
Report to the Community

The 2012 Annual Report of the Minnesota Judicial Branch



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH**

Letter from the Chief Justice



Dear fellow Minnesotans,

I am pleased to present the 2012 Minnesota Judicial Branch Annual Report to the Community, which details the progress we have made on our ongoing efforts to improve the delivery of justice in our state.

Over the past year we have continued to expand and improve our sharing of case information with our justice system partners, including beginning work on an updated system for timely sharing of court issued orders for protection with law enforcement agencies. By the end of 2012, the Judicial Branch was generating 1.4 million data exchanges per month with government agencies.

The past year also saw the expansion of eFiling (electronic case initiation and updating) and eService. eFiling and eService for civil and family cases was made mandatory for attorneys and government agencies in district courts in Hennepin and Ramsey counties beginning September 1, 2012, and expanded on a voluntary basis to courts in Cass, Clay, Dakota, Faribault, Morrison and Washington counties. eFiling and eService is just one piece of our ambitious eCourtMN initiative, an effort to convert from paper to electronic court records.

I am proud of the work our judges and employees did in 2012 to develop new and more effective ways to fulfill our mission of providing timely justice to the people of Minnesota, and I hope you find this report informative and useful.

Sincerely,

Lorie S. Gildea
Chief Justice
Minnesota Supreme Court

The Minnesota Judicial Branch

By the Numbers

The Judicial Branch Mission

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

Judicial Branch FY2012 Budget

\$235,170,000 - District Courts
\$30,610,000 - Supreme Court/State Court Administration/State Law Library
\$10,176,000 - Court of Appeals
\$275,956,000 - Total

Judicial Branch Staff and Judges

Approximately 2,500 permanent employees
315 - Number of authorized judgeships
Supreme Court- 7
Court of Appeals- 19
District (Trial) Courts- 289

Judicial Districts: 10

Number of Judicial Branch hearing facilities: 101

Oldest Courthouse: Washington County Courthouse, 101 West Pine Street, Stillwater, 1869

Number of Courthouses on the National Register of Historic Places: 62

2012 Report to the Community

Significant progress was made in 2012 on many of the priorities laid out in the Judicial Branch FY12-FY13 Strategic Plan, which calls for judges and court employees to focus their efforts on three areas:

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

Administering Justice for Effective Results – Adopting approaches and processes for the resolution of cases that enhance the outcomes for individual participants and the public.

Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality – A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.

This report to the community details much of the progress made on the strategies chosen to achieve these goals.

Priorities & Strategies

Access to Justice

Increased Data Sharing

The development of modern information management technology has made it possible for the Judicial Branch to share case information electronically in ways unimaginable even a decade ago. Since the completion of the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) in 2008, our work has focused on creating new and better ways for justice system partners, attorneys, policy makers, and the public to obtain case information, and on developing more efficient case management strategies.



As a result of these efforts, the Judicial Branch was generating 1.4 million data exchanges per month to government agencies by the end of 2012. These exchanges include criminal and traffic case eFiling, event notifications, queries from criminal justice agencies, and others as required by statute.

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Case information is being shared with the North East Minnesota Enforcement and Safety Information System (NEMESIS). Dispositions, warrants, and other case information are provided electronically to prosecutors and law enforcement officers in six counties in northeastern Minnesota. This effort, a collaboration between the Sixth Judicial District and NEMESIS, creates efficiencies and time savings in data entry and accuracy for courts and law enforcement partners, and also provides information to court partners at the time it is needed.

In another effort, case data has been passed automatically to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) when there is a finding of incompetency; a dismissal or acquittal due to mental illness or deficiency; a civil commitment; or restoration of an individual's firearm rights in a criminal, juvenile, or probate/mental health case since 2010. The BCA passes this information on to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), which is used for mandatory background checks related to firearm eligibility.



In 2012, the Branch began work on a more robust system for management of orders for protection (OFP) issued by Judicial Branch courts. The goal of the project is to improve the transmission and management of data related to these orders so that law enforcement officers and other criminal justice professionals have timely access to accurate and complete OFP information. The project will replace an outdated system that provided limited information and was transmitted only twice daily, resulting in potential delays in getting critical information into the hands of law enforcement officers. The Judicial Branch is working in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Office of Justice Programs to create the new database. Other partners include the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, and the Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association. Funding is being provided through a grant from the Federal Violence Against Women Act, Grants to Encourage Arrest Policies and Enforcement of Protection Orders.

Help for Self-Represented Litigants and Defendants

The legal system is complicated and often hard to understand for a person not trained in the law. Ideally, every litigant would be represented by a trained attorney. Not every litigant can afford to, or chooses to hire an attorney, however, which is why the Judicial Branch has created numerous resources to aid self-represented litigants and defendants.

Self-help services serve two important purposes: they help ensure access to justice for those otherwise uneducated in the law and unable to afford an attorney; and they speed cases along to resolution. Absent these services, cases involving pro se (self-represented) litigants and defendants tend to use more court resources and take longer to resolve.

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Guidance about the most common types of cases can be found through an extensive Self-Help Center on the Judicial Branch Website (www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp). The Self-Help Center includes plain-language explanations, required forms, and video and printed tutorials. Some of the information and forms are available in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

During court hours, Self-Help Center staff can assist Website users over by reviewing forms filled out by litigants for accuracy and completeness. In 2012, staff screened about 1,500 forms via this Internet-based service.

Visitors to courthouses can use public access terminals to access the Self-Help Center and talk by phone with Self-Help Center staff. In 2012, staff provided assistance on more than 18,000 calls and 4,020 eMails.

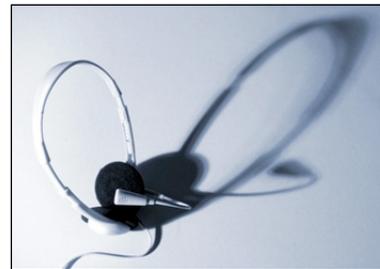
In 2012, the Self-Help Center Website received more than 900,000 visits from people seeking information on common court case types. In a few short years, the Self-Help Center Website has become a major source of information and support for people doing business in Minnesota's courts.

In addition, many courts offer in-person assistance through courthouse-based self-help centers. The Self-Help Center in Hennepin County District Court, the state's busiest, assisted more than 17,000 walk-in and call-in customers in 2012.

English Language Assistance

Immigration to Minnesota from non-English speaking countries has created the need to provide English-language assistance to many litigants and defendants. In response, Minnesota courts provided court interpretation in 27,116 proceedings in 89 different languages in 2012.

The Judicial Branch offers classes in court interpreting and participates in a national court interpreter certification program. Certification exams are offered in several languages. A roster of available court interpreters can be found on the Judicial Branch Website at (www.mncourts.gov/findinterpreters).



Remote video and telephone interpreting technology is being used throughout the Seventh Judicial District to reduce travel time and cost, and to facilitate timely case processing. In addition, several Twin Cities-area courts are served by a Spanish interpreter working remotely from the Fourth Judicial District.

Court Payment Center

The Judicial Branch Court Payment Center (CPC) completed its first full year of operation in 2012. The CPC is the Branch's award-winning effort to streamline the processing of payments of the more than one million payable citations issued each year, and to expand services to citation recipients.

The CPC project consolidated the processing of payable citations from 85 counties to a central facility located in Willmar, Minnesota. A call center staffed by workers in home offices assists callers via toll-free phone lines and by eMail. CPC staff assisted more than 120,000 callers, an average of more than 10,000 callers a month, in 2012.



The creation of the CPC has made it possible to pay citations by credit card, by phone, or via the Internet. Much of the work of processing payments -- a previously labor-intensive process -- has been automated, including the distribution of fine revenues to municipal governments and the state general fund. (The Judicial Branch does not retain any of the more than \$200 million collected each year.) In 2012, 60 percent of citations were paid electronically.

In 2012, the Judicial Branch was honored by the National Association for Court Management for its innovative approach to citation payment processing with the 2012 Justice Achievement Award.

A parallel effort involved the automation of the collection of overdue fines and fees. Overdue fines are now referred to the Department of Revenue for collection after 30 days through a labor-saving automated process. In FY12 more than \$20 million in overdue debt was collected, a 200 percent increase since 2009.

Civil Justice Reform

Surveys of court users and the public have found that many people believe that the civil litigation process takes too long and costs too much. In 2010, the Supreme Court established the Civil Justice Reform Task Force to review civil justice reforms taken in other jurisdictions and recommend changes that would facilitate more effective and efficient case processing. The Task Force delivered its final recommendations on May 22, 2012. The Supreme Court is expected to act on the recommendations in 2013.

Administering Justice For Effective Results

Conservator Account Monitoring

Every year, Minnesota's courts are asked to appoint conservators to manage the financial resources of thousands of persons deemed incapable of managing their own assets. When a request for appointment of a conservator is granted, the court is charged with overseeing the actions of the conservator.

Since January 1, 2011, conservators have been required to file their annual financial reports through the Judicial Branch Conservator Account Monitoring Preparation and Electronic Reporting (CAMPER) system. The Internet-accessible system provides a number of benefits to courts and conservators, including the reduction of errors, possible exploitation, and paperwork, allowing ready identification of overdue accounts and improving the Branch's ability to audit accounts. Training on how to use the CAMPER service, including a video tutorial, is available through the Judicial Branch Website (www.mncourts.gov/conservators).

In 2012, the Branch created a centralized auditing unit, the Conservator Account Auditing Program (CAAP), to assist courts in their oversight of over \$625 million of assets under court jurisdiction. The CAAP office is located in Ramsey, Minnesota.

With a staff of 4.5 auditors, CAAP provides specialized auditing and accounting expertise to courts, training for court staff on account review, and assistance to conservators using the CAMPER reporting system. CAAP staff is working with an advisory group to create "best practices" for court management of conservator accounts.

In 2012, CAAP received a State Justice Institute grant to replace the CAMPER system, with the goal of creating a more robust system that utilizes state-of-the-art technology like "smart forms," has report production capability and audit tools, and can integrate with commercial accounting software and the Judicial Branch case management system. The new system will be deployed in 2013. The Judicial Branch's innovative strategy for overseeing conservators has been called a national model for other courts to emulate.

"The CAMPER system represents one of the most innovative practices in the conservatorship field nationwide," said Dr. Brenda Uekert, Director of the Center for Elders and the Courts at the National Center for State Courts. "For conservators, it offers checks and balances through an automated system. For the courts, CAMPER has the potential to improve the oversight and management of cases. Many states will be looking to Minnesota as a national model of how to improve the conservatorship process."

eCourtMN

One of the most ambitious reengineering initiatives ever undertaken by the Judicial Branch is the eCourtMN initiative, which aims to move courts from paper case files to an electronic information environment. The eCourtMN vision calls for all cases to be eFiled (or submitted on paper and converted to electronic images), justice system partners and other external constituents to have secure access to electronic records, court processes to be streamlined, and judges and court staff to rely on electronic records.

The initiative calls for the implementation of a number of technology-based services, including: eFiling (including eCitations and eCharging); eService; ePayments; electronic document management, including document imaging; desktop tools for judges to view case records; electronic transmission of cases to the appellate courts; and eTools (eSignature, eNoticing, eCertification, and other tools that allow for electronic processing of orders).

The electronic case filing portion of the project began with a voluntary eFiling pilot in Hennepin County District Court in October 2010, with expansion to Ramsey County District Court in 2011. Attorneys and representatives of law firms and government agencies used a Web-based software application to file their case, which was then entered electronically into the court case management system, speeding case initiation and reducing data entry work for court staff.



In 2012, eFiling by attorneys in many types of civil and family cases was made mandatory in district courts in Hennepin County and Ramsey County, and voluntary pilots were authorized for nine additional district courts in Cass, Clay, Cook, Dakota, Faribault, Kandiyohi, Lake, Morrison, and Washington counties.

A pilot program that allows for the electronic transmission of case records in appeals to the Minnesota Court of Appeals began in Dakota County District Court in late 2012 and was expanded to Ramsey County District Court shortly thereafter. In the past, paper files -- often several boxes of filings and court documents -- had to be transported to the appellate court, copied, and distributed for review for each appeal.

Electronic Filing of Citations (eCitations)

Each year Minnesota law enforcement officers issue more than one million citations for traffic and other violations of state statutes and local ordinances. The Judicial Branch has worked with the Minnesota State Patrol to enable officers to file citations electronically. By the end of 2012, State Patrol officers statewide were filing their citations electronically, speeding citation processing and reducing paperwork on both ends of the transaction. By the end of 2012, more than 53 percent of citations filed in Minnesota were being filed electronically, up from 35 percent in 2011.

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In a related effort, the Judicial Branch has been working to increase the electronic filing of traffic citations by local law enforcement agencies. By the end of 2012, local law enforcement agencies were filing eCitations in 78 of Minnesota's 87 counties, creating significant time and labor savings for courts and law enforcement.

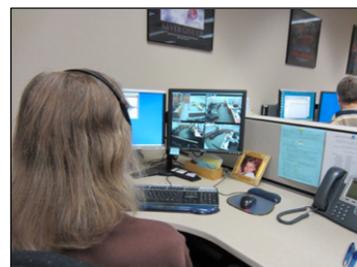
eCharging

In another effort to promote the use of labor-saving technology in case initiation, the Branch has been working with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to promote electronic filing of criminal charges by county and city attorneys. Electronic filing of charges (eCharging) speeds the processing of criminal charges and greatly reduces the amount of judge, court staff and law enforcement time required to complete the charging process. By the end of 2012, eCharging was occurring in 44 counties, with the goal of achieving 100 percent participation by county prosecutors.

Electronic Court Reporting

Many courts in Minnesota now produce the official record of a court proceeding using electronic recording tools instead of the more traditional stenographic court reporter. The use of recording technology has enabled courts to reduce their need for court reporters and devote the savings to other needs.

The Fourth Judicial District Court Reporter Unit operates out of a central control room from which court reporters can monitor several courtrooms at once. In 2012 the Unit digitally recorded an average of 38 courtroom calendars daily using nine or 10 court reporters. Prior to the creation of the Unit in 2006, as many as 40 court reporters would have been required to produce the official court record for the same number of courtrooms. By the end of 2012, there were 48 court reporters serving 75 judicial officers in the Fourth District.



A view of the Hennepin County District Court central monitoring room.

Drug, Alcohol, and other Problem-Solving Courts

Problem-solving courts represent a shift in the way courts handle certain offenders. In this approach, the court works closely with prosecutors, public defenders, probation officers, social workers, and other justice system partners to develop a strategy designed to pressure an offender into completing a treatment program and abstaining from repeating the behaviors that brought him or her to court.

Problem-solving court strategies include extended probation, frequent appearances before a judge, frequent meetings with probation officers, staggered sentencing that breaks up jail time into segments and allows the participant to earn reductions in jail time with good behavior, and regular alcohol and drug testing.

In June, the State Court Administrator's Office published the Minnesota Statewide Adult Drug Court Evaluation, the first comprehensive study of the effectiveness of Minnesota's drug courts. The two-and-a-half-year study compared 644 non-participants to 535 participants from 16 drug court programs covering 23 counties. The two groups were matched on key characteristics, including criminal history, chemical dependency status, and key demographic information.

The study found that drug court participants had lower rates of recidivism, spent less time incarcerated, and made greater progress on social indicators, such as attainment of a driver's license, than did non-participants.

Researchers also found that drug court participants spent fewer days incarcerated (jail and prison) than the comparison group. As a result, \$3,189 less per participant was spent on incarceration of drug court participants than for the comparison group. The study calculated incarceration costs using per diem costs provided by the Department of Corrections, which included costs for clothing, feeding, and housing offenders.

"The positive Minnesota results further confirm federal government and other national findings that drug courts work," said Chisago County District Court Judge Robert Rancourt, Co-chair of the Minnesota Drug Court Initiative Advisory Committee and President of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. "They are a win-win for the participants, who get help turning their lives around, and for our communities, which gain improved public safety."

The Judicial Branch also operates mental health courts, special courts that focus on people who have been charged with a crime and have a psychiatric disability. The purpose of these courts is to deal with the crime in a way that addresses the person's mental health needs. The mental disability is the focus rather than criminal behavior. Treatment, medical care and supervision, case management, and service referral are primary ingredients of mental health courts.

Operational Problem Solving

Courts

Adult Drug

Cottonwood County
Crow Wing County
Dakota County
Hennepin County
Ramsey County
St. Louis County - South
Stearns County
Winona County

Multi-County Adult Drug

Brown-Nicollet-Watonwan Counties
Clay-Becker Counties
Cornerstone Drug Court (Rock-Nobles Counties)
Southwest Community Drug Court (Lincoln-Lyon-Redwood Counties)

Juvenile Drug

Brown County
Dakota County

Family Dependency

Blue Earth County
Dakota County
Stearns County

DWI Court

Beltrami County
Cass County
Crow Wing County
Hennepin County
Otter Tail County
Pennington County
Ramsey County
Roseau-Kittson Counties
St. Louis County - South

Drug/DWI Hybrid

Aitkin County
Blue Earth County
Itasca County
St. Louis County - North
Wabasha County

Drug/Family Dependency Hybrid

Faribault-Martin-Jackson Counties

Drug/DWI/Family Dependency Hybrid

Dodge County
Borderland Substance Abuse Court:
Koochiching County - Drug/DWI/Family
& Lake of the Woods County - Drug/DWI

Veterans' Treatment Court

Hennepin County

Mental Health Court

Hennepin County
Ramsey County

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Hennepin County District Court established the state's first Veterans Court, a collaboration between justice system partners and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, to address cases involving military veterans. Hennepin Veterans Court had 133 active participants and 47 graduates in 2012.

Family Case Management

Cases involving family disputes are often some of the most contentious and time-consuming for judges and court staff. Many cases involve disputes over child custody or parenting arrangements. Early Case Management calls for early judge involvement and active judicial management in an effort to facilitate early settlement of disputed issues. A component includes Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) as an alternative to the expensive, time-consuming, and often acrimonious process of conducting custody evaluations. ENE is a short-term, confidential evaluation process using a male and female team of experienced custody evaluators to facilitate resolution of custody and parenting time matters. A similar process is sometimes used to help settle financial disputes.

Jurisdictions using these strategies report higher rates of early settlement. As of December, ENE was being used in 80 percent (70) of Minnesota's counties, with another three counties preparing to offer the option in 2013.



Court of Appeals Family Law Appellate Mediation Program

This Court of Appeals program mirrors the early neutral evaluation process used in district courts and shares the goal of achieving an early settlement of the appeal. In this program, referral to mediation occurs after the case has been filed, but before the briefing stage and before the litigants incur the considerable costs that are often part of the regular appeals process. Since 2011, 42 percent of the cases referred to mediation resulted in early settlement, a significant time savings for litigants and the Court.

Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality

Community Outreach

As part of the Judicial Branch's commitment to improving the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary, each year the Branch undertakes a number of initiatives aimed at reaching out to the citizens of the State of Minnesota. In 2012, judges and court staff spoke at more than 200 events at schools, and in front of civic and community groups, reaching over 10,000 Minnesotans.

Supreme Court Traveling Oral Argument Program

Each spring and fall the Supreme Court holds an oral argument in a high school. The arguments are followed by a question and answer session with students, lunch with students, and visits to classrooms. There are also opportunities for the members of the Court to meet with local officials and dignitaries. During the fall visit, the court hosts a community dinner open to the public.



The members of the Minnesota Supreme Court pose with students from Eastview High School in Apple Valley, MN.

In April 2012, the Supreme Court's traveling oral argument program was held at Eastview High School in Apple Valley. In October, the court visited Willmar Senior High School. A community dinner attended by more than 175 area citizens was held at Willmar Conference Center in conjunction with the visit. The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in the planning and coordination of the dinner. More than 1,500 students participated in these two events.

The Court also holds oral arguments at area law schools, giving law students an opportunity to observe the court in action and to interact with the justices. In 2012, the Court visited the University of Minnesota Law School in March, University of St. Thomas Law School in May, William Mitchell College of Law in October, and Hamline University Law School in November.

In another effort to expand public understanding of the Court's work, all Supreme Court oral arguments are recorded and made available for viewing on our Website, www.mncourts.gov. In 2012, video recordings of Supreme Court oral arguments were viewed more than 12,600 times.

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Law Day 2012

Governor Mark Dayton officially declared May 1, 2012, as Law Day in Minnesota. The theme designated by the American Bar Association for 2012 was “No Courts, No Justice, No Freedom.” In recognition of Law Day, the Judicial Branch hosted or participated in several events. Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea spoke on the topic of leadership during a program sponsored by the Minneapolis Woman’s Club and St. Catherine University. The program was recorded and subsequently broadcast on the “MPR News Presents” program on Minnesota Public Radio. In addition, the Chief Justice was a guest of the Almanac program on Twin Cities Public Television on May 4 in honor of Law Day.

Then-President of the Minnesota State Bar Association Brent Routman and Chief Justice Gildea authored a letter to Minnesotans about the important role of courts. The letter was published in the St. Cloud Times.

Judges from all three levels of courts participated in a Moot Court program for Law Day at the Minnesota History Center in conjunction with the Constitution Exhibit. A panel of three judges heard arguments from students from Champlin Park High School and Mounds Park Academy, who presented arguments based on a simulated First Amendment case. In addition, a display case presenting information about the Minnesota Judicial Branch was available for viewing during the event.



Students from Champlin Park High School pose with judges from all three levels of courts following a moot court demonstration at the Minnesota History Center.

District Court judges and staff around the state also hosted Law Day events.



Anoka County District Court judges and staff assisted the public at information tables for Law Day.

Anoka County District court partnered with other justice agencies to host a staffed information table where visitors could find resources and ask questions. The courthouse also made judges available to answer questions from the public and offered tours of the building. The 10th Judicial District’s Equal Justice Committee sponsored the first-ever Ask a Lawyer Day and had over 100 people receive free legal advice on April 7 at the Isanti County Courthouse. A second event was held on June 9 at the Church for All Nations.

Carlton County District Court in the Sixth Judicial District offered an open house at the law library.

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The First Judicial District sponsored a seminar on will and estate planning at the Carver County Courthouse. Dakota County District Court hosted an open meeting with judges at its Hastings and Apple Valley locations. Goodhue County District Court hosted a free legal advice clinic with a volunteer attorney and offered an information table and a trivia contest on May 4.

Hennepin County District Court sponsored a celebration and exhibit in the Hennepin County Government Center on May 1 and a coloring contest with a Law Day theme. Fourth Judicial District Administrator Mark Thompson spoke with jury candidates in honor of Law Day, and Fourth Judicial District judges visited schools to teach students about the Judicial Branch.



Hennepin County District Court Judge Janet Posten with a Law Day poster contest winner.

Finally, Chief Justice Lorie Gildea, in partnership with Thomson Reuters and the Secretary of State's Office, sent a letter and an introductory DVD to all middle and high schools in Minnesota to promote the use of an innovative, online civics education curriculum, iCivics.

iCivics

In an effort to better educate students about civics, former United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has developed a comprehensive, interactive civics curriculum available on the Internet. The iCivics lessons are designed to teach students about the three branches of government and to help students develop skills in areas such as persuasive writing.



Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea and Secretary of State Mark Ritchie present a student with a certificate of recognition.

the students' role in democracy. The Chief Justice and the Secretary of State awarded certificates to those students achieving the highest scores on the lessons.

Tours

The Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul is the home of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and State Court Administration. In 2012, more than 1,000 people, including 900 Minnesota school students, visited the Judicial Center and the historic courtroom in the State Capitol. Visits and tours are arranged through the State Court Information Office.

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Partnerships

The Judicial Branch partners with several organizations throughout the year, providing support through use of court facilities and judge and staff volunteers. During the 2012 YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly program, held at the Minnesota Capitol complex, Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges helped prepare students for service as judges and administered oaths of office to Youth Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branch officials.

Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges spoke throughout the 2012 Legislative Session to more than 175 high school juniors participating in the Minnesota House of Representatives High School Legislative Page Program.

Volunteering in the Community

Minnesota Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges, retired judges, law clerks, and court staff served lunch to more than 600 persons at the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul on May 25, 2012.

“We are honored to be able to participate in this event,” said Court of Appeals Judge Jill Flaskamp Halbrooks, who co-chairs the event with Supreme Court Justice Wilhelmina Wright. “This is the tenth year we have had this opportunity... The lunch is a great opportunity for members of the courts and court staff to reach out to the community and to provide a special meal for people in need. It helps put a face to members of the Judicial Branch.” Judges and staff have served more than 5,300 meals during these events over the past 10 years.



Current and retired justices and judges from the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, and appellate court staff, following lunch at Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul, MN.

Newspaper Columns by Judges

In 2012, many judges published regular columns in area newspapers explaining the workings of the courts in an effort to make the legal process more understandable to citizens. More than one million subscribers to various newspapers across Minnesota were able to learn more about their justice system through these columns.

Measuring Performance

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to establish core performance goals and to monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals in order to ensure accountability, improve overall operations of the court, and enhance the public’s trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Performance goals are established and measured in six areas: Access to Justice, Timeliness, Integrity and Accountability, Excellence, Fairness and Equity, and Quality Court Workplace Environment. Results are reported annually in “Performance Measures: Key Results and Measures Annual Report,” which can be found on the Judicial Branch Website at www.mncourts.gov/publications.

Around the Branch in 2012

First Judicial District

Access to Justice Goes International with Interactive Television

On Jan. 20, 2012, First Judicial District Judge Thomas G. McCarthy, chambered in Sibley County, was scheduled to sentence a pastor who had been convicted of sexually molesting a 16-year-old foreign exchange student from Madrid, Spain.

The victim wished to participate in the sentencing hearing, but she and her parents did not want to incur the expense or take the time to come to Minnesota.

Court administration and the Sibley County Attorney, with help from the Office of International Affairs in Washington, D.C., arranged for the victim and her family to participate in the hearing by Interactive Television (ITV) from Madrid.

Judge McCarthy commented that the connection was as good as that between Sibley County and a neighboring county.



The photographer in Spain can be seen in the monitor as she takes a photo of Judge McCarthy and Court Administrator Karen Messner in Sibley County.

Minnesota Supreme Court Convenes at Eastview High School



Members of the Supreme Court take questions from students at Eastview High School.

Over 600 students watched as the Minnesota Supreme Court convened at Eastview High School on April 11, 2012, in an effort to open the doors of the Judicial Branch to the public.

The state’s highest court heard oral arguments of an actual case, State of Minnesota, Respondent vs. Christian Chi Ndikum, Appellant (A10-1728), which originated in Hennepin County District Court.

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“We are committed to ensuring that the people of Minnesota understand that this is their Court,” said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. “Visiting high schools is particularly important because we can engage students at a time when they are learning their role in our democracy and what it means to live in a society governed by laws. Reaching out to the people of Minnesota has long been one of the Court’s highest priorities. Speaking with students and answering their questions helps to promote a better understanding of the Judicial Branch. I am pleased to have opened the court to the young people of Apple Valley.”

Volunteer attorneys coordinated by the Minnesota State Bar Association Civic Education Committee volunteered to visit classrooms prior to the program to review the case with students and help them prepare for the Supreme Court visit.

Following the arguments, the justices answered students’ questions on a wide variety of topics. Justices and other distinguished guests also ate lunch with Eastview students. In the afternoon, justices visited classrooms at Eastview High School.

Second Judicial District

Minnesota Drug Court Serves as National Model

The Ramsey County Substance Abuse Court (RCSAC) hosted a national training program for drug court teams from around the country in March 2012. The five-day Adult Drug Court Planning Initiative training brought together approximately 90 participants representing 10 jurisdictions.

"We are honored to serve as a national model for drug courts and welcome the opportunity to host what will be an outstanding week of training and sharing best practices," said Second Judicial District Judge Joanne Smith. "Our team works very hard to ensure that we follow national best practices, and as a result we have been tremendously successful at saving money and saving the lives of those struggling with addiction and mental illness."

Visiting teams learned how to develop a drug court in their community. Carolyn Hardin, Senior Director of the National Drug Court Institute, a professional services branch of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, said that training is the key to ensuring long-term success for drug courts. "Through the outstanding support of the Bureau of Justice Assistance we are able to give courts the tools they need to implement programs that will serve their communities for years to come," she said. "The success of the Ramsey County Substance Abuse Court makes it the perfect location to bring teams in for this important training."

The RCSAC serves as a national Mentor Court as part of a program sponsored by the National Drug Court Institute in conjunction with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice. As a Mentor Court, the RCSAC is a model program helping to develop, identify, and test national best practices and providing technical assistance to programs interested in starting a drug court, including hosting visitors such as court teams participating in training.

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Drug Courts have saved Minnesota an estimated \$5 million in incarceration costs. Evaluation findings for RCSAC found that graduates were 14 percent less likely to commit a new felony than those in a comparison group within one year of starting drug court or the disposition date. Additionally, graduates were 36 percent less likely to obtain a new conviction than those in a comparison group within three years of exiting drug court or the disposition date. There have been 24 drug-free babies born to mothers while in the RCSAC.

Second Judicial District Judge Joanne Smith Inducted into Drug Court Hall of Fame



*Ramsey County District Court
Judge Joanne Smith*

Second Judicial District Judge Joanne Smith was inducted into the Stanley M. Goldstein Drug Court Hall of Fame on June 2, 2012, at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) Conference in Nashville, TN. This is the highest achievement given to drug court professionals nationwide, with only 22 inductees since 2002.

Judge Smith, who presides over the Ramsey County Adult Substance Abuse Court, has distinguished herself over the years through her innovation and leadership.

The Honorable Stanley M. Goldstein was the first drug court judge in the nation. In recognition of his example, expertise, and leadership, NADCP named the Drug Court Hall of Fame in his honor. Judge Goldstein's untiring efforts epitomize the qualities the award seeks to honor in each of its recipients.

Third Judicial District

Winona County Drug Court Launches Ahead of Schedule

The Winona County Drug Court, originally scheduled to begin operation in February 2013, launched ahead of schedule, holding its first hearings in December 2012.

District Office Moves to More Economical Space

The Third Judicial District office moved to a new location, 1696 Greenview Drive SW in Rochester, MN, in November 2012. The new space accommodates staff training and bench meetings, and is more economical than the prior facility.

Workload Centralization Continues

Additional centralization of workload in 2012 included the designation of one county to process failure to appear notices for nine of the 11 counties in the District. Default judgments are now also being processed across county lines to better equalize the workload among staff. In addition, one county processes the Department of Revenue automated payment file for all counties in the District to streamline the process and maximize efficiency.

Fourth Judicial District

Minnesota Senator Al Franken Participates in Courthouse Safety Roundtable

Senator Al Franken participated in a courthouse safety roundtable at the Hennepin County Government Center on April 4, 2012, along with representatives from local law enforcement, judges, court administrators, and county commissioners. At that time, Senator Franken's proposed bill, the Local Courthouse Safety Act, would shift existing security resources to state courts, allowing them to use excess federal security equipment such as metal detectors, wands, and baggage screening machines. It would also give states access to Department of Homeland Security grants and security training.



L to R: Hennepin County District Court Chief Judge Peter Cahill, United States Senator Al Franken, Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea.

Fourth Judicial District Court Reporter Unit Receives National Award

The Court Reporter Unit of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District (Hennepin County) received the 2012 Court Award from the American Association of Electronic Reporters and Transcribers (AAERT) at its annual conference on June 23 in Philadelphia, PA.

Typically, the award is presented to a reporter or transcriber in recognition of outstanding achievements. This year, Margaret Ann Morgan, an AAERT-certified district court reporter from Rochester, MN, nominated the Fourth Judicial District Court Reporter Unit for its efforts and success incorporating video/digital reporting for courtrooms.



AAERT President, Janet Harris (l), presented the "Court Recognition Award" to Cheryl Wallat (c) and Tamara Halonen (r) of the Court Reporter Unit.

"Many courts have responded to budget cuts by laying off dedicated employees, which often results in reduced services," said Morgan. "Instead, Hennepin County District Court responded to the challenge by reorganizing, incorporating digital reporting, and gaining efficiencies. The success of the Court Reporter Unit is a result of the collaboration of judges, administrators, and court reporters. Because of the dedication and hard work by committed individuals, Hennepin County District Court reduced costs without jeopardizing the integrity of the court record."

The Court Reporter Unit has equipped 92 courtrooms in seven facilities with digital recording. It has also established a central video monitoring room.

"One of the benefits provided by the Court Reporter Unit and its central monitoring room is the ability to be extremely flexible regarding each day's needs," said Court Reporter Unit Coordinator Tamara Halonen. "Rather than having one official court reporter for every judge and

2012 Annual Report

referee, we have a pool of employees who will work either one-on-one with a judicial officer in a courtroom, or in the central monitoring room working with three or four courtrooms simultaneously.”

The Court Reporter Unit is also expected to reduce the occurrence of repetitive stress syndrome for employees, as digital recording is less manually intensive than stenographic writing.

The Court Reporter Unit has already improved service to internal and external clients by having a single contact point for inquiries and transcript requests.

“Our court reporters deserve this recognition for their willingness to be innovative, to use new court monitoring technology, and to work as a team to meet the demands of a high-volume urban court with less staff,” said Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Peter Cahill. “As we face continuing budget pressures, the collaboration of the court reporters, judges, and administrators is a model for all of us.”

Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District and Minnesotans for Safe Driving Shine Spotlight on Hennepin County’s DWI Court Results

On December 21, 2012, in recognition of National Impaired Driving Prevention month, Minnesota’s Fourth Judicial District and Minnesotans for Safe Driving hosted a program that showcased the efforts, results, and accomplishments of the Hennepin County DWI Court in combatting drunk driving and helping reform and repair the lives of drunk and impaired driving offenders.

Since the DWI Court was introduced in 2007, it has shown impressive results, which officials, including Fourth Judicial District Judge John Holahan, Officer Steve Fogarty of the Minneapolis Police Department, Sharon Gehrman-Driscoll of Minnesotans for Safe Driving, 3rd District Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman, and Secretary of State Mark Ritchie shared at the event.



L-R: Sharon Gehrman-Driscoll, Minnesotans for Safe Driving; Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State

Among the highlights:

- The DWI Court group is twice as successful as the comparison group (offenders who chose not to participate in DWI Court). They are charged and convicted at half the rate of the comparison group, which is a statistically significant difference.
- The DWI Court group re-offense rate is lower than the state average, while the comparison group (non-DWI court participants) reoffended in line with state averages.

Weapons Screening Implemented at Hennepin County Suburban Courts

Hennepin County District Court installed weapons screening equipment and began interim weapon screening at its three suburban court locations (Brookdale, Southdale, and Ridgedale) on April 23, 2012.

During the first week of weapons screening, over 3,000 people passed through checkpoints, and approximately 70 items were taken from people entering the three facilities. Items included knives, box cutters, sharp items, nail clippers, and mace.

The Fourth Judicial District works in partnership with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Hennepin County Property Services, and other justice stakeholders to maintain public safety in the 96 courtrooms throughout Hennepin County.

Fifth Judicial District

Referee Helps with Family Court Caseload

Blue Earth County District Court began using a court referee in 2012 to help with the family court caseload. Referees, who are employees of the court, are similar to judges in that they are able to oversee mediation or find fair resolution in cases, but in Blue Earth County, their recommendations are then presented to full-time judges, who are elected, to make the final decisions.

Adult Drug Courts Now Serve Every Fifth Judicial District County

As of July 2012, with the implementation of the Cottonwood County Drug Court, all counties in the Fifth Judicial District now have access to an adult drug court program. Funding to implement the drug courts in the last five counties was received from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. As of January 15, 2013, there were 134 active adult drug court participants in the Fifth Judicial District.

Sixth Judicial District

Sixth Judicial District Judge Mark Starr Honored for Efforts to Improve Traffic Safety



*Sixth Judicial District Judge
Mark Starr*

Sixth Judicial District Judge Mark Starr was honored in 2012 by Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) program with its Star Award in recognition of his efforts to improve traffic safety in St. Louis County, where he is chambered. He was presented with the award, in the category of Judicial and Court Systems, at the TZD annual conference on Oct. 22.

Each year at the conference, the TZD program gives awards to recognize individuals who have demonstrated excellence in their efforts to move Minnesota toward zero deaths. The Star Awards are given to recognize excellence in enforcement, emergency medical and trauma services, education, engineering, child

2012 Annual Report

passenger safety, judicial/court systems, public leadership, and the media. Award recipients have demonstrated exceptional creativity, leadership, and organizational skills, and the ability to successfully motivate and collaborate with others, in efforts to move toward zero deaths on Minnesota's roads.

In April 2010, Judge Starr began tracking information on the last location that individuals charged with DWI were served alcohol. He was instrumental in getting Sixth Judicial District Judge David Ackerson, also chambered in St. Louis County, involved in the same process. Both judges now provide information on the last place an individual was served alcohol to the Mesabi Safe Communities Coalition (MSCC) so the group can work with local bars that may be consistently over-serving customers to provide server training.

Judge Starr's other collaborations with the MSCC include inviting the MSCC coordinator to service organization and professional meetings so that she can present data, recruit new members, and boost efforts to change social norms surrounding alcohol.

Judge Starr is also involved in the Hibbing Chemical Health Advisory Committee, which works to prevent underage and binge drinking.

Minnesota TZD is the state's cornerstone traffic safety program, employing an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota roads.

Cook County Courthouse Celebrates 100 Years

Cook County's courthouse in Grand Marais, MN, celebrated its 100th birthday in 2012 with "Celebration of a Century" on September 21. The festivities included courthouse tours and local sixth-grade history students performing re-enactments in the courtroom. Throughout the day, visitors could also view special displays, including old photos and other artifacts. At 4 p.m., a time capsule was buried, and then music, games, and food were enjoyed on the courthouse lawn.



Cook County Courthouse, Sixth Judicial District

Seventh Judicial District

Domestic Violence Court Receives State Recognition

Stearns County's Domestic Violence Partnership project, which includes Stearns County's Domestic Violence Court, received state honors in December 2012, for its excellence and innovation. The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) recognized the Partnership with the County Achievement Award for innovations in government that improved the quality of life in Minnesota.

Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall initiated the Partnership in 2008 with prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, corrections, the battered women's shelter, legal aid attorneys, mental health and chemical dependency professionals, and law enforcement. Stearns County received nearly \$1 million in grants to revamp traditional methods of handling domestic violence cases.

The program uses intensive supervision, accountability, and support, including drug and alcohol testing, access to treatment, and strict no-contact and behavior conditions for offenders. Victims have access to victim assistance and their own legal aid attorney. Crime reduction following entry into the program is dramatic. Stearns County's Domestic Violence Court is the only repeat felony domestic violence court program in the United States.

Recipients of the County Achievement Award are nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.

Eighth Judicial District

Minnesota Supreme Court Visits Willmar, MN

The Minnesota Supreme Court visited the Willmar Lakes Area community in October 2012. The Court visited with members of the community at a dinner they hosted in partnership with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. Attendees were able to mingle with members of the Supreme Court and judges from the Eighth Judicial District bench during a social hour and at tables during dinner. The Chief Justice spoke to the group about the current state of the Judicial Branch in Minnesota following the meal, then formally introduced her colleagues, who also addressed the dinner attendees.



A student from Willmar Senior High School asks a question of members of the Supreme Court following oral arguments in the auditorium.

2012 Annual Report

The following day, October 10, the Court convened at Willmar Senior High School in Willmar, Minn., in an effort to open the doors of the Judicial Branch to the public. The state's highest court heard oral arguments of an actual case, *In the Matter of the Welfare of J.J.P.* (A11-1146).

Since the Supreme Court convened oral arguments in Rochester, Minn., in 1995, the school visits have taken center stage in the Court's efforts to build the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. The Willmar event marked the 36th in-school oral arguments for the Court and the fifteenth anniversary of the program's first visit in Willmar.

The program included 500 high school students from Willmar Senior High School. Willmar Regional Access Channel 19 recorded the oral arguments and later broadcast them to the community.

Members of the Kandiyohi County Bar Association and other area attorneys and judges volunteered to review the case with students and help them prepare for the oral arguments. They created a case summary and coordinated the attorney/classroom visits.

Following the arguments, the justices answered students' questions on a wide variety of topics. Justices also ate lunch with and visited the classes of Willmar Senior High School students.

Ninth Judicial District

State/Tribal Wellness Court Receives National Honor

The Cass/Itasca County/Leech Lake Tribal Wellness Court was named the recipient of the 2012 Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award by the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA). The award was presented to Cass County District Court Judge John P. Smith and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Court Associate Judge Korey Wahwassuck at the NCJA National Forum on Criminal Justice and Public Safety in Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico, in July.

The Cass/Itasca County/Leech Lake Tribal Wellness Court is a multi-jurisdictional court which targets chronic alcohol and drug offenders. The Court combines treatment, sobriety testing, and monitoring to break the cycle of addiction for offenders. Law enforcement, probation, treatment professionals, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and court officials provide a team approach to assist individuals in overcoming their addiction and becoming law-abiding citizens.

The Wellness Court, the first tribal-state joint jurisdictional court in the United States, has served as a national model for intergovernmental cooperation. It has been in operation since 2006, and serves tribal members and non-Indians residing in Cass County, Itasca County, and the Leech Lake Reservation.

2012 Annual Report

Each year, NCJA recognizes outstanding criminal justice programs that address important criminal justice issues; demonstrate effectiveness based upon stated goals; provide a good example of the use of federal funds to initiate a program that is subsequently supported through state and local appropriations, or is self-sustaining; and can be easily replicated in other jurisdictions. A panel of criminal justice experts from across the country selected five award winners for 2012; one each from the American Northeast, South, Midwest, and West, as well as one tribal program.

“This is an honor to receive this award on behalf of the Cass/Itasca County/Leech Lake Tribal Wellness Court,” said Judge Smith.

“The program participants have shown that this innovative method in the criminal justice system yields positive changes for themselves and our communities,” added Itasca County District Court Judge John Hawkinson.

The Wellness Court has also been the recipient of the Harvard Honoring Nations Award (Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University) and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals Cultural Proficiency Courage Award. It was also nominated for a United Nations Public Service Award.



Students participate in a mock trial in honor of Law Day in Kittson County District Court in the Ninth Judicial District.

Tenth Judicial District

Judge Alan Pendleton Receives Outstanding Judge Award



Tenth Judicial District Judge Alan Pendleton

Tenth Judicial District Judge Alan Pendleton was named the recipient of the 2012 Minnesota District Judges Association Outstanding Judge Award for his commitment to improvement in the judicial system and promotion of judicial efficiency. Judge Pendleton began his career on the bench chambered in Sherburne County. He is currently chambered in Anoka County.

The nomination of Judge Pendleton noted that, among other efforts, he designed, coordinated, and obtained funding for the construction of Minnesota's first fully-integrated electronic courtroom, which incorporated a multi-faceted electronic evidence display system. Over the next several years, he conducted public, professional, and school educational tours of the e-courtroom and developed and presented training programs to attorneys and judges on the proper use of an electronic courtroom.

The nomination pointed out that throughout Judge Pendleton's career, he has dedicated countless hours to presenting training seminars for law enforcement, attorneys, and the judiciary.

Judge Pendleton has authored numerous publications and articles covering topics ranging from criminal and trial procedure to evidence and constitutional issues. He edited and published "Anoka County Law Enforcement Training Update," one of Minnesota's largest law enforcement training newsletters, as well as the Minnesota Criminal Elements Handbook. He also co-authored a law school text book on Advanced Criminal Trial Advocacy.

Judge Pendleton created and maintains a bi-weekly judicial training e-mail service entitled "Minnesota Judicial Training Updates." The training updates are designed to be short, concise, and easy-to-read judicial tips covering basic issues that every judge and attorney should know. The updates focus on statutory, case law, criminal, civil, trial, and evidentiary issues. They are distributed to approximately 85 percent of the state's judges, with all new judges being automatically added to the distribution list. Increased demand has the distribution list now including members of the private and public bars, numerous attorney associations, and the University of Minnesota law school.

Judge Bethany Fountain Lindberg Receives Statewide Child Support Award

Tenth Judicial District Judge Bethany Fountain Lindberg was recognized in September 2012 by the Minnesota Family Support and Recovery Council (MFSRC) for her outstanding contributions to the child support community and to the Minnesota Family Support and Recovery Council. She was named as an Honorary Life Member in recognition of her leadership, dedicated service, and

2012 Annual Report

advocacy in the child support area. The award was presented to Judge Fountain Lindberg at MFSRC's Annual Conference.

MFSRC is a multi-disciplinary association of child support and collection professionals. Its mission is promoting the well-being of children and families through the professional development of members, legislative advocacy, public awareness, and collaboration with government and community agencies.

Equal Justice Committee Has Active Year

The Equal Justice Committee (comprised of more than 20 judges, attorneys, and other professionals) met quarterly and communicated frequently throughout the year to maintain awareness of issues of concern and to share information. Several community outreach activities were held. In February 2012, 50 persons from the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe and members of the Committee attended a forum; this was a follow-up to a May 2011 Community Dialogue Session. A group discussion of mutual concerns was held after the "Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Conviction" continuing professional education presentation by attorney Pat Zenner.

The Committee also sponsored an "Ask a Lawyer Day" in Isanti County. Attorneys, child support office staff, and an IRS representative were available to respond to the concerns of about 135 community members in attendance.

An Anoka County "Ask a Lawyer Day" was also held with 15 attorneys, 11 other professionals, and nine Committee members available to respond to concerns expressed by community members.

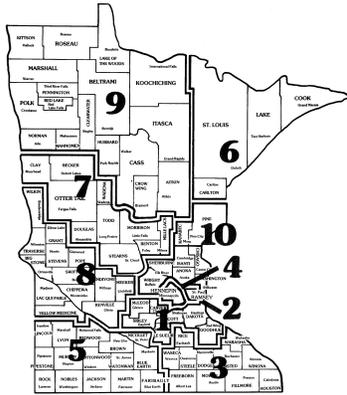


*Tenth Judicial District Judge
Bethany Fountain Lindberg*



Law Day 2012 display at the Washington County Courthouse.

District Courts



289 Judgeships, 10 Judicial Districts

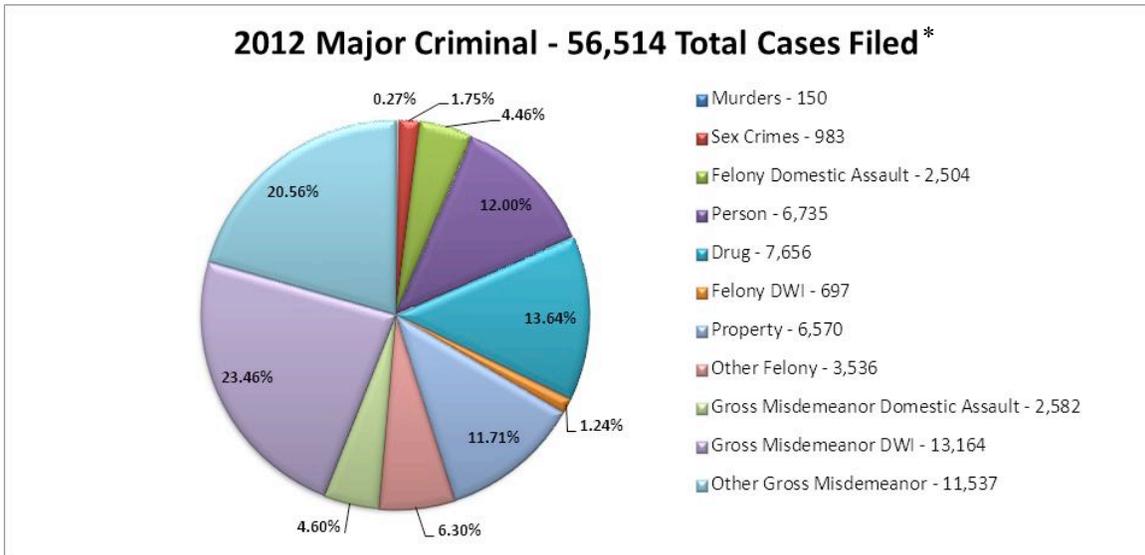
Jurisdiction: Civil Actions, Criminal Cases, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Violations of City Ordinances

Appeals from: Conciliation Court*

Conciliation Division: Civil Disputes up to \$10,000

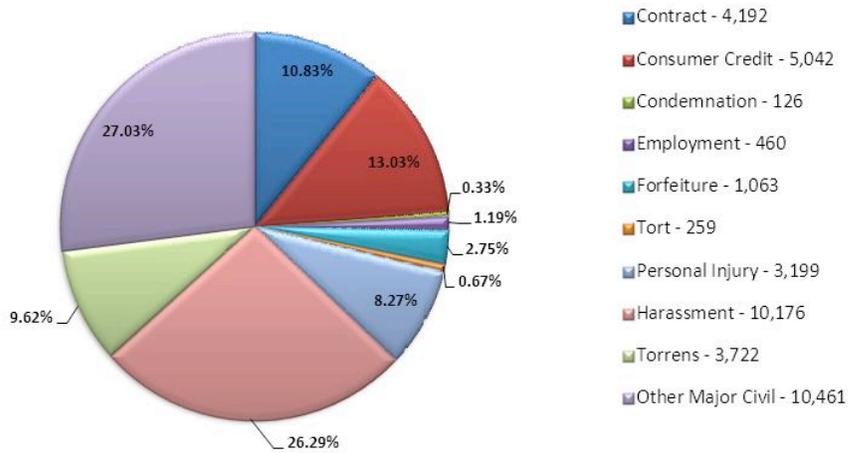
*Called trial de novo - actually a new trial, not just a review of the conciliation court

The district courts handled over 1.4 million cases that entered the judicial system in Minnesota in 2012. For administrative purposes, the district courts are organized into 10 judicial districts with a total of 100 hearing facilities across the state.

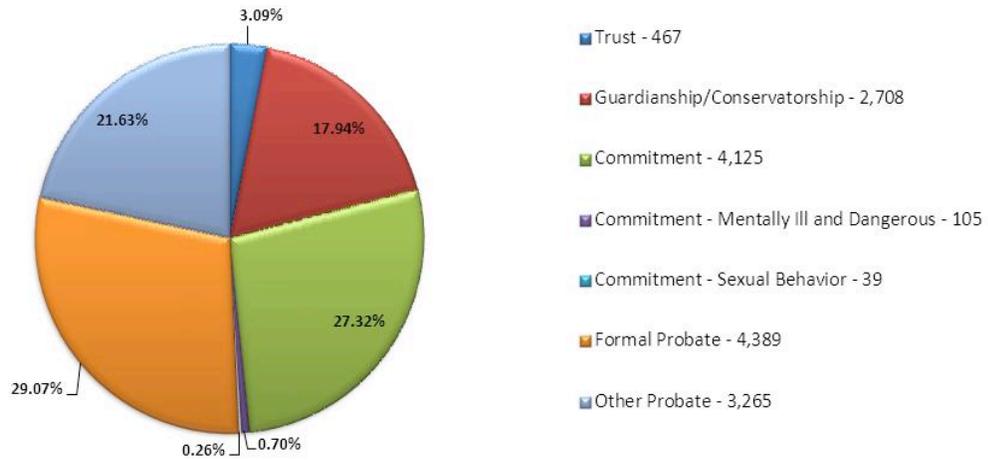


*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

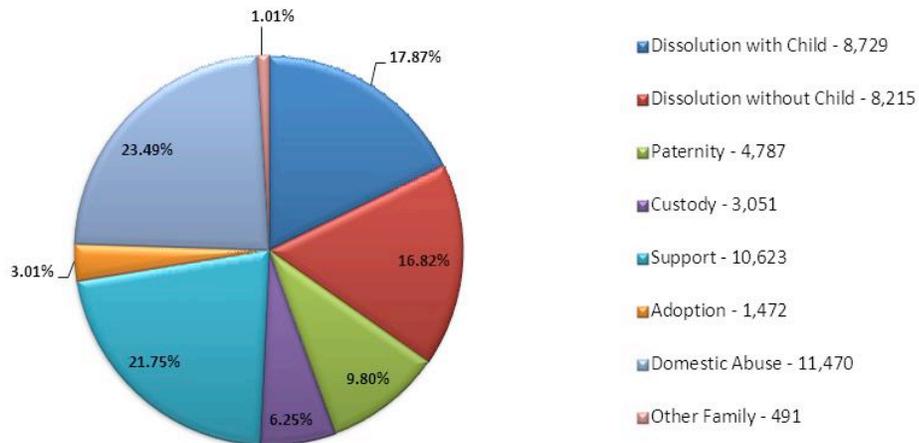
2012 Major Civil - 38,700 Total Cases Filed*



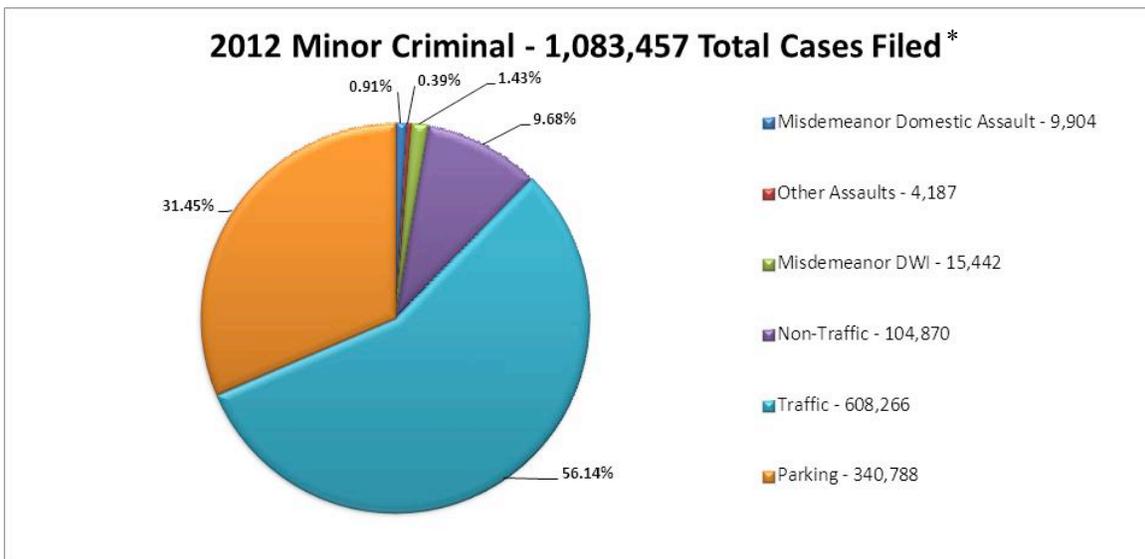
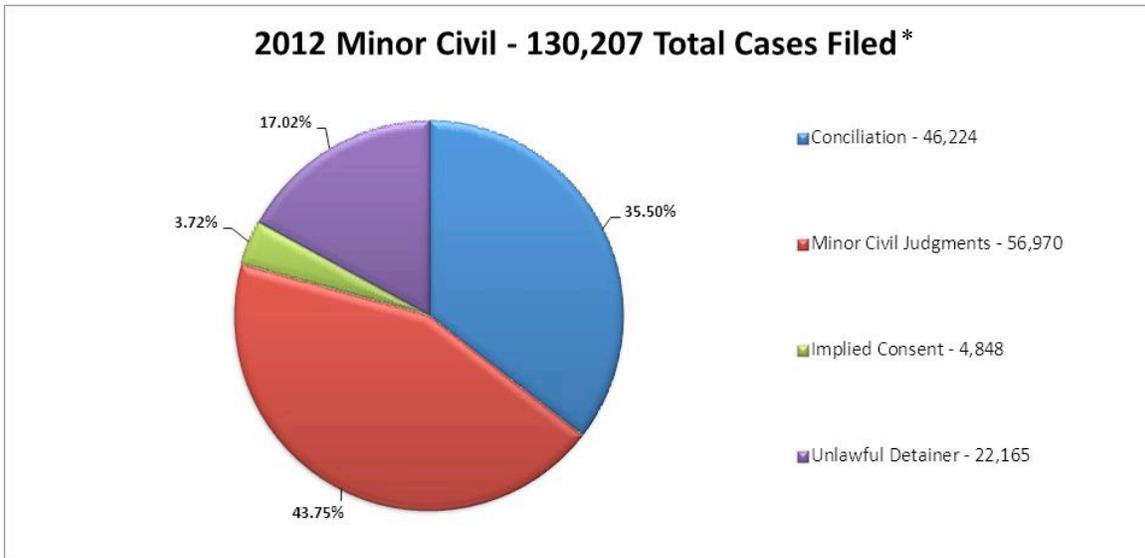
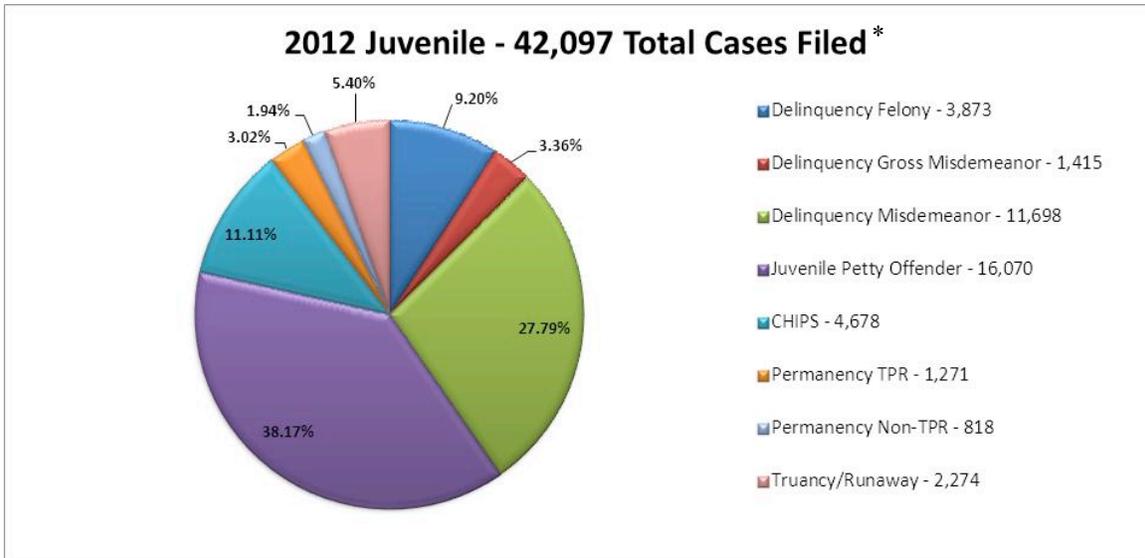
2012 Probate/Mental Health- 15,098 Total Cases Filed*



2012 Family - 48,838 Total Cases Filed*

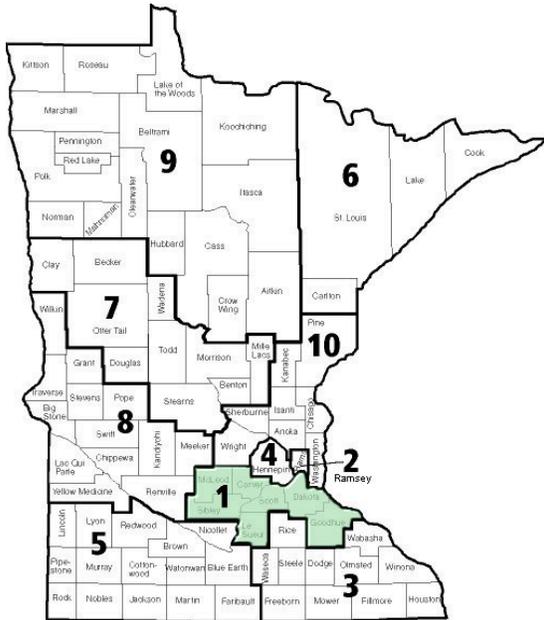


*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

First Judicial District



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

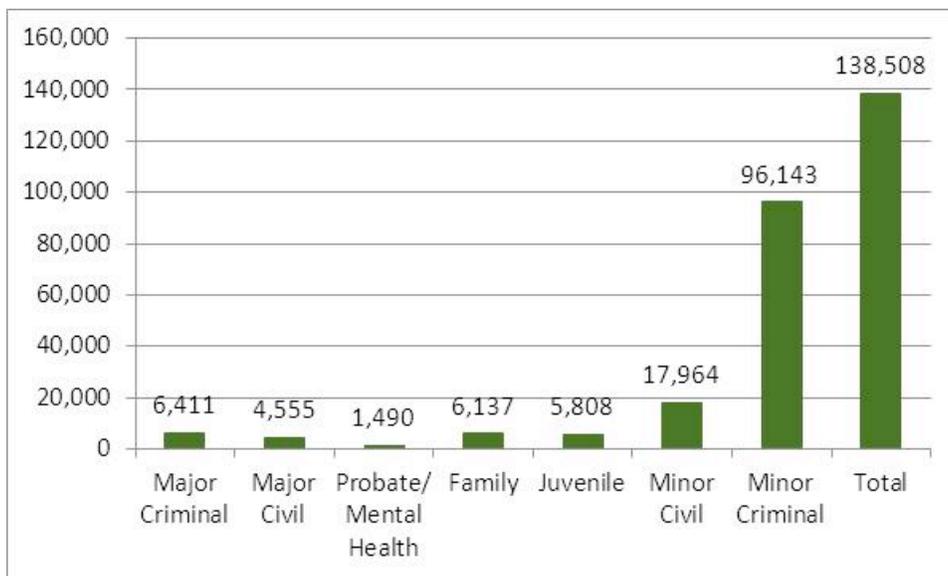
36 Judgeships

Hon. Edward I. Lynch, Chief Judge
Hon. Terrence E. Conkel, Assistant Chief Judge

Gerald Winter, District Administrator

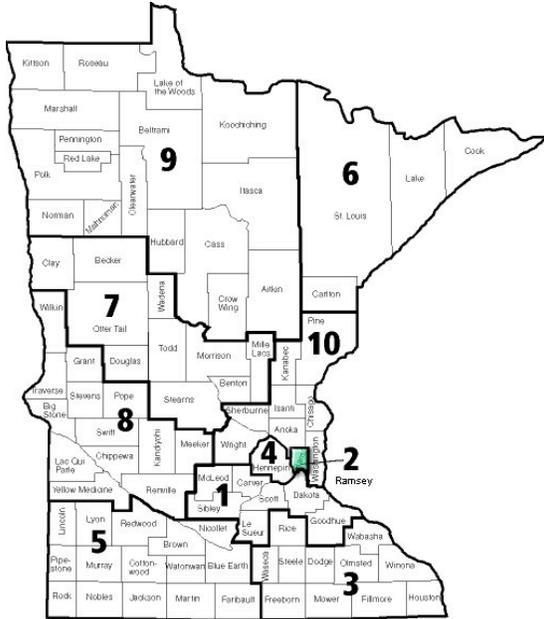
First Judicial District Administration
Dakota County Judicial Center
1560 Highway 55
Hastings, MN 55033

2012 Case Filings for the First Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Second Judicial District



1 County: Ramsey

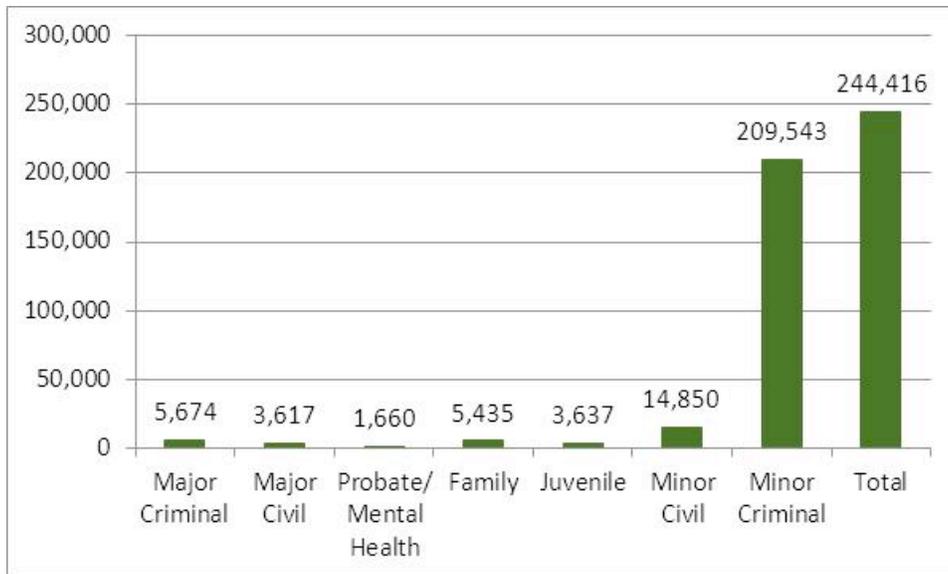
29 Judgeships

Hon. Teresa R. Warner, Chief Judge
 Hon. George T. Stephenson, Assistant Chief Judge

Larry Dease, District Administrator

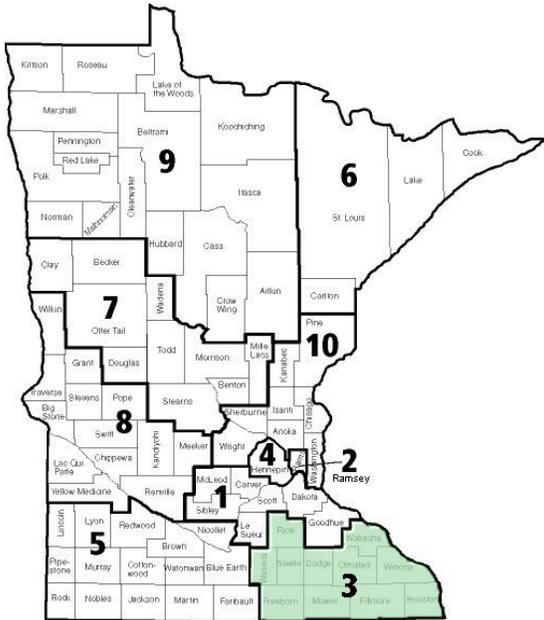
Second Judicial District Administration
 1700 Ramsey County Courthouse
 15 West Kellogg Boulevard
 Saint Paul, MN 55102

2012 Case Filings for the Second Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Third Judicial District



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

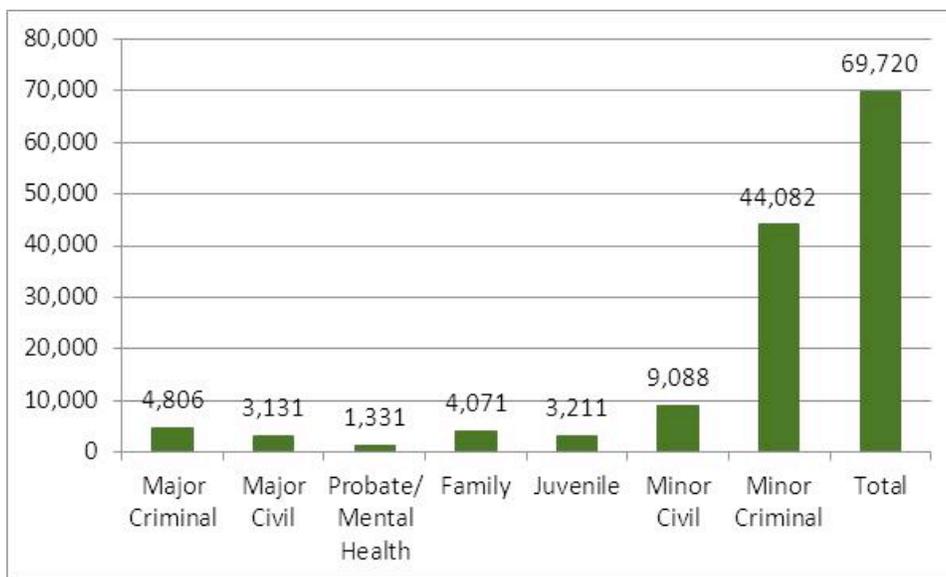
23 Judgeships

Hon. Robert R. Benson, Chief Judge
 Hon. Jeffrey D. Thompson, Assistant Chief Judge

Shelley Ellefson, District Administrator

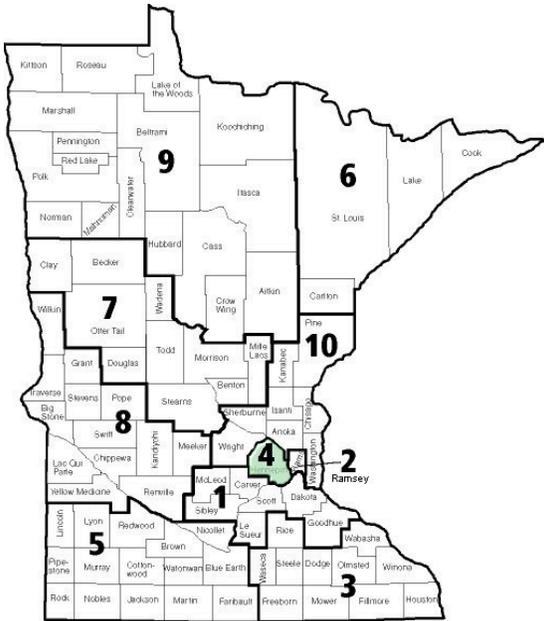
Third Judicial District Administration
 1696 Greenview Drive SW
 Rochester, MN 55902

2012 Case Filings for the Third Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Fourth Judicial District



1 County: Hennepin

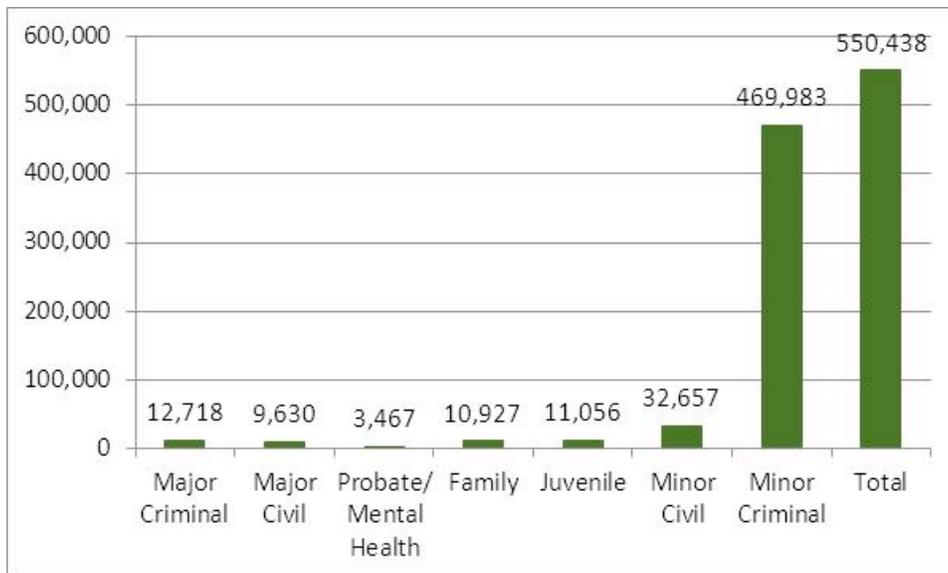
62 Judgeships

Hon. Peter A. Cahill, Chief Judge
 Hon. Ivy S. Bernhardson, Assistant Chief Judge

Mark S. Thompson, District Administrator

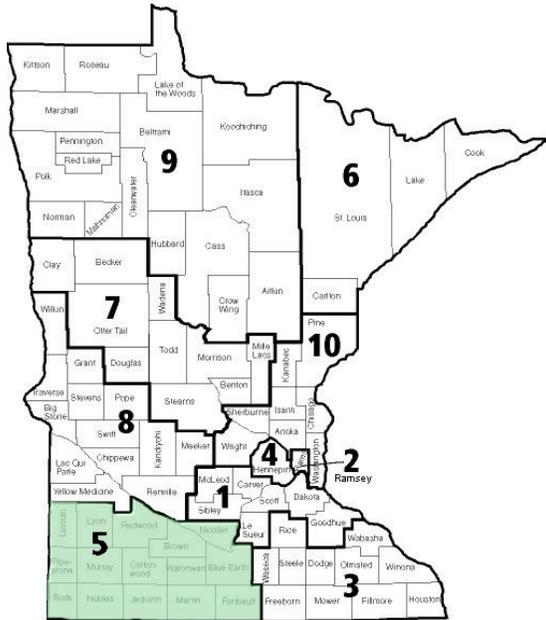
Fourth Judicial District Administration
 12-C Government Center
 300 South Sixth Street
 Minneapolis, MN 55487

2012 Case Filings for the Fourth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Fifth Judicial District



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

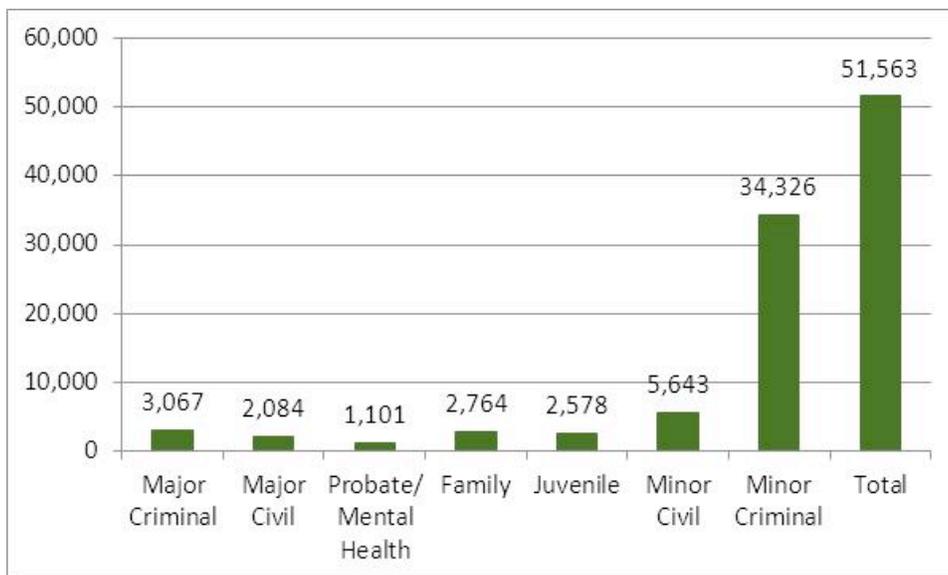
16 Judgeships

Hon. Douglas L. Richards, Chief Judge
 Hon. Bradley C. Walker, Assistant Chief Judge

Richard Fasnacht, District Administrator

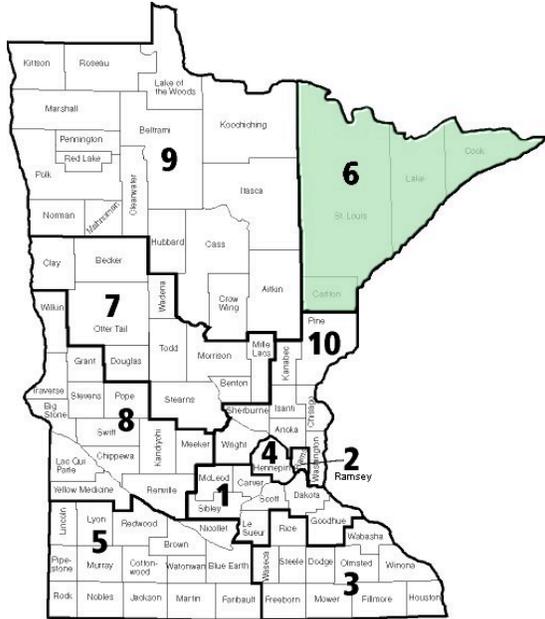
Fifth Judicial District Administration
 11 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 205
 Mankato, MN 56001

2012 Case Filings for the Fifth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Sixth Judicial District



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

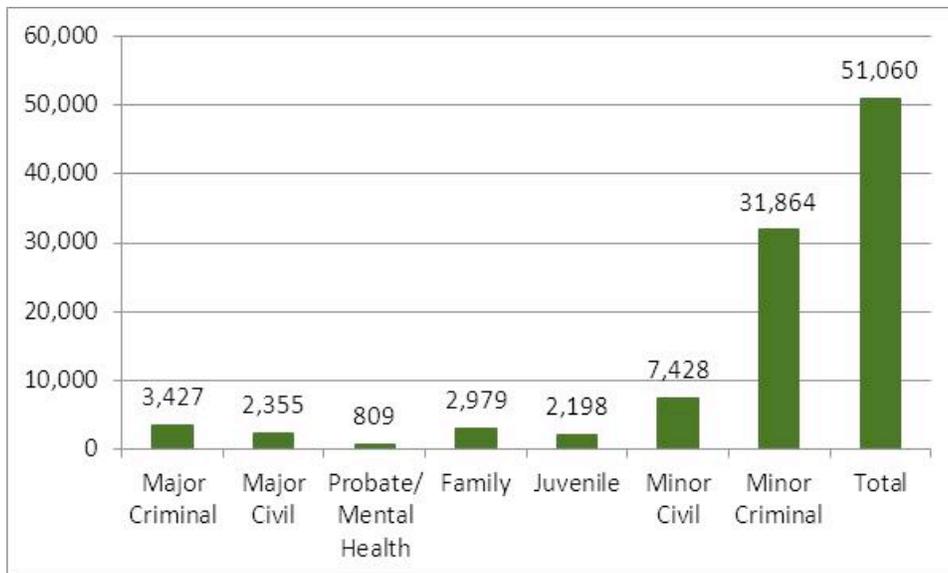
16 Judgeships

Hon. Shaun R. Floerke, Chief Judge
 Hon. Gary J. Pagliaccetti, Assistant Chief Judge

Marieta Johnson, Acting District Administrator

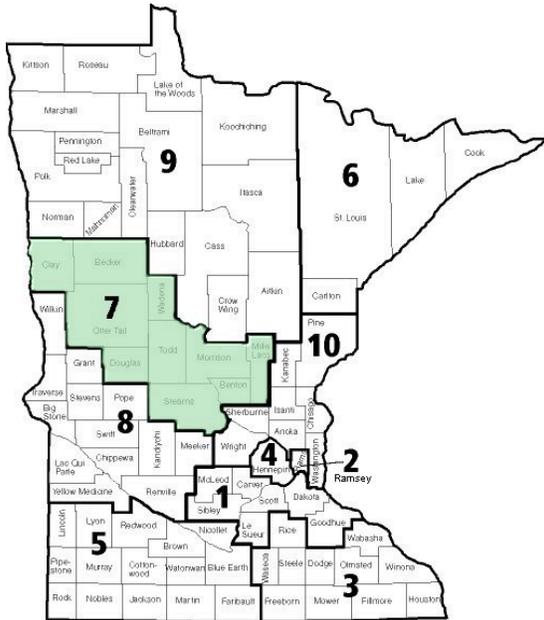
Sixth Judicial District Administration
 St. Louis County Courthouse
 100 North Fifth Avenue West, #139
 Duluth, MN 55802

2012 Case Filings for the Sixth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Seventh Judicial District



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

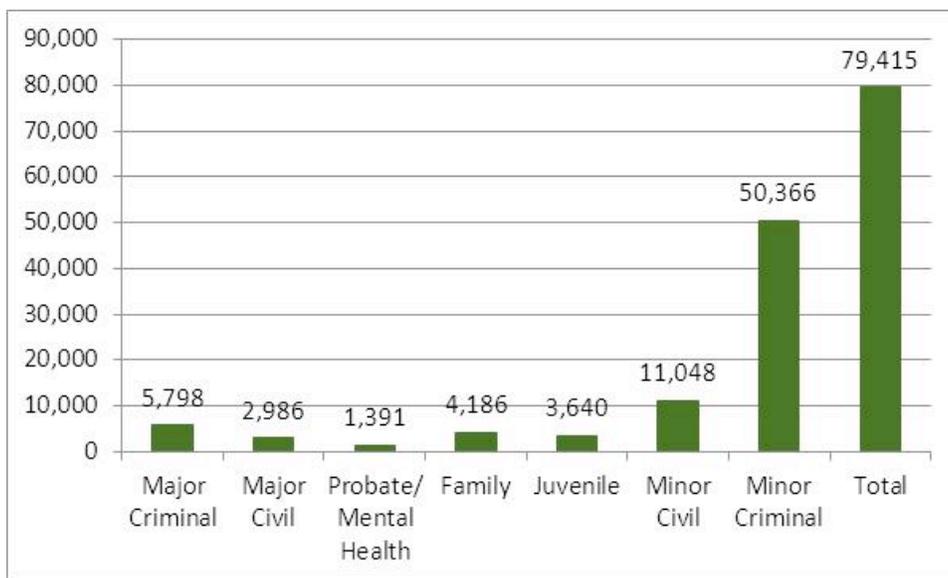
28 Judgeships

Hon. Peter M. Irvine, Chief Judge
 Hon. John H. Scherer, Assistant Chief Judge

Timothy Ostby, District Administrator

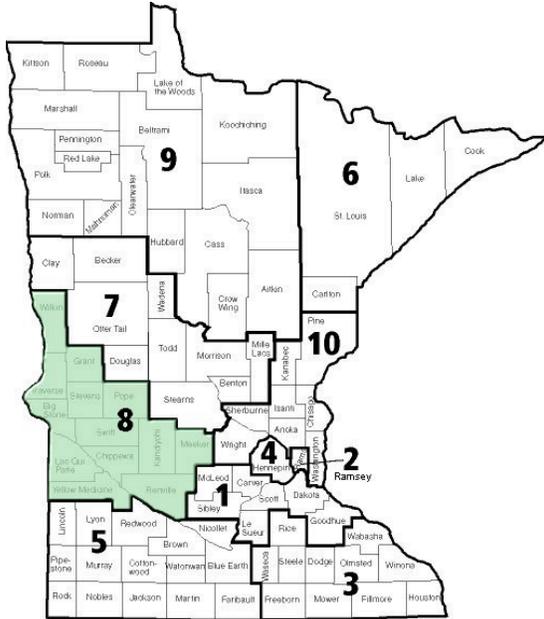
Seventh Judicial District Administration
 Stearns County Courthouse
 725 Courthouse Square #406
 Saint Cloud, MN 56303

2012 Case Filings for the Seventh Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Eighth Judicial District



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

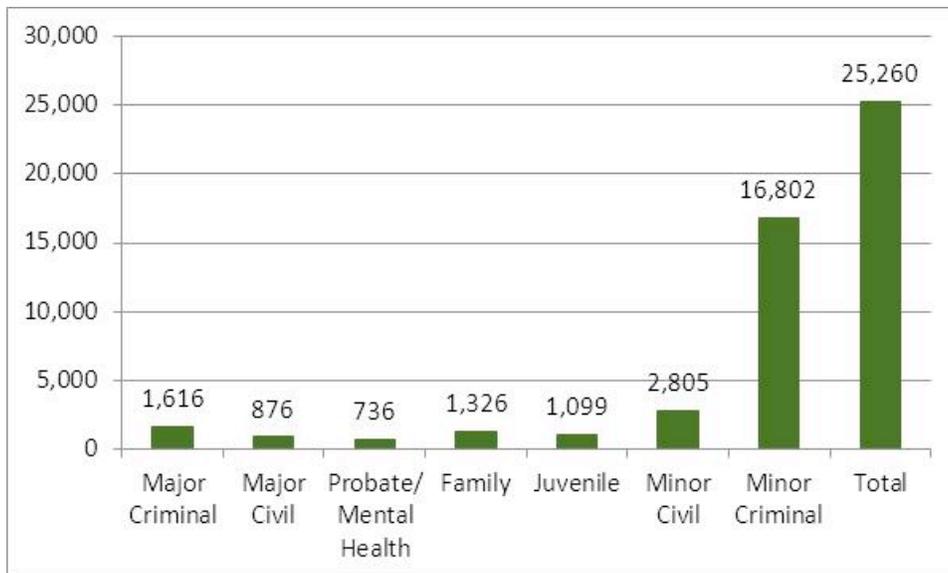
11 Judgeships

Hon. Donald M. Spilseth, Chief Judge
 Hon. Michael J. Thompson, Assistant Chief Judge

Timothy Ostby, District Administrator

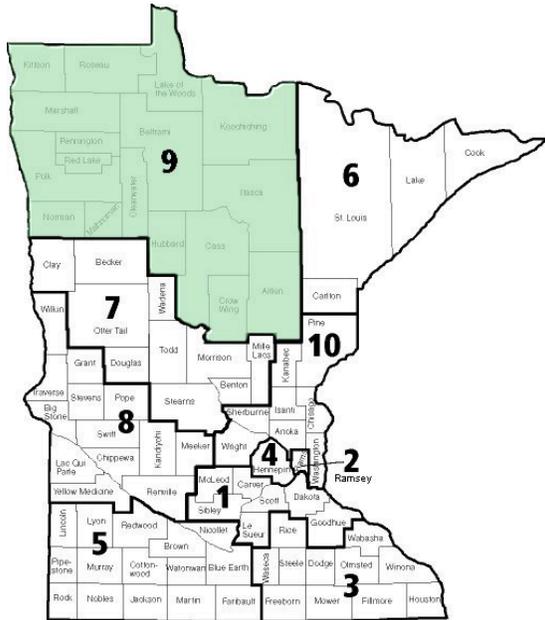
Eighth Judicial District Administration
 Kandiyohi County Courthouse
 505 Becker Avenue SW, Suite 107
 Willmar, MN 56201

2012 Case Filings for the Eighth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

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

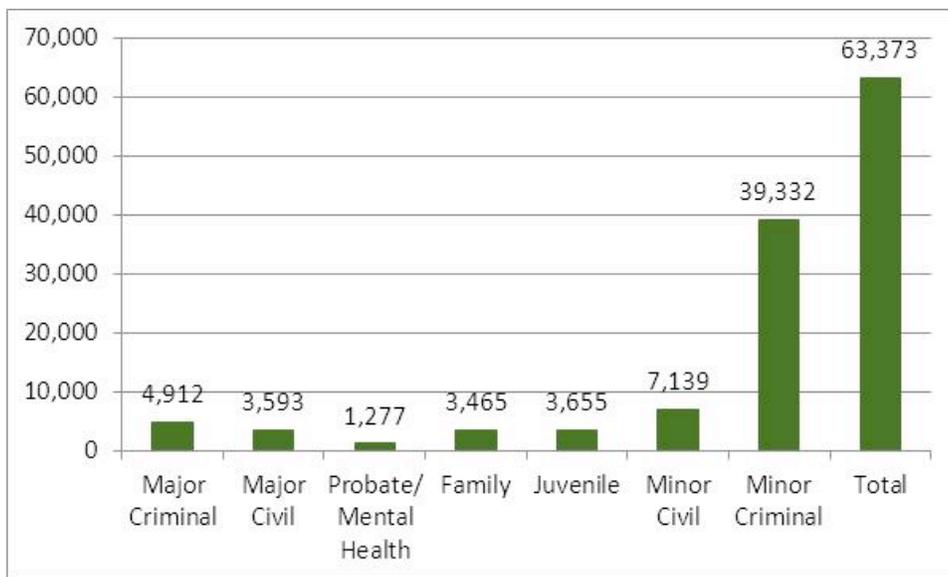
23 Judgeships

Hon. Kurt J. Marben, Chief Judge
 Hon. Paul T. Benshoof, Assistant Chief Judge

Paul Maatz, District Administrator

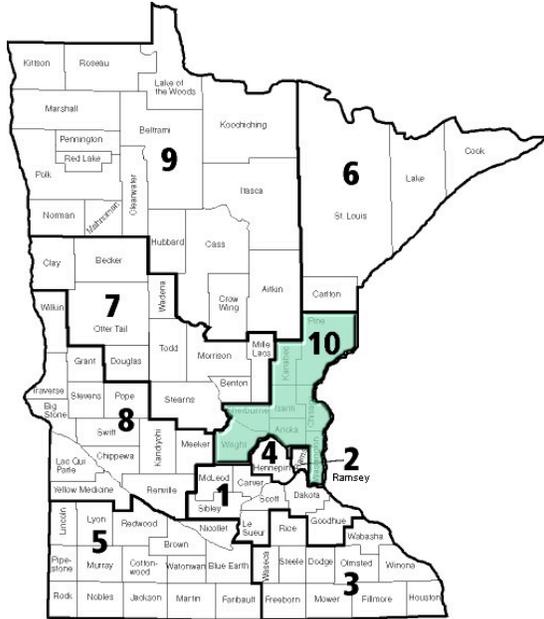
Ninth Judicial District Administration
 Community Services Building
 616 America Avenue NW #250
 Bemidji, MN 56601

2012 Case Filings for the Ninth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

Tenth Judicial District



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

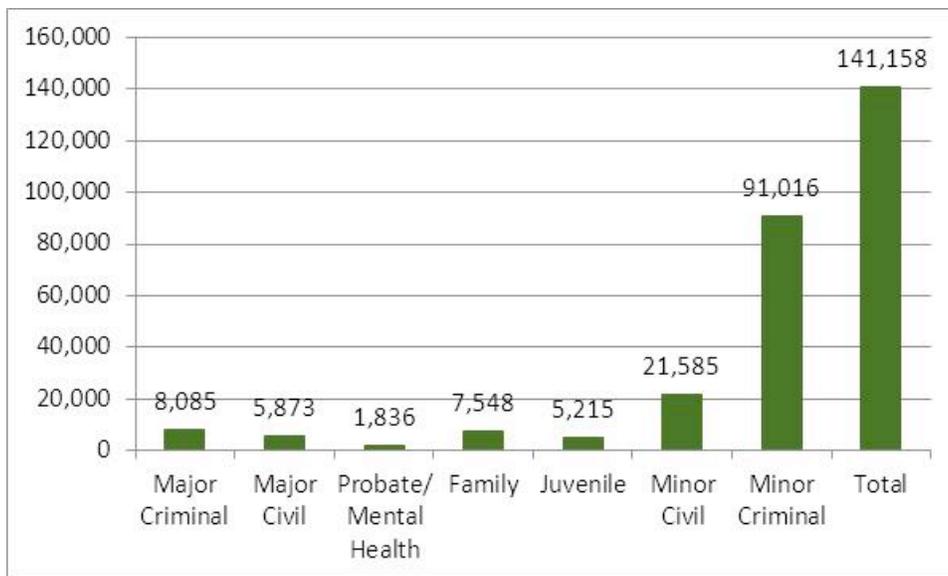
45 Judgeships

Hon. John C. Hoffman, Chief Judge
 Hon. Douglas B. Meslow, Assistant Chief Judge

Michael Moriarity, District Administrator

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

2012 Case Filings for the Tenth Judicial District*



*Data totals for 2012 are preliminary.

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 a certain act or not perform

Chief Judge Matthew Johnson Judge: 2008 - Nov. 2010, Chief Judge: Nov. 2010 - present
Judge Thomas Kalitowski 1987 - present
Judge Roger Klaphake 1989 - June 2012
Judge Randolph Peterson 1990 - present
Judge Jill Flaskamp Hallbrooks 1998 - present
Judge Terri Stoneburner 2000 - present
Judge David Minge 2002 - March 2012
Judge Natalie Hudson 2002 - present
Judge Wilhelmina Wright 2002 - September 2012
Judge Renee Worke 2005 - present
Judge Kevin Ross 2006 - present
Judge Heidi Schellhas 2008 - present
Judge Francis Connolly 2008 - present
Judge Michelle Larkin 2008 - present
Judge Larry Stauber, Jr. 2008 - present
Judge Louise Bjorkman 2008 - present
Judge Edward Cleary December 2011 - present
Judge John Rodenberg February 2012 - present
Judge Margaret Chutich February 2012 - present
Judge Carol Hooten June 2012 - present
Judge Michael Kirk August 2012 - present

2012 Court of Appeals Case Information		
	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	503	554
Criminal	816	774
Administrative Rule	1	1
Economic Security	273	344
Writs - Certiori	66	73
Habeas / Certified Questions	13	14
Commitment	47	51
Family	230	258
Juvenile Delinquency	24	21
Juvenile Protection	53	60
Implied Consent	38	33
Discretionary Review / Writs	71	78
Probate	24	18
Unlawful Detainer / Eviction	53	45
Total	2,212	2,324

Court of Appeals in 2012

The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides citizens with prompt, deliberate review of final decisions of the district courts and some decisions of state agencies and local governments. A decision of the Court of Appeals is the final judicial resolution in approximately 95 percent of the appeals filed in Minnesota courts. The Court is comprised 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.



The makeup of the Court of Appeals underwent considerable change over the year, with the retirement of Judges David Minge and Roger Klaphake and the appointment of Judge Wilhemina Wright to the Supreme Court in October.

Judges John Rodenberg and Margaret Chutich joined the Court in February, Judge Carol Hooten joined the Court in June, and Judge Michael Kirk joined the Court in August.

The year also saw the elimination of case backlogs. The backlog at the Court of Appeals had at one time grown to more than 750 cases (which caused delays of approximately 26 weeks) as judges struggled to keep up with their burgeoning caseload. The addition of three new judges to the court in 2008, and the implementation of temporary case-management initiatives, led to the backlog being reduced to fewer than 100 cases by the end of 2012. The time between the filing of briefs and scheduling of a hearing is now typically between two and four weeks.

The Court continued its transition to electronic case documents in 2012 when it began accepting electronic district court files for cases being appealed from some district courts. Dakota County District Court served as the pilot court for this effort, followed by Ramsey County District Court. Use of electronic district court records – a considerable time-saver for the district court and the Appellate Court Clerk’s Office – will be expanded to all district courts over the next two years.

One of the initiatives undertaken by the Court in recent years, the Family Law Appellate Mediation Program, continued to show positive results in 2012 by helping litigants settle their cases more quickly and at less cost. In the program’s first 24 months of existence, 42 percent of the 179 cases referred for mediation settled without the need for a decision on the merits by the Court.

The Court of Appeals has always been a busy place, with its heavy caseload and legislatively-mandated timeline for case disposition, but 2012 was an especially busy time, as the judges and staff worked to streamline the way appeals are processed and refine alternative approaches to the resolution of appeals.

Supreme Court



7 members, En Banc panel

Appeals from:

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

Original Actions:

- Writs of Prohibition, Writs of Habeas Corpus, Writs of Mandamus
- Election disputes; attorney and judicial discipline

<p>Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea Associate Justice: 2006 - June 2010, Chief Justice: July 2010 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Alan C. Page 1993 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Paul H. Anderson 1994 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson 2004 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Christopher J. Dietzen 2008 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice David R. Stras 2010 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Wilhelmina M. Wright September 2012 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Helen M. Meyer 2002 - August 2012</p>

2012 Supreme Court Case Information		
Direct Appeals		
	Cases Filed	Dispositions
Workers' Compensation	19	15
Civil	16	8
Tax Court	14	10
Attorney/Judge Discipline	54	42
Writs	3	2
First Degree Homicide	29	27
Total Direct Appeals	135	104
Petitions for Further Review (PFR)		
Filed		639
Denied		565
Granted Further Review		64
Other		27
Dispositions		
Affirmed		49
Mixed		11
Remand / Reverse		29
Other Decision / Dismissal		25
Total		114

Supreme Court in 2012

Supreme Court Associate Justice Helen M. Meyer announced in May that she would leave the state's highest court, effective Aug. 10, 2012. Justice Meyer was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2002 by Governor Jesse Ventura and was elected in 2004 and 2010.



*Associate Justice
Helen M. Meyer*

In addition to her regular duties on the Court, Justice Meyer served as chair of both the Supreme Court's Chemical Dependency Task Force and the Minnesota Judicial Council's Workgroup on Legal Representation of Parents in Child Protection Cases. She also served as the Court's liaison to the Judicial Branch's Children's Justice Initiative (CJI), a member of the State Court Administrator's CJI Advisory Committee, and a member of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission.

"Justice Helen Meyer has made a significant and lasting contribution to the administration of justice in Minnesota through her 10 years of dedicated service on the Supreme Court," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. "We will miss her, and we are grateful for the opportunity we had to serve with such an outstanding jurist and a good and kind person. We wish Justice Meyer all the best."



*Associate Justice
Wilhelmina M. Wright*

On August 20, Governor Mark Dayton announced the appointment of Court of Appeals Judge Wilhelmina M. Wright to fill the vacancy left by Judge Helen Meyer's departure. Justice Wright joined the court on September 27, 2012.

Justice Wright served on the Minnesota Court of Appeals from 2002 until her appointment to the Supreme Court. Prior to that, she served as a judge in Ramsey County District Court and as an Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota. In announcing her appointment, Gov. Dayton said, "Judge Wright has proven her exceptional judiciary skills by authoring over 700 opinions during her decade serving on the Minnesota Court of Appeals. I read several of her opinions before making my decision. I was greatly impressed by her exceptional intellect, her written communication skills and, most importantly, her excellent judgment. I believe that she will serve the people of Minnesota with great distinction on our Supreme Court."

Justice Wright earned her Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from Yale College and her Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School, where she was the Executive Editor of the Harvard Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law Review. Justice Wright was elected to the American Law Institute in 2008. She received the Myra Bradwell Award in 2006 from the Minnesota Women Lawyers, the Lena O. Smith Achievement Award from the Black Women Lawyers Network in 2004, the B. Warren Hart Award for Public Service from the Saint Paul Jaycees in 2001, and the Ten Outstanding Young Minnesotans Award in 2000.

State Court Administration

The past year saw a major transition in State Court Administration with the retirement of Sue K. Dosal as State Court Administrator, a position she held for 30 years. “Over three decades and seven chief justices, Sue Dosal has been a steady force in the formation of the judicial system you see today,” said Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. “She guided the 15-year transition to full state funding for our courts, the transition to a statewide and state-of-the-art case management system, the creation of the Court of Appeals, the construction of the Minnesota Judicial Center, and the unification of the court system under one central governing body, the Judicial Council. Sue had a major role in all of these important initiatives, and many more.”



Sue K. Dosal

Kathleen Blatz and Russell Anderson, former Minnesota chief justices, wrote in an earlier tribute to Dosal that, “Sue has been central to the success of every major effort in the court system in Minnesota.”



Jeffrey Shorba

In July 2012, Chief Justice Gildea announced the appointment of Jeffrey Shorba to succeed Dosal. Prior to his appointment, Shorba had served as Deputy State Court Administrator for 10 years. Shorba began his career in the Minnesota Judicial Branch as a law clerk for Chief Justice Peter Popovich. A native of Chanhassen, Minnesota, he received his undergraduate degree from Carleton College and his law degree from Harvard Law School.

“In his 10 years as our Deputy State Court Administrator, Jeff has shown himself to be a superb consensus builder and a skilled manager, two traits critically important to the success of the Judicial Branch’s top administrative officer,” said Chief Justice Gildea in announcing the appointment. “After a nationwide search and selection process, it was clear that Jeff was the best choice for the job.”

Dawn Torgerson was named Deputy State Court Administrator in October 2012. Torgerson, who previously served as Finance Director in the State Court Administrator’s Office, has a master’s degree in public affairs from the University of Wisconsin - Madison, and a bachelor’s degree from the College of Saint Benedict.



Dawn Torgerson

Minnesota Judicial Council

As of December 31, 2012

Hon. Lorie S. Gildea (Chair) <i>Chief Justice, Supreme Court</i>	Hon. Peter M. Irvine <i>Chief Judge, Seventh District</i>
Hon. James B. Florey (Vice-Chair) <i>Judge, Sixth District</i>	Hon. Lisa N. Borgen <i>Judge, Seventh District</i>
Hon. G. Barry Anderson <i>Associate Justice, Supreme Court</i>	Hon. Donald M. Spilseth <i>Chief Judge, Eighth District</i>
Hon. Matthew Johnson <i>Chief Judge, Court of Appeals</i>	Hon. Kurt J. Marben <i>Chief Judge, Ninth District</i>
Hon. Thomas J. Kalitowski <i>Judge, Court of Appeals</i>	Hon. John C. Hoffman <i>Chief Judge, Tenth District</i>
Hon. Edward Lynch <i>Chief Judge, First District</i>	Jeffrey G. Shorba <i>State Court Administrator</i>
Hon. Thomas W. Pugh <i>Judge, First District</i>	Dawn Torgerson <i>Deputy State Court Administrator</i>
Hon. Teresa R. Warner <i>Chief Judge, Second District</i>	Larry Dease <i>District Administrator, Second District</i>
Hon. Robert R. Benson <i>Chief Judge, Third District</i>	Paul Maatz <i>District Administrator, Ninth District</i>
Hon. Peter A. Cahill <i>Chief Judge, Fourth District</i>	Michael Moriarity <i>District Administrator, Tenth District</i>
Hon. Denise D. Reilly <i>Judge, Fourth District</i>	Chuck Kjos <i>Court Administrator, Olmsted County</i>
Hon. Douglas L. Richards <i>Chief Judge, Fifth District</i>	Hon. John P. Smith <i>MDJA President, Ninth District</i>
Hon. Shaun R. Floerke <i>Chief Judge, Sixth District</i>	

Minnesota Judicial District Chief Judges

As of December 31, 2012



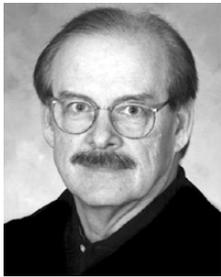
Hon. Kurt J. Marben
9th Judicial District



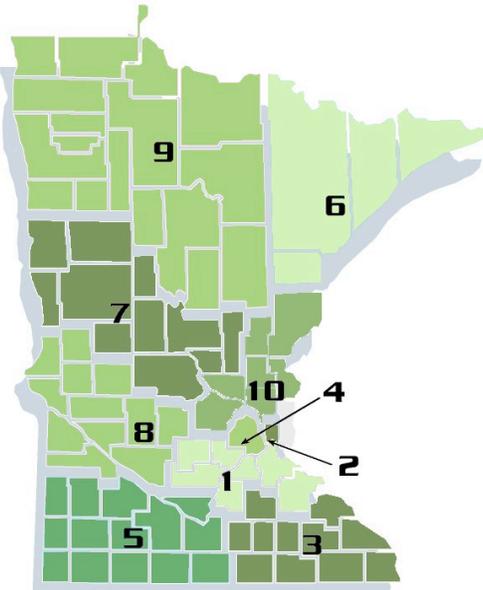
Hon. Shaun R. Floerke
6th Judicial District



Hon. John C. Hoffman
10th Judicial District



Hon. Peter M. Irvine
7th Judicial District



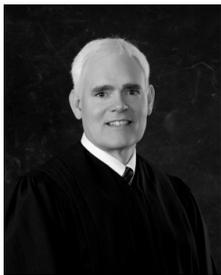
Hon. Teresa R. Warner
2nd Judicial District



Hon. Donald M. Spilseth
8th Judicial District



Hon. Peter A. Cahill
4th Judicial District



Hon. Douglas L. Richards
5th Judicial District



Hon. Edward Lynch
1st Judicial District



Hon. Robert R. Benson
3rd Judicial District



2012 Annual Report to the Community
Produced by the State Court Administrator's Office
March 2013