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Supreme Court

Agency Profile 1

<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 and applying the United States Constitution.
- In 2025, 116 direct appeals and 614 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 residents.

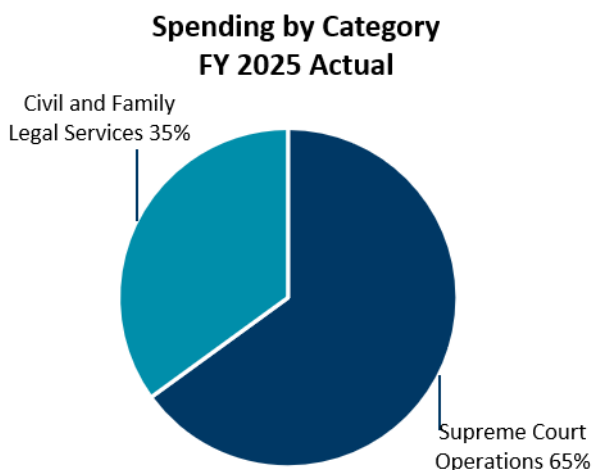
PURPOSE

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.

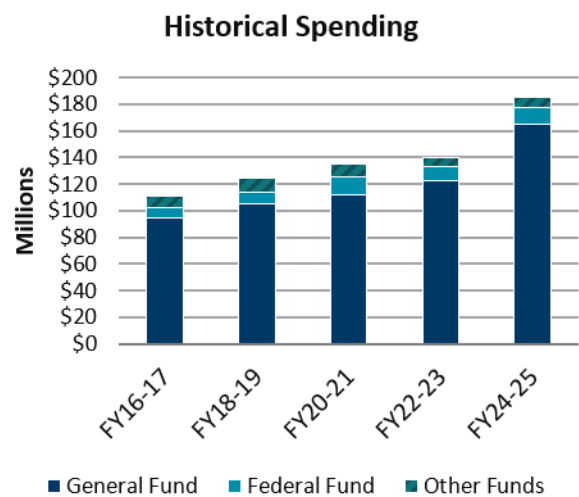
The Minnesota Supreme Court (Court) is the state's highest court. It has original jurisdiction in remedial cases as prescribed by law, appellate jurisdiction over all cases, and supervisory jurisdiction over all courts. The Court reviews matters on certiorari, meaning cases to set precedent, clarify legal issues, resolve statutory conflicts, and answer constitutional questions. It hears appeals from the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court as well as election contests and appeals for first-degree murder cases which are automatically appealed to the Supreme Court. The Court also considers special term matters, motions, and petitions for extraordinary relief. In addition, the Court is responsible for the regulation of the practice of law and for judicial and lawyer discipline, and promulgates rules of practice and procedure for Minnesota's legal system.

The Chief Justice is responsible for supervising administrative operations of the state court system and serves as chair of the Judicial Council, the policy-making entity for the Judicial Branch. 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 and evaluation, caseload management, and cross-district judicial assignments.

BUDGET



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Supreme Court spent \$97 million in fiscal year FY 2025. Of this amount, \$86 million (89 percent) was from general fund appropriations. \$11 million (11 percent) was funded through various sources, such as federal and local government grants, interest on lawyers' trust accounts, and fees. Due to legislative action, the Board of Civil Legal Aid became a new, independent agency on July 1, 2025 (beginning of FY 2026). Formerly part of the Supreme Court, Civil Legal Services expenses are included in the above historical spending chart.

STRATEGIES

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. The three goals are as follows:

- *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 user expectations, shifting demographics, and increased competition for scarce resources.
- *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.
- *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 and it is critical it maintains and continuously improves public trust and accountability. It must meet this challenge by collaborating with court customers to eliminate disparities in the court system.

Over the past 14 years, the Judicial Branch has engaged in a reform agenda to modernize and re-engineer the work of Minnesota's courts. These efforts have made the court system more efficient and more convenient for court users, while increasing access to court records for customers and the public.

Between 2012 and 2016, the eCourtMN Initiative transitioned Minnesota from paper-based court files to electronic case records improving efficiency, convenience for court users, information sharing between the state's justice partners, and access to court data. Following this initiative, the Judicial Branch adopted the oneCourtMN Vision to deliver "high-quality, consistent, and convenient court administration services anywhere in the state." To maintain access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic, the courts transitioned the majority of court hearings to online courtrooms which became preferred due to the ease and convenience of conducting official court business online.

In 2022, the Minnesota Judicial Branch became one of the first court systems in the nation to commit to the long-term use of remote (online) district court hearings. The Judicial Council adopted the oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative Policy, which set a temporary framework for how district courts would use both in-person and remote hearings to deliver timely and efficient access to justice. In 2024, the Judicial Council adopted a new, permanent hearing framework for how district courts will use both in-person and remote hearings going forward. This new framework took effect in February 2025.

RESULTS

Part A: Performance Data

It is the policy of the Judicial Branch to establish core performance goals and to monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals 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 Supreme Court reviews performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council twice a year.

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).

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Mandatory/Original Cases Ninety-five percent of the cases should be disposed of within 180 days of submission to the Supreme Court.	Result	The number of cases that met the timing objective.	81 percent of 57 cases in 2023 and 75 percent of 59 cases in 2025 met the timing objective.	75 percent in 2025
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.	Result	The number of cases that met the timing objective.	There was a decrease from 56 percent of 285 cases in 2023 to 34 percent of 376 cases in 2025 that met the timing objective.	34 percent in 2025
Expedited Cases Ninety-five percent of expedited appeals (termination of parental rights, adoptions) should be disposed of within 25 days of filing the appeal.	Result	The number of cases that met the timing objective.	There was an increase from 94 percent of 15 cases in 2023 to 100 percent of 19 cases in 2025 that met the timing objective.	100 percent in 2025

Data are from the Judicial Branch [2023 Performance Measures - Key Results and Measures Annual Report](https://mncourts.gov/_media/migration/ciomedialibrary/documents/annual-report-2023-performance-measures.pdf) (https://mncourts.gov/_media/migration/ciomedialibrary/documents/annual-report-2023-performance-measures.pdf) and [2025 Report](https://mncourts.gov/_media/migration/ciomedialibrary/documents/FY25-Performance-Measures-Annual-Report.pdf) (https://mncourts.gov/_media/migration/ciomedialibrary/documents/FY25-Performance-Measures-Annual-Report.pdf)

Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

Minnesota's district courts are a constitutionally established component of state government and play a fundamental role in upholding the rule of law, protecting individual rights, promoting public safety, and providing a peaceful and impartial forum for resolving disputes. The effectiveness of the court system is reflected in its ability to provide fair, accessible, and timely justice to Minnesotans across the state. In 2025 alone, more than 100 direct appeals and 600 petitions for further review were filed in the Supreme Court, encompassing matters ranging from traffic and family disputes to civil cases and serious criminal proceedings.

The Judicial Branch is strongly committed to performance measurement, accountability, and the use of data and evidence to continually improve court operations. For the past 17 years, the Judicial Branch has published an annual Performance Measures Report evaluating results related to access to justice, timeliness, integrity and accountability, excellence, fairness and equity, and quality court workplace environment. These measures provide a consistent, transparent assessment of how Minnesota's courts are performing and identify both positive results and areas requiring continued attention. The most recent report and prior Judicial Branch performance reports are available on the [Minnesota Judicial Branch Publications and Reports webpage](https://mncourts.gov/about-the-courts/publicationsandreports/mjb-performance-measures) (<https://mncourts.gov/about-the-courts/publicationsandreports/mjb-performance-measures>).

No evidence-based practices are known to be directly implemented by the Supreme Court.

[The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6) (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6) provides the legal authority for the Supreme Court. [M.S. 2.724](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/2.724) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/2.724>) provides legal authority for the chief justice's administrative responsibilities. [M.S. 480.05](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.05) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480.05>) provides legal authority for the Supreme Court's rule making authority. [M.S. 480.13-17](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480>) provides legal authority for the position and duties of the state court administrator.