennial Change in Expenditures				9,961		(9,961)		(9,961)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						(100)		(100)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								

6000 - Miscellaneous Agency

Balance Forward In	22,734	24,004	37,216	31,886	912		912	
Receipts	3,357	15,428	(2,769)	(28,424)	1,025	1,025	1,025	1,025
Transfers Out	5							
Balance Forward Out	24,004	37,216	31,884	912				
Expenditures	2,082	2,216	2,563	2,550	1,937	1,025	1,937	1,025
Biennial Change in Expenditures				815		(2,151)		(2,151)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				19		(42)		(42)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

District Courts

Agency Change Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2023 Appropriations	329,146	329,146	329,146	658,292
Base Adjustments				
Current Law Base Change		5,042	5,042	10,084
Program or Agency Sunset		(200)	(200)	(400)
Forecast Base	329,146	333,988	333,988	667,976
Change Items				
Maintain Core Justice Operations		24,618	43,265	67,883
Court Case Backlog		4,200		4,200
Mandated Psychological Services Deficit		1,500	1,500	3,000
New Treatment Courts		422	422	844
Courtroom Technology Enhancements		7,400		7,400
Contract Interpreter Payment Rate Continuation		200	200	400
Law Clerks Starting Salary Increase		2,033	2,033	4,066
Competency Attainment Board Delay		(3,542)		(3,542)
Extreme Risk Protection Orders		91	182	273
Legalizing Adult-Use Cannabis		1,500	1,500	3,000
Total Enacted Budget	329,146	372,410	383,090	755,500
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	4,019	1,786	1,786	3,572
Forecast Base	4,019	1,786	1,786	3,572
Total Enacted Budget	4,019	1,786	1,786	3,572
Fund: 2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	5	2	2	4
Forecast Base	5	2	2	4
Total Enacted Budget	5	2	2	4
Fund: 2403 - Gift				
Planned Spending	293	20	20	40
Forecast Base	293	20	20	40
Total Enacted Budget	293	20	20	40
Fund: 3000 - Federal				
Planned Spending	18,339	11,071	11,071	22,142
Forecast Base	18,339	11,071	11,071	22,142
Total Enacted Budget	18,339	11,071	11,071	22,142

District Courts

Agency Change Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Fund: 6000 - Miscellaneous Agency				
Planned Spending	2,550	1,937	1,025	2,962
Forecast Base	2,550	1,937	1,025	2,962
Total Enacted Budget	2,550	1,937	1,025	2,962
Revenue Change Summary				
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	1,712	1,711	1,711	3,422
Total Enacted Budget	1,712	1,711	1,711	3,422
Fund: 2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	1	2	2	4
Total Enacted Budget	1	2	2	4
Fund: 2403 - Gift				
Forecast Revenues	50	20	20	40
Total Enacted Budget	50	20	20	40
Fund: 3000 - Federal				
Forecast Revenues	11,471	11,071	11,071	22,142
Total Enacted Budget	11,471	11,071	11,071	22,142
Fund: 6000 - Miscellaneous Agency				
Forecast Revenues	(28,424)	1,025	1,025	2,050
Total Enacted Budget	(28,424)	1,025	1,025	2,050
Non-Dedicated				
Fund: 1000 - General				
Forecast Revenues	16,598	16,596	16,596	33,192
Total Enacted Budget	16,598	16,596	16,596	33,192

District Courts

Enacted Budget Changes

(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 District Courts.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	24,618	43,265	67,883	43,265	43,265	86,530
Expenditures	0	24,618	43,265	67,883	43,265	43,265	86,530

Court Case Backlog

This provision provides onetime funding to assist the courts in eliminating the court case backlog that accumulated during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds will be used to continue employing formerly retired judges and temporary staff to address the backlog while remaining current on new cases.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	4,200	0	4,200	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	4,200	0	4,200	0	0	0

Mandated Psychological Services Deficit

This provision provides onetime funding to fill the Judicial Branch's mandated psychological services deficit. The Judicial Branch is statutorily responsible for the cost of providing psychological examinations under Rule 20 of the Criminal Rules of Procedure and under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 253B. The costs of these examinations have significantly increased over the last several years, and the Judicial Branch has also assumed the additional cost of providing competency examinations that were previously provided by the Department of Human Services.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	1,500	1,500	3,000	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	1,500	1,500	3,000	0	0	0

New Treatment Courts

This provision allows the Judicial Branch to continue operating four treatment courts that face a discontinuation of grant funding. These four courts received one-time federal grants that are not being continued, necessitating an alternative source of ongoing funding.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	422	422	844	422	422	844
Expenditures	0	422	422	844	422	422	844

Courtroom Technology Enhancements

This provision provides onetime funding to assist the Judicial Branch in continuing its transition to a virtual justice system. This funding will be used to enhance and expand the courts' virtual and tech infrastructure so that the courts can expand remote hearing services.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	7,400	0	7,400	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	7,400	0	7,400	0	0	0

Contract Interpreter Payment Rate Continuation

This provision continues the current contract court interpreter hourly fee rate. In 2021, the legislature provided a one-time appropriation to increase interpreter hourly fees by eight percent for Fiscal Year 2022 and Fiscal Year 2023. This provision makes this eight percent increase permanent.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	200	200	400	200	200	400
Expenditures	0	200	200	400	200	200	400

District Courts

Enacted Budget Changes

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
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Law Clerks Starting Salary Increase

This provision provides funding for a salary increase for Judicial Branch law clerks. This pay increase will assist law clerks in achieving salary parity with public sector competitors of the Judicial Branch.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	2,033	2,033	4,066	2,033	2,033	4,066
Expenditures	0	2,033	2,033	4,066	2,033	2,033	4,066

Competency Attainment Board Delay

This provision reduces funding provided to the District Courts for Fiscal Year 2024 for the purposes of costs associated with additional competency examinations. Funding is reduced due to many of the new Competency Attainment Board's reporting requirement deadlines being shifted from Fiscal Year 2024 to Fiscal Year 2025.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	(3,542)	0	(3,542)	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	(3,542)	0	(3,542)	0	0	0

Extreme Risk Protection Orders

This provision provides funding to the District Courts for purposes of compliance with, and enforcement of, new extreme risk protection order rules and regulations.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	91	182	273	182	182	364
Expenditures	0	91	182	273	182	182	364

Legalizing Adult-Use Cannabis

The District Courts will receive funding to support treatment courts related to the legalization of adult-use cannabis.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	1,500	1,500	3,000	2,500	2,500	5,000
Expenditures	0	1,500	1,500	3,000	2,500	2,500	5,000