

Table of Contents

Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

<i>Agency Profile</i>	1
Agency Expenditure Overview	3
Agency Financing by Fund	4
Agency Change Summary	5
<u>Change Item(s)</u>	6
<i>Operating Adjustment</i>	6

AT A GLANCE

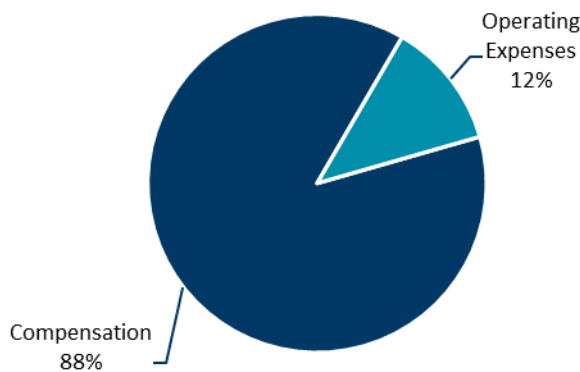
- Five appellate judges, who sit as panels of three or five, five staff attorneys, and administrative staff.
- The WCCA budget is 100% funded by the Workers Compensation Fund.
- We review workers' compensation appeals from the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH), the Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) and the Union Workers' Compensation Arbitration.
- We also decide petitions to reopen workers' compensation settlements and awards of benefits.
- Our website provides the public with information, rules, and a searchable archive of workers' compensation appellate decisions.
- Appeals from our decisions proceed directly to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

PURPOSE

The Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals is a highly specialized appellate court. Its mission is to provide accessible, fair, and timely review of disputed legal and factual issues which affect workers' compensation wage loss, medical benefits, and rehabilitation benefits.

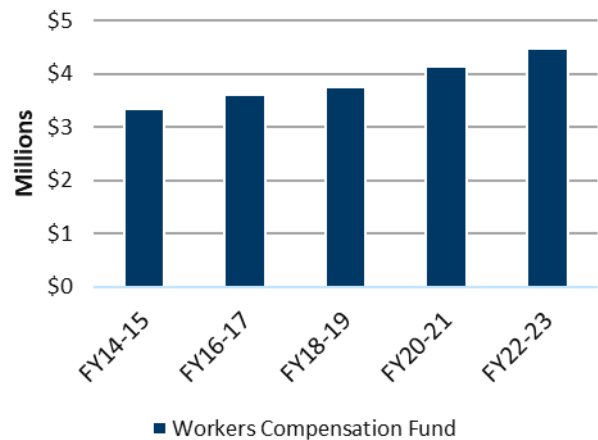
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2023 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

STRATEGIES

We provide accessible, fair, and timely review of disputes before us by:

- Promptly reviewing the evidentiary record created by the initial decision-making body;
- Integrating our case management, calendaring, and document filing systems with DLI through the CAMPUS system;
- Coordinating disparate technologies between OAH and the Minnesota Supreme Court;
- Insuring access by all parties to the case management systems;
- Presiding over oral arguments;
- Conducting necessary legal research;

- Deciding the issues on appeal;
- Issuing appropriate written orders, decisions, and memoranda; and
- Promptly preparing the record for review in cases appealed to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

RESULTS

We decide the disputes before us promptly and fairly, which:

- Ensures the timely and efficient delivery of benefits to injured workers at a reasonable cost to employers;
- Maintains economic stability for injured workers and their families;
- Provides for appropriate medical treatment of work-related illnesses and injuries;
- Supports a competitive business climate for Minnesota employers by reducing the amount of litigation; and
- Supports employers in creating safe and healthy work environments.

Our written decisions inform the parties and the public of the basis for the court's decisions and create a consistent body of law interpreting and applying the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Act. Our decisions are currently provided to the public at: <https://mn.gov/workcomp/decisions/>, distributed to the agency listserv, and available through legal databases such as Westlaw.

Performance Data

Measure Name	Measure Type	Measure Data Source	Historical Trend	Most Recent Data
Affected parties	Quantity	Case statistics from case management database.	Unavailable. This measure was first initiated in FY 2023	FY 2023: 461
Cases processed	Quantity	Case statistics from case management database.	Slightly increased from FY 2022 (51 cases)	FY 2023: 54
Average number of days between case assignment and issuance of decision	Quality/Result	Case statistics from case management database.	Faster case resolution time than FY 2022 (69 days)	FY 2023: 62

The legal authority for the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals is provided by Minn. Stat. Chapters 175A and 176 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=175A>; <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=176>).

Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

Agency Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27

Expenditures by Fund

2830 - Workers Compensation	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895
Total	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895
Biennial Change				680		(20)		711
Biennial % Change				15		(0)		14
Governor's Change from Base								731
Governor's % Change from Base								14

Expenditures by Program

Workers Compensation Court of Appeals	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895
Total	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895

Expenditures by Category

Compensation	1,957	1,972	2,123	2,339	2,201	2,289	2,600	2,621
Operating Expenses	261	273	275	406	361	273	361	273
Other Financial Transaction	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Total	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895

Full-Time Equivalents

12.57	12.73	11.81	13.00	13.00	12.00	13.00	12.00
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Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
2830 - Workers Compensation								
Balance Forward In		70		183				
Direct Appropriation	2,283	2,283	2,583	2,563	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895
Cancellations		105						
Balance Forward Out	65		183					
Expenditures	2,218	2,248	2,400	2,746	2,563	2,563	2,962	2,895
Biennial Change in Expenditures			680		(20)		711	
Biennial % Change in Expenditures			15		(0)		14	
Governor's Change from Base							731	
Governor's % Change from Base							14	
Full-Time Equivalents	12.57	12.73	11.81	13.00	13.00	12.00	13.00	12.00

Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

Agency Change Summary

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
Direct				
Fund: 2830 - Workers Compensation				
FY2025 Appropriations	2,563	2,563	2,563	5,126
Forecast Base	2,563	2,563	2,563	5,126
Change Items				
Operating Adjustment		399	332	731
Total Governor's Recommendations	2,563	2,962	2,895	5,857

Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

FY 2026-27 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Operating Adjustment

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Workers Compensation Fund				
Expenditures	399	332	332	332
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	399	332	332	332
FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$0.399 million in FY 2026 and \$0.332 million in each subsequent year from the Workers Compensation fund to help address operating cost increases at Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals.

Rationale/Background:

The cost of operations rises each year due to increases in employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, along with other salary and compensation-related costs. Other operating costs, like rent and lease, fuel and utilities, and IT and legal services also grow. This cost growth puts pressure on agency operating budgets that remain flat year to year.

Agencies face challenging decisions to manage these rising costs within existing budgets, while maintaining the services Minnesotans expect. From year to year, agencies find ways to become more efficient with existing resources. For FY 2026-27, agencies will need to continue to find additional efficiencies and leverage management tools to help address budget pressures. Holding open vacancies in certain programs or delaying hiring in other programs are examples of ways agencies manage through constrained operating budgets. Such decisions are difficult and must be weighed against a program's ability to conduct business with less staffing and its impact to service delivery.

This recommendation provides additional resources to help address these cost pressures and pay for agency operations.

Proposal:

The Governor recommends increasing agency operating budgets to support current services. For the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, this funding will help cover expected growth in employee compensation and insurance, rising rents, IT services, and other operating costs.

Dollars in Thousands

Net Impact by Fund	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 28-29
General Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0
Workers Compensation Fund	399	332	731	332	332	664
Total All Funds	399	332	731	332	332	664

Fund	Component Description	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 28-29
2830	Compensation	399	332	731	332	332	664

Results:

This recommendation is intended to help the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals address rising cost pressures and mitigate impacts to current levels of service and information to the public.