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## Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission

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<http://mn.gov/sentencing-guidelines/>

### AT A GLANCE

- Eleven Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission (MSGC) members represent key criminal justice stakeholders and the public
- MSGC creates and improves Sentencing Guidelines
- Guidelines give judges uniform standards to apply when sentencing over 18,000 felony cases annually
- MSGC staff help criminal justice professionals in all 87 counties use the Guidelines correctly
- MSGC staff publish reports and conduct research on felony sentencing for Commission, Legislature, and the public

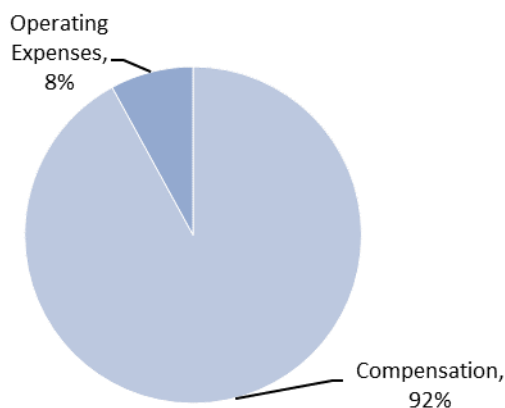
### PURPOSE

The MSGC exists to establish rational and consistent sentencing standards that—

- Promote public safety;
- Reduce sentencing disparity;
- Recommend felony sanctions that are proportional to the crime's severity and the offender's criminal history; and
- Support the appropriate use of finite correctional resources.
- The MSGC supports the statewide outcome that **people in Minnesota are safe**
- The MSGC supports the statewide outcome of **efficient and accountable government services**

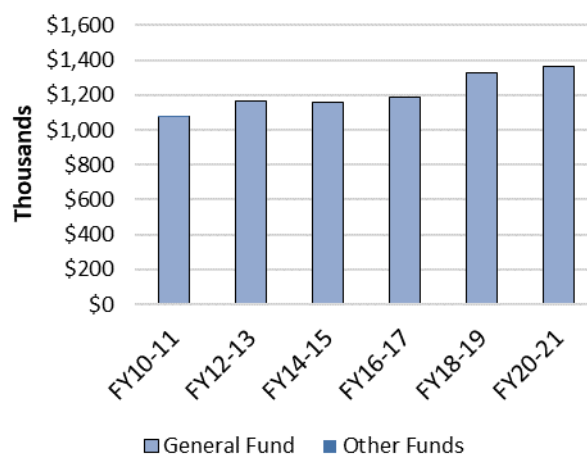
### BUDGET

**Spending by Category  
FY 2021 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

**Historical Spending**



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The MSGC's activities are financed entirely through the General Fund. Its payroll budget consists of one (1) Executive Director, four (4) research analysts, and one (1) management analyst. Operating expenses included leased space, technology costs, education delivery costs, and office expenses.

## STRATEGIES

The Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission utilizes the following strategies to accomplish its mission:

- The MSGC meets monthly to work on improving the Sentencing Guidelines.
- From time to time, the MSGC makes recommendations to the Legislature regarding changes to criminal law, criminal procedure, and other aspects of sentencing.
- MSGC staff create and maintain a comprehensive and accurate database on felony sentences.
- MSGC staff publish reports on sentencing practices and related criminal justice issues. These reports help policymakers, criminal justice officials, and the public evaluate felony sentencing policy and proposed legislation.
- A sentencing worksheet is required whenever a judge sentences a felony, and MSGC staff review every worksheet to ensure the accurate and consistent application of the Sentencing Guidelines.
- MSGC staff provide in-person and web-based educational opportunities to help practitioners understand and correctly apply Sentencing Guidelines policies.
- As needed, the MSGC and its staff respond to changes in case law, legislation, and issues raised by interested parties by making changes to the Sentencing Guidelines and the Electronic Worksheet System.
- Annually, MSGC staff work with the Department of Corrections to generate prison bed projections.
- MSGC members and staff serve on committees and task forces to further the goals of the criminal justice system.

## RESULTS

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Quantity	Felony offenders' sentencing worksheets reviewed	18,284	20,703	2018 & 2019
Quantity	Individual data reports prepared for practitioners, media, and the public	300	250	2019 & 2020
Quality	Number of agency fiscal notes completed; timeliness percentage	50; 100%	20; 100%	2019 & 2020
Results	Percentage of felony offenders receiving the recommend Sentencing Guidelines sentence	75%	73.7%	2018 & 2019

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Minn. Stat. sec. 244.09 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/244.09>) provides the legal authority for the MSGC.

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Enacted Budget	
	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY24	FY25
<b><u>Expenditures by Fund</u></b>								
1000 - General	673	677	683	822	765	765	1,549	1,488
<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>1,488</b>
Biennial Change				156		25		1,532
Biennial % Change				12		2		102
Enacted Budget Change from Base								1,507
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								99

*(Dollars in Thousands)*

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Enacted Budget FY24 FY25	
<b>1000 - General</b>								
Balance Forward In		6		57				
Direct Appropriation	679	687	740	765	765	765	1,549	1,488
Cancellations		16						
Balance Forward Out	6		57					
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>1,488</b>
Biennial Change in Expenditures				156		25		1,532
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				12		2		102
Enacted Budget Change from Base								1,507
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								99

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
<b>Direct</b>				
<b>Fund: 1000 - General</b>				
<b>FY2023 Appropriations</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1,530</b>
<b>Forecast Base</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1,530</b>
<b>Change Items</b>				
Maintain Current Service Levels		26	54	80
Expand Analysis of Sentencing-Related Data		125	124	249
Improve Fiscal Transparency & Agency Independence		50	50	100
Fully Integrate with the Court Information System		340	348	688
Comprehensively Review the Sentencing Guidelines – Phase I		243	147	390
<b>Total Enacted Budget</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>1,488</b>	<b>3,037</b>

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
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**Maintain Current Service Levels**

This provision provides additional operating funds to maintain the current level of service delivery at the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

<b>1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>108</b>
Expenditures	0	26	54	80	54	54	108

**Expand Analysis of Sentencing-Related Data**

This provision will expand the commission's staff through the hiring of a senior research analyst supervisor to oversee the commission's research staff. Having a supervisor trained in data and research analysis will allow the commission to improve data analysis project timelines and outcomes. Additionally, increasing the commission's research staff will also improve the commission's ability to fulfill its statutory responsibility to be the state's information center for sentencing and related data, allow it to publish reports in a timelier manner, and maintain minimum levels of service.

<b>1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>248</b>
Expenditures	0	125	124	249	124	124	248

**Improve Fiscal Transparency & Agency Independence**

This provision will allow the commission to move its accounting, budgeting, and human resources services to SmART for administration. Movement of these services to SmART will increase fiscal transparency and will bring the agency into compliance with statute, along with other benefits.

<b>1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>
Expenditures	0	50	50	100	50	50	100

**Fully Integrate with the Court Information System**

This provision allows the commission to facilitate data integrations with the Minnesota Judicial Branch's Court Information System (MNCIS). This provision will fund project management, business analysis, and application development on a one-time basis to facilitate the integration, while also funding IT infrastructure, staff support, and license fees and future enhancements on an ongoing basis. Integrating with MNCIS will save the commission time, improve commission accuracy, and enable quicker and better sentencing data analysis.

<b>1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>156</b>
Expenditures	0	340	348	688	78	78	156

**Comprehensively Review the Sentencing Guidelines – Phase I**

This provision provides onetime funding to finance the first phase of a 3 ½ year, two-phase comprehensive review of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines. Phase one will involve research and receiving input from a wide variety of stakeholder groups in preparation for phase two. During phase one, a temporary research analysis specialist will be hired for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 biennium to assist in facilitating the first phase of the review. This funding will also be used for academic consulting fees, MN.IT support, temporary office setup, and the consulting fees of Management and Budget's Management Analysis and Development consulting group to conduct stakeholder outreach.

<b>1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Expenditures	0	243	147	390	0	0	0