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Supreme Court

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

AT A GLANCE

The Supreme Court, consisting of seven members, is the highest court in Minnesota, serving as the final guardian of the Minnesota Constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution.

- In 2021, 88 direct appeals and 551 petitions for further review were filed with the Supreme Court.
- The Chief Justice is the administrative head of the Judicial Branch, which includes 322 justices and judges and 2,500 employees.

The Supreme Court serves all Minnesota citizens.

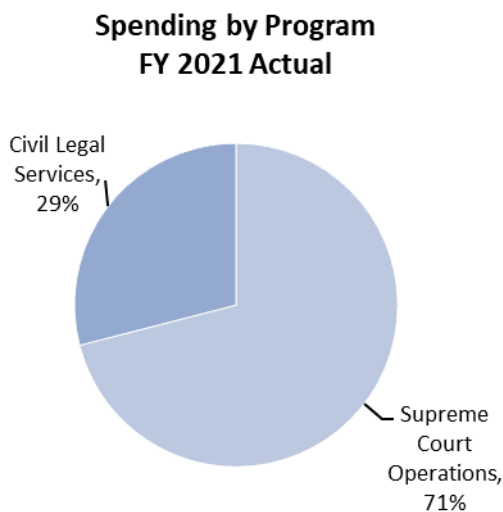
PURPOSE

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.

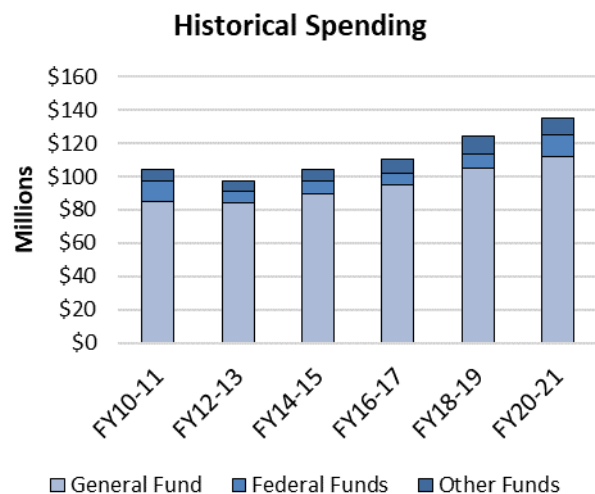
The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in remedial cases as prescribed by law, appellate jurisdiction over all cases, and supervisory jurisdiction over all courts in the state. Election contests and appeals for first-degree murder cases are automatically appealed to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is solely responsible for the regulation of the practice of law and for judicial and lawyer discipline. The Court also promulgates rules of practice and procedure for the legal system in the state.

The Chief Justice is responsible for supervising administrative operations of the state court system.

BUDGET



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Supreme Court expended \$71 million in FY 2021. Of this amount, \$58 million (82%) was from state general fund appropriations. The remaining \$13 million (18%) was funded through various sources, such as federal and local government grants, Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts, and fees.

STRATEGIES

As the state's highest court, the Supreme Court hears oral arguments in the State Capitol Courtroom and the Minnesota Judicial Center. The Supreme Court reviews matters on certiorari, meaning it reviews cases to set precedent, to clarify legal issues, to resolve statutory conflicts, and to answer constitutional questions. The Supreme Court considers appeals from judgments from the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. It hears special term matters, motions, and petitions for extraordinary relief. The Supreme Court also hears mandatory cases, including first degree murder convictions and election contests. The Court promulgates rules of practice and procedure for the legal system in the state.

In addition to hearing appeals, the Supreme Court is responsible for regulating the practice of law and making recommendations for improvement of the judicial system.

The Chief Justice is responsible for supervising administrative operations of the state court system. The Chief Justice is assisted by the State Court Administrator's Office, which provides the administrative infrastructure for the Judicial Branch, including providing finance, human resources, technology, education, communications, research/evaluation, caseload management and cross-district judicial assignments. The Chief Justice serves as chair of the Judicial Council, the policy-making entity for the Judicial Branch.

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 Supreme Court conducts its administrative 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.

The Judicial Council conducts a rigorous strategic planning process that guides the work of the State Court Administrator's Office in support of the Judicial Branch's three strategic goals. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated biennially.

In recent years, as part of the Judicial Council's strategic planning, 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. Current efforts focus on leveraging technology to provide

high-quality, consistent, and convenient court administration services anywhere in the state. 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 Branch, improve overall operations of the court and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the Judiciary. Throughout the year the Supreme Court reviews performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch's governing body) twice a year.

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.

The Supreme Court timing objectives identify the Court's performance based on the case type: Mandatory/Original Cases (e.g., First Degree Murder cases and Election Contests); Discretionary Cases (e.g., appeals from judgments from the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court); and Expedited Cases (Appeals in termination of parental rights and adoption cases).

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	FY2020		FY2021	
		Number of Cases	Percent that met Timing Objective	Number of Cases	Percent that met Timing Objective
Results	Mandatory/Original Cases Ninety five percent of the cases will be disposed of within 180 days of submission to the Supreme Court.	96	81.5%	86	84.4%
Results	Discretionary Cases Ninety five percent of petitions for further review should be disposed of within sixty days of the filing of the request for review.	610	91%	471	82%
Results	Expedited Cases Ninety five percent of expedited appeals (termination of parental rights, adoptions) should be disposed of within 25 days of filing the appeal.	25	86%	13	81%

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

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6, provides the legal authority for the Supreme Court. M.S. 2.724 provides legal authority for the chief justice's administrative responsibilities: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/2.724>. M.S. 480.05 provides legal authority for the Supreme Court's rule making authority: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.05>. M.S. 480.13-17 provide legal authority for the position and duties of the state court administrator: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.13>, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.14>, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.15>, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.16>, <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.17>.

(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	54,070	58,343	57,751	64,348	61,582	61,582	80,686	83,169
2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue	3,715	3,783	3,189	4,118	4,127	3,986	4,127	3,986
2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue		15	5	23	22	22	22	22
2403 - Gift	1,075	1,081	251	56				
3000 - Federal	4,779	4,475	4,826	8,500	6,704	6,587	6,704	6,587
3010 - Coronavirus Relief		3,500						
4925 - Family and Medical Benefit Ins							15	15
6000 - Miscellaneous Agency	19							
Total	63,658	71,196	66,022	77,045	72,435	72,177	91,554	93,779
Biennial Change				8,213		1,545		42,266
Biennial % Change				6		1		30
Enacted Budget Change from Base								40,721
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								28

Supreme Court

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	0	2,643		2,766				
Direct Appropriation	56,367	57,495	60,517	61,582	61,582	61,582	80,686	83,169
Transfers In		397	175					
Transfers Out		1,907	175					
Cancellations		285						
Balance Forward Out	2,297		2,766					
Expenditures	54,070	58,343	57,751	64,348	61,582	61,582	80,686	83,169
Biennial Change in Expenditures				9,687		1,065		41,756
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				9		1		34
Enacted Budget Change from Base								40,691
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								33

2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In	1,913	2,889	2,261	2,637	1,967	1,309	1,967	1,309
Receipts	4,470	3,150	3,566	3,448	3,469	3,469	3,469	3,469
Balance Forward Out	2,668	2,256	2,639	1,967	1,309	792	1,309	792
Expenditures	3,715	3,783	3,189	4,118	4,127	3,986	4,127	3,986
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(191)		806		806
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(3)		11		11
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue

Balance Forward In			0	1				
Receipts	15		6	22	22	22	22	22
Balance Forward Out	0		1					
Expenditures	15		5	23	22	22	22	22
Biennial Change in Expenditures				13		16		16
Biennial % Change in Expenditures						55		55
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

2403 - Gift

Supreme Court

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Enacted Budget FY24 FY25	
Balance Forward In	2,388	1,382	307	56				
Receipts	48	5	1					
Balance Forward Out	1,362	307	56					
Expenditures	1,075	1,081	251	56				
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(1,848)		(307)		(307)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				(86)		(100)		(100)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								

3000 - Federal

Balance Forward In	927	1,022	1,047	859				
Receipts	4,814	4,490	4,639	7,641	6,704	6,587	6,704	6,587
Balance Forward Out	961	1,037	860					
Expenditures	4,779	4,475	4,826	8,500	6,704	6,587	6,704	6,587
Biennial Change in Expenditures				4,071		(35)		(35)
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				44		(0)		(0)
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								0

3010 - Coronavirus Relief

Direct Appropriation	3,500							
Expenditures	3,500							
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(3,500)		0		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures								
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								

4925 - Family and Medical Benefit Ins

Direct Appropriation							15	15
Expenditures							15	15
Biennial Change in Expenditures				0		0		30
Biennial % Change in Expenditures								
Enacted Budget Change from Base								30

Supreme Court

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimate FY23	Forecast Base FY24 FY25		Enacted Budget FY24 FY25	
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								
6000 - Miscellaneous Agency								
Balance Forward In	81							
Receipts	19							
Transfers Out	81							
Expenditures	19							
Biennial Change in Expenditures				(19)		0		0
Biennial % Change in Expenditures								
Enacted Budget Change from Base								0
Enacted Budget % Change from Base								

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2023 Appropriations	61,582	61,582	61,582	123,164
Forecast Base	61,582	61,582	61,582	123,164
Change Items				
Maintain Core Justice Operations		3,197	5,680	8,877
Civil Legal Services		15,362	15,362	30,724
Legalizing Adult-Use Cannabis		545	545	1,090
Total Enacted Budget	61,582	80,686	83,169	163,855
Fund: 4925 - Family and Medical Benefit Ins				
Change Items				
Family and Medical Benefit Insurance Program		15	15	30
Total Enacted Budget		15	15	30
Dedicated				
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	4,118	4,127	3,986	8,113
Forecast Base	4,118	4,127	3,986	8,113
Total Enacted Budget	4,118	4,127	3,986	8,113
Fund: 2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue				
Planned Spending	23	22	22	44
Forecast Base	23	22	22	44
Total Enacted Budget	23	22	22	44
Fund: 2403 - Gift				
Planned Spending	56			
Forecast Base	56			
Total Enacted Budget	56			
Fund: 3000 - Federal				
Planned Spending	8,500	6,704	6,587	13,291
Forecast Base	8,500	6,704	6,587	13,291
Total Enacted Budget	8,500	6,704	6,587	13,291
Revenue Change Summary				
Dedicated				

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Biennium 2024-25
Fund: 2000 - Restrict Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	3,448	3,469	3,469	6,938
Total Enacted Budget	3,448	3,469	3,469	6,938
Fund: 2001 - Other Misc Special Revenue				
Forecast Revenues	22	22	22	44
Total Enacted Budget	22	22	22	44
Fund: 3000 - Federal				
Forecast Revenues	7,641	6,704	6,587	13,291
Total Enacted Budget	7,641	6,704	6,587	13,291
Non-Dedicated				
Fund: 1000 - General				
Forecast Revenues	447	447	447	894
Total Enacted Budget	447	447	447	894

(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 Supreme Court.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	3,197	5,680	8,877	5,680	5,680	11,360
Expenditures	0	3,197	5,680	8,877	5,680	5,680	11,360

Civil Legal Services

This provision increases compensation and staffing levels at Civil Legal Services (CLS). This additional funding will allow CLS to stabilize current services, bring CLS salaries closer in parity with public sector competitors, and expand capacities to provide services to more Minnesotans.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	15,362	15,362	30,724	15,969	15,969	31,938
Expenditures	0	15,362	15,362	30,724	15,969	15,969	31,938

Legalizing Adult-Use Cannabis

The Supreme Court will receive funding for expungement activities related to the legalization of adult-use cannabis.

1000 - General Fund Cost (Savings)	0	545	545	1,090	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	545	545	1,090	0	0	0

Family and Medical Benefit Insurance Program

The Family and Medical Benefit Insurance Programs provides partial wage replacement to all Minnesotans who need to take time off from work due to a qualifying medical situation. The FMBI program will be managed by DEED and is initially funded by the general fund but will be self-sustaining through employer and employee premium contributions (0.70%, with at least 0.35% paid by the employer) starting January 1, 2026, when the program goes into effect. Funding provided to the Supreme Court will be used for necessary systems updates.

4925 - Family and Medical Benefit Ins Fund Cost (Savings)	0	15	15	30	0	0	0
Expenditures	0	15	15	30	0	0	0