



# Annual Report 2019

MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

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# Letter from the Chief Justice

Dear fellow Minnesotan:

The Minnesota Judicial Branch has taken historic steps over the past six months to address the impact of the global pandemic on our court system. Preserving an open door to justice required a prioritization of resources to ensure access to court services and operations. This caused an unfortunate delay in our 2019 Annual Report to the Community. But we are now pleased to be able to provide that report to you.

In our report, you will see an overview of the many ways the Judicial Branch worked in 2019 to ensure fair and timely access to justice. This includes:

- Conducting the first-ever Access and Fairness Survey of our website to ensure accountability of the Judicial Branch and improve overall operations of the court.
- Advancing restorative justice through four new treatment courts, including one specifically serving veterans and one that serves individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Expanding nation-leading efforts to provide support to people who choose to represent themselves in court proceedings.
- Designing a new pilot project that will expand the role of legal paraprofessionals in areas of unmet need in civil law, such as housing disputes and family law.
- Streamlining processes and procedures to better serve those who come before the court and efficiently resolve cases.
- Launching a concerted effort on statewide change management that evaluates the needs of the district and appellate courts and aligns it with the Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan to advance work that supports the evolution and transformation of court services and operations.

Minnesota's Constitution promises every person in the state the right "to obtain justice freely...promptly and without delay." I am proud to say the state of the judiciary in our state is strong. The innovation that has been the hallmark of our strategic plan through the years has enabled our courts to quickly adapt, evolve and respond to meet the needs of those we serve.

I am proud of the accomplishments our judges and staff achieved in 2019 and their ongoing commitment to deliver on our Constitutional mission.

Sincerely,

Lorie S. Gildea  
Chief Justice  
Minnesota Supreme Court



**Minnesota Judicial Branch Mission: To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.**

# THE MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

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 2019, the district courts were served by 295 district court judges, 23 referees, and 31 child support magistrates.

In 2019 there were 105 Judicial Branch court locations across Minnesota.

## Judicial Branch FY20/21 Biennial Budget

<b>District Courts</b>	<b>\$626,204,000</b>
<b>Court of Appeals</b>	<b>\$25,994,000</b>
<b>Supreme Court/State Court Administration</b>	<b>\$82,436,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$734,634,000</b>

# Statewide Initiatives

## State Court Administration Launches Strategic Planning and Projects Office

In January 2019, State Court Administration launched the Strategic Planning and Projects Office (SPPO) to support the Judicial Branch strategic planning process and oversee statewide project and change management.

The SPPO works closely with the Judicial Council during the development of the Judicial Branch's biennial strategic plan, and will serve as a direct conduit connecting the Judicial Branch strategic leadership teams with the project and change management experts who implement the Branch's strategic initiatives.

Another role of the SPPO is to evaluate the needs of the district and appellate courts to ensure that all parts of the Judicial Branch's strategic and operational planning process are working in concert.

## State Capitol Courtroom Open House Held

In January 2019, approximately 100 state lawmakers, legislative staff, and Executive Branch

commissioners attended an open house in the Supreme Court's State Capitol Courtroom. The open house was hosted by the Minnesota Supreme Court and the Judicial Council.



The event gave legislators, commissioners, and staff an opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes tour of the historic Courtroom, including the robing room used by justices before and after oral arguments, the conference room where justices decide cases, and the Chief Justice's Capitol chambers. Members of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council used the opportunity to educate lawmakers about the work of the state's court system and key issues facing the Judicial Branch.

## New Training Available for Judicial Officers on Eyewitness Testimony

In 2019, the Education and Organizational Development Division of the State Court Administrator's Office created two eLearning modules for judicial officers on eyewitness testimony, "Eyewitness Science: Protection and Evaluation of Eyewitness Identification Evidence," and "Eyewitness Identification Evidence: The State of Current Law." A plenary presentation titled, "Eyewitness Identification: The Science of Eyewitness Memory" was also offered at the 2019 Annual Conference of Judges.

On October 1, 2018, the Rules of Evidence Advisory Committee filed a Report on Eyewitness Identification addressing issues regarding the reliability and fallibility of eyewitness identification testimony. In a December 17, 2018, order, the Supreme Court directed that the State Court Administrator develop and provide training for Minnesota judicial officers on the science behind eyewitness identifications, focused on assisting courts in making legally sound and just decisions on the admissibility of eyewitness identification evidence. The Supreme Court also directed that the State Court Administrator publish and distribute the Committee Report.

## Cyber Security Improved

In an effort to mitigate cyber security risks, Mobile Device Management (MDM) software was deployed in 2019 on all Judicial Branch-owned and personal mobile devices of judicial officers and staff that are used for work purposes.

For many judges, administrators, and court staff, the ability to work remotely and stay connected to colleagues and justice partners when outside the courthouse is crucial to their work with the Judicial Branch. In recent years, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Judicial Branch has seen an explosion in the number of judges and staff who use cell phones, tablets, and other mobile devices to connect to the Judicial Branch network to receive e-mail and access work files and court data. There is no question that the state’s justice system has benefited from the increased productivity and connectivity provided by these mobile devices, and judges and employees have benefited from the increased flexibility to perform important work outside of their offices or chambers. As in so many other organizations, the increasing number of devices with access to a proprietary network has also exposed Minnesota courts to a heightened cyber security risk.

Beginning in March 2019, judicial officers and staff also had a new, more secure option for connecting to the Judicial Branch network when working outside their offices or chambers. Known as a Virtual Private Network (VPN), this tool provides a more user-friendly remote working experience in a secure environment,

utilizing multi-factor authentication.

## Guide & File Expands

In February 2019, the Minnesota Judicial Branch launched a new [Guide & File](#) interview related to forms used to request a Harassment Restraining Order (HRO) or an Order for Protection (OFP). Guide & File users are presented with the “Ask for a MN Restraining Order” interview that serves as a decision tree to help determine if they should request an HRO or an OFP. Based on the users’ answers, Guide & File automatically directs users to the correct form. The goal is to reduce the number of incorrect filings and eliminate confusion regarding which type of order a user should request.

The Judicial Branch launched the Minnesota Guide & File system, a web-based electronic tool that helps self-represented litigants create court forms for certain case types, in June 2018, as well as a new Guide & File Help Topic. Unlike traditional court forms where users fill in fields with their information, Guide & File uses an “interview” tool that asks simple questions and uses the answers to produce forms that can be printed or filed electronically with the court.

The 2018 launch of Guide & File featured three interviews used to create multiple forms: to start

Guide & File Interview Type	Completed	eFiled	% eFiling
Conciliation Court	2,782	1,719	62%
eFiling Affidavit of Service	223	194	87%
Eviction Action Complaint	341	123	36%
Divorce with Children (6/17/19)	357	N/A	
Harassment Restraining Order (2/25/19)	1,294	994	77%
Order for Protection (2/25/19)	707	594	84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,704</b>	<b>3,624</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Documents Created</b>	<b>21,579</b>		

a conciliation court case, to start an eviction case, and to file an affidavit of service in a conciliation court or eviction case. In 2019, Guide & File was used to create more than 21,000 documents and to eFile cases in more than 60 different courts across all 10 judicial districts.

## Website Access and Fairness Survey Conducted

On March 18, 2019, the first-ever Access and Fairness Survey of the Minnesota Judicial Branch website, [www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov), was launched. Visitors to the website were asked to take the optional, web-specific Survey as part of the Judicial Branch's statewide Access and Fairness Survey effort. The Survey asked participants to review the information on the website and access to it.

Past Access and Fairness surveys were a four-month effort to gain input from court users during an in-courthouse visit, following a Court Payment Center call, or during a visit to the Minnesota Judicial Branch website. This is the first time the Survey has included a component regarding the entire Judicial Branch website. The Survey was made available in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

The goal of Access and Fairness surveys are to ensure accountability of the Judicial Branch, improve overall operations of the court, and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. Results from the Access and Fairness Survey are being used to measure the Branch's success in meeting its strategic goals and improving court visitor experiences.

## Maintaining the Court Record

In February 2019, the Supreme Court issued an order delegating authority to the Judicial Council to establish minimum qualifications for court reporters. In response, the Judicial Council adopted [Policy 324: Minimum Qualifications for Court Reporters, Electronic Recording Equipment](#)

[Operators, and Per Diem Reporters](#) at the Council's February 2019 meeting. The Policy applies statewide to all official court reporters, electronic recording equipment operators, and per diem reporters who capture and transcribe district court proceedings.

The Judicial Council requested that the Supreme Court direct its Court Rules Advisory committees to discuss and consider establishing clear instructions for judges and court reporters about whether and how audio/video exhibits submitted as evidence should be transcribed. The Advisory committees on the Rules of Civil Appellate Procedure and the Rules of Criminal Procedure subsequently filed reports and recommendations with the Supreme Court on April 1, 2019. The Supreme Court heard public testimony on proposed amendments on September 25, and on December 10 issued orders promulgating amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure and the Rules of Criminal Procedure, effective March 1, 2020.

In addition, the Judicial Council directed the State Court Administrator to establish a procedure for entering the identification of the court reporter capturing the court record for each hearing in MNCIS. This new procedure is intended to make it easier to locate the appropriate court reporter when a transcript is requested.

## Four Treatment Courts Approved

The Minnesota Judicial Council approved four new treatment courts in 2019.

The Goodhue County Treatment Court launched in March, using a four-year implementation grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. First Judicial District Judge Douglas C. Bayley presides over the program, which is designed to accommodate up to 25 participants.

The SHORE Substance Use Recovery Court serves both Lake and Cook counties in the Sixth Judicial District. Assistant Chief Judge Michael J. Cuzzo presided over the program, which is designed for

15 participants in Lake County and 15 participants in Cook County. Cook County District Court had an operational drug court for two years, but the joint SHORE Substance Use Recovery Court of Cook and Lake counties began serving all participants from those counties in April 2019.

The Third Judicial District Veterans Treatment Court serves veterans in all 11 counties in the District. The program operates out of two courthouses – an east court and a west court. The western side of the District is served through Steele County with Judge Ross Leuning presiding. The eastern side of the District is overseen by Judge Joseph Chase, through the Freeborn County Courthouse. Four of the 11 counties served by the new Court previously had no access to a treatment court program. A ribbon cutting ceremony with special guests Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea, Governor Tim Walz, and Veterans Services officers was held in both Steele and Freeborn counties on September 20, 2019. This is the second district-wide veterans court in Minnesota. The Fifth Judicial District Veterans Treatment Court launched in 2013.

The Range Mental Health Court serves individuals with severe and persistent mental illness in northern St. Louis County, building on the success of the existing south St. Louis County mental health court in Duluth. Judge Michelle Anderson presides over the program, which launched in July 2019 through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The program is the fourth mental health court in Minnesota, and has the capacity to serve 30 individuals.

Following the launch of these four programs, Minnesota has 68 operational treatment courts serving 73 counties.

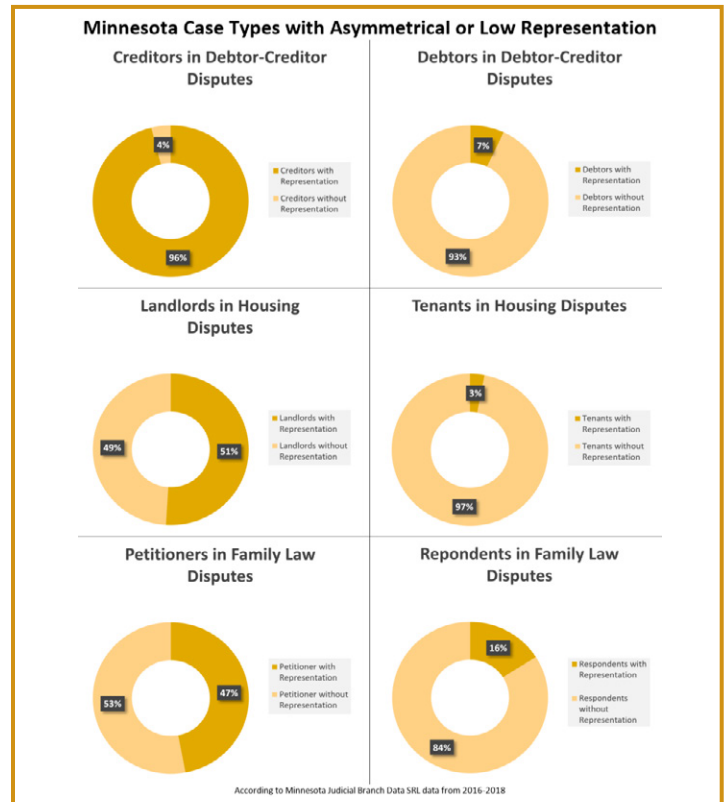
## Supreme Court Conducts Pilot to Expand Role of Legal Paraprofessionals

In March 2019, the Minnesota Supreme Court established an Implementation Committee for a

Pilot Project to allow legal paraprofessionals to provide legal advice, and in some cases represent a client in court, when under the supervision of a Minnesota attorney. The [Legal Paraprofessional Pilot Project](#) was intended to increase access to civil legal representation in case types where one or both parties typically appear without representation, and came out of the recommendations made by the 2017 Minnesota State Bar Association’s Alternative Legal Models Task Force. The Project was co-chaired by Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice Paul C. Thissen and Minnesota Court of Appeals Judge John R. Rodenberg.

The scope of the Legal Paraprofessional Pilot Project was limited to three areas of unmet need in civil law—housing disputes, family law, and creditor-debtor disputes. These civil case types have a high frequency of asymmetrical representation or low overall representation.

The Implementation Committee filed its report with the Supreme Court, which held a public hearing on the Pilot Project in August 2020.





## Court Administration Processes Unit Marks Successful, Productive Year

The Unit responsible for creating and implementing mandatory Court Administration Processes (CAPs) made significant progress in 2019 in producing quality CAPs for court administration and ensuring that significant entry points in CAPs are identified and can be monitored for compliance. Eight new and 31 existing CAPs were published as mandatory after thorough stakeholder review and user testing.

## Maintaining a World-Class Workforce

According to the State Demographer's Office, one of the biggest challenges facing Minnesota is a growing shortage of skilled workers. Over the past several years, the Minnesota Judicial Branch has engaged in a variety of strategies to improve employee retention. The State Court Administrator's Office Human Resources and Development staff is routinely analyzing employee feedback from the Quality Court Workplace Survey, employee exit interviews, and other surveys to develop strategies to increase employee satisfaction and retention.

Recent exit survey results show that more than 90% of employees say they were proud to work for the Judicial Branch. In a separate survey of a sample group of Judicial Branch employees and managers, respondents were asked why they stay employed with the Branch. Some of the top answers included professional development opportunities and the satisfaction of public service.

## State of the Judiciary Delivered

Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea delivered the annual State of the Judiciary address to more than 400 attendees at the 2019 Minnesota State Bar Association annual convention on June 27. She began her speech by referencing the words

of President George Washington: "...the due administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government."

Praising the work of judges, court staff, and justice partners, she went on to state: "I am both heartened and proud to say that this pillar of good government is as strong and sturdy as it's been in the history of Minnesota."

Her speech included a recap of recent court performance measures, summaries of major initiatives completed in the past year, and a look ahead to the Judicial Branch FY20-21 Strategic Plan.

## Judicial Council Approves FY20-21 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. In July 2019, the Judicial Council approved the [Minnesota Judicial Branch FY20-21 Strategic Plan](#) under the tagline, "Shared vision, shared priorities, shared purpose." The new Plan lays out three overarching goals for the Judicial Branch:

- Access to Justice: A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.
- Effect Administration of Justice: A justice system that adopts approaches and processes for the fair and just resolution of all cases.
- Public Trust and Accountability: A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.

## eReminders Now Available

Beginning in October 2019, parties to a court case may now enroll in optional [eReminders](#) to receive texts and email notifications to remind them of upcoming court dates. Notifications are available for parties with an Adult Criminal/Traffic,

Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Traffic, Juvenile Petty Offense, Domestic Abuse, Family, Eviction, or Juvenile Protection case in Minnesota district (trial) courts. Hearing eReminders notify parties of the date, time, and location of upcoming hearings.

During an 18-month pilot of hearing eReminders in Hennepin County District Court, bench warrants for failures to appear dropped by 25 percent. During the same time frame, July 2017 through January 2019, parties who received some form of hearing eReminder were 35 percent more likely to show up to their hearings.

Additional information regarding eligible case types and access to the enrollment portal can be found at [mncourts.gov/Hearing-eReminders](http://mncourts.gov/Hearing-eReminders).

## Interpreter Resource Management Application Launched

A new scheduling and management system for court interpreters, the [Interpreter Resource Management Application \(IRMA\)](#), was launched in November 2019. The goal of the new application is to ensure efficient resource management by providing real-time information about court reporter requests and assignments in one portal, through an integration with the Minnesota Judicial Branch case management system, MNCIS.

Court staff scheduling interpreters are able to use IRMA to assess locations, expected driving time, costs of providing the interpreter on-site, and other information to determine how best to fulfill the interpreter need either with an in-person court interpreter or using remote interpreting technology. IRMA streamlines all aspects and management of the court interpreter program for court staff and court interpreters. The system will electronically manage interpreter profile information, the court interpreter roster, scheduling, invoicing and payments, data collection, and reports.

During the first week of use, almost 200

interpreters had used the system. In 2018, there were more than 28,000 hearings or trials in Minnesota district courts that required the use of a court-appointed interpreter. IRMA was developed internally by the State Court Administrator's Office Information Technology Division.

## New Forms, Online Help for Minnesotans Navigating the Probate Process

Probate is one of the most common reasons a Minnesotan enters into the state court system. In July 2019, 13 new [probate forms](#) were published to assist Minnesotans who are entering into informal probate. The forms were developed over the course of a year, and drew on expertise from State Court Administration and judicial district staff, and simplify the probate process by eliminating most locally-derived probate court forms. The new forms also create a more consistent and coherent probate process for Minnesotans, no matter what court they visit, and will make the process easier to understand for those who do not have legal representation.



The forms are in plain language and avoid complex legalese, making them a great resource for Minnesotans entering the probate process

without a lawyer. The Probate, Wills, & Estates Help Topic on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website was updated to include the new forms and how the process will be streamlined for court users.

## **“Rocket Docket” Expedited Litigation Track Pilot Expands**

The Minnesota Supreme Court issued an administrative order on February 5, 2019, to expand the [Expedited Litigation Track \(ELT\)](#), or “Rocket Docket,” to all courthouses in the Sixth Judicial District. On March 1, 2019, Cook, Lake, and Carlton counties joined St. Louis County in the pilot project, which aims to improve the way district courts process civil cases to reach a secure, speedy, just, and inexpensive resolution to civil court cases.

Cases involving personal injury, consumer credit, contract disputes, and other circumstances are assigned to the ELT track during the pilot. The ELT pilot manages cases by inserting early involvement of a judge, limiting discovery, truncating continuances, and setting a trial date four to six months from filing or, if applicable, from assignment to ELT.

Assignment of cases to the ELT is mandatory, subject to the right of a party to bring a motion within a certain time period to opt out.

A 2015 evaluation of the ELT pilot found positive results in Dakota County and the St. Louis County Duluth Courthouse. The results included modest improvements in the time to disposition of the cases involved. In addition, lawyers and litigants reported through a survey that the ELT improved the overall quality of justice and access to the courts.

# District Courts



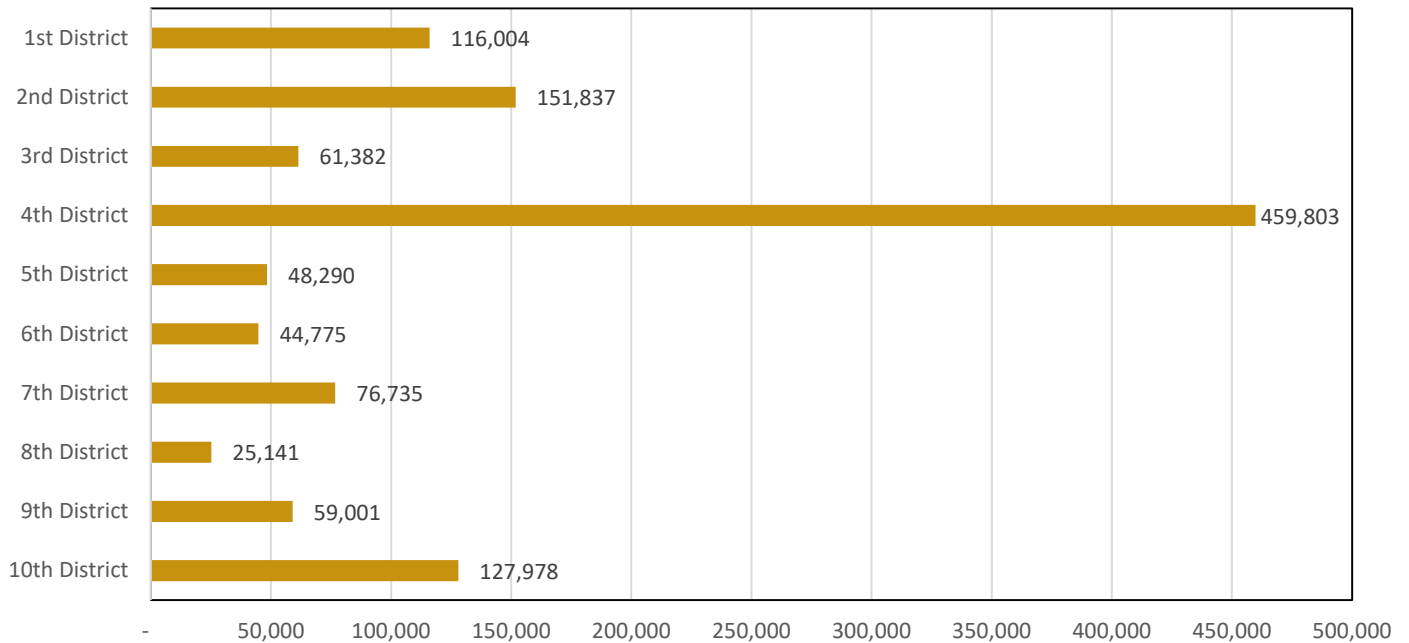
**295 Judgeships, 10 Judicial Districts, 105 hearing facilities**  
**Jurisdiction: Civil Actions, Criminal Cases, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Violations of City Ordinances**

**Appeals from: Conciliation Court\***

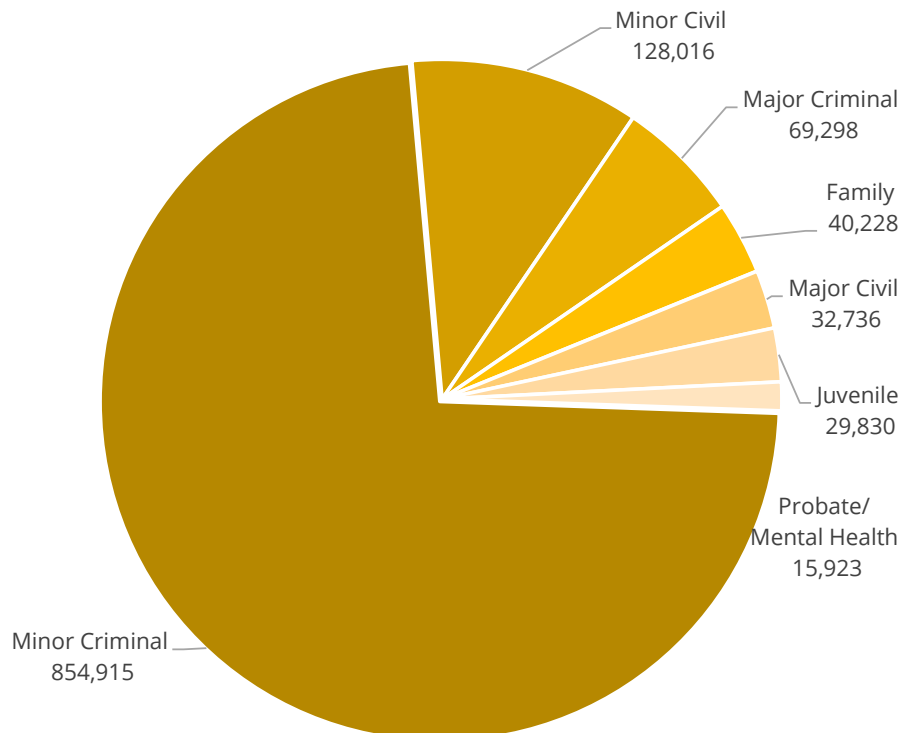
**Conciliation Division: Civil Disputes up to \$15,000**

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

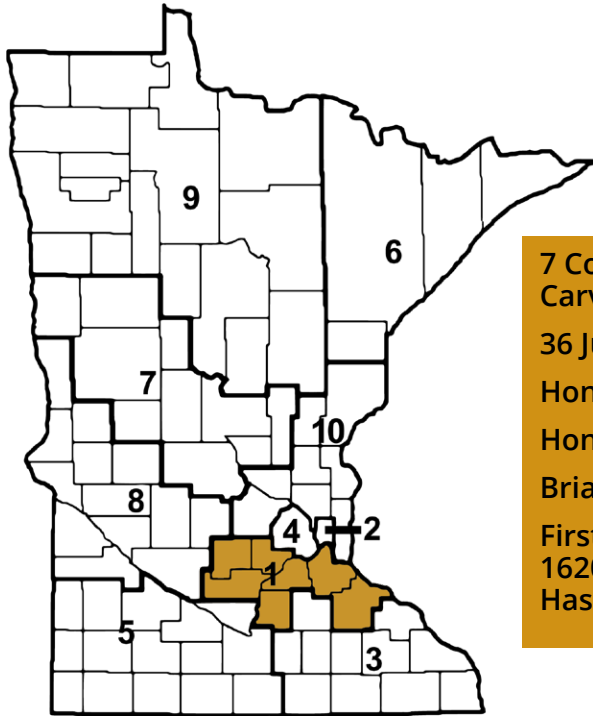
### 2019 Statewide Case Filings by Judicial District



### 2019 Statewide Case Filings by Case Type 2019 Total Filings: 1,170,946



# First Judicial District



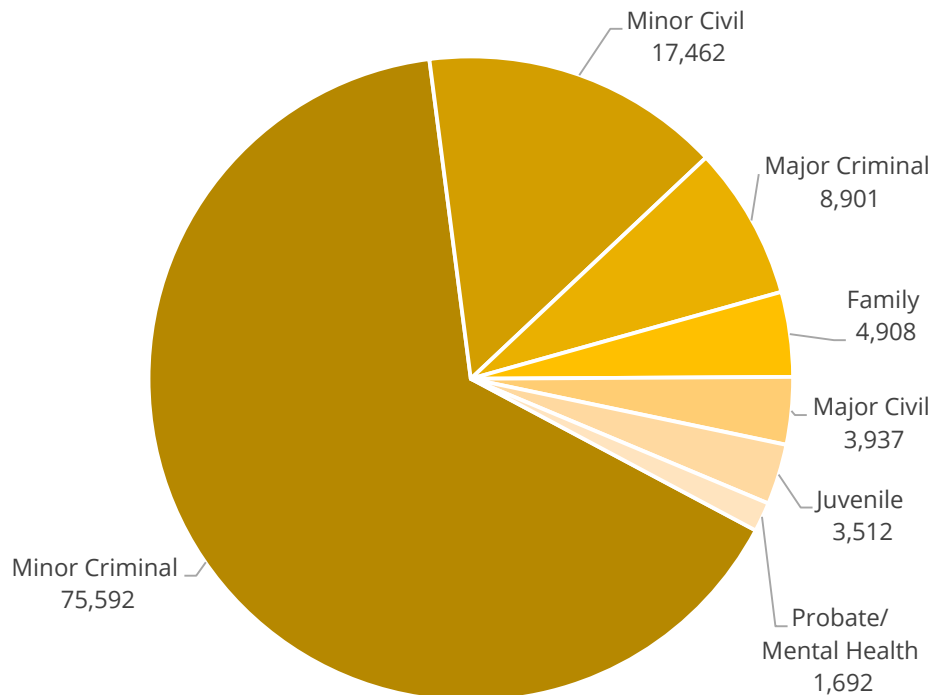
**7 Counties:**  
Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott, Sibley

**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

2019 First Judicial District Case Filings  
2019 Total Filings: 116,004



## Goodhue County District Court and Prairie Island Tribal Court Hold Community Listening Session

The First Judicial District Equal Justice Committee and the Prairie Island Indian Community hosted a community listening session at the Prairie Island Community Center on June 27, 2019. The session was an opportunity for people to voice concerns, share suggestions, and help the courts understand the court experience from the perspective of those who are entering it. Interpreters were made available for the session.

## Tribal Flags Presented to Dakota and Hennepin County District Courts

On March 29, 2019, representatives from the Red Lake Nation and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe presented their tribal flags to be installed in the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Courtroom at the Juvenile Justice Center, the family courtroom at the Family Justice Center, and at the main entrance of the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings, MN.



On behalf of Judge David Piper, presiding judge of Juvenile Court; Judge Charlene Hatcher, assistant presiding judge of Family Court; Judge Kathryn Messerich, chief judge of the First Judicial District; and Judge Jamie Cork, Dakota County District Court, Hennepin County American Indian Community Relations specialist Terri Yellowhammer approached tribes with a request to acknowledge the sovereignty of the tribal nations represented by the American Indian families served through the court system. A previous ceremony in November 2018 included an installation in Hennepin County Juvenile Court of tribal flags from the White Earth Nation and the Leech Band of Ojibwe.

ICWA is a federal law enacted in 1978 to rectify the removal of Indian children from their homes, often done without regard to the native heritage of the children. Minnesota's counterpart to ICWA is the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act (MIFPA).

## The Honorable Kathryn Davis Messerich Re-Elected to Second Term as First Judicial District Chief Judge

The Honorable Kathryn Davis Messerich was re-elected in 2019 to a second, consecutive two-year term as chief judge of Minnesota's First Judicial District. The position is filled by an election conducted by district judges who serve in the First Judicial District. Her new term as chief judge began on July 1, 2019. Chief Judge Messerich is chambered in the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings.

The Honorable David L. Knutson was also re-elected to serve his second, consecutive two-year term as assistant chief judge of the First Judicial District. His new term as assistant chief judge also began on July 1, 2019. Assistant Chief Judge Knutson is chambered in the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings.

According to state statute, the chief judge of a

judicial district exercises general administrative authority over the courts within the district, including assigning judges to serve in locations throughout the district. The chief judge of each judicial district also serves as a member the Judicial Council. No judge may serve as chief judge or assistant chief judge for more than two consecutive two-year terms.

### **Judge Cork Named to 2019 Toll Fellowship Program by Council of State Governments**

Dakota County District Court Judge Jamie L. Cork was named to the Council of State Governments (CSG) 2019 Henry Toll Fellowship Program for the Midwestern Region in 2019. Joining her were 47 other select state leaders from all three branches of state governments across the nation. The Henry Toll Fellowship Program is one of the nation’s premier leadership development programs for state government officials. As a part of the program, Judge Cork will attend an intensive six-day “leadership boot camp” designed to promote personal development, networking, and leadership growth.

### **American Board of Trial Advocates Honors Two First Judicial District Judges as Trial Judges of the Year**

The American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) selected both First Judicial District Chief Judge Kathryn Davis Messerich and First Judicial District Judge Jerome B. Abrams to receive its 2019 Trial Judge of the Year Award. The judges were honored at ABOTA’s Annual Meeting on July 11, 2019.

ABOTA is an organization of experienced and ethical trial lawyers whose mission is to preserve the right to a civil jury trial guaranteed by the 7th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and to elevate the standards of integrity, honor, ethics,

civility, and courtesy in the legal profession.

Chief Judge Messerich has served on the Minnesota District Judge Association Civil Jury Instruction Guide Committee since 2004, and has chaired the committee since 2012. She also has previously served as chair of the Minnesota

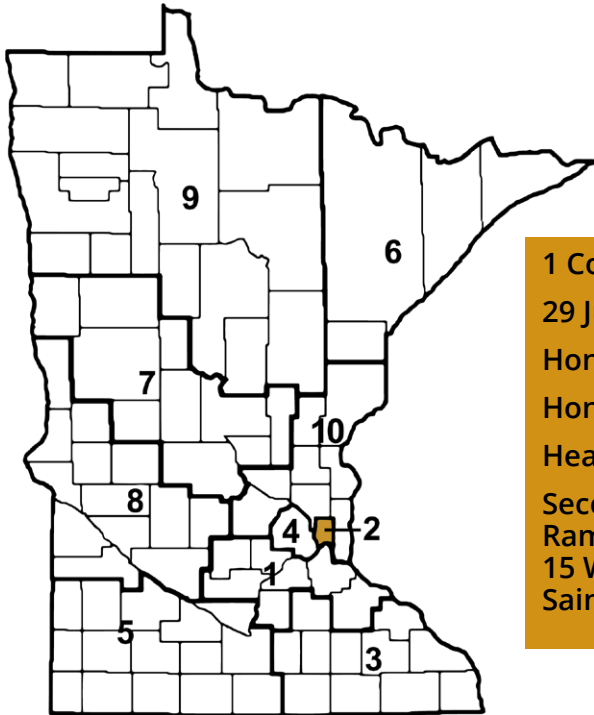


General Rules of Practice for District Courts Committee.

Judge Abrams was appointed to serve on the First Judicial District bench in 2007. Before serving as a judge, he spent 26 years in private practice. He graduated with his juris doctorate degree from William Mitchell College of Law, and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Beloit College. Judge Abrams serves on the Board of Directors for the National Center for State Courts. He has made more than 70 continuing education presentations to judges and lawyers. Judge Abrams’ chambers are also located in the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings.



# Second Judicial District



**1 County: Ramsey**

**29 Judgeships, 5 Referees, 3 Child Support Magistrates**

**Hon. John H. Guthmann, Chief Judge**

**Hon. Jennifer L. Frisch, Assistant Chief Judge**

**Heather M. Kendall, District Administrator**

**Second Judicial District Administration**

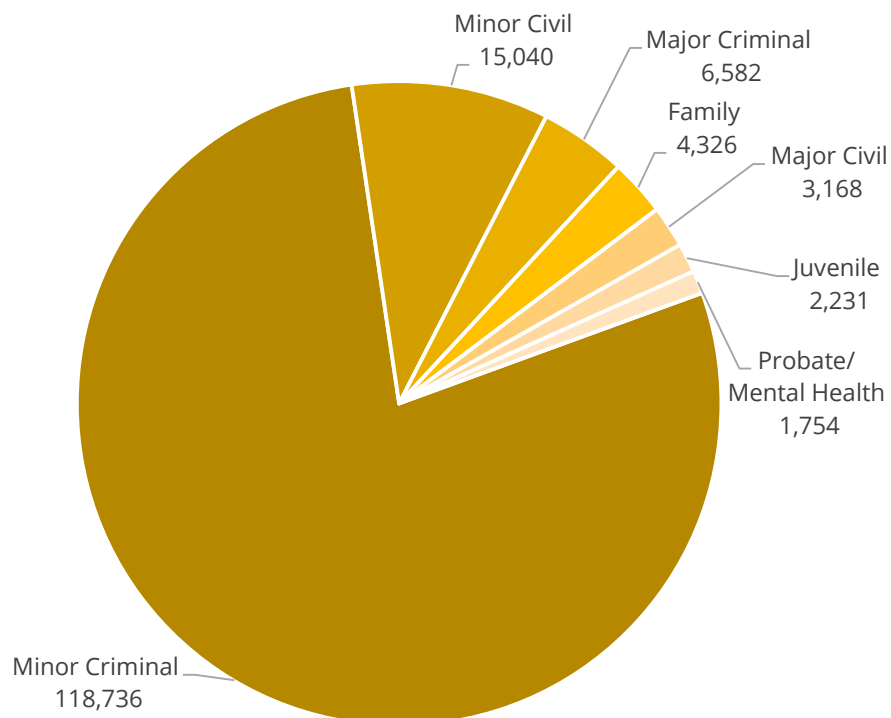
**Ramsey County Courthouse**

**15 West Kellogg Boulevard**

**Saint Paul, MN 55102**

## 2019 Second Judicial District Case Filings

2019 Total Filings: 151,837



## Veterans Treatment Court Commemorates Five-Year Anniversary



The Ramsey County Veterans Treatment Court celebrated its five-year anniversary on February 6, 2019, at the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul.

Brief comments were offered by representatives from the Second Judicial District, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, Ramsey County Attorney's Office, St. Paul City Attorney's Office, and the Minneapolis Veterans Administration Health Care System, followed by a testimonial from a Veterans Treatment Court graduate.

"We in the Second Judicial District are proud of the opportunity we had five years ago to open a Treatment Court for our veterans," said Second Judicial District Chief Judge John H. Guthmann, at the time. "Through the hard work of our veteran participants and the dedication of our staff and justice partners, many service men and woman have left the criminal justice system to resume their lives as productive and law-abiding citizens who contribute to their communities. We hope that our Veterans Treatment Court will help many more veterans for many more years."

The Ramsey County Veterans Treatment Court is a voluntary court program for eligible veterans who have been charged with a crime in Ramsey County. The mission of the Veterans Treatment Court is to promote public safety through enhanced supervision and individual accountability. The purpose of the program is to assist and support veterans by creating a coordinated response through collaboration with Veterans Affairs, community-based services, and the criminal justice system.

At the time of the commemoration, there were 15 participants in the program. The program has had a total of 58 participants, 41 of whom have graduated.

## Ramsey County District Court Selected to Explore Reducing Reliance on Fines and Fees

The Public Financial Management Center for Justice & Safety Finance (CJSF) selected Ramsey County District Court in 2019 as one of three jurisdictions nationwide to look at ways to reduce its reliance on criminal fines and fees as sources of revenue, which frequently can create a vicious cycle of debt and new charges for those unable to pay. To address any disproportionate impact of fines and fees, Ramsey County District Court will be working in collaboration with other justice partners and the CJSF.

## Ramsey County District Court Sponsors Warrant Resolution Day

Ramsey County District Court sponsored a Warrant Resolution Day in 2019, in partnership with the St. Paul City Attorney's Office, the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Minneapolis, and Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza. For the first time, other counties statewide were invited to participate. Considered an overwhelming success, more than

1,400 criminal cases were handled, 904 warrants were recalled, and 496 drivers' licenses were reinstated. In an attempt to institutionalize the process, the Ramsey County Bench will be piloting a "Walk-in Warrant" process at the Ramsey County Courthouse. The pilot will be evaluated for future implementation.

### **Judge JaPaul Harris Recognized for Contributions to Diversity in the Practice of Law**



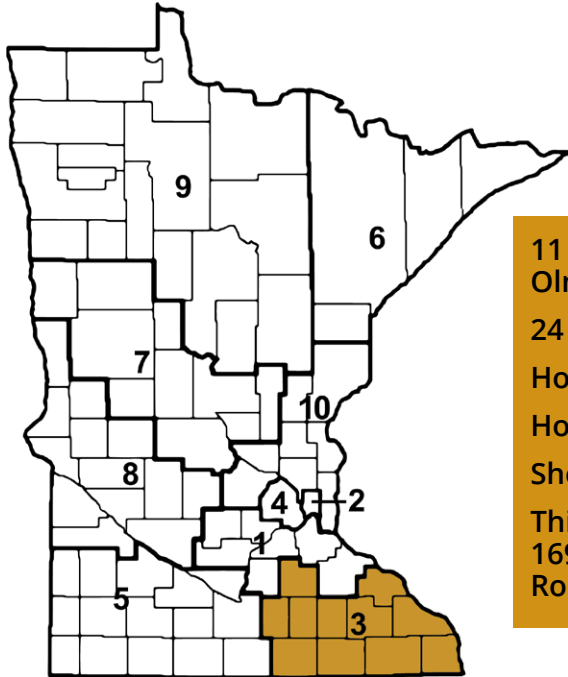
Second Judicial District Judge JaPaul Harris was recognized by Minnesota Lawyer for his contributions to diversity in the practice of law during the newspaper's third annual Diversity and Inclusion Awards ceremony in 2019. Minnesota Lawyer noted, "Among other efforts, Harris helped bring to Minnesota the annual conference of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts last year. He has also worked overtime to push forward Hennepin

County's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative, which has sought to reduce the time that teens spend in jail."

### **Consumer Credit Calendar Improved**

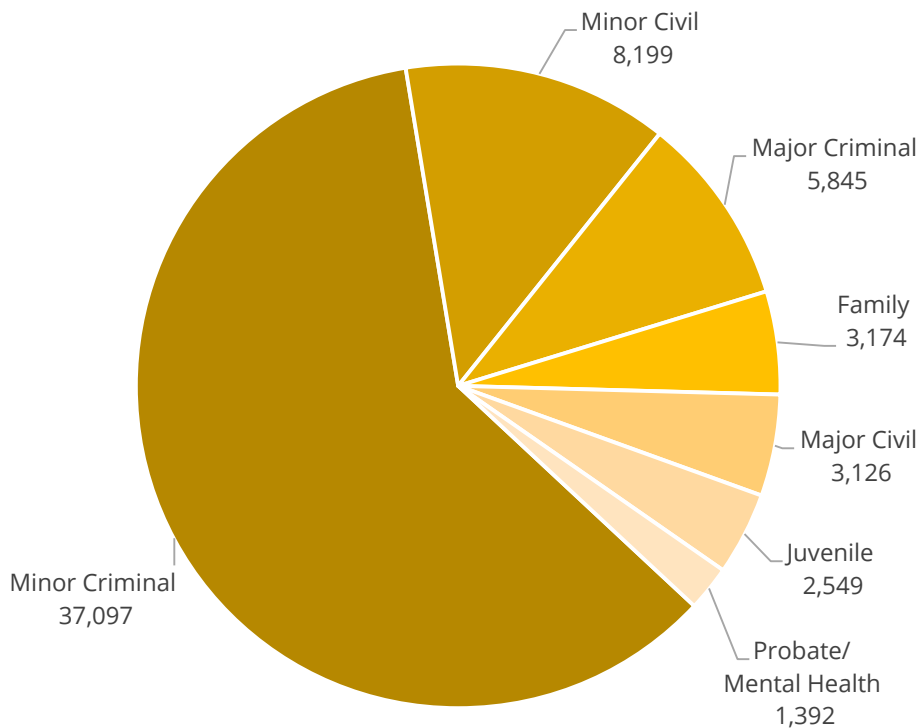
In May 2019, Second Judicial District Chief Judge John H. Guthmann instituted streamlined calendaring for consumer credit cases, with the goal of reducing the number of required appearances for parties, and achieving resolution within 180 days. Since implementation of the calendar, most cases have been resolved after only one appearance, reducing the inconvenience of appearing multiple times for creditors and debtors. The streamlined calendar was developed with input and consensus from attorneys representing both creditors and debtors.

# 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

2019 Third Judicial District Case Filings  
2019 Total Filings: 61,382



## **Chief Judge Jodi L. Williamson Re-elected Chief Judge of Third Judicial District**

*Assistant Chief Judge Joseph A. Bueltel re-elected as  
Assistant Chief Judge*

The Honorable Jodi L. Williamson was re-elected in 2019 to serve as chief judge of Minnesota's Third Judicial District. The Honorable Judge Joseph A. Bueltel was also re-elected to serve as assistant chief judge. Both were re-elected by their fellow Third Judicial District judges to serve another two-year term, effective July 1, 2019. Chief Judge Williamson is chambered in the Dodge County Courthouse in Mantorville, and Assistant Chief Judge Bueltel is chambered in Owatonna in the Steele County Courthouse.

"Serving as chief judge of the Third Judicial District for the last two years has been an incredible privilege. I am honored that my colleagues have renewed their trust in my leadership locally and at the state level." said Chief Judge Williamson at the time. "I look forward to serving with Assistant Chief Judge Bueltel once again."

By statute, the chief judge of a judicial district exercises general administrative authority over the courts within the district, including assigning judges to serve in locations throughout the district. The chief judge of each judicial district also serves as a member of the Minnesota Judicial Council, the administrative policy-making authority for the Minnesota Judicial Branch. No judge may serve as chief judge or assistant chief judge for more than two consecutive two-year terms.

## **Deputy District Administrator Angie Hutchins Earns Award for Workplace Excellence**

Deputy Third Judicial District Administrator Angie Hutchins was recognized by the Minnesota Association for Court Management for her professional talents, and her contributions to

the teams and workplaces she serves, at the Association's 2019 conference.

Hutchins was specifically honored as the Champion of Change, for which the recipient is recognized for fostering collaboration, promoting innovation, and embracing opportunities to utilize technology and other resources to increase efficiencies and productivity in the work place.

Hutchins is talented at fostering collaboration among court staff, as well as supervisory and leadership personnel, in order to promote innovation. She consistently embraces opportunities to maximize the use of technology. In the year prior to receiving the award, Hutchins volunteered to take on the project managerial duties and responsibilities, and the development and implementation of the Third Judicial District's case processing vision. Hutchins has worked for the Minnesota Judicial Branch for nearly 20 years. She has worked for the Fifth Judicial District, the State Court Administrator's Office, and the Third Judicial District.

## **Veterans Treatment Court Formalized**

The Third District had a soft launch of its newly-formed, district-wide Veterans Treatment Court in March 2019, and received federal grant funding starting in October 2019 to formalize the Court as an official treatment court.

The mission of the Third Judicial District Veterans Treatment Court is to identify veterans within the criminal justice system and honor their sacrifice and service by providing a collaborative, judicially-supervised, mentor-oriented, treatment regime, with the goal of enhancing public safety by stabilizing, habilitating, and reintegrating dependence-free veterans back into the community using federal and community resources. This is done through collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), community-based services, and the criminal justice system.

The Honorable Ross L. Leuning presides over the Veterans Treatment Court in Steele County for participants on the west side of the District, and the Honorable Joseph F. Chase presides over the Veterans Treatment Court in Fillmore County for participants on the east side of the District.



## Ignition Interlock Continues to Succeed

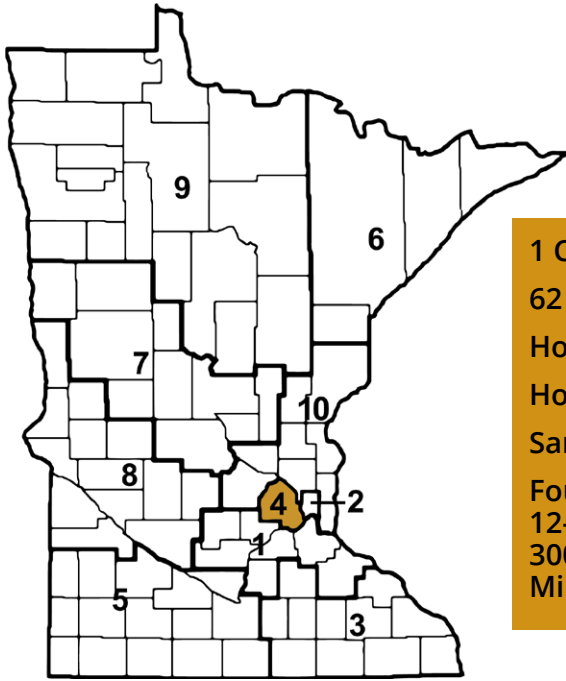
The Third Judicial District experienced continued success in 2019 with its federally-funded Ignition Interlock program, thanks to the work of the Ignition Interlock Coordinator, judges, and justice partners. The goal of the program is to promote public safety by increasing the use of ignition interlock devices for DUI offenders. The program targets first-time adult DUI offenders with a blood alcohol count at or above .16, offenders with a test refusal, or repeat offenders.

In the most recent grant cycle, there were 330 new referrals to the program, with 111 participants receiving funding for installation of the devices. This compares to 71 new referrals and 16 participants receiving funding for installation in 2017, and 245 new referrals and 58 participants receiving funding for installation in 2018.

## Olmsted County Pilots Post-Judgment Case Management

In January 2019, Olmsted County District Court began piloting a Post-Judgment Case Management program. The purpose of the program is to ensure parties and attorneys participate in a meaningful Alternative Dispute Resolution process to address post-judgment issues before significant financial and emotional resources are expended on litigation. Since the beginning of the pilot, an average of one-third of the cases involved are being resolved without the need for additional hearings and litigation.

# 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-Pfieffer, District Administrator**

**Fourth Judicial District Administration**

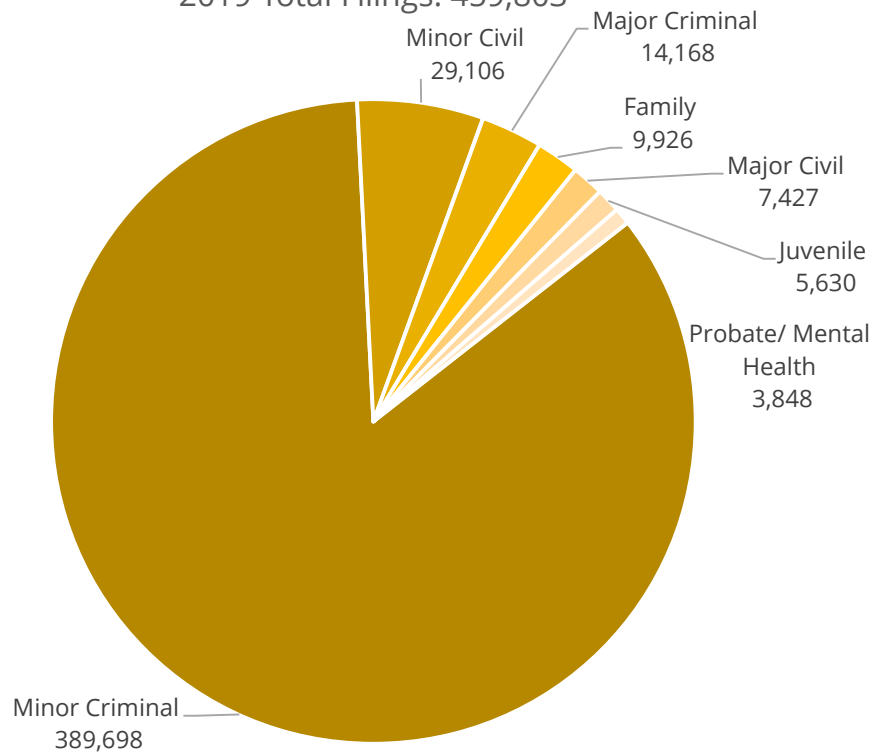
**12-C Government Center**

**300 South Sixth Street**

**Minneapolis, MN 55487**

## 2019 Fourth Judicial District Case Filings

2019 Total Filings: 459,803



## **Hennepin County District Court Co-Hosts First-Ever Juvenile Warrant Forgiveness Day and Community Fair**

On September 21, 2019, Hennepin County District Court partnered with community and court partners to host the first-ever Juvenile Warrant Forgiveness Day and Community Resource Fair in North Minneapolis.

During the event, individuals with outstanding warrants had the opportunity to resolve non-felony juvenile warrants. Public defenders represented individuals attending the event and judges were available to conduct hearings to resolve the cases or schedule new court dates. There were community service projects available on-site for individuals to fulfill any court-ordered service requirements.

Overall, volunteers helped 22 individuals with warrants at the event. Some of those individuals had adult and juvenile warrants both in Hennepin County and in other counties. There were 36 warrants recalled at the event.

More than 40 organizations participated in the Community Resource Fair, which provided an opportunity for attendees to access information about a wide variety of community-based services and resources related to health care, education, housing, mental health, chemical dependency, recreation, nutrition, and more.

## **Hennepin County District Court Hosts Trial Court Leadership Conference**

Hennepin County District Court hosted the National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO) Trial Court Leadership Conference in Minneapolis in mid-August 2019. The three-day Conference brought a record 225 attendees from 23 states to downtown Minneapolis. Chief Judge Ivy Bernhardson and District Administrator Sarah Lindahl-Pfieffer

were honored to host the guests and be able to showcase the city, court staff, and courthouses. A reception in the Jury Assembly Room at the Hennepin County Government Center provided a chance to show off the modern jury room, with its stunning views of Minneapolis.

## **Hennepin County District Court Says Goodbye to the Southdale Courthouse**

On February 1, 2019, the Southdale Courthouse in Edina permanently closed, ushering in a new era for the Criminal Division of Hennepin County District Court. Cases had been heard at the Southdale Courthouse since it opened in 1985.

Misdemeanor criminal and traffic cases that were previously scheduled for court at the Southdale location were moved to other court locations. From 2012 to 2018, an average of 50,200 non-felony criminal cases were filed at the Southdale Courthouse each year.

Court administration worked diligently with court partners to prepare for and successfully complete the move.





## **Criminal Division Implements New Warrant Hotline**

The Hennepin County District Court Criminal Division continued its efforts to reduce the number of outstanding warrants with the addition of a Warrant Hotline in 2019. The Warrant Hotline allows those with an outstanding warrant to call and receive information about the warrant and schedule a court date over the phone. Of those who have scheduled a court date, 80% have appeared at the hearings to address their warrants.

## **Psychological Services Division Completes Evaluation Pilot Program**

The Hennepin County District Court Psychological Services Division completed a Misdemeanor Rule 20 Pilot Program in 2019 with such positive results that the new process has now been adopted in all applicable cases. The Targeted Misdemeanor Rule 20 Program delivers faster time to resolution and lower evaluation costs for Misdemeanor Rule 20 referrals.

Rule 20 evaluations occur in criminal cases when there is a belief that a defendant may not be competent to proceed with the case or was not responsible at the time of the alleged offense because of mental illness or developmental disability.

The Psychological Services Division provides court-ordered forensic psychological evaluations of adults involved in criminal cases and civil commitment proceedings in Hennepin and several other metro area counties. The Division also provides evaluations of adults involved in Family Court custody/visitation cases in Hennepin County, and juveniles involved in delinquency cases in Hennepin County.

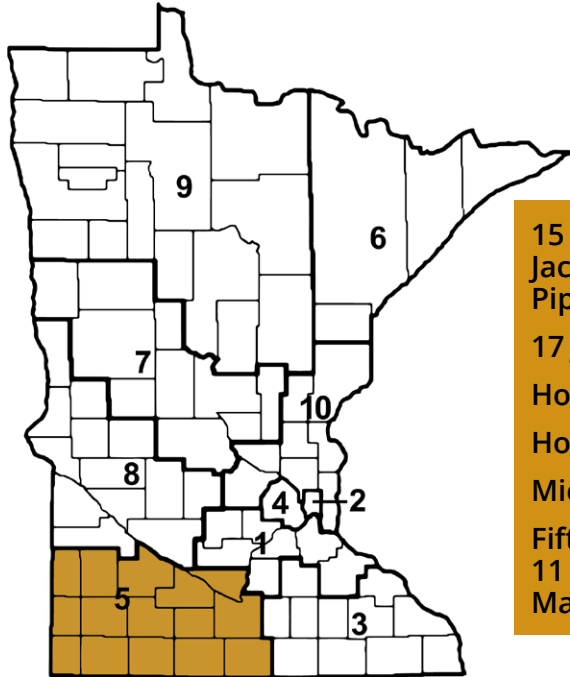
## **Housing Court Pilots Customer Assistance Program**

In 2019, the Housing Court in Hennepin County began piloting the use of a Navigator, who is a student completing a master's degree in social work at the University of Minnesota, to provide one-on-one assistance to court customers. The Navigator is available for initial appearance eviction calendars, and can assess customers' resource needs and connect them with services both on-site and through other agencies. The Navigator identified, compiled, and now provides information about more than 40 organizations with financial, legal, and housing services, as well as mental health resources, applicable to Housing Court customers.

## **Hennepin Court History Museum Opens**

The Hennepin Court History Museum opened on November 25, 2019, at the Hennepin County Government Center. The Museum features informative displays about the Court's history, as well as notable figures and cases, and some historic artifacts. Hennepin County Elections is currently occupying the Museum's space until the end of 2020. Until then, the displays are posted on the Lower Level of the Government Center.

# 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**

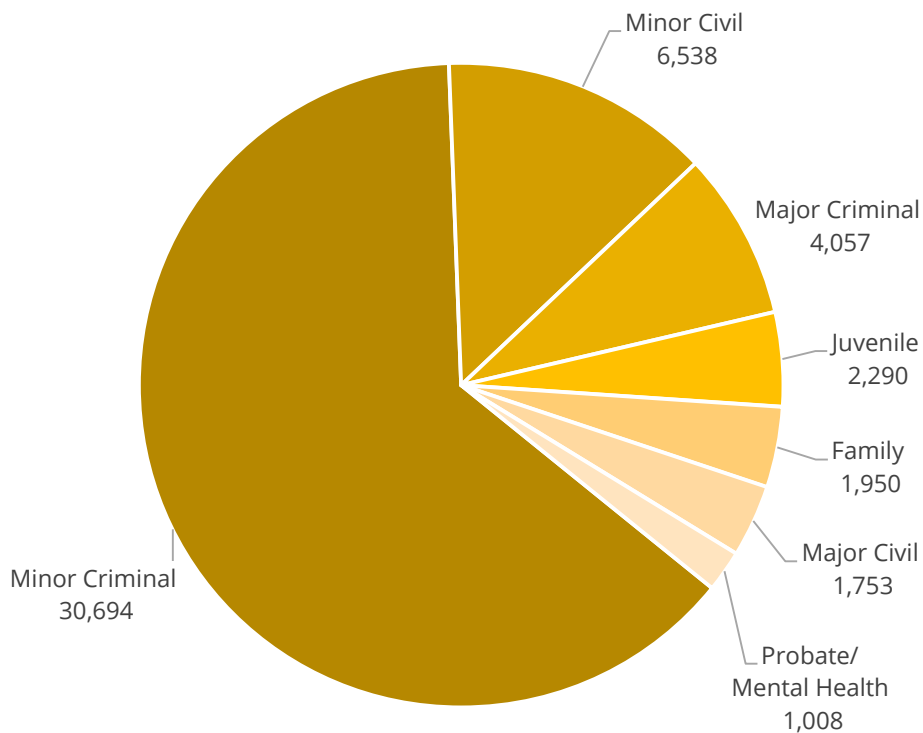
**Hon. Michelle A. Dietrich, Chief Judge**

**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

2019 Fifth Judicial District Case Filings  
2019 Total Filings: 48,290



## **Fifth Judicial District Chief Judge and Assistant Chief Judge Re-elected**

The Honorable Michelle A. Dietrich was re-elected in 2019 to serve as chief judge of Minnesota's Fifth Judicial District by her fellow judges. The Honorable Gregory Anderson was also re-elected to his position as assistant chief judge. Both began serving their second, consecutive, two-year terms on July 1, 2019.

"I am pleased to continue to serve as chief judge for two more years. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with the staff and judges in the District," said Chief Judge Dietrich at the time. "I am grateful to my fellow judges for their continued faith in my leadership."

Chief Judge Dietrich's chambers are located in the Lyon County Courthouse in Marshall. Assistant Chief Judge Anderson is chambered in the Blue Earth County Courthouse in Mankato.

## **Faribault County District Court Works to Recruit Law Clerks**



Faribault County District Court hosted an event on October 4, 2019, in conjunction with St. Thomas Law School, which brought law students to the Faribault County Courthouse to visit with judges over lunch and learn more about law clerk

opportunities in Greater Minnesota. Judges in the Fifth Judicial District have struggled with finding law school graduates who are interested in clerking outstate, and set up the event in an effort to recruit potential law clerks.

## **Financial Centralization Team Expands**

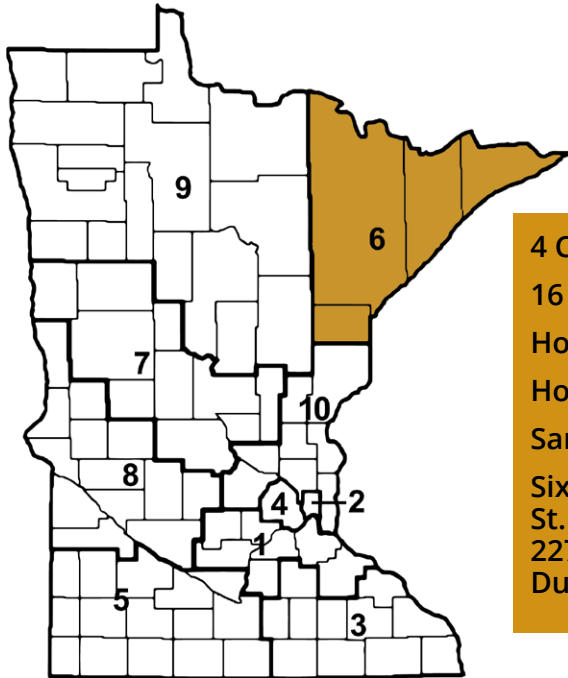
In 2019, the Fifth Judicial District greatly expanded the duties its Centralized Financial Team performs. On April 15, a five-member team began conducting financial transactions such as processing credits, charge reductions, and non-sufficient funds and void transactions for all 15 counties in the District. This additional layer of oversight helps the District achieve auditor recommendations, such as separation of duties, even in its smallest counties with only one or two staff members.

## **Equal Access to Justice Community Dialogue Held**

Nicollet County Judge Allison Krehbiel helped develop and participated in a highly successful community dialogue event, "Equal Access to Justice," on October 8, 2019, in Nicollet County. Topics covered included accessibility to law enforcement, the juvenile court process and juvenile justice, truancy, and child protection concerns. Judge Krehbiel teamed up with local schools to facilitate the event, which drew approximately 90 participants, 20 of them children, from various backgrounds. Interpreters for three different languages, including Spanish, were provided.

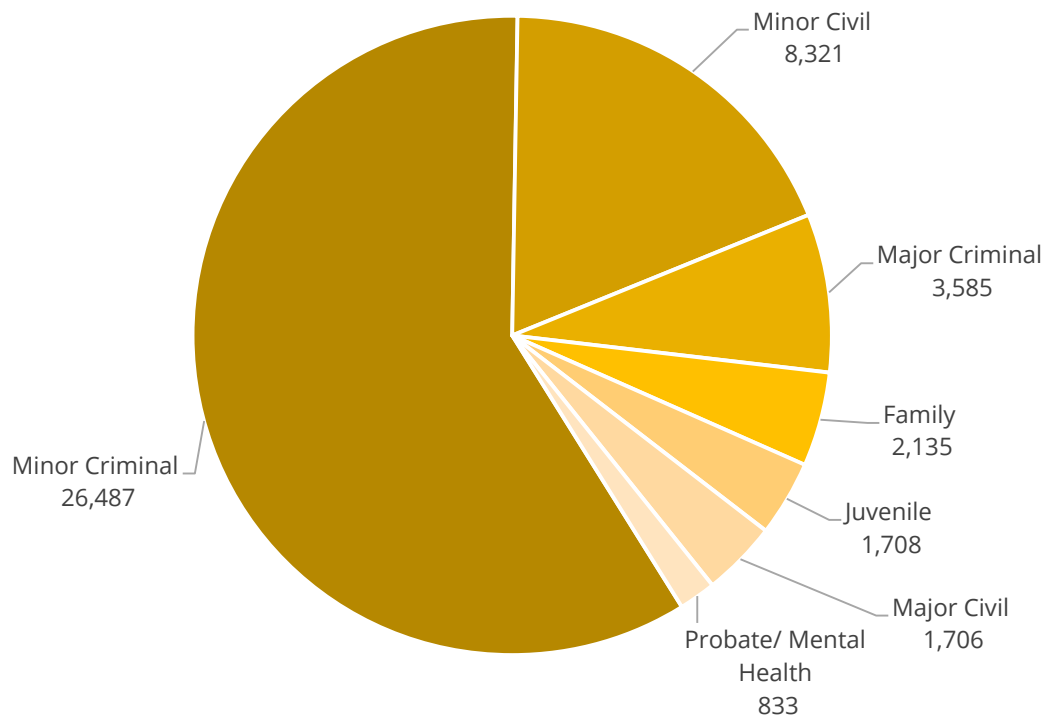
Community dialogues provide a means for each judicial district's Equal Justice Committee (EJC) to hear from community members as to their experiences in the courts, and to discuss ideas for advancing equality and fairness regarding race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and any other status protected by law.

# 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  
Sara Taylor, District Administrator  
Sixth Judicial District Administration  
St. Louis County Courthouse  
227 West First Street, Suite 302  
Duluth, MN 55802

2019 Sixth Judicial District Case Filings  
2019 Total Filings: 44,775



## Iron Range Committee on Equal Justice Holds Two Open Courthouse Events

The Iron Range Committee on Equal Justice hosted two open courthouse events in 2019 for the public to see the work of those who play a role in the local justice system. Attendees were able to meet the people who keep the justice system running, and get access to legal resources and information. The first event took place at the Virginia Courthouse on April 5, and the second took place on May 3 at the Hibbing Courthouse.

The Iron Range Committee on Equal Justice was formed in 2018 to advance equality and promote multicultural understanding and competency among judicial officers, court employees, and justice system partners who live and work in Iron Range communities. The Committee meets regularly and is made up of judicial officers, court employees, law enforcement, attorneys, community members, and community organizations.

## Taylor Appointed Sixth Judicial District Administrator

The Minnesota Judicial Council approved the appointment of Sara Taylor as the Sixth Judicial District Administrator, effective on November 15, 2019. Her appointment was put forward by then-Chief Judge Sally L. Tarnowski on behalf of the 16 judges of the District at the Judicial Council meeting on November 14.

Prior to her appointment, Taylor served as the manager of the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program for the Sixth and Ninth judicial districts, after having successfully merged the districts' two separate GAL programs. During her five years with the Program, Taylor developed the vision for and implemented hiring practices that ensured diversity and inclusivity in the workforce in her service areas. She was also involved in a variety of committees that handled labor management, union negotiations, and tribal-state partnerships.

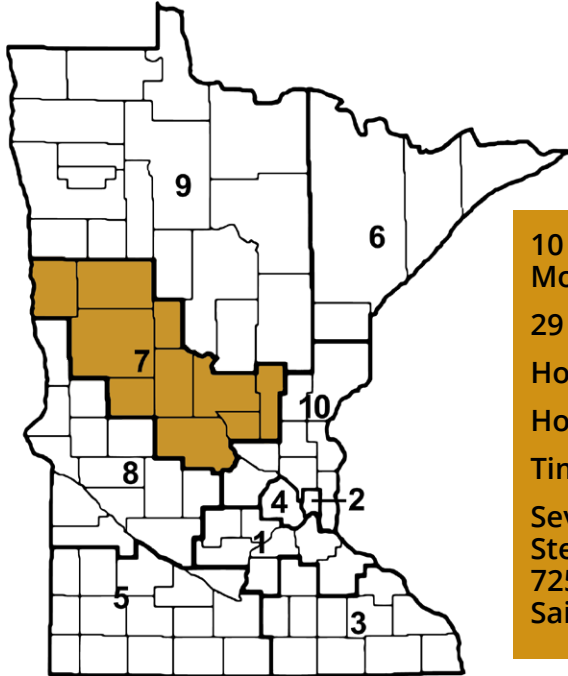
Taylor earned her Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from the College of St. Scholastica, and a Juris Doctorate from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

## Retiring Judges Replaced by New Appointments

Sixth Judicial District Judge Gary Pagliaccetti retired in 2019, after more than 30 years of service on the Iron Range bench. Upon his retirement announcement, the community described him as setting the perfect example, and acknowledged he would be remembered for his impact, fairness, and compassion. Sixth Judicial District Judge Mark Munger also retired in 2019, after almost 20 years of service on the bench as the longest-serving judge chambered in Duluth. Upon his retirement, Judge Munger was described by justice partners as knowing "how important it was to not only make fair and impartial decisions, but also decisions that were thoughtful, courageous, and right."

The two retirements brought new two new judges to the District in 2019, both appointed by Governor Tim Walz. Judge Rebekka Stumme joined bringing the experience of a prosecutor, a public defender, a private attorney, and a judicial law clerk with her. She is chambered in Carlton. Judge Andrew Peterson joined after a career practicing in civil, criminal, real estate, business, and municipal law. He was also involved with a variety of community-based committees and organizations that focus on social justice. Judge Peterson is chambered on the Iron Range in Virginia.

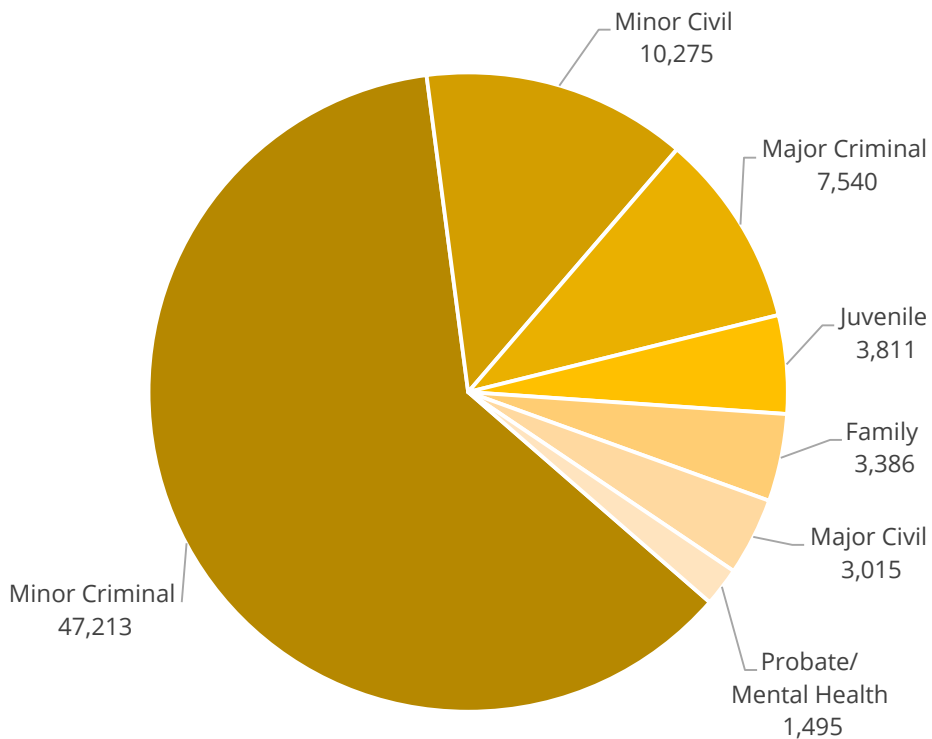
# Seventh Judicial District



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. Hennesy, Assistant Chief Judge  
Timothy Ostby, District Administrator  
Seventh Judicial District Administration  
Stearns County Courthouse  
725 Courthouse Square #406  
Saint Cloud, MN 56303

## 2019 Seventh Judicial District Case Filings

2019 Total Filings: 76,735



## The Honorable Jay D. Carlson Re-elected as Seventh Judicial District Chief Judge

*The Honorable Sarah E. Hennesy re-elected to serve as Assistant Chief Judge*

The Honorable Jay D. Carlson was re-elected to serve his second consecutive two-year term as chief judge of Minnesota's Seventh Judicial District by his fellow judges. The Honorable Sarah E. Hennesy was also re-elected to serve as assistant chief judge of the Seventh District.

Judge Carlson was appointed to the bench in August 2006. Prior to his appointment, Judge Carlson was in private practice for 25 years. He earned his juris doctorate degree from Hamline University School of Law in St. Paul in 1979, and his Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude from St. John's University in Collegeville in 1976. Judge Carlson is chambered in the Becker County Courthouse in Detroit Lakes.

"I am grateful for my colleagues' renewed support of my leadership of the Seventh Judicial District," said Judge Carlson. "I look forward to continuing to serve the District with Assistant Chief Judge Hennesy. We are eager to continue our advocacy for improved access to justice, more effective administration, and increased public trust and confidence for our Greater Minnesota district courts."

Judge Hennesy was appointed to the bench in February 2012. She previously served as staff attorney for St. Cloud Area Legal Services from 2006 to 2012. She earned her juris doctorate degree from Drake Law School in Des Moines, IA, in 1994, and her Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude from Central College in Pella, IA, in 1991. Her chambers are located in the Stearns County Courthouse in St. Cloud.

## Community Listening Session Held

The Seventh Judicial District hosted a community listening session in support of its Equal Justice Committee efforts to understand and improve the experiences of the public in the judicial system on November 6, 2019, at Long Prairie-Grey Eagle Secondary School in Long Prairie, MN.

The listening session was an informal discussion with judges and court officials about the local justice system and ideas for improvement of it from people who live in the District. Understanding the experience of court participants is a critical piece in ensuring courts are working to improve access to justice and public trust and confidence in the justice system.

## Mille Lacs County Starts Drug Treatment Court with Bureau of Justice Grant

The United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Veterans Treatment Court awarded Mille Lacs County District Court a \$500,000 implementation grant to begin the Mille Lacs County Drug Treatment Court. The grant supports the Treatment Court's initial organization and operations over four years, and funds technical assistance, drug testing, probation services, training and organizing opportunities, and a treatment court coordinator position.

The Mille Lacs County Drug Treatment Court is a key priority for the County and brings together the work of the County Attorney, the Public Defenders' office, Court Administration, the Department of Corrections, the Sheriff's Department, local treatment providers, and the Mille Lacs County District Court judges to support qualifying defendants who are working toward living a sober and productive life. Treatment courts provide accountability, structure, and support to defendants as they do the hard work of changing their lives.

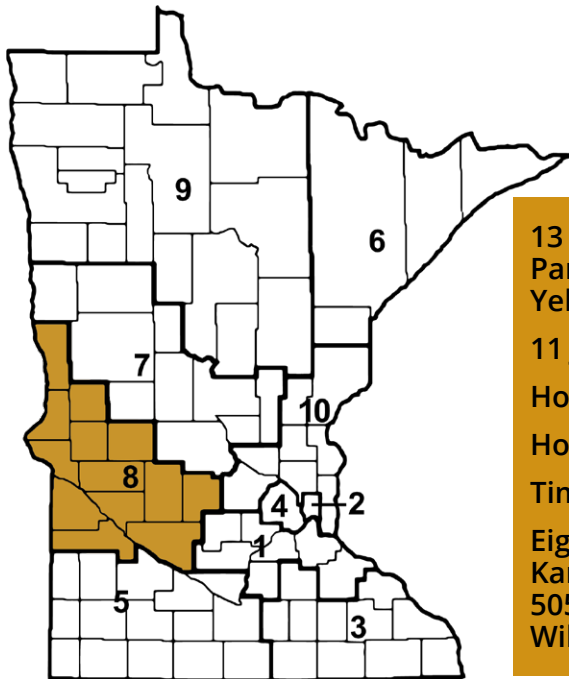
## **Douglas County Court Staff Recognized by Douglas County Bar Association**



On November 14, 2019, the Douglas County Bar Association voted unanimously to recognize Douglas County Court Administration staff for their professionalism, courtesy, and commitment to excellence. The Bar Association highlighted the excellent customer service provided by court staff and thanked them for their willingness to go above and beyond to assist attorneys and litigants.



# 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

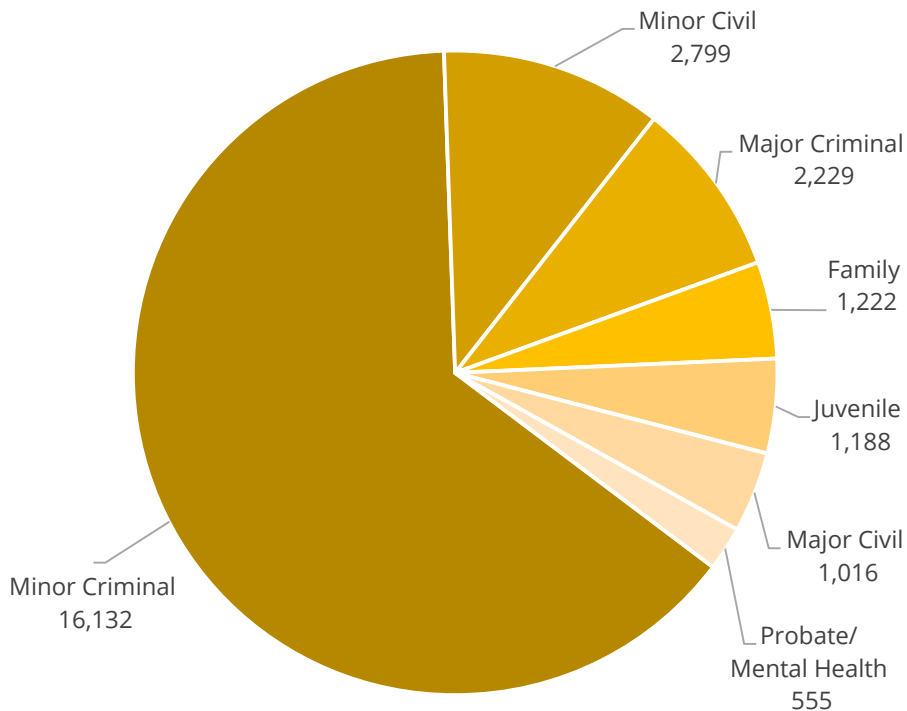
Hon. Dwayne N. Knutsen, Chief Judge

Hon. Stephanie L. Beckman, Assistant Chief Judge

Timothy Ostby, District Administrator

Eighth Judicial District Administration  
 Kandiyohi County Courthouse  
 505 Becker Avenue SW, Suite 107  
 Willmar, MN 56201

2019 Eighth Judicial District Case Filings  
 2019 Total Filings: 25,141



## **Kandiyohi County Hosts Law Day Open House**

On May 3, 2019, Kandiyohi County hosted an open house Law Day event at the Kandiyohi County Courthouse. Supreme Court Associate Justice Paul Thissen and Eighth Judicial District Judge Stephen Wentzell kicked off the event in a full courtroom. They provided a brief history of Law Day, and reviewed some Eighth District projects and case filing statistics.



Outside the front entrance of the courthouse, the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Department was present with its SWAT vehicle and K-9 unit, and Sheriff deputies spoke with members of the community and demonstrated some K-9 maneuvers. Central MN Legal Services had two attorneys present to provide free legal advice to the public throughout the open house event, and State Court Administration Communications Specialist Lissa Finne was present with posters and informational brochures regarding the three levels of Minnesota courts. There was also a career/information booth with representatives of various agency partners in attendance, such

as the Kandiyohi County Human Services Child Protection Unit, Kandiyohi County Community Corrections, and the Willmar Police Department.

## **Deputy District Administrator Deb Mueske Speaks at Willmar High School Career Day**

On February 13, 2019, Eighth Judicial District Deputy District Administrator Deb Mueske attended Willmar High School Career Day to speak about public administration with a group of 20 students. The discussion included how district courts function, the types of cases judges hear, and career paths within the Minnesota court system.

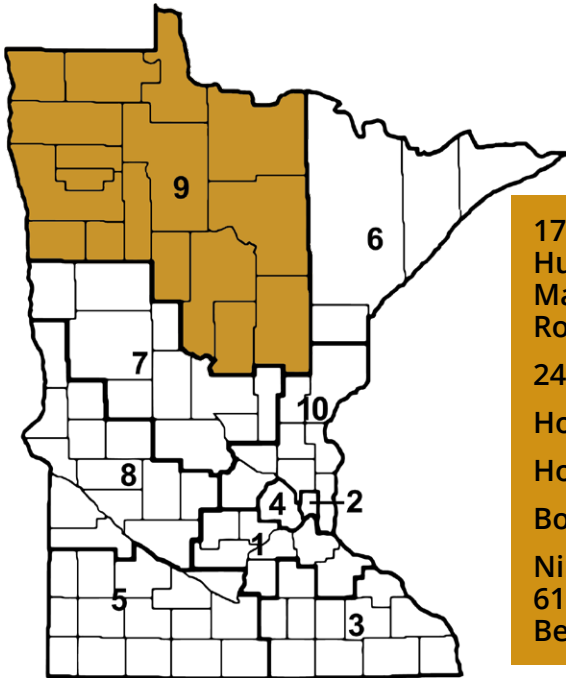
## **High School Students Participate in Renville County Courthouse Law Day Event**

Renville County Judge Laurence Stratton and Court Administrator Cheryl Bain hosted 40 high school students at the Renville County Courthouse as part of a Law Day event in spring 2019. They explained the details of the court system and how the district courts function.

## **Chief Judge Knutsen, Upper Sioux Judge Sheffler Speak at Southwest Minnesota State University**

In spring 2019, Chief Judge Dwayne Knutsen and Upper Sioux Judge Lenore Sheffler spoke to a criminal justice class offered at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN. The class compared the district court system and the tribal courts, and how the two jurisdictions work together to give full credit and validity to each of the courts' orders.

# Ninth Judicial District



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

24 Judgeships, 2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Tamara L. Yon, Chief Judge

Hon. Jana M. Austad, Assistant Chief Judge

Bob Sommerville, District Administrator

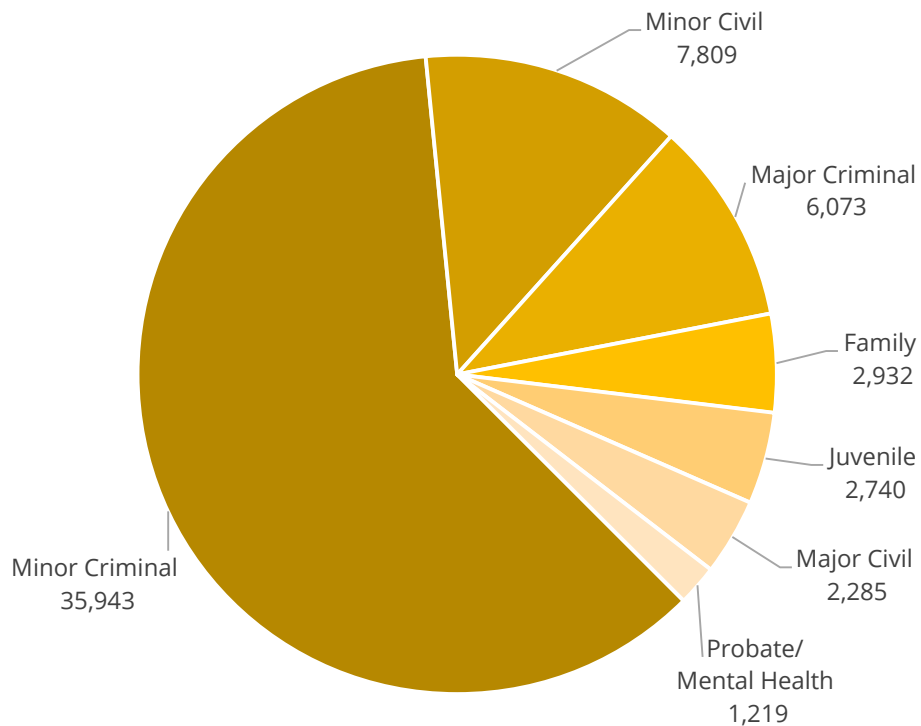
Ninth Judicial District Administration

616 America Avenue NW #250

Bemidji, MN 56601

## 2019 Ninth Judicial District Case Filings

2019 Total Filings: 59,001



## The Honorable Tamara L. Yon Elected Ninth Judicial District Chief Judge

### *The Honorable Jana M. Austad Elected as Assistant Chief Judge*

The Honorable Tamara L. Yon was elected to serve as chief judge of Minnesota's Ninth Judicial District by her fellow judges in the District in 2019. Previously, she served two consecutive terms as assistant chief judge for the District. Her first term as chief judge began on July 1, 2019, when The Honorable Paul T. Benshoof, completed his second term as chief judge. The Honorable Jana M. Austad was also elected as assistant chief judge in the Ninth District in 2019.



Minnesota state statute authorizes the chief judge of a judicial district to exercise general administrative authority over the courts within a district. This includes assigning judges to serve in locations throughout the district. A chief judge also serves

as a member of the Minnesota Judicial Council, the administrative policy-making authority for the Minnesota Judicial Branch. Chief judges and assistant chief judges are elected to two-year terms by the judges within the district. No judge may serve as chief judge or assistant chief judge for more than two consecutive two-year terms.

## Judicial Retirements and Appointments in 2019

### **Retired:**

- Judge David Harrington
- Judge David TenEyck
- Judge Earl Maus
- Judge Paul Rasmussen
- Judge Kurt Marben

### **Appointed:**

- Judge Patricia Aanes
- Judge Charles Halverson
- Judge Darlen Rivera Spalla
- Judge Matthew Mallie

## Sommerville Appointed District Administrator

On behalf of the 24 judges of Minnesota's Ninth Judicial District, Chief Judge Tamara L. Yon appointed Bob Sommerville to serve as District Administrator. The appointment was approved by the Minnesota Judicial Council on July 18, 2019.

Sommerville previously served as Deputy District Administrator for the Ninth District, a position he held since 2018. He earned his Bachelor of Arts and later Master of Public Policy degrees from the University of Minnesota. Starting as a senior court clerk for the Fourth Judicial District shortly after his graduation, Sommerville quickly rose through the ranks working as a court operations leadworker, a court operations supervisor, and a court operations manager for the District. In 2013 he took a position as a multi-county court administrator in the Ninth Judicial District for Beltrami and Cass district courts. He held that position until taking the Deputy District Administrator position for the Ninth Judicial District.

As District Administrator, Sommerville oversees the administrative affairs of the Ninth Judicial District, including management and processing of all court records and files, budgeting and accounting, human resources, and maintenance

of the District's information technology infrastructure.

### **Paula Lang Appointed Ninth Judicial District Deputy District Administrator**

Paula Lang was appointed the Deputy District Administrator for the Ninth Judicial District in October 2019. Previously, Lang served as the court administrator for Aitkin and Crow Wing counties, and in various roles throughout the District in her 18-year career with the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

As Deputy District Administrator, Lang is responsible for supporting the District Administrator in all Ninth District management, with a focus on the courts in Hubbard, Aitkin, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, and Roseau counties. Lang also manages the Ninth District treatment courts, domestic violence courts, the Business Process Unit, and their divisions. Lang also serves on several statewide and local committees representing the Ninth District and outstate Minnesota.

### **Polk County DWI Court Celebrates Four Years, Fifteenth Graduation**

Polk County DWI Court's celebrated its fourth anniversary on January 9, 2019, by holding a graduation ceremony for its 15th graduate, who had remained sober for all 532 days of participation in the program.

At the ceremony, the graduate shared how his life had changed because of DWI Court, and he thanked the Court immensely for helping him achieve the life he has. The judges applauded the graduate for the commitment and work he put in.

### **Beltrami County Establishes Treatment Court**

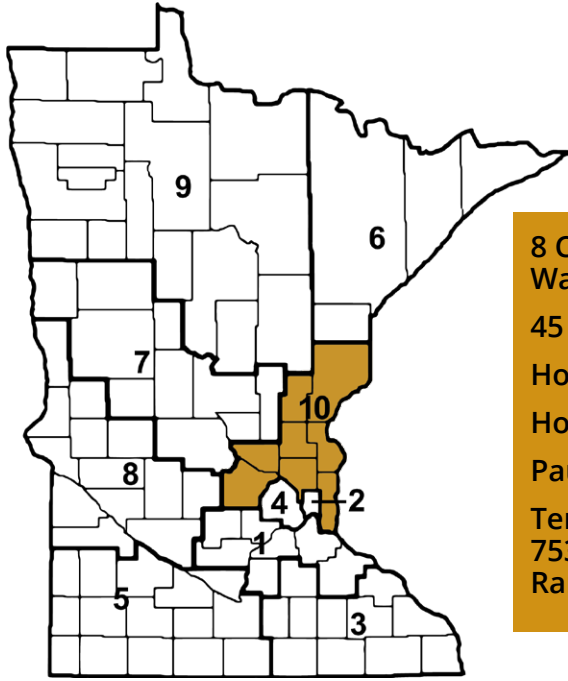
In October 2019, a new Beltrami County Treatment Court was established and funded for a four-year period through a grant from the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice. Judge Paul Benshoof and Trisha Hansen, district supervisor for the Minnesota Department of Corrections, helped write the grant application.

The mission of the Beltrami County Treatment Court is to intervene with high risk/high need chemically dependent offenders by providing immediate access to substance use disorder and mental health assessments and treatment, as well as increased supervision and accountability, thereby helping offenders enter into a lifestyle of long-term recovery that will promote recovery, accountability, self-sufficiency, family preservation, and public safety.

Judge John Melbye oversees the new Treatment Court, and the first session took place in early 2020.

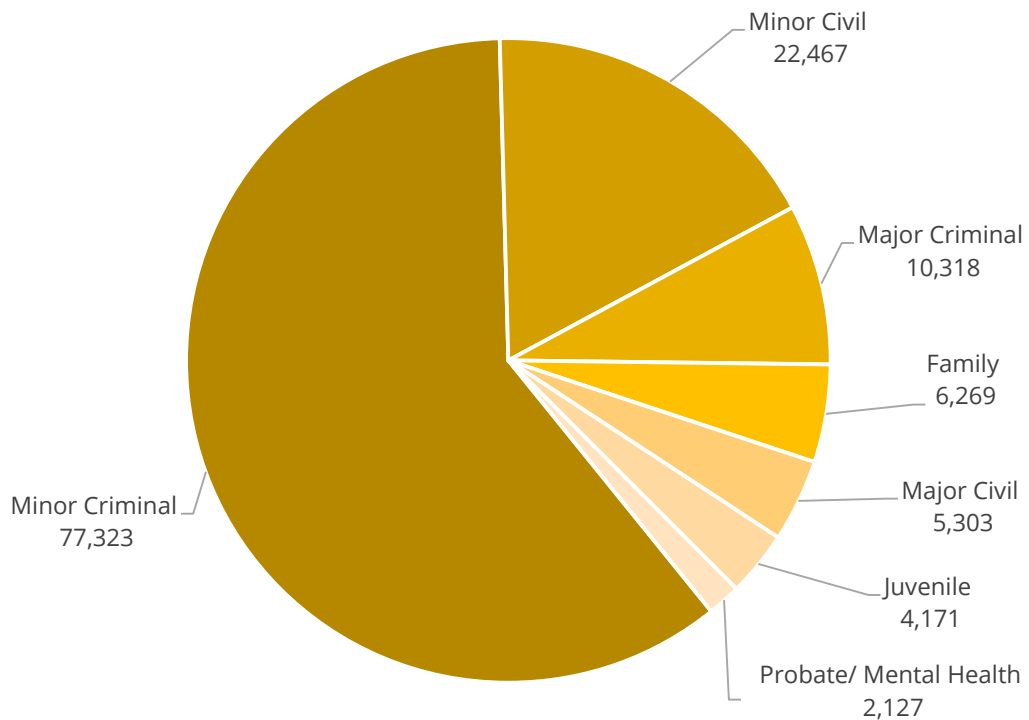


# Tenth Judicial District



8 Counties: Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, Wright  
45 Judgeships, 4 Child Support Magistrates  
Hon. Douglas B. Meslow, Chief Judge  
Hon. Stoney L. Hiljus, Assistant Chief Judge  
Paul Patterson, District Administrator  
Tenth Judicial District Administration  
7533 Sunwood Drive NW, Suite 306  
Ramsey, MN 55303

2019 Tenth Judicial District Case Filings  
2019 Total Filings: 127,978



## Warrant Walk-In Programs Offered

Following a pilot in Anoka County, Pine, Washington, and Wright counties in the Tenth Judicial District recently began offering “warrant walk-in” programs in 2019. The programs allows individuals with low level offenses (no higher than a misdemeanor, and bail set at no more than \$500) to have their cases added to the court calendar that day, without turning themselves into the local jail. The programs are supported by local justice partners and work to reduce jail costs while allowing individuals to re-engage with the court system without being incarcerated.

## Three Win Minnesota Association for Court Management Awards

Three Tenth Judicial District employees won Minnesota Association for Court Management awards in 2019.

The Distinguished Service Award winner was Wright County Court Administrator Monica Tschumper. The Distinguished Service Award is given to individuals who have a record of outstanding service to the community and courts, and demonstrates leadership by improving the administration of justice and delivery of public service through the application of modern management techniques. Tschumper is a current Fellow of the Institute for Court Management and shares her knowledge and experience with others in the court system to lead a successful court. She demonstrates leadership by improving the administrative of justice, and has hosted law day events in Wright County to educate the community and stakeholders about the courts. Tschumper has worked for the Minnesota Judicial Branch for 25 years. She has worked in several different positions in Mille Lacs, Isanti, and Wright counties.

Gena Jones was awarded the Coach/Mentor of the Year Award. She works as a court administrative manager in Washington County.

The Coach/Mentor of the Year Award recognizes a person who fosters trust while encouraging others to achieve their goals without thought of reciprocation. Recipients are recognized for their willingness to share their skills and knowledge with others and provide excellent coaching in the ongoing development and enrichment of others. Jones was described by her nominators as an experienced and trusted advisor who is personable, approachable, and knowledgeable. Jones has participated as a mentor in the Merging Minds Mentorship program for several years. She has also served on several statewide committees, ranging from eFiling and eService (eFS), the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS), and eAppeals—all of which have been instrumental in shaping the way the Minnesota courts’ work is performed through the use of technology. Jones has worked for the Minnesota Judicial Branch for 28 years. She has worked for the First Judicial District, the Fourth Judicial District, Dakota County District Court, and Washington County.

The 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Kanabec County Court Administrator Sharon Schubert. The Lifetime Achievement award honors recipients’ many contributions to the court management profession and their years of service to the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Schubert was praised for her diplomacy, advocacy, and professionalism when faced with challenges. She is a member of the Civil Process Advisory Workgroup, a member of many District committees, and has served as the co-chair of the Tenth District’s Administrators Group for the last four years. Her tenure with the Minnesota Judicial Branch has included two tragic and formative events: a courthouse shooting and a gas explosion in a courthouse. Both events left a substantial imprint on Schubert, the teams she’s lead, and her leadership style. Schubert has worked for the Minnesota Judicial Branch for 37 years. She has worked in Stearns, Wright, and Kanabec counties.

## **Self-Help Center Begins Offering Services at Anoka Technical College**

The Tenth Judicial District Self-Help Center began offering services at Anoka Technical College in spring 2019. The District and the College partnered to have staff from the Self-Help Center set up a workstation on campus to aid the public with legal forms, procedures, and information. Anoka Technical College serves more than 2,500 students annually, with the majority of those students residing in Anoka, Sherburne, and Wright counties. The average age of Anoka Technical College students is 27-years-old, so the program's focus will be removing any potential legal issues that might be a distraction to college success or a roadblock to post-graduate employment. Many visitors commented on how much more accessible the campus services were instead of having to go to the courthouse.

## **Commitment Appeal Panel Hearings Held in Washington County**

Commitment Appeal Panel (CAP) hearings began being held in Washington County in 2019. The hearings continue to be held in Ramsey and Dakota counties as well.

Formerly called the Supreme Court Appeals Panels, the three-judge CAPs are established pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 253B, and hear appeals of decisions of the Special Review Board (SRB) established by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The SRB hears petitions for reductions in custody status by people indeterminately committed as mentally ill and dangerous, people with sexual psychopathic personalities, and/or sexually dangerous people. A reduction in custody includes a request for transfer to a less restrictive facility, provisional discharge, or full discharge from civil commitment. CAP members are appointed to one-year renewable terms by the Minnesota

Supreme Court Chief Justice, and include many senior (retired) judges.

Three sitting judges are appointed to serve as the chief judge of each of the three CAPs. The Honorable Robert Rancourt, chambered in Chisago County, served as one of the three chief judges of a CAP for more than 10 years. On July 1, 2019, the Chief Justice appointed The Honorable Kristin Larson, chambered in Anoka County, to succeed Judge Rancourt as chief judge of that CAP, and the hearings are heard in Washington County.

## **Washington County Holds Misdemeanor Warrant Resolution Day**

Washington County held a Misdemeanor Warrant Resolution Day on June 1, 2019, at Washington Technology Magnet School in St. Paul. The voluntary event allowed for defendants to clear their warrants for misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and probation violations. The event was a collaboration between community groups, local governments, and courts in Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Washington, and Anoka counties, and more than 700 people, some with multiple cases, were served. The makeshift courtroom staffed by Tenth District Judge Laura Pietan and Washington County court administration alone heard more than 112 cases and cleared 55 outstanding Washington County warrants.

## **Project RISE**

Project RISE (Restorative Investment for Student Empowerment) was awarded the 2018 Capstone of the Year Award from The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy in 2019. The Project RISE team, including Pine County Judge Heather Wynn, traveled to Washington D.C., to accept the national Award.

Project RISE aims to reduce school-related



referrals to the juvenile justice system, decrease the number of children needing protective services, and reduce behaviors that ultimately tend to lead to criminal offenses. As part of Project RISE, Judge Wynn presides over truancy court, which is held at local area schools instead of the courthouse to keep students in the classroom and provide a more restorative justice approach.

## Sherburne County Holds Constitution Day Open Courthouse Event

More than 100 members of the public visited the Sherburne County Government Center in Elk River on November 22, 2019, to take part in a Constitution Day “Open Courthouse” event. The day-long event was designed to showcase the work of Minnesota’s courts, and educate the public about the work of judges, attorneys, law enforcement, and Sherburne County departments in administering the state’s justice system and county government. The event featured a special welcome presentation by local judges, with opening comments from Sherburne County District Court Judge Brianne Buccicone and Supreme Court Associate Justice Paul Thissen. Sherburne County Judge Mary Yunker led a mock trial experience, and guests had the opportunity to take “behind-the-scenes” tours of



the Court's Judicial Services and Administration wings, with presentations by judges and county administrators. Other highlights included an information fair featuring court and county departments, and free, one-on-one legal assistance provided through the walk-in Self-Help Center.

## Judicial Council Visits Sherburne County

The Minnesota Judicial Council held its September 19, 2019, meeting at the Sherburne County Judicial Services Building in Elk River. While the Judicial Council typically meets in the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul, the Council occasionally meets in newly-opened or renovated court facilities across the state.

The Sherburne County Judicial Services Building opened in June 2018, and is approximately 100,000 square feet, including five new courtrooms, judges’ chambers, inmate delivery and holding, and office space for Court Administration, Community Corrections, and the County Attorney. There is also space for two additional future courtrooms. The addition has improved security and includes updated technology for visitors and staff.

During the Council’s visit, Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea presented a plaque to the Sherburne County Board of Commissioners, recognizing Sherburne County’s investment in supporting its local justice system. County officials, local justice partners, and local legislators attended the plaque presentation and shared lunch with Judicial Council members.

## New Judges Appointed

The Tenth Judicial District saw the appointment of three new judges in 2019, including The Honorable Melissa Saterbak and The Honorable Suzanne M. Brown, both chambered in Anoka County, and The Honorable Laura A. Pietan, chambered in Washington County.

# 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.

Chief Judge Edward J. Cleary  
Judge:

2011 - October 2013

Chief Judge:

November 2013 - April 2020

Judge Renee L. Worke  
2005 - present

Judge Kevin G. Ross  
2006 - 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

Judge Jeffrey Bryan  
2019 - present

Judge Susan Segal  
2019 - present

## 2019 Court of Appeals Case Information

Case Type	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	406	461
Criminal	912	892
Administrative Rule	2	1
Economic Security	61	81
Writs - Certiorari	54	79
Habeas/Certified Questions	11	9
Commitment	43	52
Family	208	209
Juvenile Delinquency	15	16
Juvenile Protection	101	118
Implied Consent	24	28
Discretionary Review/Writs	98	99
Probate	31	24
Unlawful Detainer/Eviction	34	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,108</b>

## Court of Appeals in 2019

The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides citizens with prompt, deliberate review of final decisions of the district courts and 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 2019, Judges Jeffrey Bryan and Susan Segal joined the Court, succeeding Judges Heidi Schellhas and Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks, who retired. A number of senior judges also assisted the Court throughout 2019, providing coverage for vacancies and absences.



The Court disposed of 2,108 cases in 2019 (an increase of seven percent), filing opinions in 1,462 cases (an increase of 10%), issuing about 2,000 orders, hearing oral arguments in more than 700 cases, and considering more than 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

at locations outside the Twin Cities metro area in 53 cases in 2019. Judges also met with high school and university groups in conjunction with five 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 2019, filing 111 published, precedential opinions. Although total filings were similar to 2018, there were noticeable increases in the number of criminal appeals and petitions for extraordinary writs. Almost 200 appeals were referred to the Court's Family Law Appellate Mediation Program in 2019. More than 30% of the cases mediated were resolved by agreement of the parties, reducing overall costs and delays for many families.

In 2019, the Court launched its new "Class in the Courtroom" program, an initiative to invite teachers, high school students, and university students to observe oral arguments – at the Minnesota Judicial Center or at any of the Court's travel calendars – and engage with judges afterward to learn about the appellate process.

The third anniversary of mandatory e-filing for all attorneys, court reporters, and state agencies occurred in July 2019. 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, even when the Clerk of Appellate Courts Office is not open. E-filing has dramatically improved access to justice at reduced cost to litigants and attorneys. In 2019, the Court also implemented a new application for the filing and secure storage of records from state agencies and governmental entities. These appeals bypass the district courts and can include thousands of pages of technical documents and diagrams. Ongoing 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.

The 19 judges of the Court of Appeals preside over hundreds of oral arguments and non-oral matters annually. Given these numbers, and with strict deadlines for issuing written decisions, the judges of the Court of Appeals do their very best to meet this challenge year in and year out. As a result of the dedication of the judges and staff, and their commitment to initiatives that enhance efficiency and ensure that every case receives timely consideration and review, the Court of Appeals continues to provide meaningful access to appellate review to thousands of citizens every year.

# 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

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- Chief Justice  
July 2010 - present

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- Associate Justice  
G. Barry Anderson  
2004 - present

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- Associate Justice  
David L. Lillehaug  
2013 - July 2020

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- Associate Justice  
Natalie E. Hudson  
2015 - present

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- Associate Justice  
Margaret H. Chutich  
2016 - present

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- Associate Justice  
Anne K. McKeig  
2016 - present

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- Associate Justice  
Paul C. Thissen  
July 2018 - present

<b>2019 Supreme Court Case Information</b>	
<b>Direct Appeals</b>	
Workers' Compensation	12
Tax Court	10
Professional Regulation	43
First Degree Murder	23
Writs/Miscellaneous	7
<b>Total Direct Appeals</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Petitions for Further/Accelerated Review (PFR/PAR)</b>	
Filed (PFR/PAR)	620
Review Denied	541
Granted Further/Accelerated Review	71
Other (Remand, Dismiss)	3
<b>Opinions/Disposition Orders</b>	
Affirmed	64
Affirmed in Part	10
Reverse/Remand	32
Other (Discipline, dismiss, other disposition)	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>

## Justice David Lillehaug Announces Departure from the Court

On June 12, 2019, Associate Justice David L. Lillehaug announced his retirement from the Minnesota Supreme Court, effective July 31, 2020.

Justice Lillehaug served on the Court since 2013, following an appointment by Governor Mark Dayton. Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, he served as officer and shareholder at Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. from 2002 to 2013, as United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota from 1994 to 1998, and as Issues Aide and Executive Assistant to the Hon. Walter Mondy from 1983 to 1984. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree summa cum laude from Augustana College, and his Juris Doctorate cum laude from Harvard Law School.

## Minnesota Supreme Court Leads Lawyers Well-Being Event

The Minnesota Supreme Court led a call to action for lawyer well-being in 2019 at St. Thomas University. The event was attended by more than 245 invited judicial officers, lawyers, and human resources professionals from the public sector; organization leaders of large, small, and solo law firms; and in-house counsel from Minnesota businesses. The three-and-a-half hour event was organized to bring attention to the crisis of lawyer well-being and spur action by those in attendance. Attendees were encouraged to be aware of the crisis, review their work environments for barriers to lawyer well-being, and sign a pledge to take action to promote lawyer wellness.

Minnesota was home to 29,466 active and inactive attorneys in 2017. The American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation published a study in August 2017 that found lawyers, particularly younger lawyers in their first 10 years of practice, are grappling with serious barriers to well-being. According to

the study, between 21 and 36 percent of lawyers qualify as problem drinkers, and 28 percent are struggling with some level of depression. Suicide, social alienation, work addiction, sleep deprivation, job dissatisfaction, diversity crises, work-life conflict, incivility, a narrowing of values so that profit predominates, and negative public perception were all cited as major difficulties lawyers are facing.

The call to action started with welcoming remarks from Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea and the case for action laid out by Patrick Krill, the lead author of the report on lawyer well-being based on the study. Attendees then broke out into guided discussions based on their workplace organization. The event concluded with the Chair of the American Bar Association Law Practice Divisions Attorney Well-Being Committee, Anne Brafford, discussing overcoming barriers to wellness, and a call to action for Minnesota lawyer well-being from Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice David L. Lillehaug.



# 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 2019.

## 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	727	373	230	100	23	1
Black/African American	541	215	154	109	48	15
Hispanic/Latino	299	135	92	55	11	6
Native American/ Alaskan	102	35	26	32	7	2
White/ Caucasian	20,050	5,602	5,171	4,085	3,354	1,838
Multiple	295	169	79	27	14	6
Choose Not to Answer	3,965	1,706	948	635	481	195
Total	25,979	8,235	6,700	5,043	3,938	2,063

## Inactive - ALL

	Inactive Totals	Inactive Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	141	40	62	34	4	1
Black/African American	82	16	24	31	7	4
Hispanic/Latino	58	17	24	12	4	1
Native American/ Alaskan	12	3	3	5	1	0
White/ Caucasian	3,101	439	906	890	662	204
Multiple	50	10	28	9	3	0
Choose Not to Answer	510	86	166	146	85	27
Total	3,954	611	1,213	1,127	766	237

# 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 2019.

## Male Active

	Male Active Totals	Male Active Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Male Active Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Male Active Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Male Active Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Male Active Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	324	158	103	48	14	1
Black/African American	284	97	82	66	29	10
Hispanic/Latino	148	64	39	29	11	5
Native American/ Alaskan	55	20	15	14	4	2
White/ Caucasian	11,910	2,950	2,633	2,370	2,315	1,642
Multiple	145	78	41	13	8	5
Choose Not to Answer	886	268	202	164	160	92
Total	13,752	3,635	3,115	2,704	2,541	1,757

## Male Inactive

	Male Inactive Totals	Male Inactive Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Male Inactive Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Male Inactive Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Male Inactive Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Male Inactive Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	66	21	27	15	2	1
Black/African American	31	4	10	11	3	3
Hispanic/Latino	26	7	12	5	1	1
Native American/ Alaskan	5	2	0	2	1	0
White/ Caucasian	1,501	214	372	396	354	165
Multiple	26	3	14	7	2	0
Choose Not to Answer	94	14	28	25	16	11
Total	1,749	265	463	461	379	181



# 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 2019.

## Female Active

	Female Active Totals	Female Active Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Female Active Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Female Active Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Female Active Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Female Active Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	393	211	124	49	9	0
Black/African American	253	115	71	43	19	5
Hispanic/Latino	150	70	53	26	0	1
Native American/ Alaskan	46	15	10	18	3	0
White/ Caucasian	8,072	2,630	2,523	1,696	1,032	191
Multiple	148	89	38	14	6	1
Choose Not to Answer	489	196	154	70	60	9
Total	9,551	3,326	2,973	1,916	1,129	207

## Female Inactive

	Female Inactive Totals	Female Inactive Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Female Inactive Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Female Inactive Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Female Inactive Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Female Inactive Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	72	19	32	19	2	0
Black/African American	51	12	14	20	4	1
Hispanic/Latino	31	9	12	7	3	0
Native American/ Alaskan	7	1	3	3	0	0
White/ Caucasian	1,589	221	531	493	306	38
Multiple	24	7	14	2	1	0
Choose Not to Answer	92	14	27	32	17	2
Total	1,866	283	633	576	333	41

# 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 2019.

## Choose Not to Answer Gender Active

	Active Totals	Active Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Active Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Active Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Active Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Active Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	4	3	3	0	0
Black/African American	4	3	1	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	1	1	0	0	0	0
Native American/ Alaskan	1	0	1	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	68	22	15	19	7	5
Multiple	2	2	0	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	2,590	1,242	592	401	261	94
Total	2,676	1,274	612	423	268	99

## Choose Not to Answer Gender Inactive

	Inactive Totals	Inactive Adm 0 to 10 yrs	Inactive Adm 11 to 20 yrs	Inactive Adm 21 to 30 yrs	Inactive Adm 31 to 40 yrs	Inactive Adm 41+ yrs
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	0	3	0	0	0
Black/African American	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	1	1	0	0	0	0
Native American/ Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	11	4	3	1	2	1
Multiple	0	0	0	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	324	58	111	89	52	14
Total	339	63	117	90	54	15

## Retired

	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American/ Alaskan	White/ Caucasian	Multiple	Choose Not to Answer
Total	3	9	3	1	891	4	2715

# Appellate Clerk's Office

## 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 related and 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 of Appellate Courts Office has reviewed 6,322 user accounts.

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 and 2019, appellate e-filing consistently accounted for 93% of all appellate filing submissions.

The appellate courts' on-going commitment to the eCourt initiative continued in July 2019, with the implementation of a new digital asset management system, C-Track. The C-Track system addresses electronic storage and functionality issues created by the increasing volume of appellate cases with digital evidence, specifically photographs and audio and video recordings. Within the first six months, Clerk Office personnel uploaded and imaged evidence for 475 cases on appeal. C-Track provides appellate court personnel with on-demand access to evidence and exhibits via a web-based application, eliminating the end user's need for specialized viewing equipment and software.

## Commitment Appeal Panels

Commitment Appeal Panel (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. Personnel from the Office of the Clerk of the Appellate Courts are responsible for docketing all CAP filings, conducting pre-hearing conferences, assigning three-judge panels, and scheduling the hearings.

Year	Number of CAP Cases Initiated
2009	54
2010	62
2011	98
2012	87
2013	106
2014	108
2015	185
2016	200
2017	193
2018	176
2019	196

## Emergency Management Coordinator

Recognizing the need to better prepare Minnesota's court system for emergencies and possible courthouse closures, the Minnesota Judicial Branch hired its first statewide Emergency Management Coordinator. The position took 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. The position has focused on emergency communication tools, workplace violence prevention, security enhancements to the Minnesota Judicial Center, and training for employees and judicial officers.

# 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 2019, Library staff answered more than 8,200 questions. Additionally, more than 2,200 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.

In April 2017, the Law Library began offering a 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 to get into the community and reach people who don't know about the Library, or don't know it is open to everyone. In 2019, the librarians answered almost 700 questions.

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 2019, the Library answered more than 40,000 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.

## Self-Help Services

The Minnesota State Law Library hosts a 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 self-represented litigants 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 2019, the Clinic assisted 158 people. Twenty-two of

those sessions were done over the phone with individuals who were not in the metro area. Ninety-five 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. More than 80 percent of this type of case involves a party who is unrepresented. There were 62 unemployment appeals filed in 2019, and the clinic assisted 48 people. The clinic's volunteer attorneys are primarily members of the Labor and Employment Law Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association.

In addition to the help provided at the appellate clinics, the State Law Library continues its long tradition of serving anyone seeking legal information via the phone, e-mail, mail, live chat, and in person.



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**2019 Annual Report to the Community**  
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