



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH**

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

The 2018 Annual Report of the Minnesota Judicial Branch

LETTER FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE



Dear fellow Minnesotans,

I am pleased to present, on behalf of the judicial officers and staff of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, the 2018 Annual Report to the Community. The report is intended to give you a comprehensive view on the work and improvements implemented to increase access to justice in our great state.

One of the first promises made in Minnesota's Constitution is the right for all "to obtain justice freely... promptly and without delay." The judicial officers and staff of the Minnesota Judicial Branch strive every day to make that promise a reality for all while working to enhance the trust and confidence in our state courts.

In this report you will find a summary of efforts made in 2018 to ensure fair and timely access to justice, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of court operations, and improve outcomes for those who enter our justice system. This includes:

- Growing on the successes of reengineering of our court processes to ensure convenient, consistent, and customer-focused innovations;
- Expanding on the nationally-recognized tools offered to support self-represented litigants;
- Increasing the oversight and review of conservator-managed accounts and support services for guardians;
- Updating and making permanent the pilot for cameras in district courtrooms during criminal cases;
- Increasing electronic tools to make judicial and court administration more efficient.

There were many achievements made by our employees and judges in 2018. The Minnesota Judicial Branch is committed to our mission to provide equal access for the timely resolution of cases and controversies. I hope you find this report informative and useful.

Sincerely,

Lorie S. Gildea
Chief Justice
Minnesota Supreme Court

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THE MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Judicial Branch Mission

To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

Judicial Branch Overview

There are three levels of court in Minnesota: district courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. District courts are located in each of the state's 87 counties and are divided among 10 judicial districts for administration purposes.

The Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court is the administrative head of the Judicial Branch and responsible for its overall management. The Chief Justice chairs the Minnesota Judicial Council, the administrative, policy-making body for the Judicial Branch.

The State Court Administrator serves as staff to the Judicial Council. The State Court Administrator's Office provides central administrative infrastructure services to the entire Judicial Branch, including human resources, finance, legal research, information technology, communications, statewide program management, and research and evaluation services.

The Chief Justice leads the Supreme Court, which, in addition to resolving the cases that come before the Court, has the responsibility for regulating the practice of law and for the promulgation of statewide rules of procedure and practice for all courts of the state. There are seven justices on the Supreme Court.

There is a chief judge of the Court of Appeals, appointed by the governor for a three-year term, who serves as the head of that Court. There are 19 judges on the Court of Appeals.

One district court judge in each judicial district is elected as a chief judge by the bench for a two-year term, and is responsible for the management of the entire judicial district. The chief judge is assisted by a judicial district administrator. In 2018, the district courts were served by 294 district court judges, 23 referees, and 28 child support magistrates.

In 2018 there were 106 Judicial Branch court locations across Minnesota.

Judicial Branch FY2019 Budget

District (Trial) Courts	\$294,978,000
Court of Appeals	\$12,470,000
Supreme Court/State Court Administration/State Law Library	\$38,011,000
Total	\$345,459,000

STRATEGIC PLAN

Every two years, the Minnesota Judicial Council directs a comprehensive strategic planning process that defines the Judicial Branch's major goals for the upcoming biennium, and creates an operational roadmap to achieve those goals. The Minnesota Judicial Branch's major goals for the current FY2018-19 Strategic Plan are as follows:

- *Access to Justice*
- *Effective Administration of Justice*
- *Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality*

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.

The transition from [eCourtMN](#) to OneCourtMN has created an opportunity for court-user-focused organizational changes, process improvement, and continuity of service experiences. Reengineering has been the strategic effort that has led these wide-ranging initiatives to continue to improve Minnesota's court system.

OneCourtMN: Reengineering Minnesota's Courts

The Reengineering Steering Committee was formed in January 2017 to provide strategic direction and statewide coordination on initiatives aimed to implement more efficient and effective processes for the eCourtMN environment. The Committee was made up of State Court Administration and district court staff. Much of the Committee's efforts in 2017 were focused on information-sharing and the roll out of individual projects.

Over the course of 2018, the Committee plotted a roadmap and implemented initiatives to rethink and improve court processes and the

OneCourtMN Vision

High-quality, consistent, and convenient court administration services anywhere in the state.

customer experience in the fully digital, eCourtMN environment. Members of the Committee also formed and led local reengineering committees in their districts to advise the statewide Committee and build consensus around the OneCourtMN vision and direction. The final meeting of the statewide Committee was held in December 2018.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch's consistency, convenience, and customer-focus value statement guided the work of the Statewide Reengineering Committee and local committees. Major reengineering initiatives developed and implemented include:

- The Conservator Account Review Program (CARP) was established to work in partnership with the existing Conservator Account Auditing Program to bring greater and more frequent review to conservator-managed

accounts of the elderly and vulnerable.

- The transition to specialized document acceptance teams in judicial districts, and a new centralized oversight unit for document security, have resulted in fewer errors and more robust information-sharing.
- The move to mandatory Court Administrative Processes was begun to help ensure consistent case processing across the state.
- Three ambitious Small County Initiatives focused on centralization that were begun in 2017 and fully implemented in 2018 have sustained staffing in 17 rural, and the lowest volume, courthouses.
- The statewide Central Appeals Unit was relocated from Hennepin County District Court to Judicial Branch staff working in Lincoln and Pipestone county courthouses. This move allowed the two rural counties to keep their courthouse customer service windows open to the public.
- The new Consolidated Jury Unit is located in the Ninth Judicial District and has increased efficiency and consistency in jury processes, while sustaining courthouse customer service staffing in northwest Minnesota. The new Unit has centralized contact information, 888-902-9581 and MJBjury@courts.state.mn.us, and has become a central point of contact for prospective jurors and statewide court staff. The Consolidated Jury Unit is responsible for the summoning and qualification of jurors in all 87 counties.
- The Eighth Judicial District will soon be processing expedited child support orders for eight of the 10 judicial districts. As of the close of 2018, the centralized staff in the Eighth District has already reduced processing time for expedited child support orders by 20%.

Finally, State Court Administration directors and all judicial district administrators worked to digest the Reengineering Steering Committee recommendations and plot a course for 2019 and beyond. The group identified three organizational themes to address in the coming year:

- Sustain innovation and constant improvement through better information- and idea-sharing
- Improve and align the strategic planning process and project management systems
- Develop greater court user supports and expand engagement opportunities

In so many different ways, reengineering is having a positive impact on Minnesota's courts and court users. The electronic case record, coupled with all the new tools built during the transition to eCourtMN, have opened the door for the courts to work more efficiently, and process cases more effectively.

Audit office expands, offers new training

The Minnesota Judicial Branch Conservator Account Auditing Program has been nationally-lauded as an example of [state government innovation](#) and as a [model for better protecting vulnerable individuals](#) in need of conservatorship or guardianship. Two significant reengineering initiatives to improve conservator training and accountability were launched through the Conservator Account Auditing Program (CAAP) this year. CAAP was launched in 2012 as an effort to improve statewide oversight of court-appointed conservators and protect the assets of elderly and vulnerable Minnesotans. The Program previously audited all accounts with bondable asset balances of more than \$3,000 after one year, accounts referred by the court, and larger accounts every four years.



More frequent reviews for conservator-managed accounts

The Conservator Account Review Program (CARP) was launched in 2018 to provide regular review of accounts not subject to CAAP audits, and to provide public hearing preparation documents to district courts. One of the primary goals of this reengineering effort—in addition to providing greater oversight of conservator-managed accounts—is to provide district court judges more information and insight to assist in their decision-making process. CARP reviews accounts under \$10,000 and older than one year, and larger conservator accounts in between those accounts' fourth-year audits that are conducted by CAAP. With the addition of CARP, the CAAP auditors will now audit all conservator-managed accounts after each account's first year. These more frequent reviews will allow auditors to

more quickly identify any issues or concerns with an account. After the first year review, the CAAP unit will audit all accounts with assets over \$10,000 every four years. In addition, CAAP will audit any account referred to auditors by the reviewers working in CARP.

Before CARP was established, local district court officials were performing regular account reviews. CAAP and CARP findings are presented to the parties and district judge. CARP audits will include a new, public Account Review Report summarizing the findings of a review. In addition to the Account Review Report, since April 2019, CARP reviewers have also begun submitting a hearing preparation document into the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) before each hearing in a conservatorship case.

A new training and information hub for conservators and guardians

A new self-paced online training module was launched in 2018 to offer more resources and training for conservators and guardians. The interactive, online training was developed through grant funding from the State Justice Institute and in partnership with the National Center for State Courts. The training details step-by-step explanations of the guardianship and conservatorship processes, from the legal process by which a conservator or guardian is approved, to the powers granted to a court-appointed guardian or conservator, to the specific reporting requirements that guardians and conservators must meet. The training also reviews information on the legal rights of individuals who need a guardianship or a conservatorship, includes a glossary of key legal terms conservators and guardians may encounter in their duties, and links to other helpful guardianship and conservatorship resources, including relevant court forms and the Minnesota Judicial Branch's [Guardianship and Conservatorship Manual](#).



Conservators appointed in Minnesota already submit their annual accounts through MyMNConservator, an online application that contains built-in “red flag” logic that automatically reviews filed accounts and alerts auditors to possible errors, inconsistencies, or transactions that require further review. In addition, a team of trained experts working as part of a centralized conservator account auditing center now conduct compliance audits on conservator accounts from across the state. The Minnesota Judicial Branch is currently developing MyMinnesotaGuardian, which aims to make it faster and easier for guardians to submit their well-being reports to the court, and simpler for the court to review and track these reports and identify any concerns.

Safeguarding court user information through specialization

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is responsible for an enormous number of court documents that make up court user case files. Keeping this data safe and appropriately classified has led to another reengineering effort. Specialized document acceptance teams (DATs) have been established in judicial districts to improve document security and classification.

Audit findings made it clear that it was no longer realistic to have staff juggling document acceptance duties alongside all of their other work. The DATs are comprised of staff who devote at least half of their time to reviewing, classifying, and accepting electronically-filed documents. This allows DATs to develop expertise in the complex rules that govern document security classification, and to spend more of their time becoming proficient in this important work. In addition to district DATs, the Branch has also implemented centralized monitoring of document security classification entries. This monitoring allows Court Administrative Processes (CAPs) Unit staff to identify and analyze statewide trends, provide guidance to districts, and ensure consistent practices for the document security classification work performed by the DATs. Overall document security errors are decreasing, clearly showing that specialization and oversight has improved security and classification efforts.

Consistent statewide administration processes improve court user experience

In January 2018, an important reengineering effort was launched when CAPs adherence became a requirement for district court administrative staff statewide. The first CAPs were developed in 2008 to assist district court staff and improve the accuracy of case management records. In 2018 there were more than 87 CAPs. The purpose of CAPs will slowly transition from serving as resources for court staff, to mandatory guides for how cases should be uniformly processed across the state. New CAPs, and CAPs updated or revised after January 2018, are considered mandatory processes for each district court.

This reengineering effort will make it easier for court users and justice partners to work in multiple counties and districts, will ensure more accurate and reliable court data, and will allow judicial districts to explore collaboration and sharing work across county and district lines. In July 2018, a CAPs Compliance Monitoring Plan was put into place, which will evolve as more CAPs are developed and updated. Initial monitoring of CAPs compliance focuses on critical factors such as public safety, integrations, and data accuracy. The goal of the CAPs Compliance Monitoring Plan is to ensure the most critical CAPs are standardized as efficiently as possible, while also ensuring staff have the training and resources they need to effectively follow these processes.

Self-help centers offer new resources, expand on successes

Minnesota ranks as one of the highest-scoring states in the nation on the Justice Index, an independent examination of how well state court systems ensure access to justice for those who can't afford an attorney, those with limited-English proficiency, and those with disabilities. The Minnesota Judicial Branch rolled out two new electronic tools to better serve self-represented litigants in 2018. Minnesota Guide & File was launched in June. Also launched were new fillable smart forms.

Guide & File is an online tool that uses web-based “interviews” to help people create the most-used court forms. Rather than filling in fields on a court form, Guide & File reduces “guess work” by asking the user simple questions, and creating forms based on the answers to those questions. The resulting forms can then be printed or filed electronically with the court. Guide & File is available for conciliation court claims, eviction action complaints, subsequent affidavits of service for eFiling eviction complaints, and, as of early 2019, orders for protection/harassment restraining orders.

A [Guide & File help topic](#) was also developed to help court users navigate the system. In the seven months of production in 2018, 8,085 documents were created through Guide & File, and cases were eFiled in all 10 districts and 60 different counties.

Online court forms are a critical resource for self-represented litigants. In 2018, to make form completion less confusing for self-represented litigants, the Self-Help Center launched new online fillable “smart” forms. The court forms are available free of charge on the Judicial Branch website and are approved for use in any district court in Minnesota. Fillable smart forms are now available for approximately half of the 500 court forms. These forms have built-in intelligence that makes it easier for self-represented litigants to complete and file court forms quickly and accurately. Some of the features of fillable smart forms include:



- When an answer is completed for one field, that answer will show up in other spots on the form that asks for the same information. This eliminates the need to retype duplicate information.
- Questions on the form that are not necessary, because of previous answers, will stay hidden. For example, if an answer indicates there are no children, subsequent fields asking for the names of children will not display.
- Some answer fields will expand to allow longer answers. Previous formats required a separate document to provide longer answers.
- The forms allow for the use of an electronic signature, eliminating the need to print, sign, and potentially re-scan the completed document.
- The forms can be easily prepared for eFiling by using the “Prepare for eFile” button on the form.

New video helps Minnesotans seeking criminal record expungement

The Statewide Self-Help Center launched a new [video](#) to help people complete the process for a criminal record expungement. The step-by-step video explains how to complete the necessary forms, and overviews what court users should expect during the process of petitioning for a criminal record expungement. The video is broken into 16 short chapters for easy navigation, totaling approximately one hour of video explanation in plain language. Each chapter is between one and seven minutes long.

Last year, the Minnesota Judicial Branch’s statewide virtual Self-Help Center, which assists self-represented litigants, handled more than 24,000 phone calls and answered more than 3,700 emails.

Cameras in the courtroom pilot ends, permanent rules established with public input



In an August 2015 order, the Minnesota Supreme Court amended Rule 4 of the General Rules of Practice to authorize a pilot project that permitted, without the consent of the parties, limited audio and video coverage in certain criminal court proceedings. The amendment took effect in November 2015. As directed by the Supreme Court in its order, the Advisory Committee on the Rules of Criminal Procedure worked with the State Court Administrator’s Office (SCAO) to monitor the pilot and, in December 2017, submitted a report to the Court that summarizes the information collected, the issues the Committee discussed, and the Committee’s recommendations regarding the pilot and Rule 4 of the General Rules of Practice.

In April 2018, the Minnesota Supreme Court held a public hearing on the report and recommendations submitted to the Court by the Advisory Committee on the Rules of Criminal Procedure related to the current district court “cameras in the courtroom” pilot. The Advisory Committee report recommended the permanent codification, with several amendments, of the pilot rules that permit, without the consent of the parties, limited audio and video coverage of criminal court proceedings that occur after a guilty verdict has been returned or a guilty plea accepted. The Supreme Court accepted written public comment on the Advisory Committee report and received 10 written comments. The comments are available to the public via case file ADM09-8009 in the Minnesota Appellate Courts Case Management System (MACS).

From November 2015 to the end of 2018, there were 351 camera requests in 208 criminal cases. Coverage was granted in 111 cases. Four of the cases saw no decision on cameras, as they were dismissed, and one of the cases for which sentencing was to be covered resulted in an acquittal. In one other case, the media backed out because the decision about the camera would not be made until after hearing from the parties about it right before the hearing that was to be covered took place.

In July 2018, the Court issued an order creating permanent rules for cameras in the courtroom. An accompanying form is now available for media to use when submitting requests for cameras.

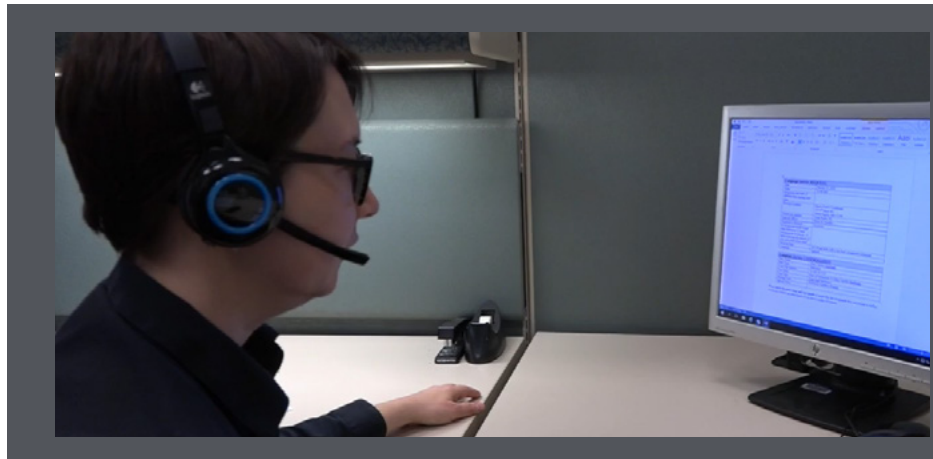
Some highlights of the order include:

- Judges may not deny a request for a camera at a sentencing simply because the guilty plea will not be accepted until right before the sentencing.
- The media are no longer required to notify the parties about notices of coverage. Court administration staff is now responsible for this.

- Media are now required to submit a notice of coverage seven days in advance of the hearing they wish to cover, instead of the 10 days required during the pilot.
- Amendments were made to clarify and refine the category of domestic violence proceedings in which coverage is generally prohibited by confining the category of excluded cases to those in which the victim is defined as a family or household member under Minn. Stat. § 518B.01, subd. 2(b) (2016).

Remote interpreting

Over the past two years, the Minnesota Judicial Branch has been pilot-testing new ways to remotely connect court interpreters with courtrooms across the state. The pilot has involved using modern audio and video technology to deliver quality interpreter services in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. Costs for interpreter travel continue to increase as the need for interpreters grows statewide, and many of



the most qualified interpreters are located in the metro area. Remote interpreting can significantly reduce travel costs by allowing an interpreter to virtually appear in courtrooms across the state from his or her office or a nearby courthouse. It also allows interpreters to use their time more efficiently by reducing the hours they have traditionally spent traveling from courthouse to courthouse.

Based on the success of the pilot – including positive feedback from judges, staff, attorneys, and case participants – the Judicial Council formed an ad hoc workgroup to assess how the Judicial Branch could use the pilot findings to expand the use of remote interpreting. Using the recommendations of that short-term workgroup, the Judicial Council approved policy changes to promote increased use of remote interpreting technology for certain types of short hearings, as well as the formation of a statewide workgroup to continue discussions on how best to provide quality, cost-effective interpreter services across the state.

The policy changes encourage district courts with the technological capability to more readily use remote interpreting for short hearings, when it is determined that it is more fiscally responsible than an in-person interpreter, and when the quality of the interpretation would not be compromised. Currently, fewer than five percent of all interpreter court hearings are done with the interpreter in a remote location.

Remote interpreting also must be considered in urgent or unexpected situations where no in-person staff or freelance interpreter is reasonably available. The revised policies make in-person interpreting

the priority for many longer proceedings, including trials, hearings at which witnesses testify under oath, and civil motion hearings.

The ongoing statewide workgroup began meeting in October 2018, and will develop recommendations for how the Judicial Branch can continue to provide quality, cost-effective interpreter services across the state. The workgroup will also look at the technological, staffing, and training needs to expand the use of remote interpreting.

State Law Library

In 2016, the Minnesota State Law Library in St. Paul launched a new Self-Help Clinic to provide free assistance to individuals seeking to file an appeal with the Minnesota Court of Appeals or the Minnesota Supreme Court. The Appeals Self-Help Clinic is held monthly, and offers SRLs an opportunity to have a brief meeting, at no cost, with a volunteer attorney to better understand the rules and procedures of Minnesota's appellate courts.

Almost a quarter of all appeals in Minnesota involve a party who is not represented by an attorney. Volunteer attorneys are coordinated through the Appellate Practice Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association. In 2018, the Clinic assisted 181 people. Twenty-seven of those sessions were done over the phone with individuals who were not in the metro area. Ninety-three percent of the Clinic customers reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the assistance received.

The State Law Library also offers a twice-monthly clinic to assist people appealing a denial of unemployment benefits to the Court of Appeals. Over 80 percent of this type of case involves a party who is unrepresented. There were 90 unemployment appeals.

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

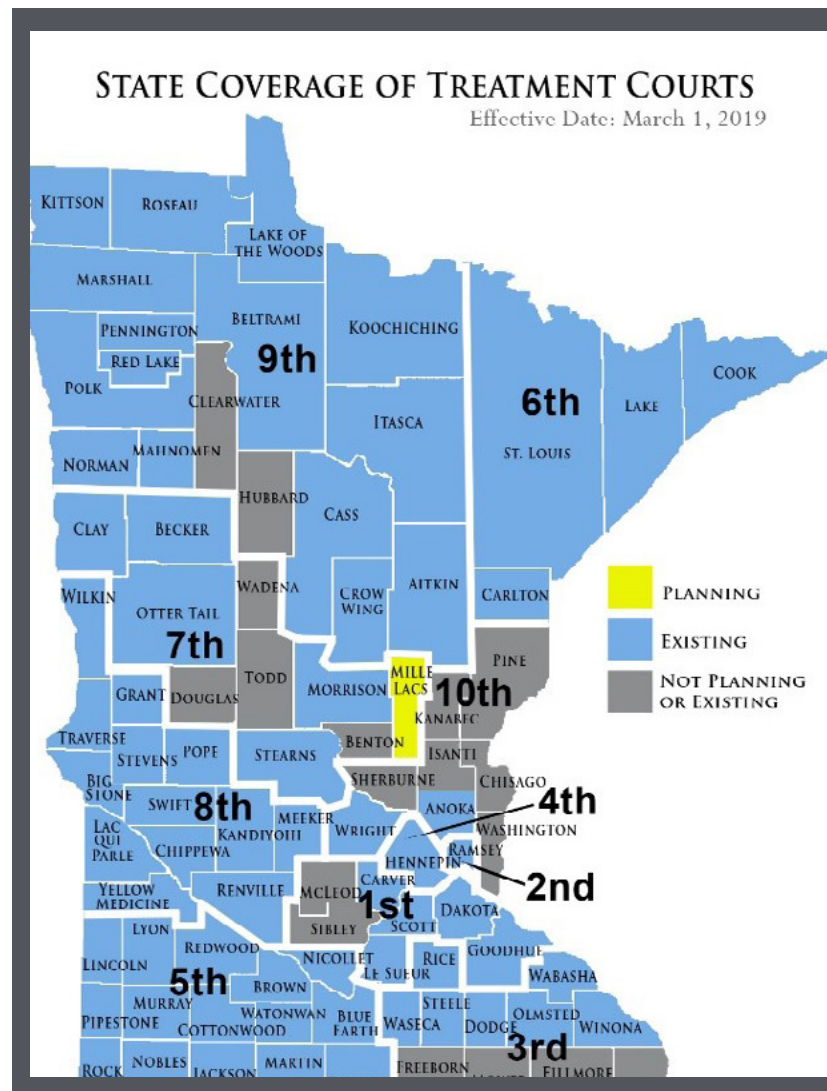
Adopting approaches and processes for the resolution of cases that enhance the outcomes for individual participants and the public.

Treatment Court Coverage Continues to Expand

In 2018, there were 66 treatment courts serving 70 counties in operation throughout Minnesota. Treatment court is an umbrella term that includes drug courts, DWI courts, juvenile drug courts, mental health courts, family dependency courts, veterans courts, and courts that are a hybrid of several types of treatment courts. Treatment courts are a collaborative effort to target court users with a high recidivism potential. Treatment courts result in more defendants turning their lives around and becoming healthy, law-abiding citizens. Research also shows that when these strategies are implemented correctly, they improve public safety, reduce recidivism, and save taxpayer dollars.

Local and national recognition

Minnesota treatment courts and leaders were recognized in 2018 for their contributions to improving public safety.



Statewide Treatment Court Coordinator Abby Kuschel was honored in October at the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Conference with a 2018 TZD Star Award for her contributions to keeping Minnesota roads safe. The TZD Star Awards are given to leaders in several fields who have demonstrated exceptional creativity, leadership, and organizational skills, and the ability to successfully motivate and collaborate with others to move toward zero deaths on Minnesota's roads.

In June, Duluth-chambered Judge Shaun R. Floerke was honored at the Harold E. Hughes Awards of Excellence Luncheon during the National Rural Institute on Alcohol and Drug Abuse award ceremony at the University of Wisconsin, Stout campus. Judge Floerke was awarded the Exceptional Rural Professional Award, which is given to rural professionals for outstanding contributions to the field of drug and alcohol recovery. Judge Floerke was recognized for his local and national contributions to address the opioid crisis, and his work with the South St. Louis County DWI Court. Judge Floerke was also selected in 2018 to serve on the National Judicial Opioid Task Force, which fights the opioid epidemic locally and at a systems-level nationwide.

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) awarded the prestigious DWI Court Leadership Award to the South St. Louis County DWI Court team. The team received the Award on June 2 at the 2018 NADCP National Conference in Houston, Texas. The Award recognizes South St. Louis County DWI Court's tireless efforts to expand treatment for felony DWI offenders and making the community a safer place for all citizens. The National Center for DWI Courts DWI Court Leadership Award is presented annually to individuals and programs that have made preeminent contributions to reducing impaired driving.



New Policies Come Out of Committee for Equality and Justice Work

New performance measures were approved in 2018 based on recommendations received from the Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ). The goal of these policy changes is to ensure the Judicial Branch has sufficient race data to analyze whether persons are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnicity.

- Judicial districts are to maintain race data collection rates of at least 80% on the following case types: Major Criminal, Minor Criminal, Juvenile Delinquency, and Petty and Juvenile Protection.
- Districts should strive for collection rates of at least 90%.
- The new performance standards have been added to Judicial Council policies 505 and 505.2, and were effective January 1, 2019.

The [2018 Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report](#) summarizes the substantial outreach, recruitment, and education efforts conducted throughout the state. It was delivered to the CEJ and judicial partners and presented at the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts earlier this year.

PUBLIC TRUST, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND IMPARTIALITY

A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision making and accountability for the use of public resources.

Access and Fairness Survey

In December 2018, the Minnesota Judicial Branch launched a four-month effort to survey court participants and stakeholders in each of the state's district courthouses. In addition to the in-courthouse surveys, the Judicial Branch surveyed Court Payment Center users, both over the phone and online, and visitors to the Judicial Branch website. The goal of this Access and Fairness Survey is to ensure

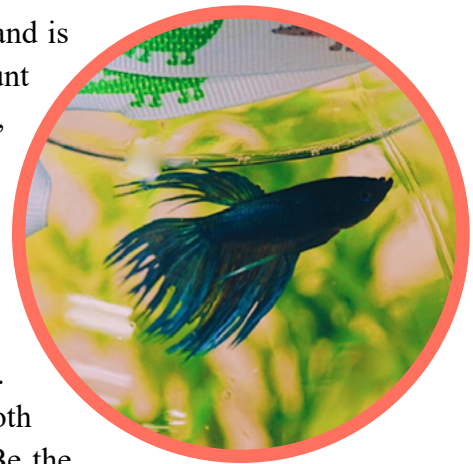
accountability of the Judicial Branch, improve overall operations of the court, and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary.

The results from the Access and Fairness Survey will be used to measure the Branch's success in meeting Strategic Plan Goals. The Survey was also conducted in 2008 and 2013. Survey-takers at that time also rated the court's accessibility and its treatment of them in terms of fairness, equality, and respect. Participants in legal matters and their friends and family, victims, witnesses, attorneys, service counter users, jurors or potential jurors, and all other users of the court system—were encouraged to complete the Survey.

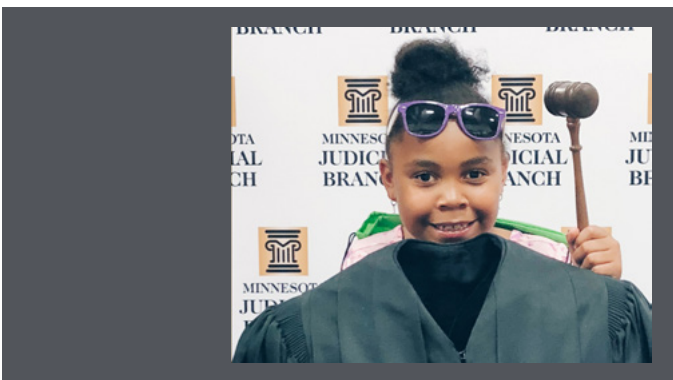
The Access and Fairness Survey was implemented on a rolling basis throughout Minnesota's courthouses from December 2018 through the end of March 2019. State Court Administration staff worked with local court administration in all 87 counties to implement the Survey.

Instagram

The Minnesota Judicial Branch also joined Instagram in 2018, and is currently showcasing one court each week. The [@mncourts](#) account has been steadily gaining followers on the youngest, most diverse, and fastest-growing social medium. The account has featured staff and judges hard at work; local outreach events, including visitors to the Minnesota State Fair booth; historic photos and memorabilia; unique artwork and architectural features; and a courthouse mascot. The most-liked post of 2018 was the image of Steve the fish, Cass County District Court's courthouse pet. The most-watched video of 2018 is a summary of State Fair booth visitors posing at the Minnesota Judicial Branch booth's You Be the Judge selfie station.



State Fair



For the first time ever, the Minnesota Judicial Branch joined the Great Minnesota Get-Together in 2018. The booth was located in the southeast corner of the Education Building. Judicial officers and Judicial Branch staff were on hand each day to connect with the public and provide information about Minnesota's court system. The effort received public kudos from the Pioneer Press Editorial Board, neighboring state judicial systems, and visitors.

In total, 40 judicial officers and 83 staff members volunteered their time to educate Minnesotans about their nation-leading court system. The volunteers were supervised by 16 shift leaders, court staff from around the state who had also served on the workgroup that helped plan and coordinate the Judicial

Branch's involvement in the State Fair.

Visitors were able to collect an informational magnet, a hand fan, or a gavel-shaped pencil at the booth. The gavel-shaped pencils proved to be very popular and were featured in the State Fair's promotion of new vendors and booths. The booth featured interactive opportunities for Fairgoers: a judicial district map where visitors could place a sticker and learn what district they live in, and a selfie station where visitors were able to get a photo of themselves robed as a judge.

Improving the Pretrial Release Process

As part of the Minnesota Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan, the Minnesota Judicial Council launched a Pretrial Release Initiative in 2018 aimed at studying and implementing evidence-based tools for use by judges making pretrial release decisions. For several years, the Minnesota Judicial Branch has been working with state and local justice partners and other stakeholders to improve the processes and tools judges tap to make pretrial assessment decisions. These decisions include whether individuals arrested and detained are released before trial on their own recognizance, on bail or bond, or with conditions. In Minnesota, all defendants have a right to release on bail while their criminal case is pending.

Under Minn. Stat. § 629.74, the Minnesota Judicial Council approved pretrial evaluation forms to be used in each county. Minnesota Judicial Council policy 524: Pretrial Release Evaluation, requires that each county use a validated risk assessment tool as part of the pretrial evaluation process, and provides a statewide pretrial evaluation form and Minnesota Pretrial Assessment Tool (MNPAT) that will be continuously validated to ensure effectiveness and fairness in release decisions.

MNPAT is meant to ensure that judges have the most predictive and least biased information about a defendant, providing accurate, objective, and useful information for pretrial release decisions. Information not supported by research is not part of the risk assessment tool score provided to judges. MNPAT was rolled out to 82 counties in the state in December 2018. Five counties in the state have fully implemented, and will independently validate, their own customized risk assessment tools in the coming years. As a part of improving the pretrial release process, local bail schedule use has been discontinued and substantial MNPAT training has been made available for judges and staff.

Additional outreach and engagement work is highlighted in subsequent District and Appellate Court sections.

DISTRICT COURTS

294 Judgeships, 10 Judicial Districts, 106 hearing facilities

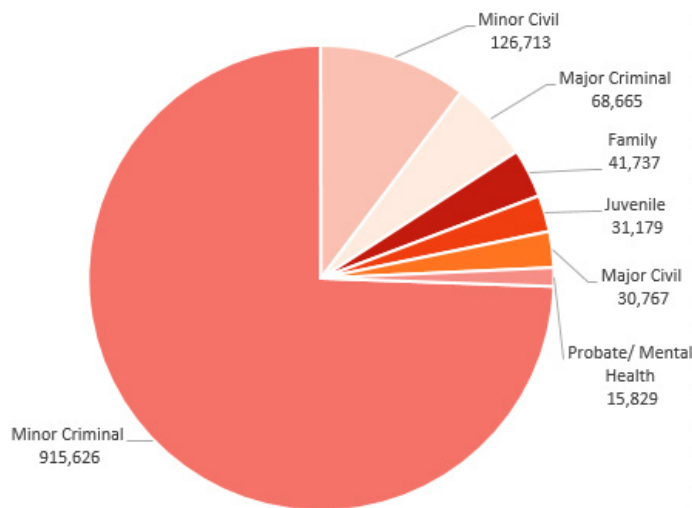
Jurisdiction: Civil Actions, Criminal Cases, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Violations of City Ordinances

Appeals from: Conciliation Court*

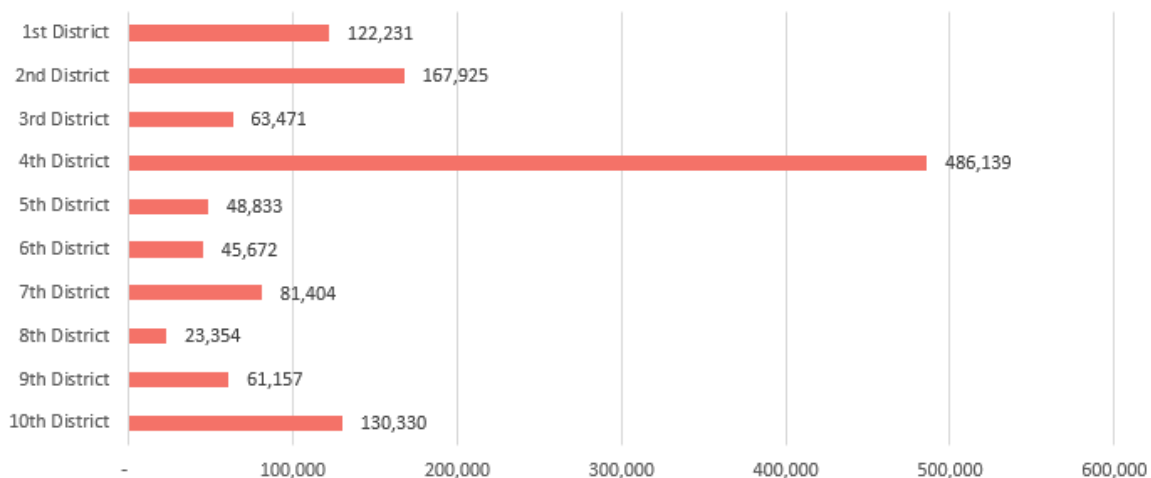
Conciliation Division: Civil Disputes up to \$15,000

*Called trial de novo - actually a new trial, not just a review of the conciliation court

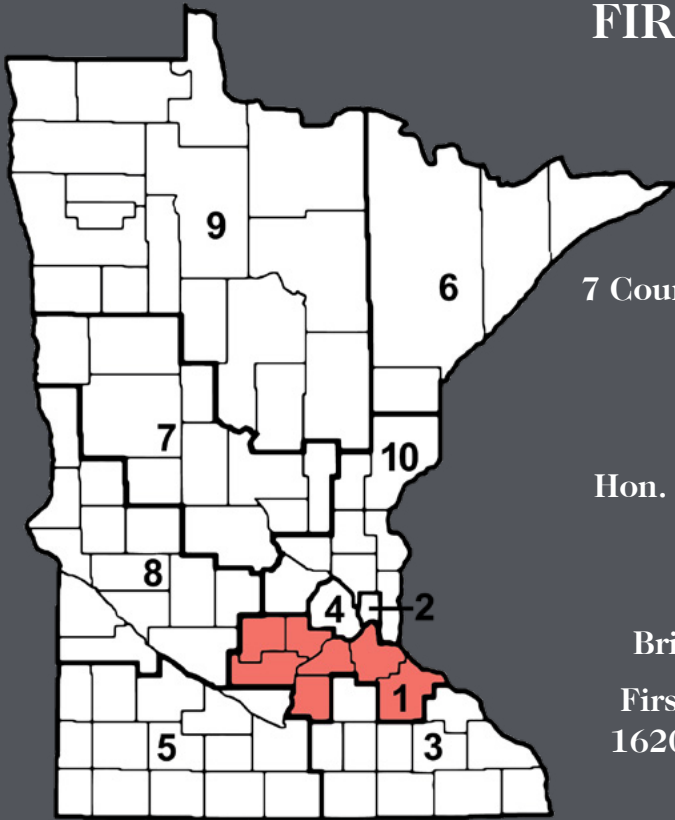
2018 Statewide Case Filings by Case Type



2018 Statewide Case Filings by Judicial District



FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT



7 Counties: Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott, Sibley

36 Judgeships

4 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Kathryn D. Messerich, Chief Judge

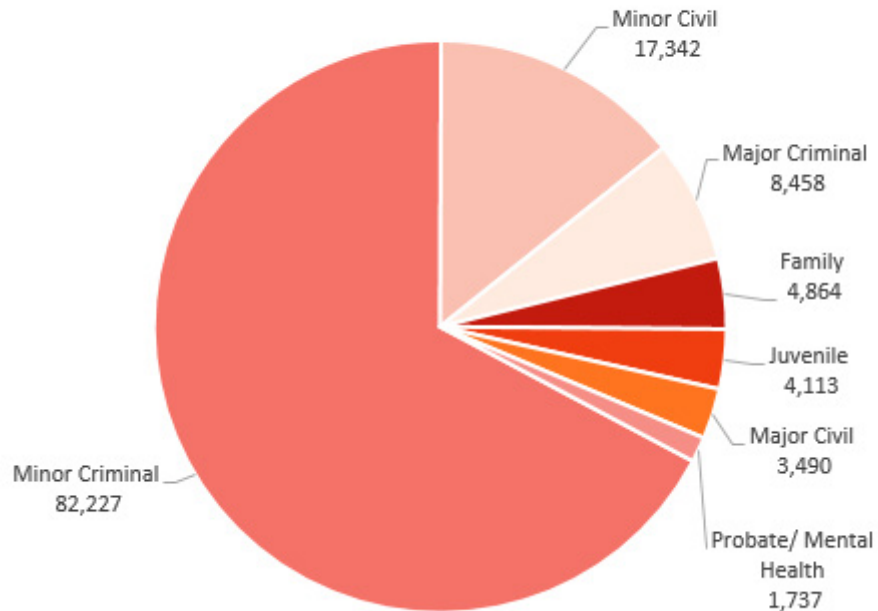
**Hon. David L. Knutson,
Assistant Chief Judge**

Brian Jones, District Administrator

**First Judicial District Administration
1620 South Frontage Road, Suite 200
Hastings, MN 55033**

2018 First Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 122,231



First Judicial District Domestic Violence Coordinating Council Holds Annual Conference

The First District Domestic Violence Coordinating Council addressed trauma at its 2018 domestic violence conference. The Council is comprised of law enforcement, court personnel, probation officers, judges, attorneys, and other interested parties who are committed to educating and coordinating initiatives that discuss domestic violence as it relates to the court system and its various judicial partners.

Two sessions offered at the conference specifically addressed trauma:

Surviving the Trenches

Research confirms that constant exposure to the pain and suffering of others can come with a price for professionals who spend a significant part of their day listening to, reading about, or otherwise observing traumatic material. KSL Research presented on identifying early warning signs of burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma, which can improve resilience and promote healthy coping, as well as minimize the impact of cumulative stress. This training brought together the latest research on the neurological process of trauma with simple, realistic techniques that can improve personal well-being and professional longevity.

Organizational Trauma

Tragic events, high-profile cases, external pressures, and public scrutiny can take a collective toll on any agency. Like individuals, organizations too can become traumatized from critical incidents or chronic repetitive stress. Left unattended, workplace toxicity slowly develops, creating atmospheres of cynicism, negativity, embitterment, and mistrust. However, an exciting body of research emerging in health psychology presented at the session suggests that although traumatic events can be difficult, they can also bring people together, enhance empathy and compassion in the workplace, improve performance under pressure, and even render a workforce stronger and more successful.

Brittany Schneider, wife of slain Lake City Police Officer Shawn Schneider, shared her story of how domestic violence changed her life when her husband was shot and killed while bringing a victim to safety during a domestic violence call.

Le Sueur County Treatment Court Visited by Senator Klobuchar

On March 29, 2018, the judge, court staff, and county officials who lead the Le Sueur County Treatment Court were visited by United States Senator Amy Klobuchar at the Le Sueur County Courthouse for a roundtable discussion. Three Treatment Court graduates were also in attendance, and Associate Justice Barry Anderson attended on behalf of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Le Sueur County's Treatment Court offers defendants who



qualify an opportunity to recover from addiction rather than going to prison.

Le Sueur County Treatment Court Presiding Judge Mark Vandelist explained to Senator Klobuchar the various steps of the Treatment Court process during the discussion, pointing out that the majority of drug issues the county deals with involve methamphetamine.

The Treatment Court began operations in 2015 after receiving \$100,000 in funding from the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners and a three-year \$300,000 grant from the federal government. Senator Klobuchar stated she would continue to work towards obtaining funding for sustaining grants for treatment courts.

Goodhue County Awarded Federal Grant to Establish Treatment Court

Goodhue County was awarded a federal grant in 2018 in support of the Goodhue County Adult Treatment Court, which became the 62nd operational adult drug treatment court in the State of Minnesota.

The County applied for funding from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance Grant in June 2018. The Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant, in the amount of \$499,469, and covering the years 2019 to 2022, allowed the County to establish the Goodhue County Adult Treatment Court in early 2019 and serve individuals who have a substance abuse disorder. In addition, the Grant funded a full-time drug court coordinator, intensive outpatient treatment, and frequent drug testing.

“This is fantastic news for Goodhue County,” said Goodhue County Judge Douglas Bayley at the time. “The Goodhue County Treatment Court will have a positive impact on public safety at the same time as it offers a real helping hand to our community members struggling with addiction. Receiving this federal Grant was the result of a huge team effort. We also have widespread community support for a treatment court. I look forward to getting the Goodhue County Treatment Court up and running.”

Scott County Plans to Expand Facilities

A space study in 2016 and 2017, and an expected 50,000 additional residents in Scott County by 2040, indicated a need to expand Scott County facilities, including the Scott County Justice Center. Planning for the expansion began in 2018, and construction, which is expected to last several years, will begin later this year.

The space study specifically identified the need for new courtrooms and security, and the renovation of the Justice Center, expected to cost \$6.2 million, will also include a buildout of the jury assembly room.

McLeod County Courthouse Hosts Student Government Day, Celebrates Expansion

Students from McLeod County schools spent April 17, 2018, at the McLeod County Courthouse as part of Student Government Day.

In the recently renovated second floor courtroom, the students met with First Judicial District Judge

Jessica Maher, First Judicial District Judge Jody Winters, and Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson, formerly of Hutchinson.

Justice Anderson presented the County a dedication on behalf of the state in recognition of the courtroom improvements that made it ADA-accessible and more secure as part of a \$7.54 million expansion to the McLeod County Courthouse and Jail.

Goodhue County Sponsors Children and the Law Day

Goodhue County hosted local groups of fifth-grade students again in 2018 for an annual day that has become known as Children and the Law Day.

The Day started with providing students with an overview of the judicial system and educating them about jury duty. A deputy sheriff then talked to them about how important safety is in the courthouse. The students then received a tour of the entire building and individual courtrooms, followed by a mock trial where local attorneys volunteered their time in a case involving whether or not a student had stolen a candy bar from the town grocery store. The students took on the roles of judge, jurors, attorneys, and court staff during the mock trial.

Children and the Law Day is an opportunity to connect with young children, educate them on one of the three branches of government, and perhaps even inspire them to consider a career in the justice system.

Warrants Quashed at Scott-Carver Project Community Connect

The courts in Scott and Carver counties participated in Project Community Connect (PCC) on September 12, 2018, at Canterbury Park, where several warrants were quashed without arrest and court dates were rescheduled.

This was the first time the courts participated in PCC, a program in its ninth year designed to give Carver and Scott county residents experiencing poverty and homelessness an opportunity to access programs, resources, and job opportunities. PCC is a joint venture between Scott County, Carver County, and the Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Scott, Carver, and Dakota counties.

Scott and Carver counties had more than 5,000 active warrants combined at the time of the event, and Scott County Judge Christian Wilton and Carver County Judge Eric Braaten were on hand to meet with more than 10 individuals who wanted their warrants quashed. The meetings took place in a makeshift courtroom designed to offer some privacy.

The courts received praise from the individuals served as they were able to avoid arrests. The event also assisted the courts and law enforcement by clearing out some warrants from their files.

Dakota County Holds Warrant Resolution Day

On November 17, 2018, Dakota County District Court, the Dakota County Sheriff's Department, Dakota County Social Services, Dakota County Probation, the County Attorney, city prosecutors, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,

and La Asamblea de Derecho Civiles (Civil Rights Assembly) hosted a “Warrant Resolution” event at Crossroads Church in Eagan. The event offered anyone with an outstanding arrest warrant an opportunity to meet with justice system officials and take steps to resolve his or her case.

Visitors to the event were able to speak with consulting attorneys and prosecuting attorneys, and arrange to pay any outstanding fines. Representatives from the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety were also present to assist attendees. Both Spanish and Somali interpreters were available at the event.

Key elements to the event’s success included its publicity, the timing of holding it on a weekend, the event location being close to public transportation, and the fact that defendants could resolve warrants without having to serve jail time.

Arriving defendants first checked in and met with a public defender. The public defender worked out a resolution to the charge or probation violation with the appropriate prosecutor and probation officer and then appeared before a judge to put the agreement on the record. Defendants left with copies of the orders resolving their outstanding warrants. Many were vocally appreciative and relieved that their warrants were quashed and their cases resolved.

There were 10 court administration staff, three judges, two court reporters, and three supervisor/event planners, including a judge and court staff from Ramsey County to handle warrants from that County. In total, 80 outstanding warrants were handled. This included eight from Washington and Hennepin counties, 15 from Ramsey County, and 57 from Dakota County.

Chief Judge Messerich Receives District Judges Association Award

First Judicial District Chief Judge Kathryn D. Messerich was awarded the Minnesota District Judges Association (MDJA) President’s Award in 2018 for her service to the Association and the Minnesota Judicial Branch, including her 14 years of participation in and leadership of the Civil Jury Instructions Committee (JIG). Chief Judge Messerich has served as chair of the Committee since 2012.

“I am honored by this recognition,” said Chief Judge Messerich. “The MJDA Civil JIG Committee regularly reviews and updates the current changes to civil law, and with the input of the civil bar, publishes jury instruction guides that assist jurors in applying the facts to the law in civil lawsuits. I share this recognition with my fellow judicial Committee members and our reporters, Professor Michael Steenson and Peter Knapp.”



Chief Judge Messerich has served in the First Judicial District since April 2004, and is chambered in the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings, Minnesota. She sits on the Minnesota Judicial Council, which is the administrative policy-making authority for the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Before her appointment to the bench, Chief Judge Messerich worked as an attorney and shareholder

with the Minneapolis law firm of Halleland, Lewis, Nilan, Sipkins, and Johnson from 2000 to 2004. She was an associate general counsel for Allina Health System in Minnetonka from 1997 through 1999, an associate attorney and shareholder with the Minneapolis law firm of Bassford, Lockhart, Truesdell and Briggs from 1991 to 1997, and an associate attorney with the Minneapolis law firm of Lommen, Nelson, Cole and Stageberg from 1987 to 1991. Chief Judge Messerich earned her juris doctorate degree from William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul in 1987, her master of science degree in maternal-child nursing in 1984, and her bachelor of science in nursing degree from Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan, in 1979.

Heidi Carstensen and Holly Bohlken Receive 2018 Minnesota Association for Court Management Awards

The Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM) announced the recipients of its 2018 awards at its annual meeting in September. Heidi Carstensen, Dakota County Court Administrator, received the Distinguished Service Award, and Holly Bohlken, Dakota County Court Operations Supervisor, received the Early Career Excellence Award.

The Distinguished Service Award was established to recognize MACM members who have distinguished themselves through their records of service to the profession in leadership roles, outstanding service to the community and courts, and demonstrating leadership by improving the administration of justice and delivery of public service through the application of modern management techniques. Carstensen has worked in Dakota County District Court for almost two decades in a variety of positions and leadership roles. She has been on numerous state, district, and county committees. She is an Institute for Court Management Fellow through the National Center for State Courts, which is an advanced professional development program for court executives.

The Early Career Excellence Award is intended for an early career member who has demonstrated some or all of the following – achievement in the courts through obtaining a high level of knowledge in a short period of time; is a quick learner and a valuable resource to others; diligently performs with dependability and consistency while working to achieve success; and outstanding leadership by considering stakeholders when making decisions. Bohlken has been with Dakota County District Court since 2008, presently supervising the criminal division in Hastings. Still in the early stages of her career, Bohlken has demonstrated forward-thinking leadership, a positive attitude, and unwavering dedication and commitment to the court system. She also serves on many district and local committees and workgroups.

“The First District should be very proud that our judges and staff continue to be recognized for their leadership and achievements, as well as their dedication to the citizens of Minnesota,” said Brian Jones, First Judicial District Administrator.

MACM has more than 350 members throughout the Minnesota Judicial Branch, and is committed to the enrichment of its members through professional growth and development opportunities, promoting advancements and innovation in court administration, and partnering with other professionals working to improve the justice system in Minnesota.

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT



1 County: Ramsey

29 Judgeships

5 Referees

3 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. John H. Guthmann, Chief Judge

Hon. Robert A. Awsumb,
Assistant Chief Judge

Heather M. Kendall, District Administrator

Second Judicial District Administration

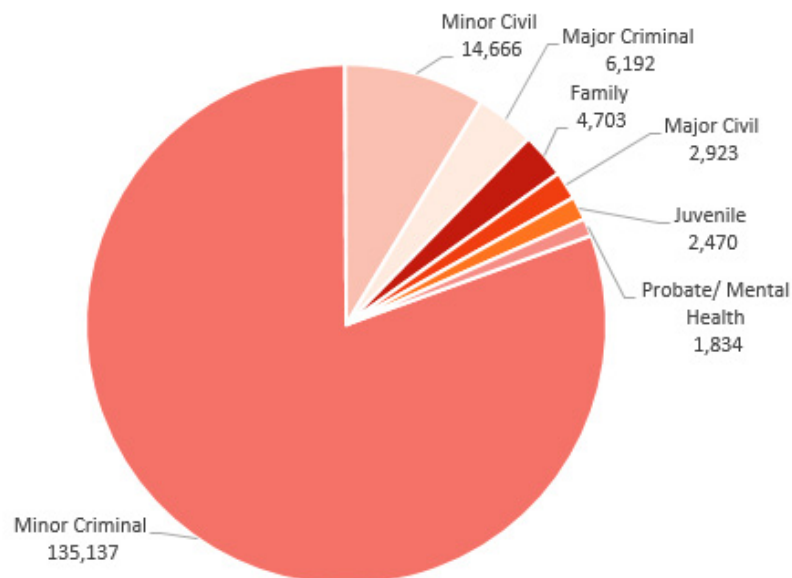
Ramsey County Courthouse

15 West Kellogg Boulevard

Saint Paul, MN 55102

2018 Second Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 167,925



Second Judicial District Holds Warrant Resolution Day

The Second Judicial District held a “Warrant Resolution Day” on May 18, 2018, at the High School of Recording Arts. The goal of the event was to clear active misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor warrants from Ramsey County.

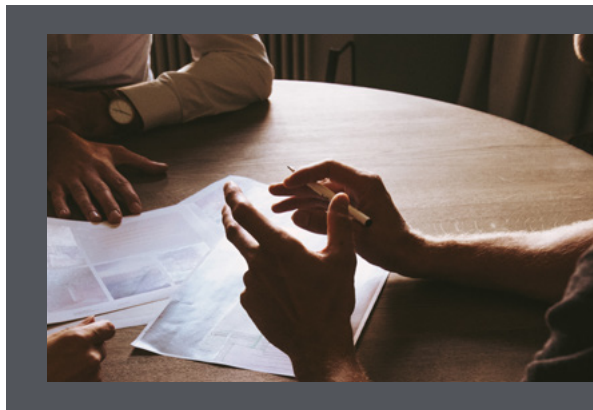
Those participating as partners in the event included the Second District bench and District Administration, the Ramsey County Manager’s Office, the Ramsey County Sheriff, the Ramsey County Attorney, the St. Paul City Attorney, suburban prosecutors, public defenders, Community Corrections, Project Remand, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

There were 245 defendants served at the event, with 575 cases heard, 164 warrants recalled, 388 drivers’ licenses reinstated, and 23 cases resolved that had a prior failure to appear without a drivers’ license suspension or related warrant.

Family Court Self-Help Service Center Expands Services to Maplewood Courthouse

As part of promoting access to justice as part of the Judicial Branch Strategic Plan (see page 5), the Second Judicial District Family Court Self-Help Service Center expanded services to the Maplewood Courthouse in September 2018.

A Self-Help Center staff member is now onsite in Maplewood every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to assist self-represented litigants with family court matters, including marital dissolution, child support, custody, and parenting time.



The Self-Help Center staff provide the same services in Maplewood as they do at the Self-Help Service Center’s primary location at the Juvenile and Family Justice Center in downtown St. Paul. Self-represented litigants can obtain court forms, have their pleadings reviewed prior to filing, obtain a hearing date, pay filing fees, file documents, and receive legal information, such as explanations of relevant rules, laws, and court procedures.

The Self-Help Service Center is located in the northwest corner of the Maplewood Courthouse, next to Courtroom A.

One-Stop Shop Established

A “One-Stop Shop” at the Ramsey County Courthouse in downtown St. Paul was established in 2018, consolidating the customer service counters throughout the Courthouse to a convenient location on the first floor and in the basement.

The One-Stop Shop accepts filings, consolidates intake, and provides access to records for all case types.

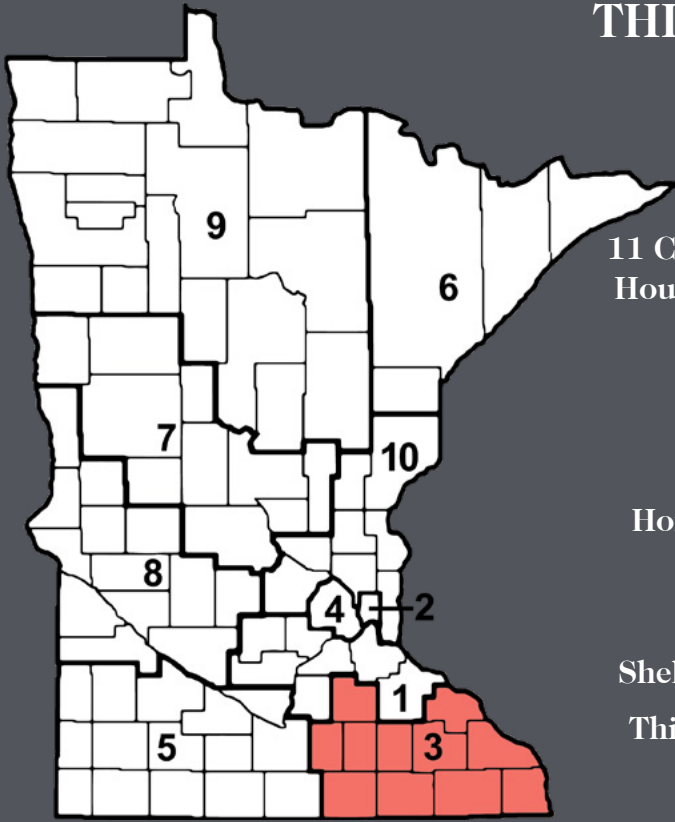
The Second District management team spent a year focusing on ways to maximize efficiencies within the District without sacrificing customer service. It identified an opportunity to create the One-Stop Shop to greatly improve interaction with court customers and provide them with a better experience, while at the same time preparing the District for innovations to meet the demands of the future.

Housing Court Clinic Launched

On July 24th, 2018, the Second District launched a Housing Court Clinic to assist tenants and landlords with eviction and other housing-related matters. Volunteer attorneys and mediators, alongside staff from Ramsey County Emergency Assistance, are now available to confer with parties prior to their cases being heard by a Ramsey County housing referee.

The Clinic's goal is to address some of the underlying issues that lead to homelessness in Ramsey County. It was made possible through a grant by the McKnight Foundation and in coordination with the Family Housing Fund, the National Center for State Courts, the Ramsey County Office of Emergency Assistance, the Dispute Resolution Center, the Volunteer Lawyer's Network, and Southern Metro Legal Regional Services.

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT



11 Counties: Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Winona

24 Judgeships

1 Referee

2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Jodi L. Williamson, Chief Judge

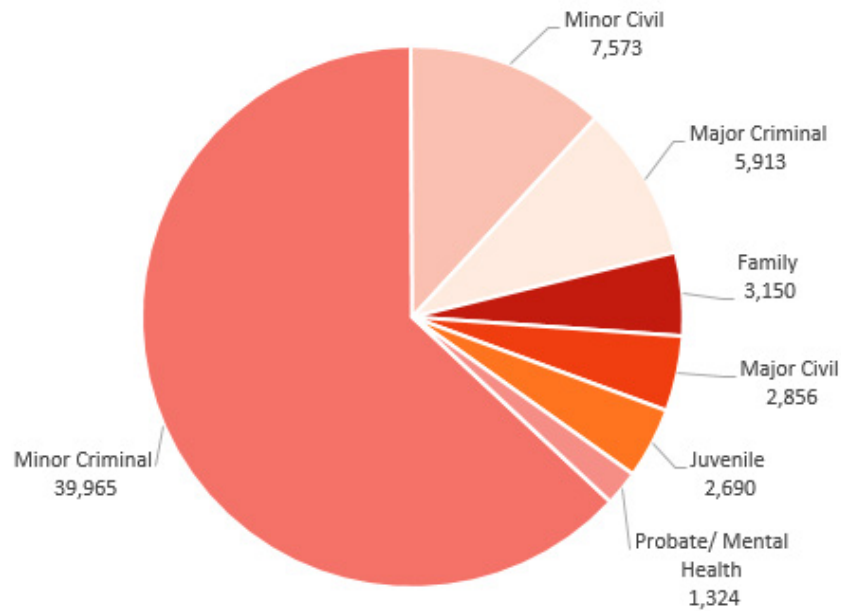
Hon. Joseph A. Bueltel,
Assistant Chief Judge

Shelley Ellefson, District Administrator

Third Judicial District Administration
1696 Greenview Drive SW
Rochester, MN 55902

2018 Third Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 63,471



Centralized Team to Accept all Filings Implemented

In order to ensure that documents are classified appropriately for access to the public, in 2018 the Third Judicial District formed a centralized team of specialized staff that has document security classification expertise. Team members now accept all electronic and paper filings on behalf of all counties within the District.

Remote Interpreting Piloted

New equipment was installed in 2018 as part of a remote interpreting pilot in Olmsted and Freeborn counties. The pilot had a Spanish interpreter in Olmsted County providing remote interpretation for parties in Freeborn County. The pilot was a success, and efforts are underway to expand remote interpreting functionality to additional counties within the Third District.

Courtroom Technology Updated

Courtrooms in Freeborn, Mower, Rice, Steele, Waseca, and Winona counties received sound system and Interactive Video (ITV) upgrades in 2018. The sound upgrades have improved the clarity of the court record, and the ITV upgrades have allowed the courts to conduct remote hearings when a judge from another county is hearing a case, significantly reducing travel time for judges.

Steele County District Court Hosted an Open Courthouse Event

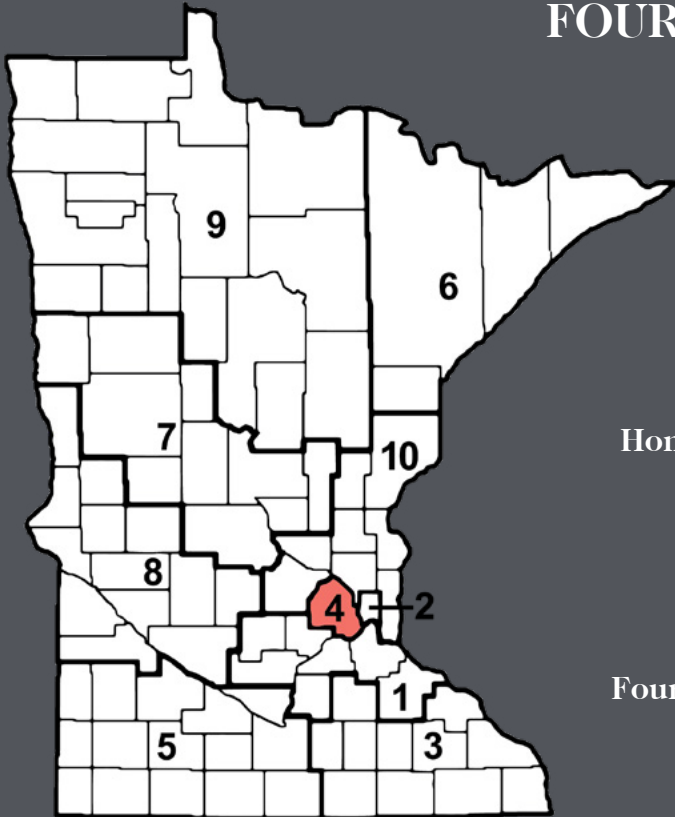
On Tuesday, May 1, the Steele County Courthouse in Owatonna hosted a Law Day “Open Courthouse” event designed to showcase the work of Minnesota’s Third Judicial District, and educate students and the public about the role of judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and citizens in administering Minnesota’s justice system.



The event included a recognition ceremony featuring remarks by Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson, Third Judicial District Assistant Chief Judge Joseph A. Bueltel, and local and state partners who helped with the transition to and transformation of the Courthouse. The ceremony was broadcast live online, so members of the community who were not able to attend could view the event.

The Open Courthouse event was scheduled to coincide with Law Day, and was hosted by Minnesota’s Third Judicial District in partnership with Steele County, the Steele County Bar Association, and local justice system partners.

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



1 County: Hennepin

62 Judgeships

16 Referees

5 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Ivy S. Bernhardson, Chief Judge

**Hon. Toddrick S. Barnette,
Assistant Chief Judge**

**Sarah Lindahl-Pfeiffer,
District Administrator**

Fourth Judicial District Administration

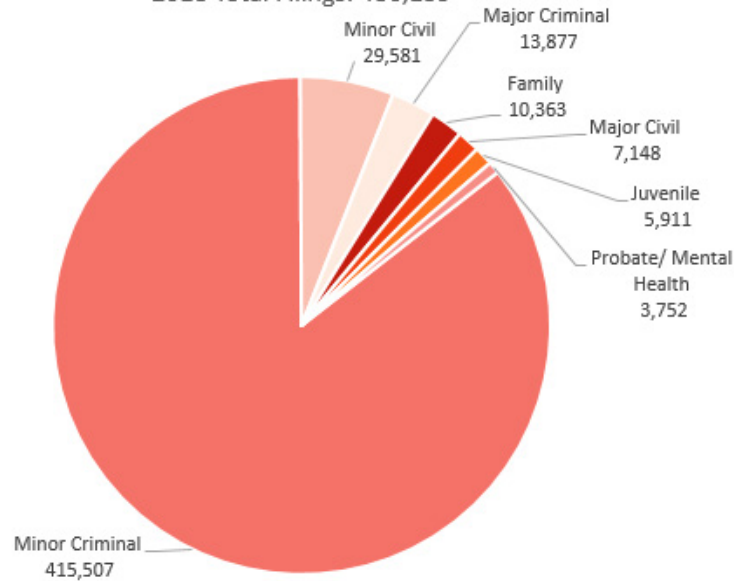
12-C Government Center

300 South Sixth Street

Minneapolis, MN 55487

2018 Fourth Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 486,139



Super Bowl Planning Pays Off

More than two years of planning paid off when Super Bowl LII came to U.S. Bank Stadium in downtown Minneapolis at the end of January 2018.

During the week prior to the game on February 4, many hearings were redistributed to other weeks and from the Hennepin County Government Center to Hennepin County court locations outside downtown Minneapolis, including Brooklyn Center, Edina, and Minnetonka. Hearings in downtown Minneapolis were limited to mandatory hearings and in-custody hearings only.

As a result, the impact on operations at the Government Center was minimal.

Self-Help Centers See Increased Efficiencies

Local investments in the walk-in self-help centers in the Fourth District in 2018 have resulted in increased efficiencies and better customer service.

Both walk-in self-help center (SHC) locations successfully implemented Q-Flow, electronic queueing software, for customer service functions. Q-Flow also captures critical data and generates reports, which has led to more accurate and comprehensive SHC statistics.

The walk-in SHC in the Family Justice Center in downtown Minneapolis also successfully integrated additional intake functions for Family Court Filing and Records. Having a “one-stop shop” for all first floor Family Court services – Filing, Records, and Self-Help – has reduced inefficiencies, fostered increased divisional collaboration, and provided a high-quality, consistent customer experience for the public.

Judicial Officers Connect with the Public on National Night Out

On August 7, 2018, judicial officers from Hennepin County District Court participated in the 34th annual National Night Out celebration in Minneapolis. Judicial officers visited several neighborhoods throughout the City, connecting with community members and organizers in attendance at the various block parties.

Hennepin County District Court Holds Open Courthouse Event

On September 21, 2018, the Hennepin County Government Center in Minneapolis opened its doors to the public as part of a Constitution Day “Open Courthouse” event.

The free, open-to-the public event was held to showcase the work of Minnesota’s courts and educate the public about the work of judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and citizens in administering the state’s justice system.

The event featured numerous activities, including:

- A special short welcoming presentation featuring local judges, as well as justices from the Minnesota Supreme Court.
- An opportunity to meet local district court judges and justice system partners.

- Self-guided “behind-the-scenes” tours of Hennepin County District Court, with presentations by judges.
- Free, one-on-one legal assistance provided through the walk-in Self-Help Center in the Government Center.
- An information fair with representatives from numerous law- and justice-related organizations.
- Information on legal resources and other services available in the community.

The Open Courthouse event was scheduled to coincide with Constitution Day, a federal day of observance during which Americans reflect on the rights and freedoms granted to them through the signing of the United States Constitution.

The event was hosted by Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District in partnership with Hennepin County and local justice partners.

Psychological Services Division Develops Postdoctoral Training Program

The Hennepin County District Court Psychological Services Division developed a postdoctoral training program in 2018, and successfully trained its first two postdocs. The program is helping to provide a recruitment track for qualified employees, and is keeping the Division up-to-date in the field of psychological services.

The Psychological Services Division provides court-ordered forensic psychological evaluations of adults involved in Criminal Court or Family Court custody/visitation cases, and juveniles involved in delinquency cases, in Hennepin County.

Hennepin County District Court Concludes Successful Pilot of eReminders

Hennepin County District Court concluded a successful pilot in 2018 of eReminders, which were sent by text or e-mail to remind defendants about their upcoming court hearings. A statewide expansion of that pilot is planned for 2019.

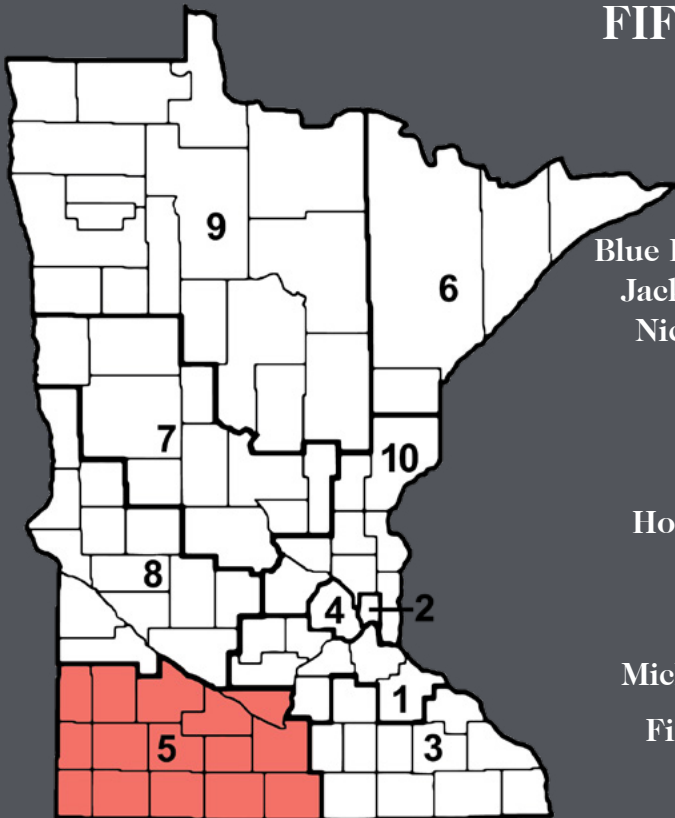
The first 13 months of the eReminder project showed a 30% reduction in failures to appear in criminal cases when the Court was able to successfully remind defendants to come to court. Previously, there was a 10% no show rate per hearing, and that dropped to seven percent per hearing.

The Court also saw a 15% reduction in the number of bench warrants issued for failures to appear during that same time period, even though there was a higher number of cases filed.

One challenge of the pilot was getting litigants to provide their cell phone numbers or email addresses so they could be reminded of their next appearances; about 54% of litigants have opted in for the new service.

eReminders do not take the place of formal hearing notifications from the Court, which still occur. There is no indication in the case management system that a reminder has gone out, meaning that whether or not a defendant receives a reminder cannot be used for or against his or her case.

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



15 Counties:

Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, Watonwan

17 Judgeships

2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Michelle A. Dietrich, Chief Judge

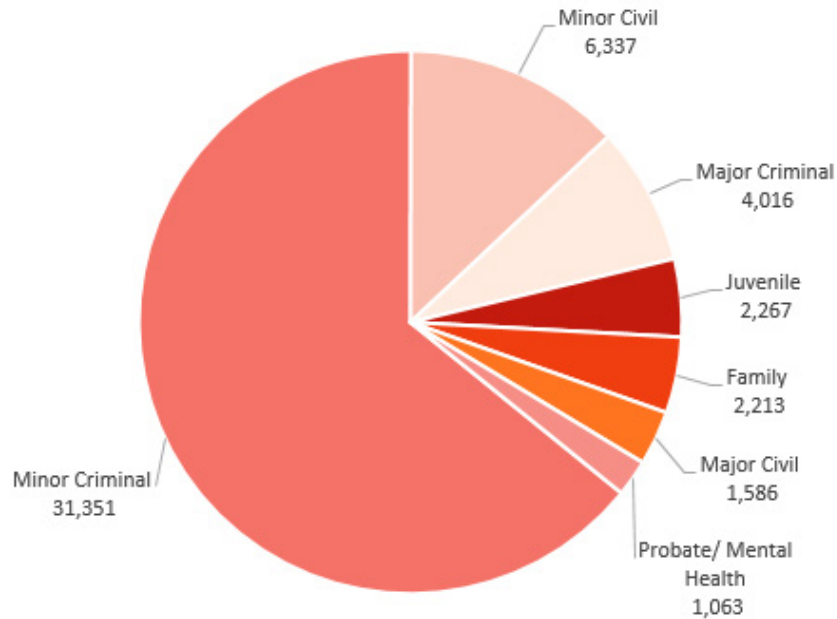
Hon. Gregory J. Anderson,
Assistant Chief Judge

Michael J. Kelley, District Administrator

Fifth Judicial District Administration
11 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 205
Mankato, MN 56001

2018 Fifth Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 48,833



DocumentGet Pilot Succeeds

On October 9, 2018, the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office became the first agency in the state to begin electronically receiving court documents on demand from the Judicial Branch case management system directly into its local internal case management system.

In the first seven weeks of the pilot, the County Attorney's Office received more than 8,000 case documents through this enhanced integration, saving the Office dozens of hours of staff time once spent manually downloading documents through Minnesota Government Access (MGA).

Based on the success of the pilot, State Court Administration is now marketing this new service – called 'DocumentGet' – to other government partners across the state as an enhanced customer service that will improve efficiency and information-sharing throughout Minnesota's justice system.

A grant from the Court Technology Fund helped the Judicial Branch complete the necessary integration development to allow electronic transfer of documents. The grant also funded the development needed to prepare the Blue Earth County Attorney's case management system to request and receive the documents.

Now that this integration service has been developed, the Judicial Branch can easily establish the same integration with any other government justice partner in the state, after the justice partner makes the necessary configurations to its local case management system.

Currently, nearly 600 government agencies across the state are using the online MGA portal to access court documents remotely. Court Rules determine which documents are available to agencies through this portal. While MGA has been incredibly successful, it can be time-consuming for government partners to download large numbers of documents through the system. Each document must be accessed individually, then manually downloaded to the local agency's network or device.

Through DocumentGet, the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office can access the same documents as it could through MGA, but Office staff can now locate a court file and have selected documents from the file instantly transferred into their case management system.

In its Court Technology Fund application, the Blue Earth County Attorney's Office estimated this automation would save 150 hours per week in staff time, which is the equivalent of \$13,000 per month.

The addition of DocumentGet does not eliminate the court's obligation to serve certain documents on justice partners.

Any justice partner interested in DocumentGet should review the [DocumentGet service page](#) on the Court Integration Services site.



Specialization Teams Developed

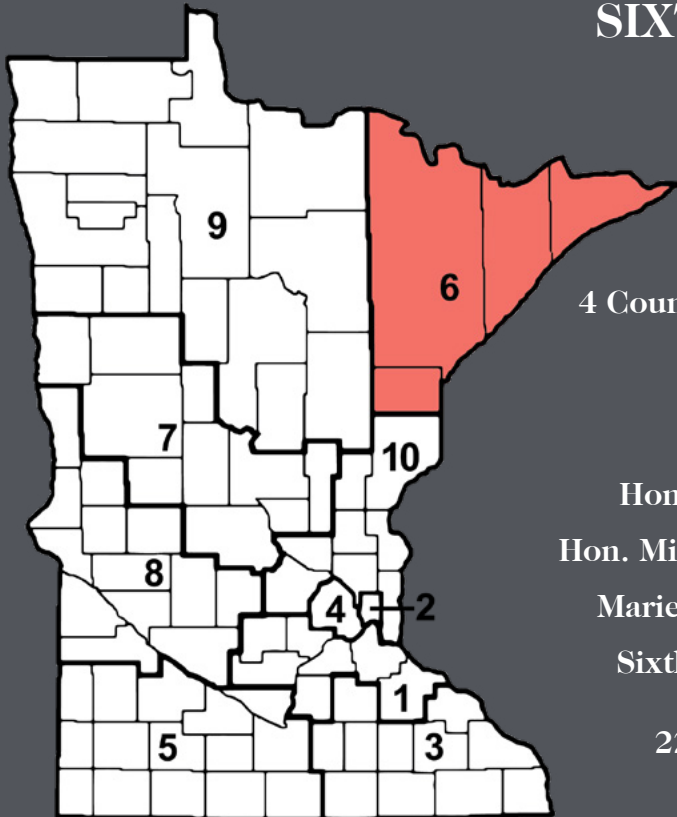
As part of promoting reengineering as part of the Judicial Branch Strategic Plan (see page 5), two specialized teams were developed within the Fifth Judicial District in 2018.

The new Financial Processing Team includes a team lead and four staff members who now perform financial processing for all 15 counties in the District.

The new Judgments Team consists of a team lead and four specialists devoting about 15-20 hours per week each on processing judgments for the entire District. Case processing by this Team includes default judgments, confessions of judgment, foreign judgements, issue and return of writs of execution, affidavits of increased costs, and satisfaction and discharge of judgments. Statistics indicate this Team has been highly successful in providing a more efficient process for performing this very specialized work.



SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



4 Counties: Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis

16 Judgeships

1 Referee

2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Sally L. Tarnowski, Chief Judge

Hon. Michael J. Cuzzo, Assistant Chief Judge

Marieta Johnson, District Administrator

Sixth Judicial District Administration

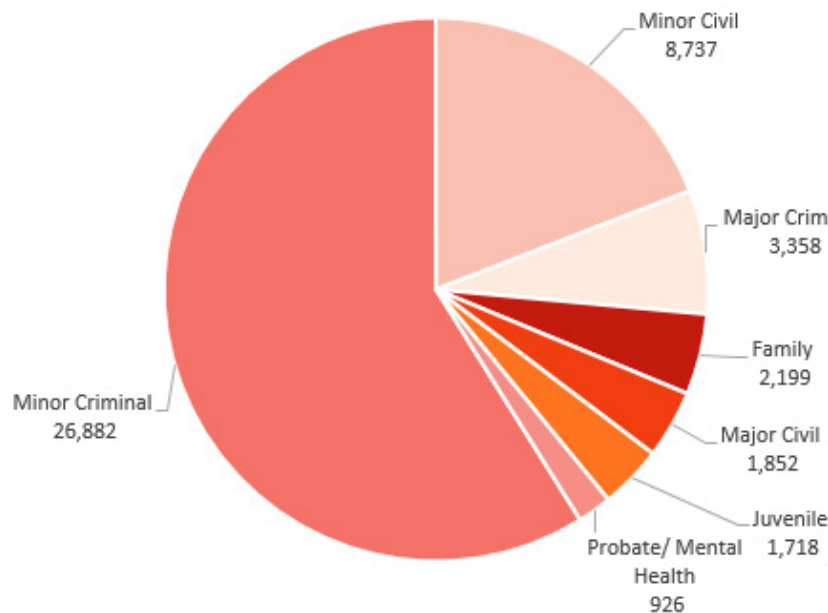
St. Louis County Courthouse

227 West First Street, Suite 302

Duluth, MN 55802

2018 Sixth Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 45,672



Flag of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Raised in Carlton County

The Fond du Lac Band is one of six Chippewa Indian bands that make up the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. The La Pointe Treaty of 1854 established the Fond du Lac Reservation, and geographically, half of its land is located in Carlton County. Because of its location, the Carlton County Treatment Court includes tribal partners. Through work on the Treatment Court, Judge Leslie Beiers of Carlton County initiated conversations with Treatment Court tribal partners and Fond du Lac Chief Judge Ojibway Townsend about making the courthouse and courtroom more inclusive of tribal partners.

Their efforts led to an agreement that the flag of the Fond du Lac Band would be installed in the courtroom. A flag installation ceremony was held on August 7, 2018. It is a tradition of the Anishinaabe Ojibwe people of the Great Lakes region that ceremonies begin with a traditional drumming ritual. Members of the Fond du Lac Veteran's group, many of whom attended the ceremony, presented the Fond du Lac Band's flag. In addition to judges and staff, members of the Reservation Business Committee, the Carlton County Board of Commissioners, justice system partners, and many community members attended the ceremony.

South St. Louis County Veterans Court Receives U.S. Department of Justice Grant



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The South St. Louis County Veterans Treatment Court was awarded a United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Veterans Treatment Court Discretionary Grant in September 2018 that will fund much of the Court's operations until 2022. The Grant, in the amount of \$550,000 for a term of four years, will fund additional drug testing, probation services, advanced training opportunities, research in partnership with the University of Minnesota Duluth, and a half-time treatment court coordinator.

The South St. Louis County Veterans Treatment Court, a special program designed to assist veterans involved in the criminal justice system who are diagnosed with a mental health or substance use disorder, currently has a capacity of five veterans at any given time. The Grant will allow the Court to serve up to 25 veterans at any given time. The program began implementing the new funding in January 2019.

Warrant Resolution Day Held in Duluth

St. Louis County District Court in Duluth partnered with local prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and the Public Defender's Office to hold a Warrant Resolution Day on Wednesday, June 20, 2018, at the Damiano Center in Duluth.

During the event, individuals with outstanding warrants had the opportunity to speak with a public

defender or prosecutor, arrange to pay outstanding fines, or have a hearing before a Sixth Judicial District judge regarding their warrants. In addition to local judges and court staff, representatives from the Sixth District Public Defender's Office, the Duluth City Attorney's Office, St. Louis County Probation, the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office, and the Driver Diversion Program were on site during the event.

The event intended to simplify the process of resolving an outstanding warrant, with the goal of helping people avoid being arrested or detained for having an outstanding warrant. Local justice partners made their best efforts to resolve an individual's case or cases during the event.

South St. Louis County Veterans Court Earns Final Approval

St. Louis County District Court has been holding a special court calendar for veterans since early 2014, based on a recommendation from the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans. The effort proved successful, as court and county officials began collaborating with community organizations to provide greater support to veterans in the court system. In 2016, court and county officials began taking steps to formalize this effort into a recognized veterans treatment court program, including meeting national standards and best practices, and ensuring the judges and staff involved in the program have received the necessary training.

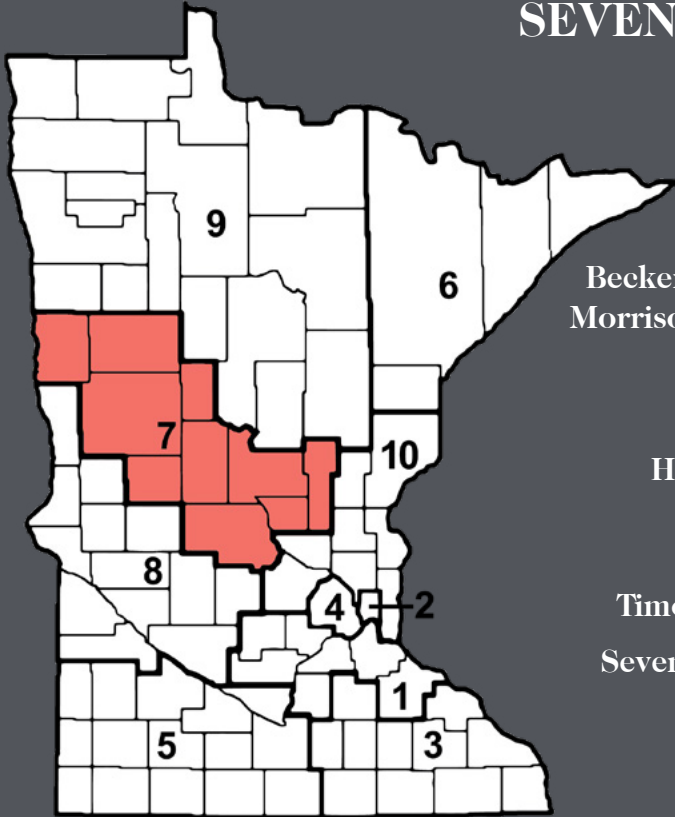
In February 2018, the Minnesota Judicial Council, the policymaking body of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, gave formal approval to officially launch the South St. Louis County Veterans Treatment Court.

The program provides veterans in the criminal justice system with the opportunity to change their life circumstances, become alcohol and drug free, and get treatment for mental health issues. This is accomplished through comprehensive assessment and treatment, intensive supervision, random drug and breath testing, regular court appearances, and the use of immediate sanctions and incentives. The program works in partnership with St. Louis County, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other organizations that support veterans and veterans' families. In addition, volunteer veteran mentors help guide and support participants through the program and their recovery.

The goal of the program is to ensure veterans receive the help and assistance they are owed, receive treatment for their chemical and mental health issues, and leave the program sober, law-abiding, and in a stable living situation. The program accepts veterans charged with misdemeanors and felonies where the defendant is screened as a high-risk to reoffend and in high-need of treatment or services. The program is divided into five phases. Movement through phases is based on accomplishment of goals and requirements. Advancement through the phases results in reduced responsibilities and, ultimately, graduation from the program.

An estimated 17,000 veterans reside in St. Louis County, including 10,000 veterans in south St. Louis County.

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



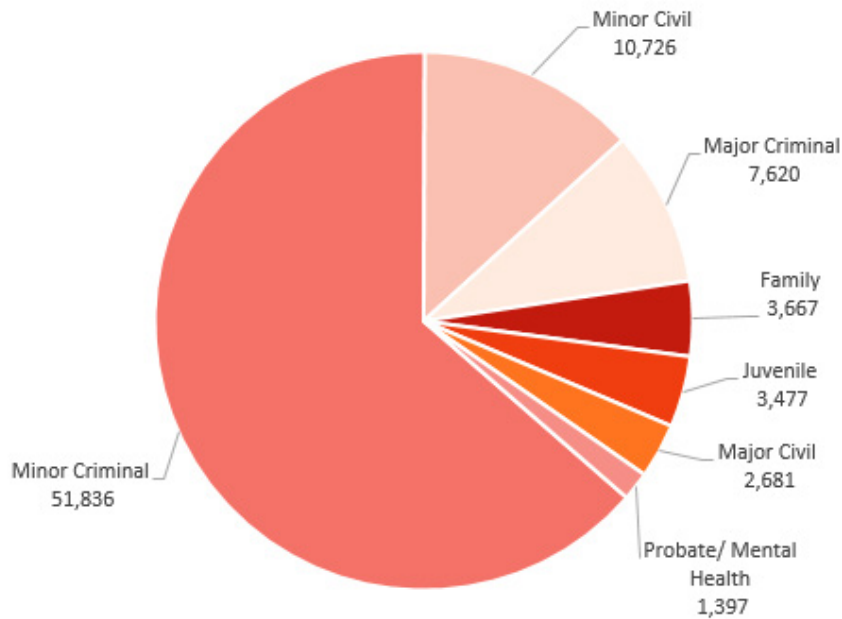
10 Counties:
Becker, Benton, Clay, Douglas, Mille Lacs,
Morrison, Otter Tail, Stearns, Todd, Wadena

29 Judgeships
5 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Jay D. Carlson, Chief Judge
Hon. Sarah E. Hennessy,
Assistant Chief Judge

Timothy Ostby, District Administrator
Seventh Judicial District Administration
Stearns County Courthouse
725 Courthouse Square #406
Saint Cloud, MN 56303

2018 Seventh Judicial District Case Filings
2018 Total Filings: 81,404



Six New Judges Begin Serving the Seventh District Within 90 Days

From April to July, 2018, six new judges appointed by Governor Mark Dayton began serving the Seventh Judicial District to replace retiring judges. The work of bringing on six judges in a short timeframe was successful, due in large part to organization, communication, and collaboration between the human resources department, District Administration, court administration, and the information technology division.

Judge Douglas B. Clark replaced Judge Sally Ireland Robertson, and is chambered in Wadena County; Judge Amber B. Gustafson and Judge Tammy L. Merkins replaced Judge Steven J. Cahill and Judge Galen J. Vaa, and are chambered in Clay County; Judge Kevin M. Miller replaced Judge Waldemar B. Senyk, and is chambered Otter Tail County; Judge Michelle L. Clark replaced Judge Ann L. Carrott, and is chambered in Douglas County; and Judge Antoinette C. Wetzel replaced Judge Douglas P. Anderson, and is chambered in Morrison County.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is experiencing a rapid rate of judge retirements. By 2022, almost 40 percent of all judges that were on the bench in 2017 either will have retired, or will have turned 65-years-old.

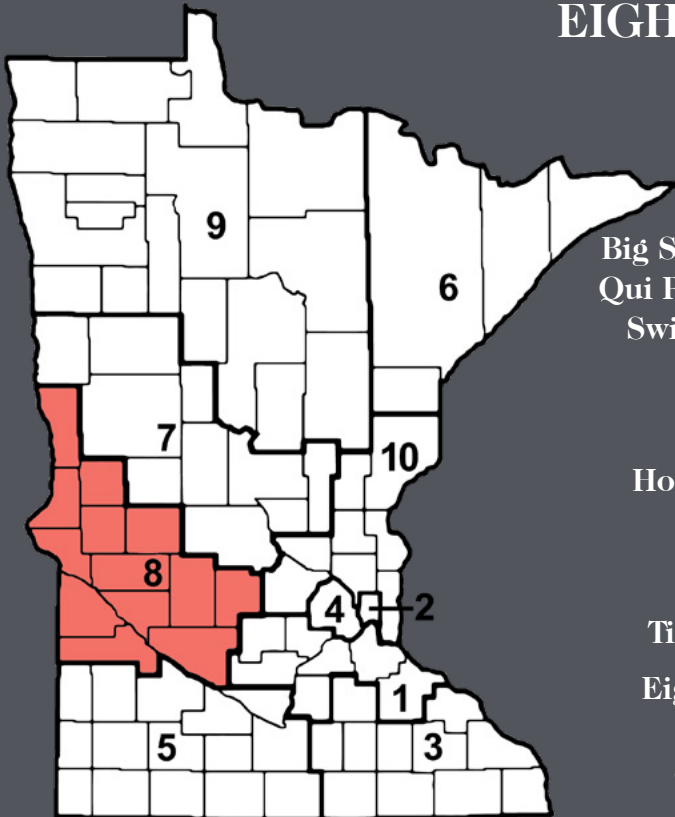
Benton County District Court is First Court on Minnesota Judicial Branch Instagram



In July 2018, the Minnesota Judicial Branch launched an [Instagram account](#) to highlight all of the courthouses in the state, and the work that happens within each courthouse. Benton County District Court was selected as the first court to be featured.

Benton County was established in 1849 and organized in 1850, and is one of the oldest counties in Minnesota. The Benton County Courthouse houses two chambered judges and their staff, the Court Administrator's office, Corrections, the County Attorney's office, and the County Law Library.

EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



13 Counties:

Big Stone, Chippewa, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Meeker, Pope, Renville, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin, Yellow Medicine

11 Judgeships

2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Michael J. Thompson, Chief Judge

Hon. Dwayne N. Knutsen,
Assistant Chief Judge

Timothy Ostby, District Administrator

Eighth Judicial District Administration

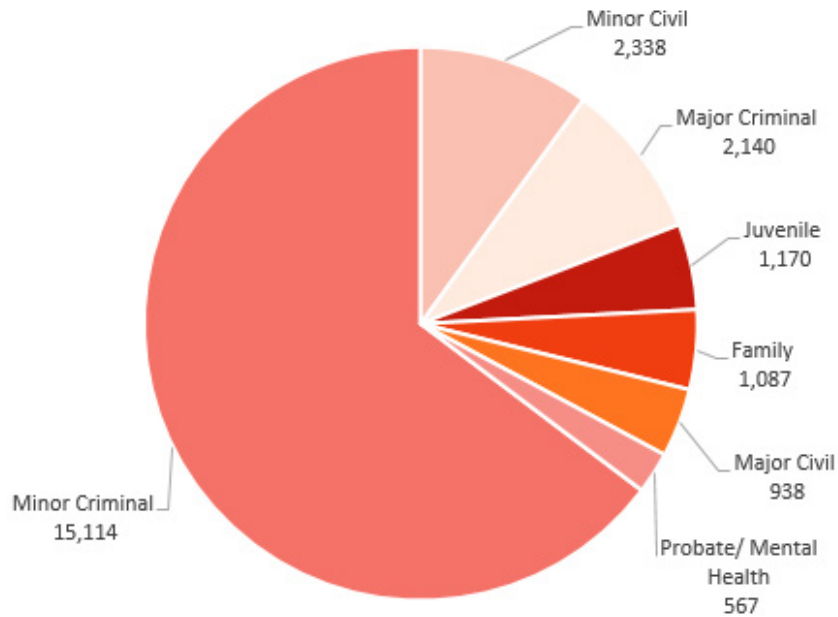
Kandiyohi County Courthouse

505 Becker Avenue SW, Suite 107

Willmar, MN 56201

2018 Eighth Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 23,354



Pilot Underway to Improve Outcomes for Children in Need

In an effort to improve outcomes for abused and neglected children, the Eighth Judicial District launched a two-year pilot program in January 2018, targeting court cases involving Children in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS cases). The goal of the pilot is to find safe, permanent homes for at-risk children as quickly as possible.

Under the pilot, CHIPS cases in a five-county region - Kandiyohi, Meeker, Swift, Yellow Medicine, and Renville counties – are heard by a single judge and managed by specialized court staff. Two dedicated administrative staff who focus on ensuring court cases involving vulnerable children are processed in a timely fashion support Judge Jennifer K. Fischer, the CHIPS judge during the pilot, in addition to her court reporter and law clerk.

Since the pilot began, uniform courtroom procedures and templates have been developed to make it easier for all judges to maintain strict calendars for each step of a child protection case and to provide permanent homes to children in the required timeframe.

Eighth Judicial District Judge Randall J. Slieter Appointed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals

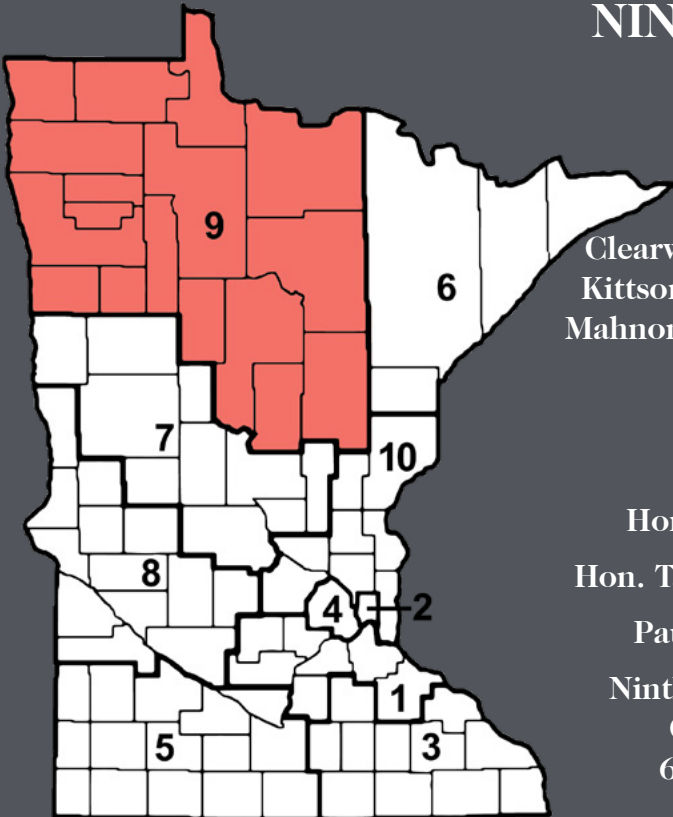


On Friday, October 5, 2018 Governor Mark Dayton announced the appointment of Judge Randall J. Slieter as the Seventh Congressional District Judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. Judge Slieter replaced the Honorable Michael L. Kirk.

“Judge Randall Slieter has demonstrated a wealth of judicial knowledge and experience that make him very well-qualified to serve in this important role,” said Governor Dayton. “His commitment to leading with fairness and integrity, both on the Bench and in his community, will bring great value to the Minnesota Court of Appeals.”

Judge Slieter was a district court judge in the Eighth Judicial District for 24 years, where he presides over district court cases in Renville County. Previously, he was a partner at Qualley, Boulton & Slieter, a law clerk at the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Minnesota, a legislative intern with the Minnesota House of Representatives, and an adjunct professor of Pre-trial Litigation, Remedies, and Research and Writing at Mitchell Hamline School of Law. He earned his B.A. from the University of Minnesota and his J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



17 Counties:
 Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass,
 Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca,
 Kittson, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods,
 Mahnomon, Marshall, Norman, Pennington,
 Polk, Red Lake, Roseau

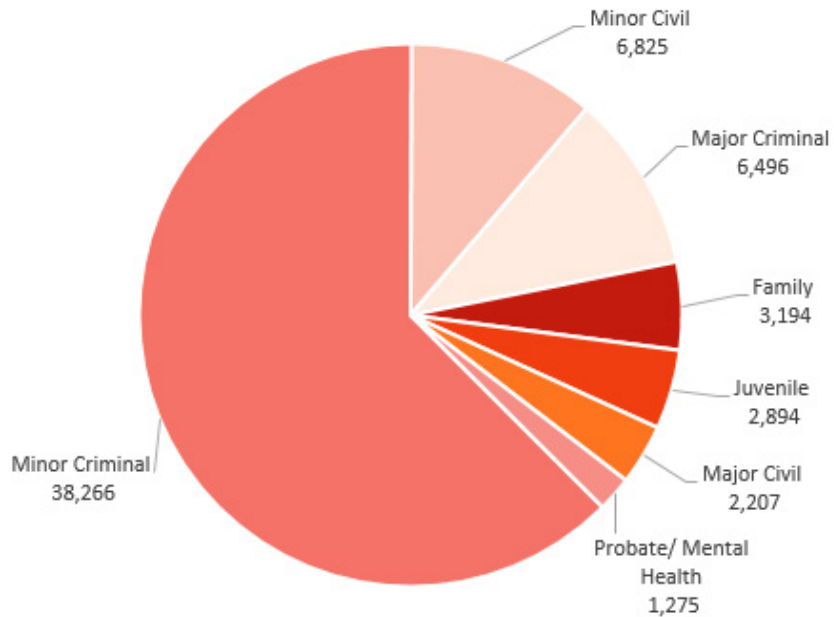
24 Judgeships
2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Paul T. Benshoof, Chief Judge
 Hon. Tamara L. Yon, Assistant Chief Judge

Paul Maatz, District Administrator

Ninth Judicial District Administration
 Community Services Building
 616 America Avenue NW #250
 Bemidji, MN 56601

2018 Ninth Judicial District Case Filings
 2018 Total Filings: 61,157



White Earth Nation, Mahnomen County Launch Joint Drug Court

After months of planning by justice system and tribal officials, a proposal to establish a joint White Earth Nation-Mahnomen County drug court program received final approval in 2018 from the Minnesota Judicial Council, the policymaking body of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

The new drug court program represents a partnership between state, local, and tribal governments aimed at reducing drug abuse throughout Mahnomen County and the greater White Earth Nation tribal lands. In December, the White Earth Tribal Government identified an urgent public health crisis after there were seven reported drug overdoses, including two deaths, within 48 hours on tribal lands. Between 2014 and 2017, there were 320 Major Drug cases filed in Mahnomen County, one of the state's smallest counties with less than 2,000 households. By comparison, neighboring Norman County, with a population roughly 20% greater than Mahnomen County, saw just 48 Major Drug cases filed during that same four-year span.

The program, officially called the White Earth Tribal and Mahnomen County Healing to Wellness Drug Court, targets high-risk, high-need felony offenders whose substance abuse problems caused or contributed to their current involvement with the criminal justice system. Through the program, district court and tribal judges work closely with prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, social workers, and other justice system partners to develop a strategy that will pressure an offender into completing a treatment program and abstaining from repeating the behaviors that brought them to court. The ultimate goal is to address the underlying addiction that resulted in the offender's criminal offense, and have him or her leave the program sober, law-abiding, and with a stable living situation.

Judge Lang named ABOTA's Trial Judge of the Year

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) presented its 2018 Trial Judge of the Year Award to Ninth Judicial District Judge Lois J. Lang. Minnesota ABOTA recognized Judge Lang for her excellence in the conduct of jury trials, her enduring professionalism, and her commitment to civility. Judge Lang was appointed to the bench in 1994 by Governor Arne Carlson. She was the first woman appointed to the bench in the Ninth Judicial District, which includes 17 counties in the northwest corner of the state and encompasses approximately 30 percent of the state. There, she served as assistant chief judge and then chief judge during her 24 years on the bench. Judge Lang retired on July 6, 2018.



New Pennington County Justice Center

In November 2018, the Pennington County District Court moved to a brand new justice center. Although the new justice center did not change the way the court conducts business, the new space

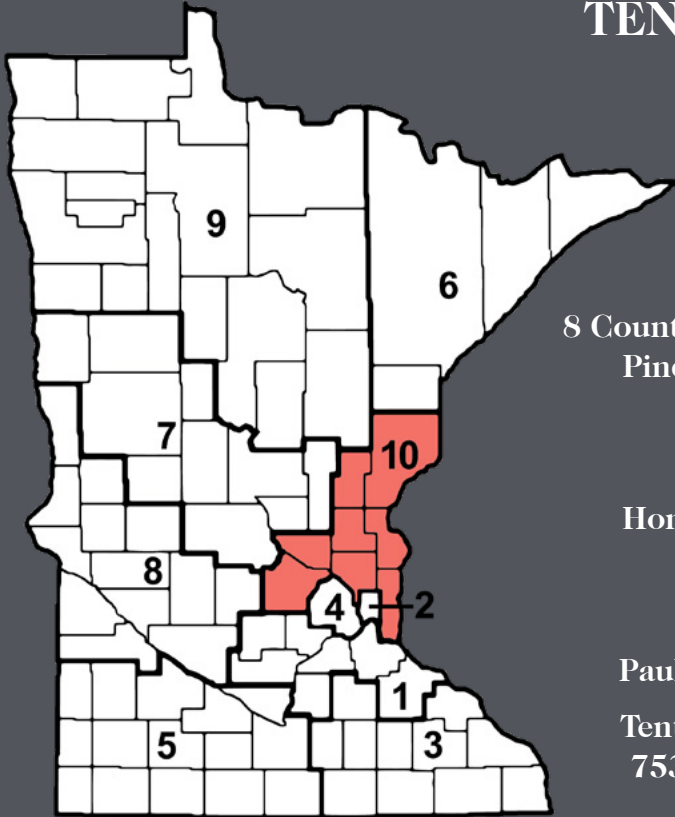
is more welcoming and better provides for the needs of court visitors and personnel. The new space is shared by the Pennington County Attorney's Office and Pennington County Jail, providing better service and improved security.

The two new courtrooms seat 75 spectators per courtroom, increasing access to the justice system for the public. There are four conference rooms adjacent to the courtrooms where attorneys and justice partners can meet with clients before and after court appearances.

The new justice center has a larger jury assembly room that can accommodate 50 prospective jurors. The new public lobby seats more than 30 people, and replaces a space in the former courthouse that only had room for eight to ten people.

The new space has significant security improvements, creating a safer environment for everyone who visits the court. All district court offices are within a secure area, and the judges and court staff have secure access to the courtrooms. Defendants who are incarcerated can be transported to court appearances through a secure elevator directly from the jail to each courtroom. When the court was in the previous location, the jail was in a separate building and defendants would walk across the street from the jail to court.

TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT



8 Counties: Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, Wright

45 Judgeships

4 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Douglas B. Meslow, Chief Judge

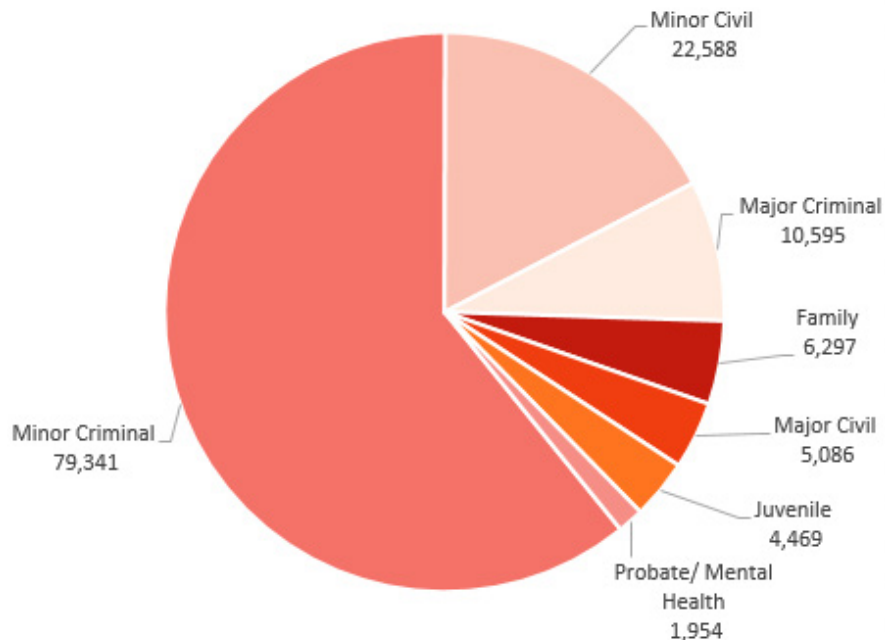
Hon. Susan R. Miles,
Assistant Chief Judge

Paul Patterson, District Administrator

Tenth Judicial District Administration
7533 Sunwood Drive NW, Suite 306
Ramsey, MN 55303

2018 Tenth Judicial District Case Filings

2018 Total Filings: 130,330



Law Day Events

Several Tenth Judicial District counties, supported by local justice partners, participated in Law Day events in 2018. The events, held in Anoka, Washington and Wright counties, provided information and assistance to nearly 1,000 individuals.



At the Wright County Law Day event, Judge Steve Halsey and Judge Elizabeth Strand wore period costumes to debate the 1867 election on the issue of whether the county seat should be moved from Monticello to Buffalo. Those in attendance, and viewers of “The District Court Show”, a cable television program hosted by Judge Halsey and Judge Strand, were able to watch the debate.

Increasing Access to Services for Court Users

The Tenth Judicial District Self-Help Center added expanded hours for the second consecutive year in all eight of the counties in the District. Approximately 6,500 self-represented litigants were served by the Tenth District Self-Help Center in 2018, which was an 11% increase from 2017. The Self-Help Center and Anoka Technical College also began a partnership that will bring Self-Help staff to the Anoka Technical College campus to assist the public with legal information and procedures in 2019.

Operation Community Connect

In October 2018, the District’s Litigant Services team, along with the Kanabec County Court Administrator, participated in Operation Community Connect in Kanabec County, providing legal information and resources to members of the public who were there to receive any number of free resources from participating organizations.

New Court Buildings

The new Sherburne County Judicial Services Building had its grand opening in June 2018. It is approximately 100,000 square feet, including five new courtrooms, judges’ chambers, inmate holding and office space for Court Administration, Community Corrections, the Law Library, the Self-Help Center and the County Attorney. It also includes space for two additional future courtrooms, and features improved security and technology for visitors. It is the first



courthouse in the state designed for a paperless court; it was built without a paper file room.

2018 also saw Wright County break ground on a new justice center, which will include the courts. The 150,000 square foot building will be attached to the existing Law Enforcement Center, and will feature courtrooms with advanced technology. The justice center is scheduled to open in May 2020.

COURT OF APPEALS

19 Members, Three-Judge Panels

Appeals from:

District court decisions (except first-degree murder convictions), administrative agency decisions (except Tax Court & Workers' Compensation Court), decisions of local governments

Original Actions:

Writs of mandamus or prohibition, which order a trial judge or public official to perform or not perform a certain act.

2018 Court of Appeals Case Information

	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	439	427
Criminal	860	839
Administrative Rule	2	1
Economic Security	88	88
Writs - Certiorari	86	74
Habeas/Certified Questions	9	10
Commitment	51	36
Family	223	199
Juvenile Delinquency	17	22
Juvenile Protection	106	101
Implied Consent	19	42
Discretionary Review/Writs	81	75
Probate	26	19
Unlawful Detainer/Eviction	43	31
Total	2,050	1,964

Chief Judge Edward J. Cleary
Judge:

2011 - October 2013

Chief Judge:

November 2013 - present

Judge Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks
1998 - present

Judge Renee L. Worke
2005 - present

Judge Kevin G. Ross
2006 - present

Judge Heidi S. Schellhas
2008 - present

Judge Francis J. Connolly
2008 - present

Judge Matthew E. Johnson

Judge:

2008 - Nov. 2010;
Nov. 2013 - present

Chief Judge:

Nov. 2010 - Oct. 2013

Judge Michelle A. Larkin
2008 - present

Judge Louise Dovre Bjorkman
2008 - present

Judge John R. Rodenberg
2012 - present

Judge Carol Hooten
2012 - present

Judge Denise D. Reilly
2014 - present

Judge Peter M. Reyes, Jr.
2014 - present

Judge Lucinda E. Jesson
2016 - present

Judge Tracy M. Smith
2016 - present

Judge Diane B. Bratvold
2016 - present

Judge James B. Florey
2017 - present

Judge Jeanne M. Cochran
2018 - present

Judge Randall J. Slieter
2018 - present

COURT OF APPEALS IN 2018



The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides citizens with prompt, deliberate review of final decisions of the district courts and some decisions of state agencies and local governments. The decision of the Court of Appeals is the final judicial resolution in more than 95% of cases filed, with review being granted by the Supreme Court in less than five percent of cases.

The Court of Appeals is composed of 19 judges who hear cases in three-judge panels at the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul and at various locations around the state. In 2018, Judges Jeanne Cochran and Randall Slieter joined the Court, succeeding judges Randolph Peterson and Michael Kirk, who retired. A number of senior judges also assisted the Court throughout 2018, providing coverage for vacancies and absences.

The Court disposed of 1,964 cases in 2018, filing opinions in 1,328 cases, issuing more than 2,000 orders, hearing oral arguments in over 600 cases, and considering almost 750 cases at non-oral conferences. In addition to argument calendars at the Judicial Center and at Minnesota law schools, three-judge panels held arguments on 86 cases at locations outside the Twin Cities metro area. Judges also met with school and community groups in conjunction with eight of the travel calendars, providing opportunities for dialogue and education about the role of the Court of Appeals.

The Court addressed a number of cases involving issues of first impression and public importance in 2018, filing 120 published, precedential opinions. Although total filings were similar to 2017, there were noticeable increases in the number of appeals from administrative agencies, appeals involving mental commitments, and family matters. Almost 200 appeals were referred to the Court's Family Law Appellate Mediation Program in 2018. About 35% of the cases mediated were resolved by agreement of the parties, reducing overall costs and delays for many families.

July 2018 marked the second anniversary of mandatory e-filing for all attorneys, court reporters, and state agencies. E-filing remains optional for self-represented litigants, but has been widely embraced by litigants with Internet access. E-filing substantially reduces copying, postage, and courier costs for litigants, and it makes electronic service on other parties to the appeal free and nearly instantaneous. Documents related to pending appeals may be e-filed 24 hours a day. E-filing has dramatically improved access to justice at reduced cost to litigants and attorneys. These efforts to move to an electronic environment have substantially reduced the time and money spent by the Court of Appeals on storing and retrieving paper files, and they ensure that judges can securely access case files and relevant documents from the bench and when traveling to hearings around the state.

With 19 judges, hundreds of oral arguments and non-oral conferences, almost 2,000 new filings per year, and strict deadlines for issuing written decisions, the Court of Appeals is very busy. The Court continues to provide meaningful access to appellate review to thousands of citizens every year, through the dedication of judges and staff, and their commitment to initiatives that enhance efficiency and ensure that every case receives timely consideration and review.

SUPREME COURT

7 members, En Banc

Appeals from:

Court of Appeals decisions, Trial court decisions if Supreme Court decides to bypass the Court of Appeals, Tax Court decisions, Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals decisions, Review of all first-degree murder convictions

Original Actions:

Election Disputes; Professional Regulation

Chief Justice
Lorie S. Gildea
Associate Justice
2006 - June 2010
Chief Justice
July 2010 - present

Associate Justice
G. Barry Anderson
2004 - present

Associate Justice
David R. Stras
2010 - February 2018

Associate Justice
David L. Lillehaug
2013 - present

Associate Justice
Natalie E. Hudson
2015 - present

Associate Justice
Margaret H. Chutich
2016 - present

Associate Justice
Anne K. McKeig
2016 - present

Associate Justice
Paul C. Thissen
July 2018 - present

2018 Supreme Court Case Information

Direct Appeals

Workers' Compensation	20
Tax Court	9
Professional Regulation	61
First Degree Homicide	18
Writs/Micellaneous	4
Total Direct Appeals	112

Petitions for Further/Accelerated Review (PFR/ PAR)

Filed (PFR/PAR)	605
Review Denied	470
Granted Further/Accelerated Review	83
Other (Remand, Dismiss)	2

Opinions/Disposition Orders

Affirmed	60
Affirmed in Part	9
Reverse/Remand	26
Other (Discipline, dismiss, other disposition)	51
Total	146

SUPREME COURT IN 2018

David R. Stras Resigns from the Minnesota Supreme Court

Supreme Court Associate Justice David R. Stras resigned from the state's highest court on January 31, 2018, following his confirmation by the United States Senate as a judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth District. Justice Stras joined the Minnesota Supreme Court on July 1, 2010, and was elected as an associate justice in 2012. Prior to his appointment to the Court, Justice Stras had been a member of the faculty of the University of Minnesota Law School since 2004. He has also served as counsel to the law firm of Faegre & Benson LLP in its appellate advocacy group. Following law school, Stras clerked for The Honorable Melvin Brunetti of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and then for The Honorable J. Michael Luttig of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

While serving on the Court, Justice Stras served as liaison to the advisory committees on the Rules of General Practice, Juvenile Protection Procedure, Adoption Procedure, and Civil Appellate Procedure. He also served as liaison to the State Law Library, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Ethics Board, and the Guardian ad Litem Board. He was also the liaison to the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility, Client Security Board, and the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board, all of which required him to handle many issues regarding attorney ethics and discipline on behalf of the Court.

Paul C. Thissen Appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court



On April 17, 2018, Governor Mark Dayton announced the appointment of Paul C. Thissen to fill the vacancy left upon the resignation of Justice David R. Stras after his confirmation as a federal court of appeals judge. Justice Thissen joined the Court on July 24, 2018.

Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Thissen was Senior Counsel of the Health Law Group at the Ballard Spahr Law Firm (formerly Lindquist & Vennum) where he worked with clinics, hospitals, health plans, and long-term care clients. He was previously a Shareholder at Briggs and Morgan, an appellate state public defender, and a law clerk for the Honorable James B. Loken at the Eighth Circuit Court of

Appeals.

During his 25-year legal career, Justice Thissen has represented a wide range of pro bono clients, including survivors of domestic abuse seeking protective orders, people fleeing persecution in their home countries, and parents seeking to preserve custody rights. Justice Thissen also developed and organized a program to train lawyers on the unique needs of and obstacles to justice for people with disabilities, and then paired those lawyers with pro bono clients.

Justice Thissen was a Minnesota State Representative from 2003 until his appointment to the Supreme Court, serving as the Speaker of the House and as chair of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments at Anoka High School

On April 11, 2018, the Minnesota Supreme Court convened at Anoka High School in Anoka as part of the Court’s biannual program that seeks to teach students about the court system and build the public’s trust and confidence in the Judicial Branch. The Anoka High School visit marked the 47th in-school oral argument for the Court.



The state’s highest court heard oral arguments of an actual case, *State of Minnesota v. Cortney John Edstrom* (Case No. A16-1382), in front of nearly 850 Anoka High School students.

Following the oral arguments, members of the Court held a question-and-answer session with the students in attendance, shared lunch with student representatives, and spent the afternoon visiting classrooms to talk more about the state’s court system.

Supreme Court visits Thief River Falls, Red Lake Nation

The Minnesota Supreme Court visited Thief River Falls and Red Lake Nation in September as part of a program that seeks to teach students about the court system and build the public’s trust and confidence in the judiciary.

On the morning of September 13, 2018, the state’s highest court convened at Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls to hear oral arguments in a real court case in front of hundreds of students. That evening, the Supreme Court held a community dinner in the Lincoln High School Commons.

On September 14, the Court spent the day at the Red Lake Nation with students and the Red Lake Tribal Court.



Since the Supreme Court convened oral arguments in Rochester, Minn., in 1995, school visits have taken center stage in the Court’s public outreach and education efforts. The Thief River Falls event marked the 48th in-school oral arguments for the Court.

Demographic Data

In January 2016, the Lawyer Registration Office began collecting race/ethnicity information in addition to gender data from attorneys during the lawyer registration process. The following data was reported in 2018.

Active - ALL

	Active Total	Active Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Active Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Active Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Active Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Active Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	704	359	240	82	19	4
Black/African American	518	201	147	116	41	13
Hispanic/Latino	288	128	90	53	13	4
Native American/ Alaskan	108	36	34	28	6	4
White/ Caucasian	19,834	5,731	4,988	4,004	3,405	1,706
Multiple	380	162	93	58	44	23
Choose Not to Answer	3,858	1,674	899	667	460	158
Total	25,690	8,291	6,491	5,008	3,988	1,912

Inactive - ALL

	Inactive Total	Inactive Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	135	42	59	29	5	0
Black/African American	74	14	24	24	8	4
Hispanic/Latino	53	13	21	15	4	0
Native American/ Alaskan	12	1	4	7	0	0
White/ Caucasian	3,060	469	924	861	611	195
Multiple	43	11	17	10	3	2
Choose Not to Answer	502	97	163	142	80	20
Total	3,879	647	1,212	1,088	711	221

Demographic Data

In January 2016, the Lawyer Registration Office began collecting race/ethnicity information in addition to gender data from attorneys during the lawyer registration process. The following data was reported in 2018.

Male Active

	Active Total	Active Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Active Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Active Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Active Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Active Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	322	157	107	42	12	4
Black/African American	277	96	79	67	27	8
Hispanic/Latino	135	60	36	26	10	3
Native American/ Alaskan	59	20	17	14	4	4
White/ Caucasian	11,875	3,041	2,567	2,343	2,385	1,539
Multiple	219	77	56	35	29	22
Choose Not to Answer	851	262	213	161	142	73
Total	13,738	3,713	3,075	2,688	2,609	1,653

Male Inactive

	Inactive Total	Inactive Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	60	18	28	11	3	0
Black/African American	34	7	11	11	2	3
Hispanic/Latino	22	5	10	6	1	0
Native American/ Alaskan	6	1	1	4	0	0
White/ Caucasian	1,486	230	363	386	340	167
Multiple	20	4	6	6	2	2
Choose Not to Answer	120	19	42	23	25	11
Total	1,748	284	461	447	373	183

Demographic Data

In January 2016, the Lawyer Registration Office began collecting race/ethnicity information in addition to gender data from attorneys during the lawyer registration process. The following data was reported in 2018.

Female Active

	Active Total	Active Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Active Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Active Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Active Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Active Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	377	200	131	39	7	0
Black/African American	241	105	68	49	14	5
Hispanic/Latino	146	66	52	26	2	0
Native American/ Alaskan	49	16	17	14	2	0
White/ Caucasian	7,890	2,667	2,406	1,644	1,012	161
Multiple	161	85	37	23	15	1
Choose Not to Answer	457	179	133	84	54	7
Total	9,321	3,318	2,844	1,879	1,106	174

Female Inactive

	Inactive Total	Inactive Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	72	24	29	17	2	0
Black/African American	40	7	13	13	6	1
Hispanic/Latino	28	7	11	7	3	0
Native American/ Alaskan	6	0	3	3	0	0
White/ Caucasian	1,564	237	559	473	268	27
Multiple	23	7	11	4	1	0
Choose Not to Answer	83	18	20	34	8	3
Total	1,816	300	646	551	288	31

Demographic Data

In January 2016, the Lawyer Registration Office began collecting race/ethnicity information in addition to gender data from attorneys during the lawyer registration process. The following data was reported in 2018.

Choose Not to Answer Gender Active

	Active Total	Active Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Active Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Active Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Active Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Active Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	2	2	1	0	0
Black/African American	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	7	2	2	1	1	1
Native American/ Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	69	23	15	17	8	6
Multiple	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	2,550	1,233	553	422	264	78
Total	2,631	1,260	572	441	273	85

Choose Not to Answer Gender Inactive

	Inactive Total	Inactive Admitted 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Admitted 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Admitted 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Admitted 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Admitted 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	0	2	1	0	0
Black/African American	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	3	1	0	2	0	0
Native American/ Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	10	2	2	2	3	1
Multiple	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	299	60	101	85	47	6
Total	315	63	105	90	50	7

Retired

	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American/ Alaskan	White/ Caucasian	Multiple	Choose Not to Answer
Total	3	7	3	1	696	2	2680

APPELLATE CLERK'S OFFICE

The Office of the Clerk of the Appellate Courts provides docketing, scheduling, and case management services for the Minnesota Supreme Court, the Minnesota Court of Appeals, and the Commitment Appeal Panels (CAP).

AnnMarie S. O'Neill, Clerk of the Appellate Courts, manages a team of six staff members who are responsible for maintaining accurate appellate records and for providing customer service to case participants and members of the public.

Appellate E-filing

On July 1, 2016, appellate e-filing became mandatory in all case types for court reporters, attorneys, court-appointed examiners, agency records managers, and panels appointed by the appellate courts. Additionally, beginning in 2016, self-represented parties were permitted to e-file in all appellate case types. Appellate stakeholders have embraced the transition from voluntary to mandatory e-filing and frequently provide positive feedback regarding the efficiencies of the E-MACS (e-filing) system and the effectiveness of the robust training materials and videos available on the Judicial Branch website.

Since the launch of the E-MACS pilot project on October 1, 2014, the Clerk's Office has reviewed 5,639 user accounts. The following is a breakdown of current accounts by user type:

<i>Account Type</i>	<i>2016 Total</i>	<i>2017 Total</i>	<i>2018 Total</i>
Attorney	2,857	3,728	4,481
Court Reporter	336	376	416
Self-Represented Litigant	183	333	506
Executive Branch Agency Records Manager	78	106	125
Court Appointed Examiner	18	24	27
Other /Test Accounts/Pro Hac Vice	39	59	84

During 2016, the average number of monthly e-filings was 1,320 per month, which represented approximately 60% of all appellate filings being submitted electronically. In 2017, the number increased to 2,460 e-filings per month, which translated to 93% of all appellate filings being submitted electronically. During 2018, appellate e-filing continued to account for 93% of all appellate filing submissions.

In July 2017, the Clerk's Office transitioned appellate e-filing support to the eFiling and eService Support Center. This resource provides appellate stakeholders with access to specialized, technical support during court business hours. The partnership between the Court Services Division of State Court Administration and the Clerk's Office has led to greater efficiencies and faster filing evaluations

by allowing Clerk's Office staff to focus on docketing incoming filings, while the eFS staff handle e-filing support questions.

CAP Hearings

In April 2016, the Judicial Branch responded to the increasing number of CAP petitions filed each year by adding a third, three-judge panel to conduct CAP hearings. CAP hearings are held when a civilly committed patient petitions for release from a state security hospital or requests a less restrictive placement. District court judges from the First, Second, and Tenth judicial districts serve as chief judges of these panels. The addition of the third panel has reduced the amount of time between when a patient's petition is filed and the first available hearing date. Clerk's Office personnel are responsible for docketing all CAP filings, conducting pre-hearing conferences, assigning three-judge panels, and scheduling the hearings.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of CAP Cases Initiated</i>
2009	54
2010	62
2011	98
2012	87
2013	106
2014	108
2015	185
2016	200
2017	193
2018	176

Minnesota Judicial Branch Hires an Emergency Management Coordinator

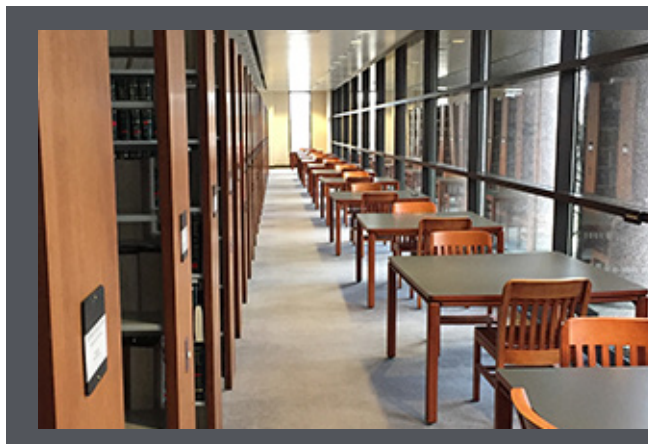
Recognizing the need to better prepare Minnesota's court system for local and statewide emergencies and possible courthouse closures, the Minnesota Judicial Branch hired its first statewide Emergency Management Coordinator, a position that reports to the Clerk of the Appellate Courts. Krysta Reuter, with 19 years of emergency management expertise working for a variety of public and private sector organizations across the country, joined the Branch in December 2018.

In her new position with the Judicial Branch, Reuter has taken a leadership role in ensuring the Judicial Branch is prepared for emergencies and able to restore core court services as quickly as possible after a disaster or catastrophic event.

STATE LAW LIBRARY

The Minnesota State Law Library, which is located on the ground floor of the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul, provides legal information to the courts, attorneys, self-represented litigants, and the general public on a statewide basis. The Library supports the legal research needs of the appellate and district courts, and serves as the archive for the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Librarians also assist attorneys and the public in finding legal materials via e-mail, phone, live chat, and in person. In 2018, Library staff answered more than 8,200 questions. Additionally, more than 2,500 people visited the Library and utilized its resources without requiring Library staff assistance. The Library's collection includes state and federal laws, legal treatises, practice materials, and self-help materials. In addition, patrons can use public computers, current awareness materials, and online legal research resources such as Westlaw. The State Law Library also provides access to trial court and appellate court documents from its public terminals.



The State Law Library has two free clinics for people seeking advice on appeals. The Library hosts a clinic for people seeking to appeal a denial of unemployment benefits to the Court of Appeals. In 2018, the clinic assisted 51 people with their unemployment appeals. In January 2016, the Library opened an Appeals Self-Help Clinic for most other types of appeals. During 2018, the attorney volunteers met with 181 people.

In April 2017, the Law Library began offering legal reference service in some St. Paul Public Library branches. The response from the public has been very positive. With this service, the State Law Library is able get into the community and reach people who don't know about the Library, or don't know it is open to everyone. In 2018, the librarians answered more than 700 questions at the public library.

Through a collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the State Law Library also provides legal resources to inmates of the state prisons. The Law Library Service to Prisoners librarians meet monthly with inmates at each of the eight primary correctional facilities in Minnesota. Most inmate requests are received and answered by mail, using the resources of the State Law Library. In 2018, the Library answered more than 39,000 requests from inmates. The program expenses are funded by inmate canteen and phone service fees, and are not paid for by Minnesota taxpayers.

In addition, the State Law Library provides assistance and advice to county law libraries located throughout the state. It provides training to county law library staff and regularly answers questions about collection development, budget issues, and staffing.



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH**

2018 Annual Report to the Community

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