

# Report to the Community 2022



**MINNESOTA  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

🌐 [mncourts.gov](https://mncourts.gov)

📍 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

# LETTER FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE

Dear fellow Minnesotan:

As our state emerged from a time of crisis related to the pandemic, the Minnesota Judicial Branch focused our efforts on the invaluable lessons we have learned over the past three years to expand access to justice and improve how we serve the people of Minnesota.

Together with our judicial officers, court staff, and justice partners, the Minnesota Judicial Branch moved forward — charting a new course that will transform how we operate and deliver justice today and into the future.

During this past year:

- We adopted and implemented the oneCourtMN Hearing Initiative to make our courts more accessible, convenient, and user-friendly for the people we serve. This includes making remote hearings for specific case types a permanent part of court operations.
- We focused on tackling the pandemic case backlog, prioritizing our time and resources to bring down the backlog of felony and gross misdemeanor cases and ensure timely access to justice for the people of Minnesota.
- We launched a Minnesota Digital Exhibit Management System that allows attorneys and litigants to upload, manage, and share digital exhibits from anywhere, all within a secure server that is only accessible to them and the court. The same system displays digital exhibits during remote and in-person court hearings.
- We focused on creating a quality court workplace and making our courts an employer of choice for current and prospective employees.
- We advanced work to promote equal access to our courts, eliminate disparities, and promote diversity and inclusion in our organization.

The court system in Minnesota is nationally recognized for its professionalism, efficiency, and innovation. Despite a historic workforce shortage, navigating the challenges from the pandemic, and increased demand for online services and support, we have made tremendous progress in our mission to be a more robust, efficient, and accessible court system. Our judges and staff have done remarkable work to expand access to justice and ensure timely resolution of cases for the people of Minnesota. Through their steadfast commitment, innovation, and hard work, the state of the judiciary in Minnesota remains strong and resilient.

Sincerely,  
Lorie S. Gildea  
Chief Justice  
Minnesota Supreme Court



# ANNUAL REPORT

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# THE MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

## Mission

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

## Fiscal Year 22/23 Biennial Budget

District Courts	\$655,118,000
Court of Appeals	\$27,064,000
Supreme Court/State Court Administration	\$86,413,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$768,595,000</b>



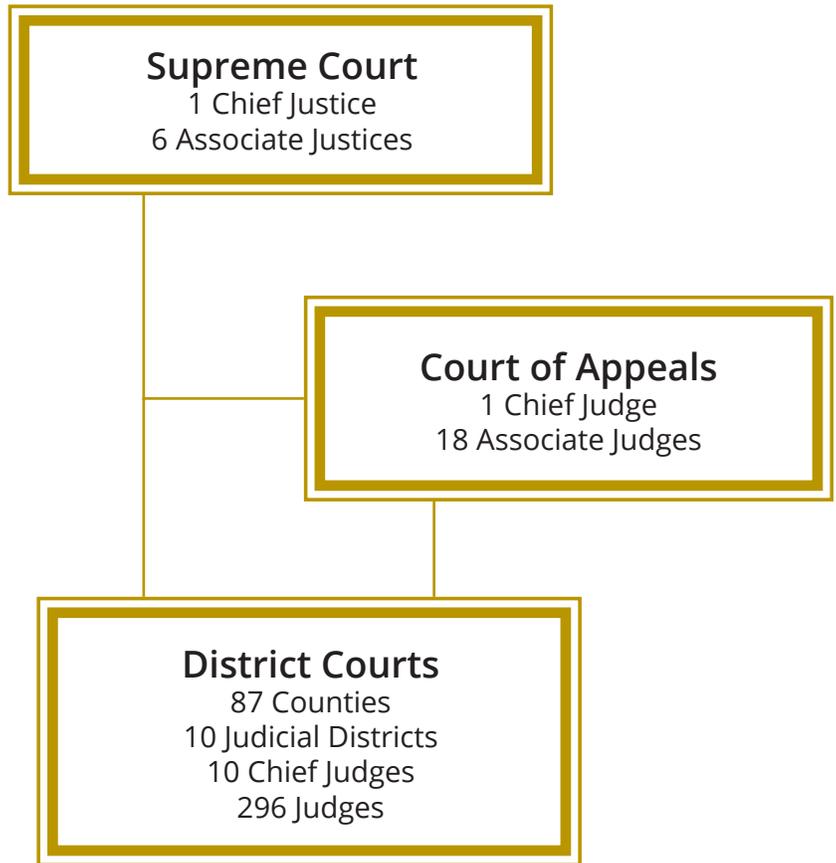
# THE COURTS

There are three levels of court in Minnesota: district courts, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court.

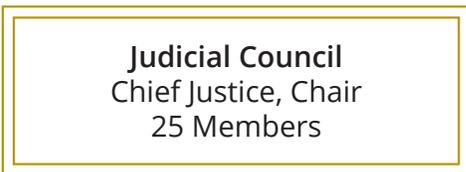
The Chief Justice leads the Supreme Court, which, in addition to resolving the cases that come before the Court, has the responsibility for regulating the practice of law and for the promulgation of statewide rules of procedure and practice for all courts of the state.

There 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.

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.



# ADMINISTRATION



**Governing and administrative policy-making body for the Minnesota Judicial Branch**



**Central Administration:**

**Executive Office**

- Court Information
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Internal Audit
- Legal Counsel
- Strategic Planning & Projects

**Court Services**

- Finance
- Human Resources & Development
- Information Technology

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, which is 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.

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Every two years, the Minnesota Judicial Council directs a comprehensive strategic planning process that defines the Minnesota Judicial Branch’s major goals for the upcoming biennium, and creates an operational roadmap to achieve those goals. The [FY22-23 Strategic Plan](#) sets forth the shared vision, priorities, and purpose that will lead the Minnesota Judicial Branch each biennium.

This biennium, a Strategic Planning Committee, formed by the Minnesota Judicial Council and overseen by the Chief Justice reviewed lessons learned from the pandemic, national and state trends in state courts, and the Judicial Branch’s FY20-21 strategic initiatives and projects underway, including those expected to continue into the next biennium. With a lens on the future of court operations and a quality work environment, the Committee prioritized these guiding principles: be strategic, be nimble, and create a plan in which judicial officers and employees see connections in their day-to-day work.

The Committee identified three focus areas for the FY22-23 Strategic Plan:

1. Identify practices from the pandemic that should be made permanent and prioritize the work that is needed to implement these practices;
2. Complete the strategic initiatives currently underway, such as improving remote hearings, investing in projects with long-term customer service benefits, and supporting quality work environments; and
3. Explore enhanced judicial officer and employee specialization to align and develop more expertise in complex matters currently facing the courts.

The Judicial Council then adopted strategic goals and priorities that support the vision, mission, and core values of the Judicial Branch.

## Access to Justice

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

## Effective Administration of Justice

A justice system that adopts approaches and processes for the fair and just resolution of all cases.

## Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality

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

# ACCESS TO JUSTICE

## Remote hearings are here to stay

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During the pandemic, the Minnesota Judicial Branch reinvented how courts do business and deliver justice. The positive feedback received from using remote hearings during the pandemic spurred an innovative initiative that represents a significant shift in court operations into the future.

The oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative (OHI) is designed to make courts more accessible, convenient, and user-friendly. OHI defines a framework for presumed hearing locations for Criminal and Non-Criminal case types and lays out a plan for the continued use of remote hearings into the future. Under OHI, most civil proceedings in state district courts are conducted remotely, with in-person court proceedings reserved for evidentiary hearings, trials, and jury selection.

The state's 10 judicial districts each established a plan to implement the framework. This local flexibility assists state district courts in addressing the Major Criminal case backlog that grew during the pandemic as efficiently as possible. Once the Judicial Branch's backlog reduction goals have been achieved, the Minnesota Judicial Council will use the lessons learned and experience gained, as well as district-level plans, to refine a statewide approach to using remote hearings for criminal cases.

According to the National Center for State Courts, Minnesota was the first state in the country to codify and make permanent its protocols for the use of remote court proceedings.

## Tackling the pandemic criminal case backlog

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota's courts were forced to take unprecedented steps to limit in-person courthouse activity. While remote hearings allowed the Judicial Branch to address much of the incoming caseload during the pandemic, limited in-person courthouse activity increased pending felony and gross misdemeanor cases in district courts. In November 2021, the Judicial Branch set a goal to reduce the pending caseload to pre-pandemic levels by June 30, 2023. To achieve this goal, district courts must keep pace with all new filings and reduce the Major Criminal case backlog by 20% every four months. In addition, Major Criminal clearance rates are the highest they have ever been since reporting annual performance measures began in 2009. District courts are disposing of more criminal cases compared with a similar pre-pandemic period, and there is little to no backlog statewide in other case types.

## Case resolution events provide efficiency, reduce backlog

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Minnesota's judicial districts continue to develop and refine practices and processes to create more effective, timely, and accessible hearings for court customers. These events provide court customers closure on their cases, enable them to resolve their probation processing, and take advantage of diversion opportunities in a single day.

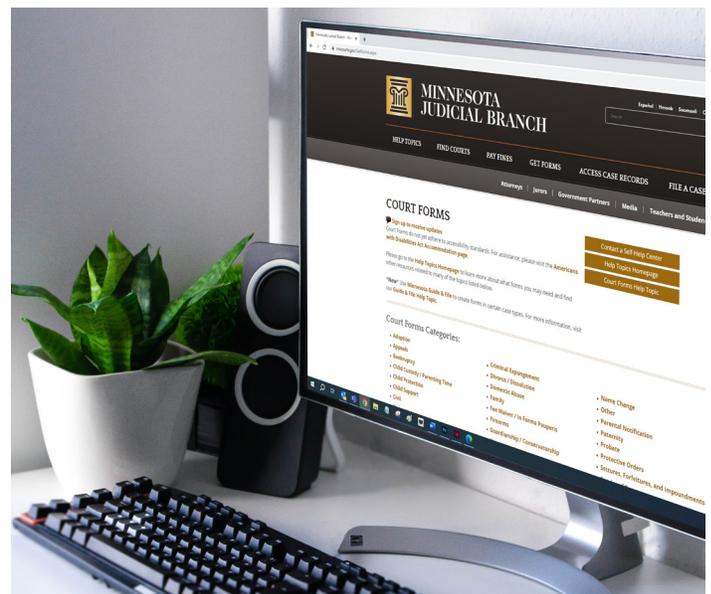
The events require close collaboration with local justice partners. Before an event, the court and attorneys determine which cases will be scheduled. Once a case is scheduled, it is treated as any other court appearance. The court shares the calendar with the county attorney, public defender, and corrections. Before sending out hearing notices, counsel evaluates if cases are appropriate or need a different setting. Two examples of successful events include:

- Washington County held two case resolution days in 2022, resolving a total of 189 cases. Based on this success, the court began planning an event specifically focused on gross misdemeanors and eligible felony offenses that have been pending for more than a year.
- Carlton County held a Stand Down event focused on gross misdemeanors and how each hearing would be resolved: a plea on the record, case dismissal, or trial. The limited options helped streamline the process and allowed the court to move through hearings more quickly. The court scheduled 77 cases between two judges. Of those cases, 21 moved to sentencing or were dismissed. The court also experienced increased case resolutions and pleas weeks before the event.

## New resources support self-represented litigants

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The Self-Represented Litigant Program updated its [Civil](#) and [Family](#) trial booklets in 2022 to provide more support for self-represented litigants. The updates include additional links and referrals to helpful information and resources, and improvements for plain language and digital accessibility. In addition, the Family trial booklet was revised to be applicable statewide, and a new [Conciliation Court booklet](#) provides detailed information specifically for hearings in Conciliation Court. The materials are available on the [Court Forms](#) page of the Minnesota Judicial Branch website.



# Legal Paraprofessional Pilot Project expands civil legal representation

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The Legal Paraprofessional Pilot Project Interim Report and Recommendations to the Minnesota Supreme Court, which was issued by a standing committee in late 2021, led to several refinements in the ongoing Project in 2022.

The Report included the results of a survey of legal paraprofessionals and supervising attorneys. The Report noted, among other things, that:

- About half of the clients served would have been unrepresented without the assistance of a legal paraprofessional, and a little more than half of the paraprofessionals charged clients for their services.
- The legal paraprofessionals who responded to the survey believe that the Pilot Project provides individuals who cannot afford an attorney with quality alternative legal services, which provides access to justice for more Minnesotans. The legal paraprofessionals requested more education on effective courtroom representation and practices.
- Supervising attorneys found the legal paraprofessionals to be “careful, serious, and excellent.” They did not have complaints about the legal paraprofessionals’ performance in court or management of cases.

In its report, the committee stated that the Pilot Project has demonstrated that legal paraprofessionals can provide quality services to parties in family and housing cases. The committee also made recommendations for additional advice and representation that could be provided by legal paraprofessionals, as well as training and education requirements for them.

In October 2022, the Minnesota Supreme Court issued an order promulgating amendments to the Supervised Practice Rules that govern the Legal Paraprofessional Pilot Project. Legal paraprofessionals on the roster can now provide advice and representation in some family law cases involving allegations of domestic abuse or child abuse, and also provide advice and representation for petitioners in some order for protection and harassment restraining order cases. The Supreme Court also concluded that the training requirements proposal and the additional recommendations made by the standing committee are sufficient for the Project to protect clients and the public. The Court ordered the committee to file additional interim reports about the Pilot Project in March 2023 and January 2024.

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion prioritized

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The Minnesota Judicial Branch continues to promote a quality court workplace for judicial officers and employees by fostering a collaborative culture valuing diversity, equity, inclusion, and development. In addition, it maximizes use of practices, tools, and techniques that eliminate bias to make equality under the law an enduring reality for all.

The 2022 Court Business Conference featured an interactive session entitled “The Three Es of Employee Retention” that provided supervisors with tips and tools to support employee retention by engaging and empowering their employees.

The MN Judicial Council's Committee for Equality and Justice continued to advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the courts in 2022.

The Committee started off the year with a Talent Strategy and Management presentation by the State Court Administrator's Human Resources and Development Division. The presentation focused on attracting, recruiting, and retaining staff by building intentional relationships with schools, highlighting Minnesota Judicial Branch jobs at virtual career fairs, and developing tools and resources to empower supervisors to create a positive, welcoming, and engaging culture to retain all employees. The Committee then focused on developing its biennium strategic plan and outlined meaningful priorities to work on through each of its subcommittees. Key initiatives accomplished in 2022 included:

- The Access and Fairness Subcommittee presented a Probation Revocations and Recommendations Report to district benches and Equal Justice committees throughout the state. The report examined the processes used in local probation revocation studies to determine whether they could be replicated by other districts; it also made recommendations for consideration by local Equal Justice committees. The Subcommittee also updated the Race Bias Task Force Grid, "2020-2021 Jury Race Data and Recommendations," which reviews the race data of those called for jury service, and makes recommendations on closing identified gaps and encouraging people to serve as jurors. Finally, the Subcommittee distributed information to the judicial districts about jury outreach, including jury race data study findings, recommendations for the State Court Administrator's Office, and strategies for the Equal Justice committees.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Education Subcommittee presented at the annual Minnesota District Judges Foundation (MDJF) Conference, the Annual Conference of Judges, and employee education events and programs. Presentations included: "Juneteenth-the History," "The Inclusive

Leader: Taking Intentional Action for Justice and Equality," and "Federal Fair Housing Law in State Courts: Understanding Policy Goals and Local Impacts."

- The Community Outreach Subcommittee held "Clear the Docket" days for warrant forgiveness and license reinstatement, and began drafting a community dialogue toolkit.
- The Civil Justice Subcommittee expanded a successful Twin Cities metropolitan area housing court model to other courts in Minnesota in collaboration with civil legal aid, conducted pro bono recognition and outreach in each judicial district, and researched the transportation and technology best practices of courts around the state and country in overcoming barriers to low-income people attending court hearings.

The Equal Justice committees in each judicial district also focused on a variety of measures in 2022, including:

- Holding local training to address equity and diversity knowledge gaps.
- Participating in school events to highlight judicial career pathways.
- Holding mock trials.
- Holding community conversations regarding jury education.
- Partnering with local courts on cultural spotlights.

# EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

## Technology leveraged for digital exhibit management

A new web-based application launched in 2022 puts court customers and attorneys in control of managing their digital exhibits. The Minnesota Digital Exhibit System (MNDES) provides a secure tool for uploading digital exhibits and then accessing and reviewing them without visiting a courthouse or relying on court staff.

MNDES accommodates most modern evidence formats, including audio and video files, images, and documents. The exhibits are stored in a secure platform and are not directly accessible by or visible to the public. The benefits to external court users, judges, and court staff, include:

- Attorneys and self-represented litigants can upload and manage their exhibits from anywhere, and can view and share them with anyone with an email address or smartphone.
- Parties can display exhibits during remote and in-person court hearings.
- Court clerks can manage exhibits virtually.
- Judges can access exhibits and make notes as needed within the platform.
- Courts can use chain-of-custody tracking and other features to manage exhibits securely.

## Electronic filings improve accuracy, efficiency, and security of court documents in juvenile proceedings and fees

Electronic filing of juvenile petitions is improving the accuracy of juvenile court records, reducing manual entry for court staff, and ensuring secure transmission of data and documents containing nonpublic juvenile case information between agencies.

The Juvenile ePetition application was created by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) in 2022 to allow prosecutors to electronically file petitions for Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Traffic, Juvenile Petty Offenses, and Juvenile Extradition cases into the Judicial Branch case management system.

The new standardized process allows prosecutors to electronically file juvenile petitions that are functionally like the eCharging process for adult criminal complaints. However, there is no judicial officer signature requirement for petitions, so the filings are submitted directly by prosecutors.

The Juvenile ePetition was first rolled out as a pilot project in Blue Earth, Crow Wing, Dakota, Stearns, Swift, and Washington counties. It was then implemented in 12 additional counties: Chippewa, Grant, Jackson, Kittson, Le Sueur, Norman, Red Lake, Wabasha, Lincoln, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, and Lake of the Woods. Statewide implementation is anticipated to be complete in 2023.

## Court customers provided with more flexibility and payment options

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The Court Payment Center (CPC) made it easier and more convenient for court customers to pay their fines and fees through new and expanded payment options in 2022:

- **Simplified payment plan:** A simplified payment plan is now available for eligible payment citations. The first \$50 payment and signed Admission of Guilt, Waiver of Rights, and Payment Plan Agreement form is due within 30 days from the date the defendant requests the payment plan. Individuals will pay \$50 per month until their fine is paid in full, regardless of the amount they owe.
- **Electronic proof of insurance:** Court customers, charged by payable citation, can now submit their proof of insurance electronically using the Pay Fines web page. Previously, court customers who needed to provide proof of insurance, in response to a No Proof of Insurance or No Insurance charge, had to do so via fax, U.S. mail, or in person at a courthouse in order to have their charge administratively dismissed
- **Partial payment plans:** Court customers who find it cost prohibitive to pay the total amount owed on their adult criminal cases can now make partial payments using the CPC's phone and web payment systems.
- **Online payment plan application:** A new online application process allows court customers to apply for a payment plan consisting of \$50 monthly payments on adult criminal, non-mandatory (VB) cases. A streamlined payment plan fulfillment process allows court customers to request a payment plan without the need to return any additional paperwork or mail in a payment. After the customer completes the online payment plan application, they receive an email with either a Payment Plan

Summary outlining their payment terms or a Notice of Payment Plan Ineligibility with details about why they were determined to be ineligible for a payment plan.

## Redesign results in clear and concise adult sentencing orders

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A project to redesign the Judicial Branch sentencing order in 2022 has resulted in a clear and concise order that accurately reflects judges' sentencing decisions. The previous version of the sentencing order was lengthy, repetitive, and confusing for defendants, court staff, the public, and justice partners. The confusion was even more significant when the sentencing order was used for amended orders resulting from probation violation hearings, which often added additional conditions to previously imposed conditions. Since its implementation, there has been an increase in the number of cases using the new adult sentencing order. Work now shifts to developing a new juvenile disposition and amended juvenile disposition order. Statewide implementation of those redesigned orders is targeted for summer 2023.

## Improving outcomes through restorative justice

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The Scott County Veterans Court, which serves adult veterans (both active and former) who are charged with an offense driven by chemical and/or mental health issues, became Minnesota's 70th approved operational treatment court in 2022. The program can serve 20 participants. Participants must be experiencing a chemical and/or mental health issue to enter the program, with preference given to those with a nexus between military service and conduct surrounding the referred offense. The program was initially launched through a Bureau of Justice Assistance Implementation Grant.

## **New forms developed for juvenile protection cases**

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The Minnesota Judicial Branch developed several new resources in 2022 in anticipation of a change in state law that requires the appointment of attorneys to parents, guardians, and custodians who request and financially qualify for one before the first hearing and at all stages of the proceedings. These resources include a statewide forms packet in English, Spanish, and Somali for parents to apply for a court-appointed attorney, and a more consistent application process. The packet and process will help ensure district courts receive requests from parents with the information needed to determine financial eligibility so that courts issue timely appointment orders.

Parents, guardians, and custodians can download the forms from the Judicial Branch website or use Guide & File to complete them. Guide & File allows unrepresented parents, guardians, and custodians to apply for a court-appointed attorney. Parents are provided with their completed affidavits and instructions explaining what happens after they eFile their forms, or how to file their forms if not within Guide & File.

## **Improving decorum in online hearings**

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While many positive benefits have resulted remote court hearings, they are not without their challenges. One issue is the loss of decorum when court proceedings are not in person. To help improve remote hearing decorum, the Minnesota Judicial Branch released a Preparing for Your Remote Hearing video and written guide. Both resources provide information on how hearing participants can prepare for their hearings by familiarizing themselves with their cases, testing their technology, minimizing background distractions, and other helpful tips.

## **Children's Justice Initiative releases updated video on child protection proceedings**

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The Children's Justice Initiative released an updated orientation video in 2022 that provides a comprehensive overview of child protection proceedings. "In the Best Interests of Your Child" helps parents with a child involved in a child protection proceeding better understand and be prepared for what will happen in their case — before, during, and after the initial hearing. The updated video is offered in five languages: English, Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Spanish. The video:

- Emphasizes that the child's best interests are at stake, and timely resolution of the problems causing risk of harm to the child is essential to healthy development.
- Explains a parent's legal rights and responsibilities.
- Explains how the juvenile court process may affect the parent and the child.
- Identifies the people involved in a child protection case and their roles in the courtroom.
- Describes the juvenile court process, including the types of hearings a parent may be required to attend, what happens at a typical hearing, and what happens after a hearing.

## **New bail bond program database saves time and money**

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A new bail bond program database launched in 2022 now allows agents, agencies, and sureties to electronically submit applications, update contact information, and renew applications. Previously, the Judicial Branch conducted these approvals through a combination paper and manual processes, including email, spreadsheets, and an SQL database. Implementing the new database provided immediate benefits for both court users and the courts, including faster processing and approval for bail bond applications. It also allows the Judicial Branch to provide real-time feedback to applicants about the status of their applications, and to track and follow up on incomplete applications. The Statewide List of Approved Bail Bond Agents remains publicly available on the Judicial Branch website.

## **New Juvenile Protection Performance Dashboard launched**

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The Judicial Branch developed new and updated internal data tracking tools for cases involving Children in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) in 2022. The Juvenile Protection Performance Dashboard displays information on two critical measures connected to the core performance goal of Timeliness: Length of Time to Permanency and Length of Time to Adoption. The Dashboard also shows Current Out-of-Home Placements as a tool to manage future performance on those two measures. The Dashboard, updated weekly, can be used by judges, administrators, and all other court staff to help assess the timeliness of permanency decisions.

## **New Rule 20 order forms improve usability and accuracy, reduce costs**

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Feedback received by the Judicial Branch on the Psych Examiner Services Judicial Workgroup's Final Report in 2021 resulted in substantive changes to the Rule 20 forms in 2022. The feedback helped produce clearer, more usable, and accurate forms that may eliminate unnecessary examinations and reduce costs. Substantive changes to the Rule 20 form orders include:

- The Rule 20.01 order now references the defendant's ability to consult rationally with counsel.
- The Rule 20.01 and Rule 20.02 orders have been revised to delegate the decision on whether an inpatient exam is needed to the court-appointed examiner, in consultation with the Minnesota Department of Human Services Forensic Coordinator. All judicial findings related to this issue have been removed and the order has been restructured to reflect the new process. The updated orders clarify the difference between inpatient exams and in-custody exams that as outpatient procedures; they also ensure that inpatient exams are performed only when necessary.
- An optional checkbox has been added to the Rule 20.02 form for a judge to direct when the court-appointed examiner shall not proceed with conducting an examination if the examiner concludes the defendant is incompetent to proceed under Rule 20.01. This is intended to help eliminate unnecessary examinations and related costs.

# PUBLIC TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## Minnesota Court Records Online recognized for achieving excellence in access and transparency

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The Minnesota Judicial Branch fully implemented Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO) in 2022. This ground-breaking application allows the public to search for and retrieve publicly accessible court documents without going to a court facility. The MCRO Development and Business Team received the 2022 President's Award from the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA) for its achievements in increasing access, transparency, and convenience.

## Improving how the state serves individuals with mental illness

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The Judicial Branch partnered in 2022 with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to hold the Summit on Improving the Court and Community Response to Individuals with Mental Illness in Minnesota. The Summit brought together 125 state and community leaders from across the state to address the increasing demand for mental health services in the state, and the rising number of individuals facing mental health issues who are entering the criminal justice system. A locally-selected team of community stakeholders from all 10 judicial districts worked with state and national experts to develop action plans to implement key tenets of the Sequential Intercept Model within their districts.

## Achieving better outcomes for American Indian children and families

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The Children's Justice Initiative held its second Indian Child Welfare Act Courts Summit in 2022. The event was designed to enhance understanding and achieve full implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act in each of Minnesota's seven ICWA Court jurisdictions and juvenile courts across the state. Summit sessions included:

- A panel of Native American former foster care youth, who aged out of foster care without permanent families, shared their experiences about how the child protection system can be improved for Native American children and youth who often are separated from their families, their tribes, and their cultural teachings.
- Washington Supreme Court Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis discussed how keeping Native American families and communities together can keep families and children connected with their tribes and reduce generational trauma.
- Presenters from the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation discussed how substance use disorders impact families, and how delivering services to an identified substance user and children within that family could bring families together through healing.
- Presenters from the National Native Children's Trauma Center shared how trauma-informed policy and practice support effective and healing casework for children and families moving through the child welfare system.

## New documentary highlights Minnesota's mental health courts

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The Sixth Judicial District's South St. Louis County Mental Health Court partnered with Blue Forest Films of Duluth in 2022 to produce a short documentary highlighting the vital work of the state's mental health treatment courts. *Mental Health Court: Community Restoration* was developed to increase public awareness about these important programs, and improve trust and confidence in the courts and criminal justice system.



## Providing high-quality customer service for online court applications

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As the Judicial Branch launches more online tools to improve how it serves the public, it is also providing easy and accessible statewide customer service for users of those applications. The new External Application Support Team (EAST) is a convenient, one-stop shop. EAST provides telephone support to users of the new Minnesota Digital Exhibit System and Minnesota Court Records Online. In the future, EAST will also offer customer support for MyMNGuardian and to users of the Statewide Check-In application.

## Protecting people subject to guardianship or conservatorship

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The Judicial Branch launched a new process in 2022 to allow individuals to report concerns or complaints about court-appointed guardians and conservators. The new Conservatorship and Guardianship Complaint Process was established through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services – Administration for Community Living and is part of a broader effort to ensure that people subject to guardianship or conservatorship in Minnesota are adequately protected and well cared for.

## Access and Fairness Survey for appellate courts conducted

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The Minnesota Supreme Court and Court of Appeals conducted an Access and Fairness Survey in June 2022 designed to gather opinions from attorneys and district court judges about the accessibility, affordability, and openness of Minnesota's two appellate courts, including perspectives on the fairness and equity of the courts' proceedings and decisions. The last Access and Fairness Survey for the appellate courts was in 2015.

Links to the Survey were emailed to all attorneys registered in the Minnesota appellate courts' case management system.

The appellate courts will use the Survey results in the strategic planning process as they continue to seek ways to increase access to justice and improve the performance of Minnesota's courts.

## Sharing and learning at the Great Minnesota Get-Together

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More than 100 judicial officers and staff volunteered their time to represent the Minnesota Judicial Branch and visit with more than 20,000 fairgoers during the 2022 Minnesota State Fair. Volunteers talked with fairgoers and answered questions on various topics, including jury service, employment opportunities, and remote hearings. The information booth was staffed by representatives from all 10 judicial districts, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, the State Court Administrator's Office, the Minnesota State Law Library, the Appellate Clerk's Office, and the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility.

## Detailed case filing dashboard launched

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To increase access to public information about the state's court system, the Judicial Branch launched a new data dashboard tool on its website in 2022 that provides access to annual district court case filing data from 2012 to 2016. The data can be filtered by case type, district court, judicial district, and year. The dashboards only contain summary information, and do not contain information about individual cases.

## Improving courthouse security

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The Safe and Secure Courthouse Initiative issued \$500,000 in grants to 13 county courthouses across Minnesota in 2022. The grants help fund various courthouse security improvements to better protect the thousands of Minnesotans who enter local courthouses daily. Grant awards ranged from \$1,800 to nearly \$155,000. Counties receiving grants included: Anoka, Becker, Big Stone, Carlton, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Hubbard, Koochiching, McLeod, Meeker, Ramsey, and Sibley.



# DISTRICT COURTS

296 Judgeships, 10 Judicial Districts, 103 hearing facilities

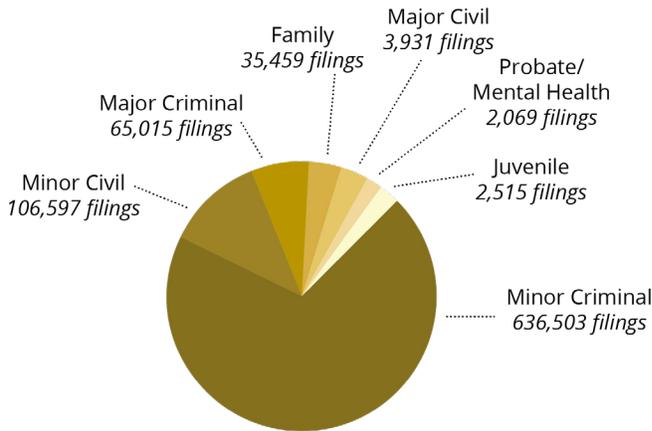
Jurisdiction: Civil Actions, Criminal Cases, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Violations of City Ordinances

Appeals from: Conciliation Court\*

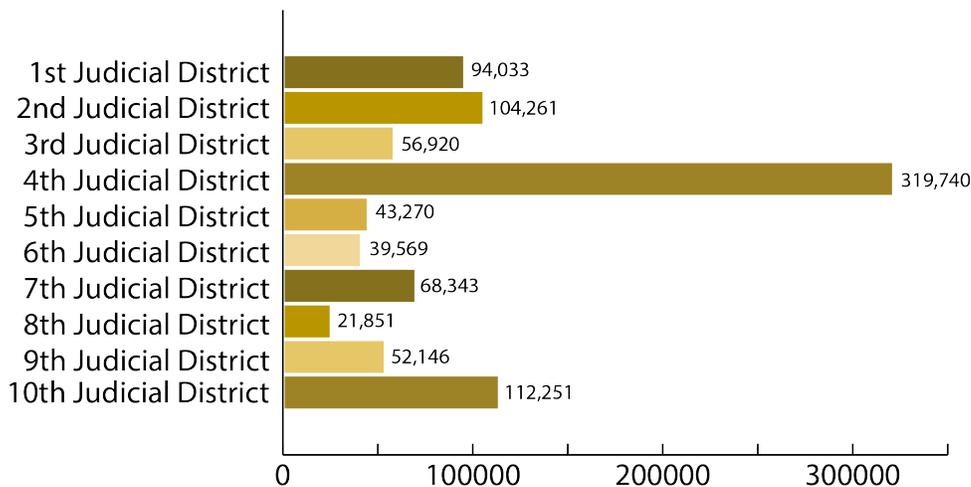
Conciliation Division: Civil Disputes up to \$15,000

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

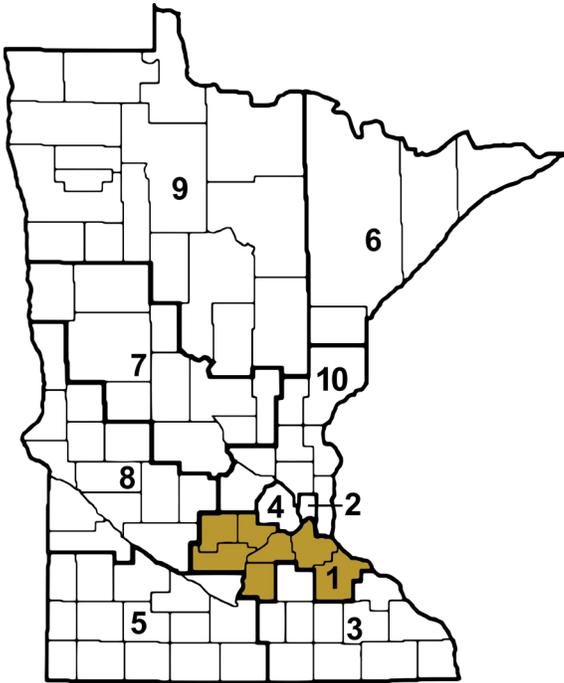
**2022 Statewide Case Filings by Case Type**  
2022 Total Filings: 912,384



**2022 Filings by District**  
2022 Total Filings: 912,384



# First Judicial District



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



36 Judgeships, 4 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Kevin Mark, Chief Judge

Hon. Carrie Lennon, Assistant Chief Judge

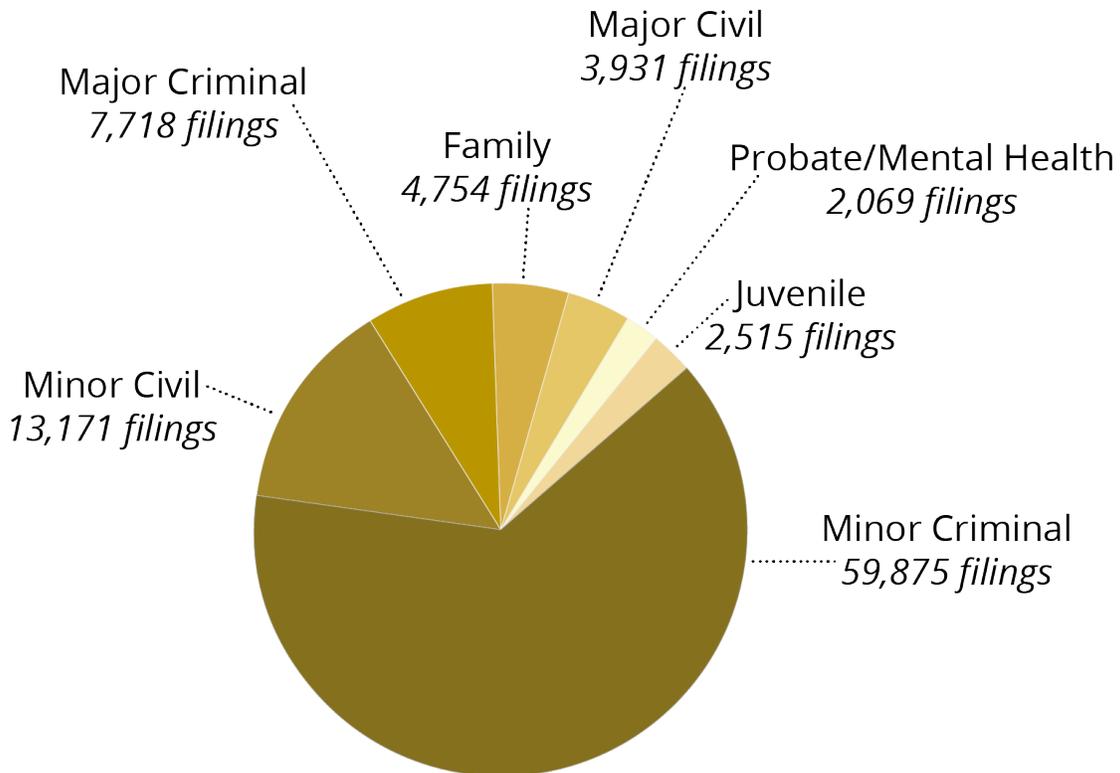


First Judicial District Administration  
1620 South Frontage Road, Suite 200  
Hastings, MN 55033

Brian Jones, District Administrator

## 2022 First Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 94,033



## **Carver and Scott counties offer new hearing officer program**

District courts in Carver and Scott counties launched a hearing officer program in 2022 that allows people to contest their petty and payable misdemeanor citations without going to court. Violations related to driver's license suspensions, vehicle registration, and proof of insurance, as well as payable violations involving parking and minor traffic offenses, may be resolved with a hearing officer. The service is offered both online and in-person.

## **Dakota County Juvenile Courts Area renovated**

The Dakota County Juvenile Courts Area in Hastings was significantly renovated in 2022. The remodel includes a District Court Check-In office, a waiting area, multiple conference rooms, and on-deck displays in multiple locations that show parties when their cases will be heard. The remodel provides staff and parties more space to conduct work, and allows for a more efficient flow of traffic.

## **First District Equal Justice Committee studies revocation rates, educates on jury service**

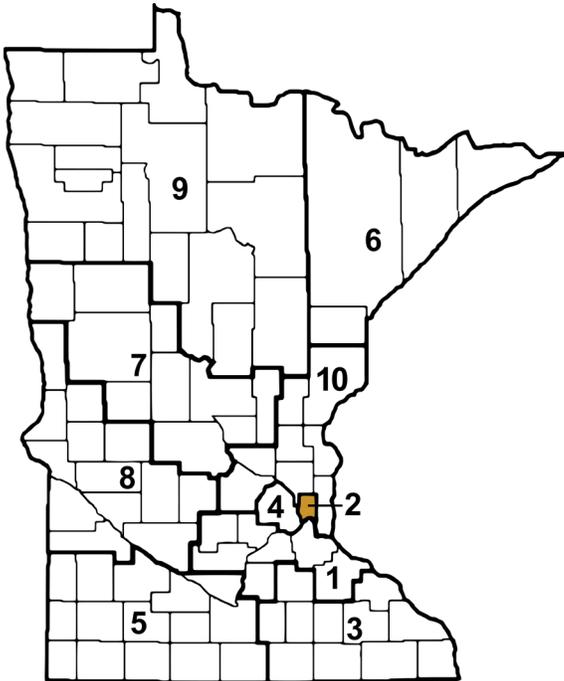
The First Judicial District Equal Justice Committee (EJC) continued to advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access to the court, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the Minnesota Judicial Branch. The EJC finalized a probation revocation study that examined disproportionate revocation rates for certain racial and ethnic probationers. It included a review of approximately 250 files spanning all counties in the District and found that probation revocations did not stem from racial or ethnic bias. The revocations were for legitimate reasons, including, but not limited to, requests for an executed sentence or revocation stemming from ongoing substance abuse issues and the failure to complete treatment in a probationary setting. Also in 2022, the EJC began engaging in targeted community outreach about jury service to educate people on how to become a juror, the importance of jury service, and also the importance of tracking race data on jurors.

## **New facilities, centralization of staff results in more efficient services for Scott County**

How and where services are delivered by Scott County to its residents continued to change in 2022. Over the past few years, several new facilities have been built, and existing facilities have undergone extensive renovations and updates. A new courtroom was added to the third floor of the Law Enforcement Center. The existing Scott County Justice Center had two new courtrooms and a large jury assembly area added to meet the needs to the justice system, and a new law library was constructed there, increasing the available space and resources for the public. The Justice Center now offers a central location for Scott County's law library; its Veteran Services, Mental Health, and Public Health offices; and its District Court.



# Second Judicial District



1 County: Ramsey



29 Judgeships, 5 Referees, 3 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Leonardo Castro, Chief Judge

Hon. Sara Grewing, Assistant Chief Judge



Second Judicial District Administration

Ramsey County Courthouse

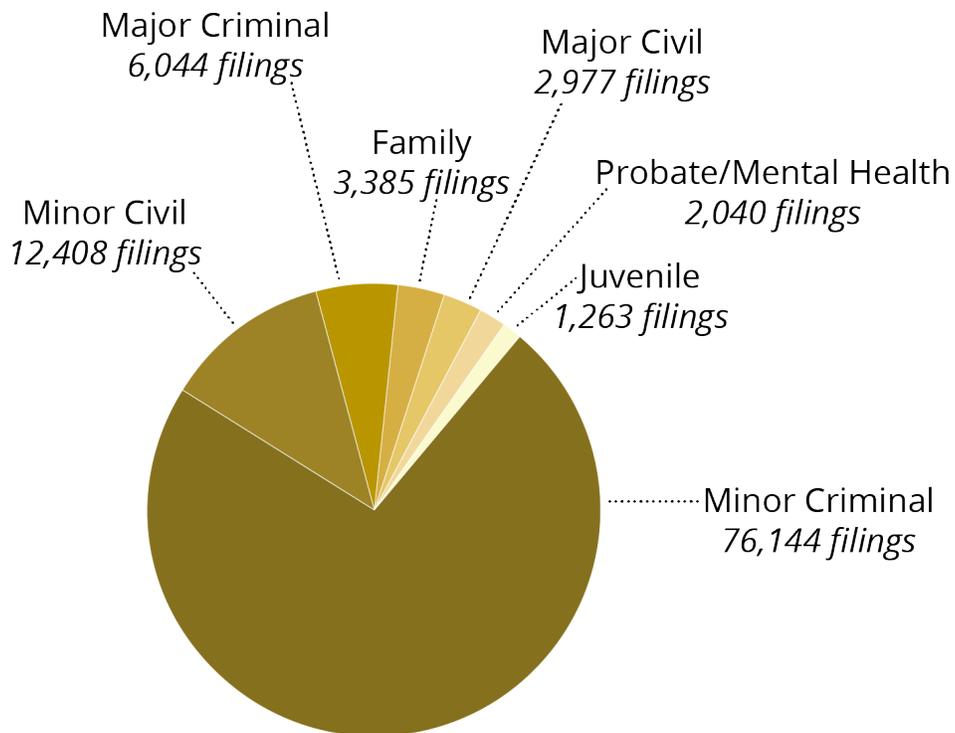
15 West Kellogg Boulevard

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Heather M. Kendall, District Administrator

## 2022 Second Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 104,261



## **Attorneys trained on technology**

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The Second Judicial District hosted a virtual continuing legal education training session for 66 attorneys in 2022 to learn about various courtroom technologies. The session focused on the new Minnesota Digital Exhibit System, connecting to courtroom audio/visual systems, and troubleshooting techniques to successfully participate in court hearings.

## **Mobile devices provided to remote hearing participants**

---

The Second District began offering touchscreen tablets to court participants for use during in remote hearings in 2022. Public conference and waiting rooms, some with touchscreen monitors, are also made available for participants to use as quiet spaces to avoid distractions during remote hearings. Not only are the accommodations available at the main Ramsey County Courthouse and at the Juvenile Family Justice Center, but also at a number of locations throughout the community, such as [Ujamaa Place](#), the Ramsey County Law Library, and Ramsey County Service Centers. Court participants can search for other legal kiosk locations by going to the [Legal Kiosk Project](#).

## **Flexible courtroom concept piloted**

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As part of the OneCourtMN Hearings Initiative, in 2022 Ramsey County District Court volunteered to participate in a pilot of a new flexible courtroom concept in certain criminal and juvenile delinquency hearings. The concept provides case parties, attorneys, and the public the opportunity to appear for hearings in person at the courthouse or remotely via Zoom without informing the court in advance of their appearance preference. This is intended to provide open, accessible, and transparent courtrooms while providing flexibility to court customers. It also eliminates the need for judges, attorneys, and court staff to manage motions and requests related to hearing venues. The pilot, which also includes Becker County District Court, provides a unique opportunity for data collection, analysis, and feedback that will influence how future hearings are held across the state.

## **Ramsey County Adult Substance Abuse Court commemorates 20 years**

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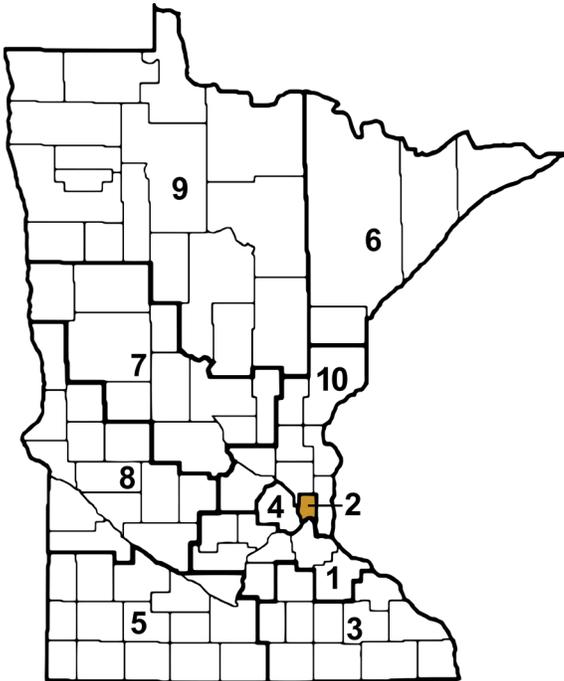
The Ramsey County Adult Substance Abuse Treatment Court celebrated its 20-year anniversary on October 31, 2022. A recognition event was held on Nov. 4 at the Ramsey County Courthouse in downtown St. Paul, which was attended by court participants, as well as dozens of people from the Second Judicial District, Ramsey County, the City of St. Paul, supporting agencies, the media, and the community. Speakers included Second Judicial District Chief Judge Leonardo Castro and Senior Judge Joanne Smith, who founded the Court in 2002 in collaboration with the St. Paul City Attorney, the Ramsey County Attorney, and Ramsey County Community Corrections. A Court graduate also provided a testimonial. The mission of the Ramsey County Adult Substance Abuse Court is to enhance public safety by reducing criminal activity and assisting substance abusers in becoming drug- and alcohol-free, productive, and law-abiding citizens. To break the cycle of substance abuse and further involvement in the criminal justice system, the Court uses a comprehensive, collaborative, and non-adversarial team approach that includes assessment, treatment, service connections, drug testing, and immediate sanctions and incentives to keep participants on the right track. In its 20 years, the Court has served 605 participants and averaged one program graduation a month.

## **Housing Court holds resolution events**

---

With the end of Minnesota's Eviction Moratorium Off-Ramp in June 2022, Ramsey County Housing Court experienced an increase in eviction filings not seen since the Great Recession in 2007: a 70% increase between June and November 2022. This extraordinary increase in filings required a change in the way the Court managed its docket to balance the competing interests of providing parties with a timely means to resolve their disputes, and also providing tenants with access to legal aid, mediation, and emergency rental assistance services. The Court launched four remote housing events between November and December 2022 with the goal of providing an early opportunity for parties to mediate, negotiate a settlement, and receive information regarding available services and rental assistance. A total of 700 eviction actions were heard during the housing event calendars, with more than half reaching an early resolution through agreement of the parties. The parties in the remaining cases were given additional time to explore related services, and were assisted in connecting with them.

# 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. Joseph Bueltel, Chief Judge

Hon. Christine Long, Assistant Chief Judge

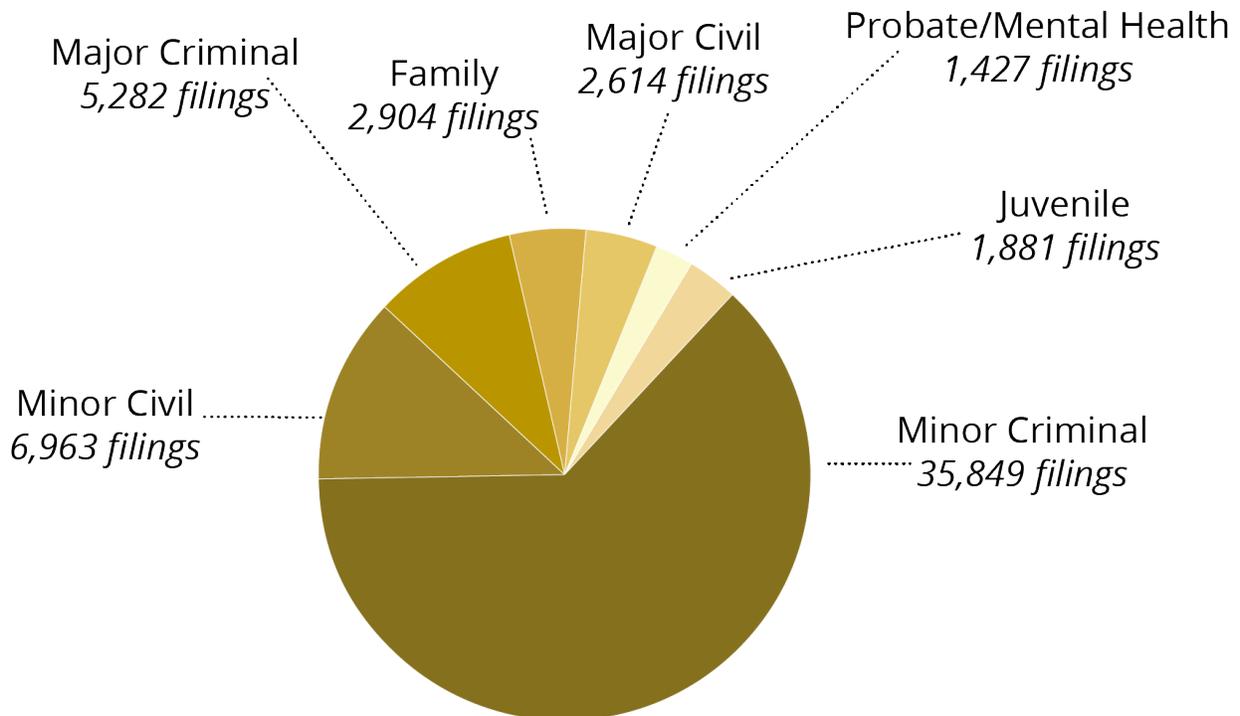


Third Judicial District Administration  
1696 Greenview Drive SW  
Rochester, MN 55902

Shelley Ellefson, District Administrator

## 2022 Third Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 56,920



## Probable cause determinations transition from paper to digital

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A team of Third Judicial District judges and administration staff in 2022 transitioned the weekend probable cause determination process from an in-person paper process to a fully electronic process. The transition not only eliminated the need for an on-call judge to travel to a local law enforcement center on weekends and holidays to review probable cause applications, it also created the ability for a judge to review and process electronic applications from anywhere. The new process is also more convenient and efficient for law enforcement agencies in the Third District, as they are now able to submit their probable cause applications via email directly to the on-call judge. Through the transition, the Third District also promoted the use of a consistent, standardized probable cause application form and order to be used district-wide.

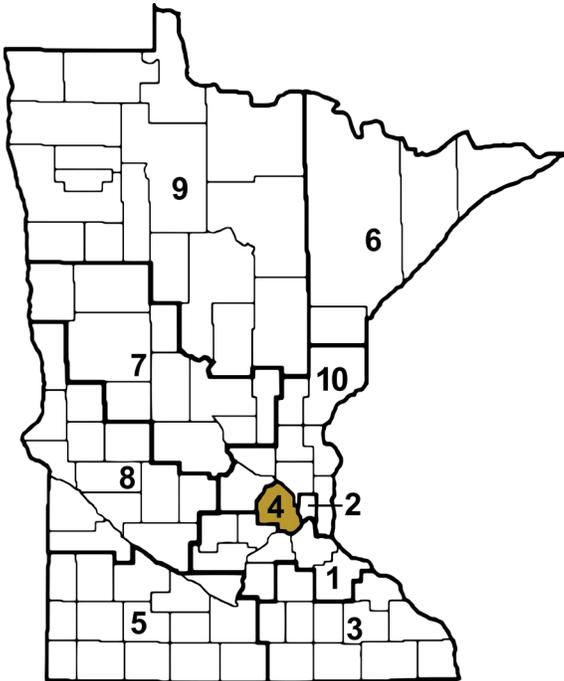


## Districtwide Case Processing implemented

---

The Third District transformed the way it processes cases in 2022 by implementing Districtwide Case Processing (DWCP). Under DWCP, teams of subject matter expert staff perform case processing work for all counties in the District. Other teams work at each courthouse, responding to phone calls, providing service at the public counters, and working in courtrooms. The change was made in response to feedback received during focus group sessions with justice partners, including attorneys, law enforcement, probation, the County jail, County Human Services, and County Victim Services, among others. Justice partners are also providing feedback on their DWCP experiences, which will be used to make improvements and further refinements.

# Fourth Judicial District



1 County: Hennepin



63 Judgeships, 13 Referees, 5 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Toddrick S. Barnette, Chief Judge

Hon. Kerry W. Meyer, Assistant Chief Judge

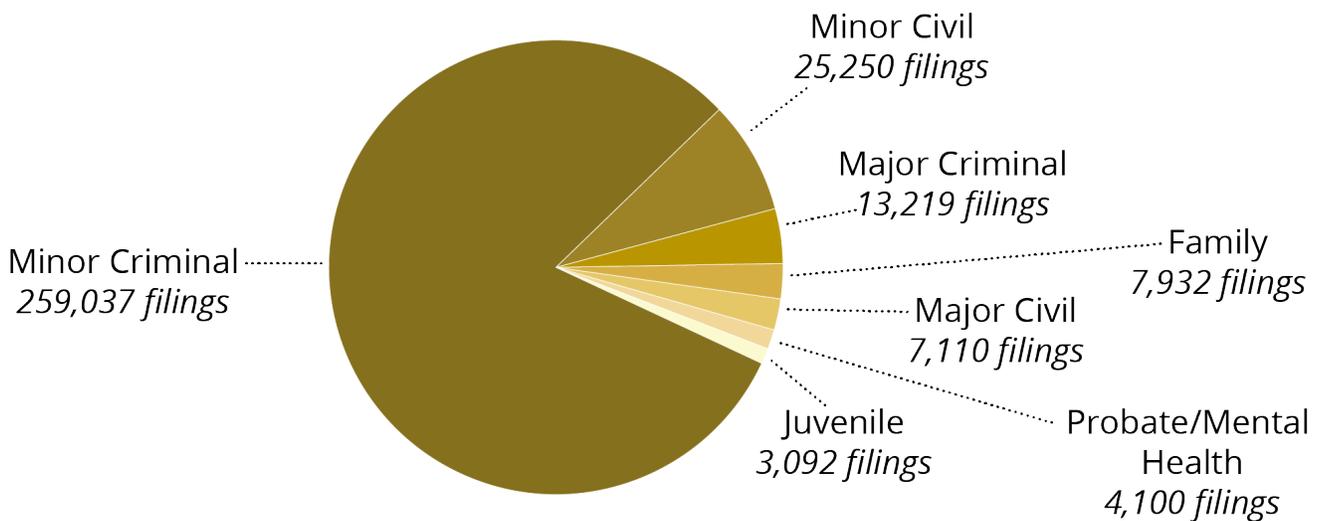


Fourth Judicial District Administration  
 12-C Government Center  
 300 South Sixth Street  
 Minneapolis, MN 55487

Sara Gonsalvez, District Administrator

## 2022 Fourth Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 319,740



## Fourth District honored for improving access to justice

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The Hennepin County Bar Association (HCBA) honored the Fourth Judicial District with the Association's 2022 Excellence Award for Improving Access to Justice. The judicial officers and court staff of the Fourth District were specifically recognized for diligent logistics planning, swift technological adaptation, teamwork with justice partners, and the ability to deliver justice, transparency, and safety for all involved in the justice system during the challenges of the pandemic.

## Specialized criminal unit implemented

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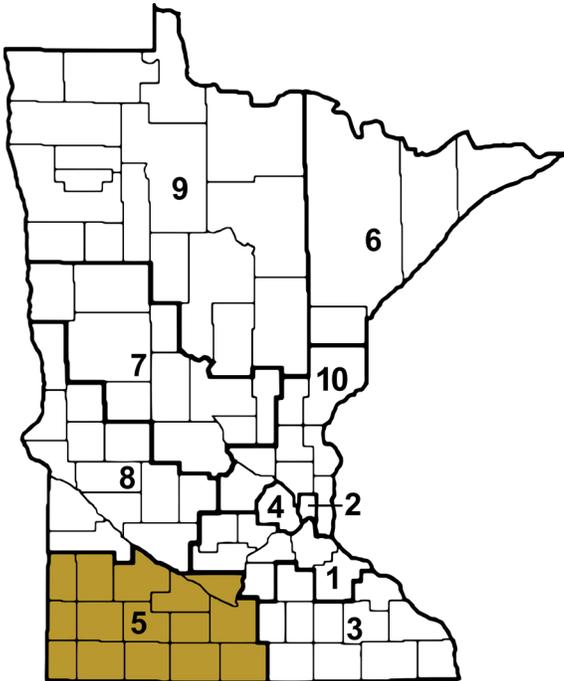
The Fourth District implemented a new seven-member Criminal Specialized Unit in its Criminal Division in 2022 to help balance workload. The Unit handles a variety of operational tasks, including processing criminal expungements and search warrants, and also monitors certain error reports and queues to consolidate case updating while ensuring accuracy and consistency across the Division. The new Unit gives stakeholders and court customers one point of contact for these specific tasks.

## Race data collection piloted

---

The Fourth District began a pilot in 2022 to collect race data in several new case types: eviction, guardianship, civil commitment, and family. The goal is to collect and analyze the data to help identify any disparities in outcomes and/or services for court customers based on race. The information will be used to develop strategies aimed at improving services and the court experience for all customers.

# Fifth Judicial District



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



18 Judgeships, 2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Gregory Anderson, Chief Judge

Hon. Darci Bentz, Assistant Chief Judge

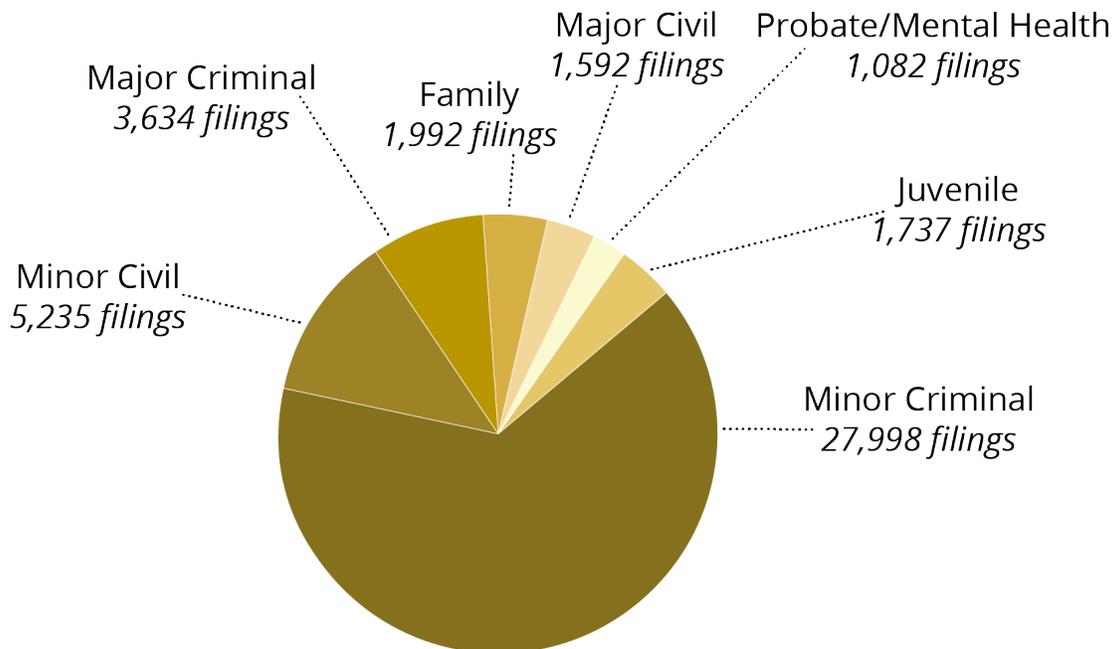


Fifth Judicial District Administration  
1961 Premier Drive, Suite 402  
Mankato, MN 56001

Michael J. Kelley, District Administrator

## 2022 Fifth Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 43,270



## Effective remote practices continue

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In order to better support the remote hearing experience for court participants, the Fifth Judicial District began updating the infrastructure and technologies in several of its courtrooms and court facilities in 2022. Existing conference rooms are being repurposed into dedicated Zoom rooms for those without the technology or network reliability needed to effectively participate in remote hearings. The District's remote hearings practices also continue to improve and evolve. For instance, Child Support Magistrate hearings are now being heard and recorded remotely.

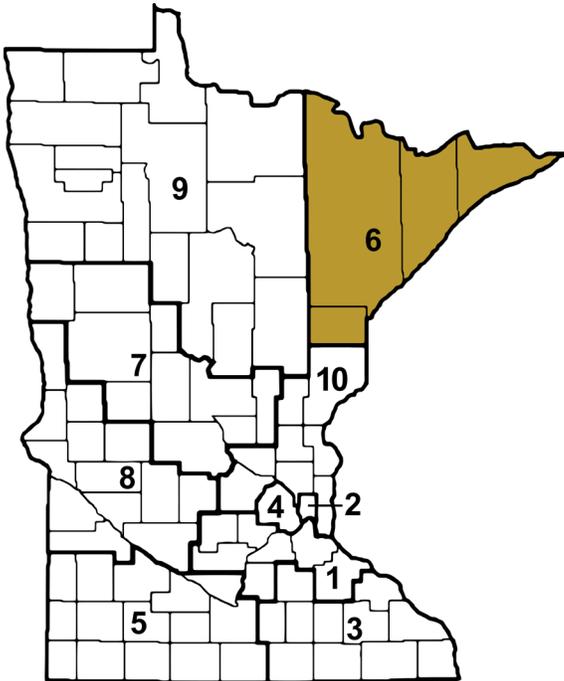
## Specialization expanded

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The Fifth District began expanding the case processing and administrative support provided by its specialized teams in 2022. Several existing teams have expanded the scope of work performed in an effort to increase accuracy and efficiency, and to provide a more consistent experience for court customers. A new specialized juvenile protection team was developed to serve select courts in certain counties, as well.

Also, several courts in the District have regionalized their criminal and non-criminal case processing work, serving as a model for other interested counties to follow. The District hosted town hall-style sessions throughout the month of September, inviting business partners to learn more about the specialized teams and the work they perform. Each session ended with an opportunity for those attending to provide feedback.

# Sixth Judicial District



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



16 Judgeships, 1 Referee, 2 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Michael J. Cuzzo, Chief Judge

Hon. Leslie E. Beiers, Assistant Chief Judge

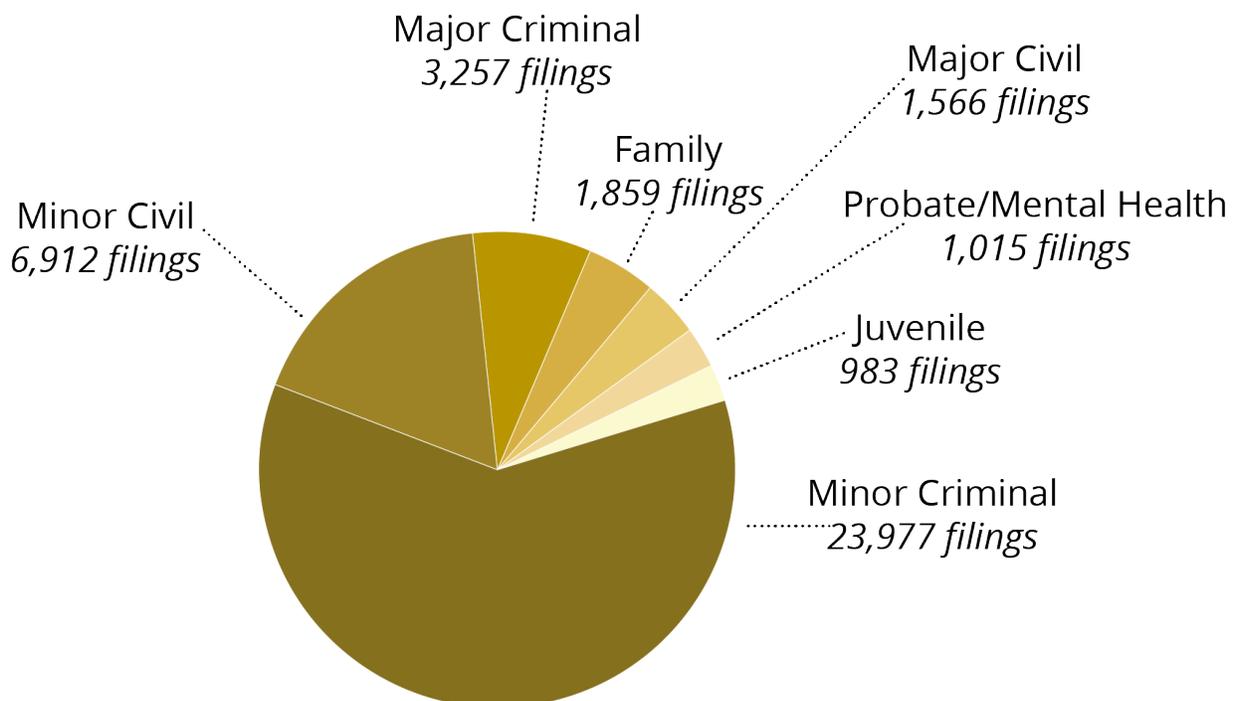


Sixth Judicial District Administration  
 St. Louis County Courthouse  
 227 West First Street, Suite 302  
 Duluth, MN 55802

Sara Taylor, District Administrator

## 2022 Sixth Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 39,569



## **Work continues on pandemic backlog**

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The Sixth Judicial District used several strategies to reduce its pandemic backlog in 2022 while continuing to provide equal access to justice to court customers. The District upgraded its remote access points for customers without access to remote technology, enhanced its Zoom practice sessions, and launched phase one of a centralized customer service unit. The District also continued to conduct case resolution events, hold trial blitzes, and significantly modify calendars to meet the continuing need to reduce the pandemic backlog in all case types.

## **Equal Justice committees reconnect with communities**

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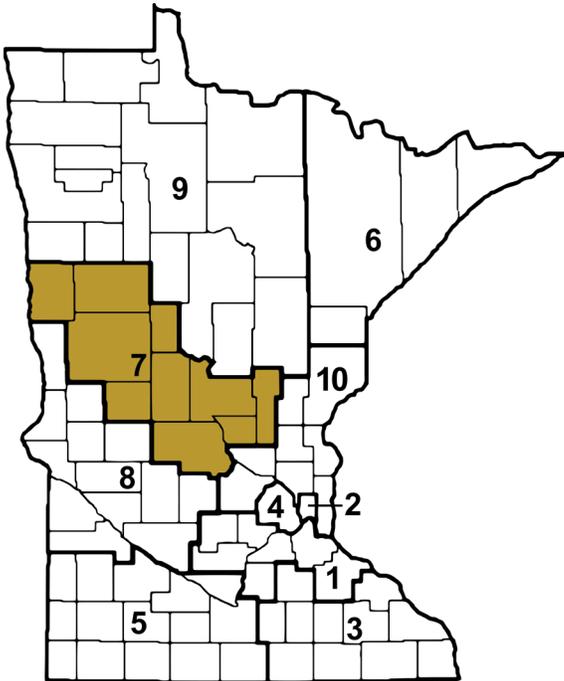
The Duluth Equal Justice Committee (EJC) and Iron Range EJC reconnected with their communities in 2022 as COVID-19 restrictions lifted. Judges representing the Duluth EJC and Sixth District Human Resources attended Juneteenth and the local Pride Festival to provide educational and recruitment information about the courts. The Duluth EJC also sent presenters to area schools to speak in classes about the judicial system, including historical inequities. The Range EJC presented a mock trial at the St. Louis County Fair, and also collaborated with Voices for Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Awareness to host a community listening session and potluck event at the Salvation Army. The Range EJC also hosted open courthouse events for children at both of its courthouses. The Iron Range judges built respected relationships with local high schools as well, visiting them to talk with students about career opportunities in the courts, and then welcoming students interested in law to observe court. The committees collaborated in 2022 to analyze probation violation data, as well as the results of a jury diversity study, from other parts of the state to identify racial disparities and then work to prevent them on the Range.

## **Treatment courts continue to thrive**

---

The Sixth District treatment courts continued to provide significant contributions to justice partners and participants of treatment courts across Minnesota, and even the world, in 2022. The Sixth District Mental Health Court Conference was again held for criminal justice and mental health professionals, with a focus on mental health court-specific topics. It is the only conference of its type in the country and it continues to grow in popularity. The 2022 Conference had the largest attendance to date, with 400 registrants. That included representatives from almost every state in the country, and a group of professionals from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan). Additionally, the Range Hybrid Court launched its College Nights project statewide in September 2022 in collaboration with Minnesota North College – Mesabi Range Campus. College Nights bring students and treatment court participants together twice a semester for presentations and discussions about recovery and treatment courts; they are now held virtually to allow teams and participants from all over Minnesota to join. The Range Hybrid Court scholarships, which provide a free three-credit college course were also made available statewide in 2022.

# Seventh Judicial District



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



29 Judgeships, 3 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Sarah Hennesy, Chief Judge

Hon. Michael Fritz, Assistant Chief Judge

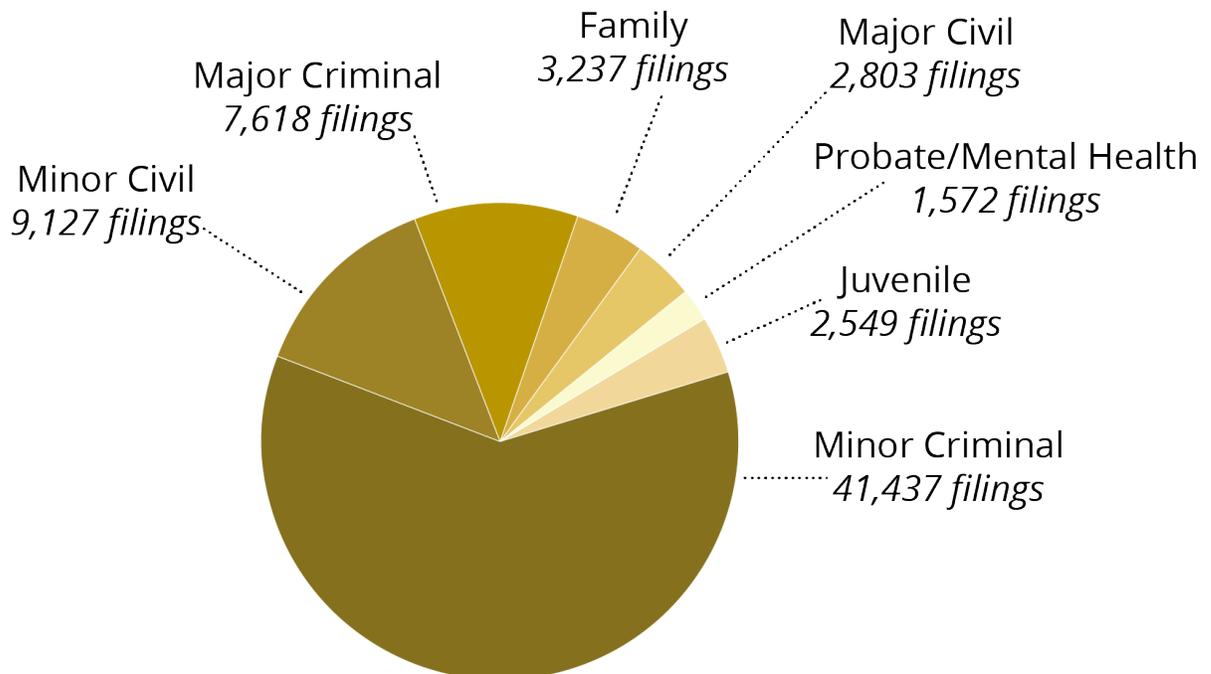


Seventh Judicial District Administration  
Stearns County Courthouse  
725 Courthouse Square #406  
Saint Cloud, MN 56303

Deb Mueske, District Administrator

## 2022 Seventh Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 68,343



## Otter Tail County District Court facilitates virtual court hearings

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In January 2022, two local libraries in Otter Tail County (Pelican Rapids and Perham) installed Zoom technology to assist Otter Tail County District Court litigants with remote hearing attendance. The new locations, which join the one available at the Otter Tail County Courthouse, provide access to reliable internet and the technology needed to connect to remote court hearings. Private rooms are also available at all three locations for court hearing attendees' convenience and to ensure confidentiality.

## Stearns County Drug Court celebrates 20th anniversary

---

On July 8, 2022, Stearns County Drug Court celebrated its 20th anniversary at Wilson Park in St. Cloud. The event featured an informal ceremony with speeches from judges and past participants. For 20 years, the Stearns County Drug Court has partnered with key stakeholders in the justice system to lead people living with substance use and mental health disorders out of the justice system and into lives of recovery and stability.

## Regionalized Housing Court launched

---

A Regionalized Housing Court for Becker, Clay, and Otter Tail counties began operations on October 5, 2022. The new Court is a collaborative effort with representatives from Northwest Legal Services, who meet with tenants prior to their initial hearings to discuss legal rights.

## Public shares experiences at community listening session with judges and staff

---

On October 6, 2022, the Seventh District's Equal Justice Committee partnered with the City of Moorhead's Human Rights Commission and Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota to host a community listening session in Moorhead. Fourteen judicial officers attended the event, accompanied by multiple community leaders and representatives of the City of Moorhead and its surrounding communities. The session also included small group discussions so members of the public could share experiences they had with the court system and ideas for advancing, and ideas for advancing equality, access, and fairness in the system.

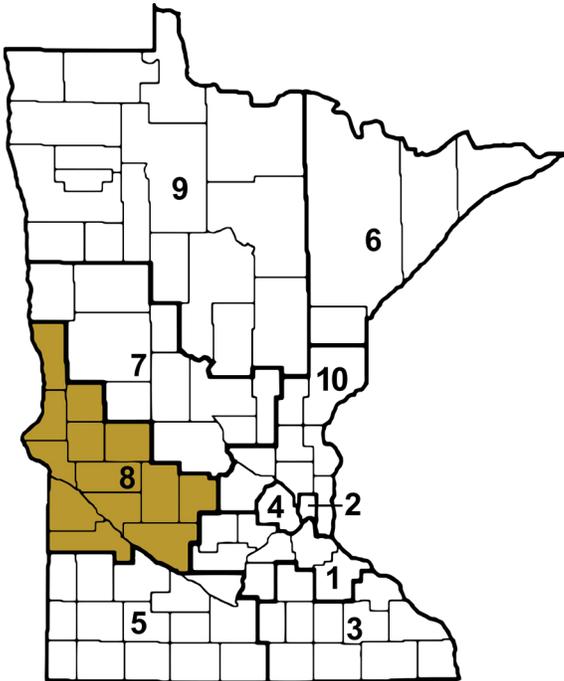
## Stearns County celebrates 100 years

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On November 15, 2022, Stearns County held a 100-year celebration at the downtown historic courthouse. The evening event included courthouse tours, live music, court reporter demonstrations, and an appearance by the Stearns County Sheriff's K-9 unit.

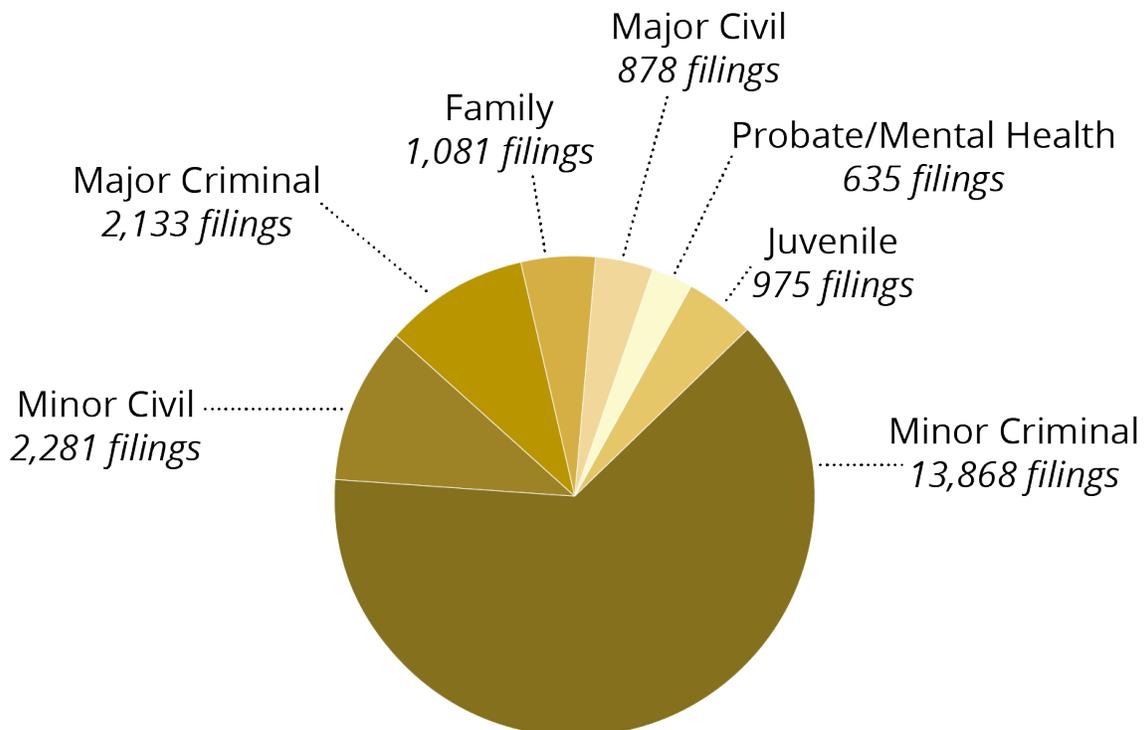
# Eighth Judicial District



- 
**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. Stephanie Beckman, Chief Judge  
 Hon. Rodney Hanson, Assistant Chief Judge
- 
**Eighth Judicial District Administration**  
 Kandiyohi County Courthouse  
 505 Becker Avenue SW, Suite 107  
 Willmar, MN 56201  
 Deb Mueske, District Administrator

## 2022 Eighth Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 21,851



## Districtwide Housing Court launched

---

A new Housing Court serving the entire Eighth Judicial District began operations on August 5, 2022. The new Court is a collaborative effort with representatives from Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid and Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota, who appear in court with qualifying tenants and provide legal advice.

## Courtroom cameras and monitors being installed

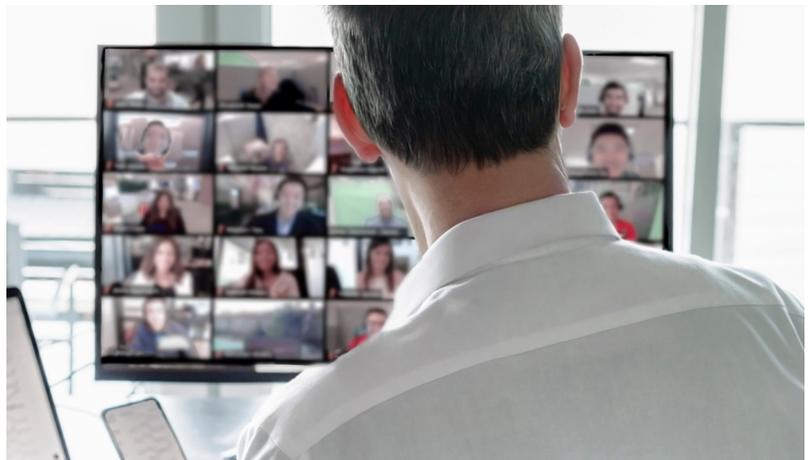
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The Eighth District began working on courtroom technology upgrades in 2022 to improve remote and hybrid hearing appearances. When the work is finished, monitors and cameras will be mounted in each courtroom that will display remote and in-person hearing participants and will interface with the presentation of digital exhibits for contested hearings.

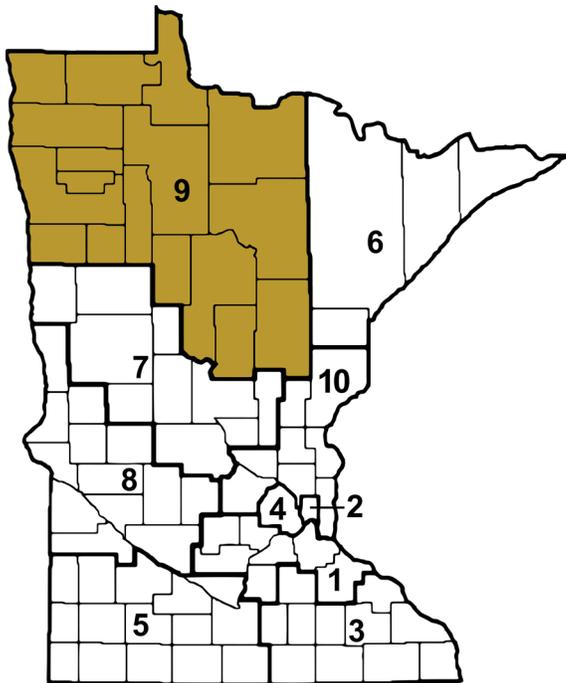
## Support for remote hearings provided

---

The Eighth District continued to partner with the Sixth, Seventh, and Ninth districts in 2022 to provide customer support for remote hearings with Zoom practice sessions. The sessions are hosted two days a week for four and a half hours. Litigants can test their internet connections, ask questions about the remote hearing process, and learn Zoom techniques such as renaming themselves, muting and unmuting, and turning their videos on and off. The service was provided to more than 800 litigants in 2022.



# Ninth Judicial District



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



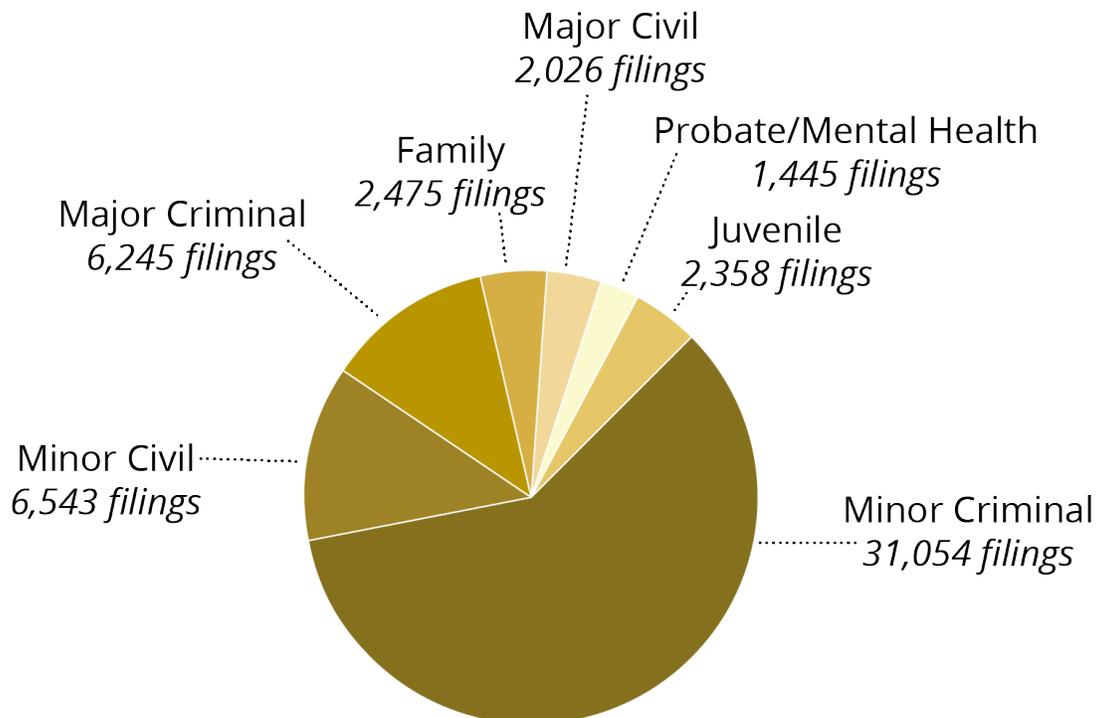
24 Judgeships, 2 Child Support Magistrates  
 Hon. Tamara L. Yon, Chief Judge  
 Hon. Jana M. Austad, Assistant Chief Judge



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

Bob Sommerville, District Administrator

## 2022 Ninth Judicial District Case Filings 2022 Total Filings: 52,146



## **Weekly eviction calendar established**

---

With the expiration of the eviction moratorium in 2022, the Ninth Judicial District established a weekly calendar devoted to eviction cases, which created a seamless process to handle the anticipated high volume of eviction filings. The District had previously hired two temporary referees with support staff to hold hearings via Zoom on domestic abuse, harassment, commitment, probate, default dissolution, and minor civil type cases, and they held the majority of the eviction case hearings as well. Representatives from RentHelpMN and attorneys from Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota and Legal Services of Northeast Minnesota attended the eviction hearings as well. They assisted tenants with their concerns, which resulted in quicker resolution of the eviction cases.

## **Clearwater County DWI Court launched**

---

Clearwater County DWI Court accepted its first participant on March 25, 2022, being approved by the MN Judicial Council in 2021 to merge with Beltrami County DWI Court as a multi-county court-funded program. Each court has its own program policies, teams, presiding judges and court days, but they share a coordinator and funding through the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety. Team members of the new Court in Clearwater County include Ninth District staff and a judge, as well as others from agencies within the area: the Clearwater County Attorney's Office, the Clearwater County Sheriff's Department, Clearwater County Human Services, North Home Treatment, Sanford Health, the Bemidji Area Program for Recovery, the Department of Corrections, White Earth Treatment, and Native Defense. By the end of 2022, the new Court had a total of three active participants. Its capacity is 10 participants.

## **DWI court training held**

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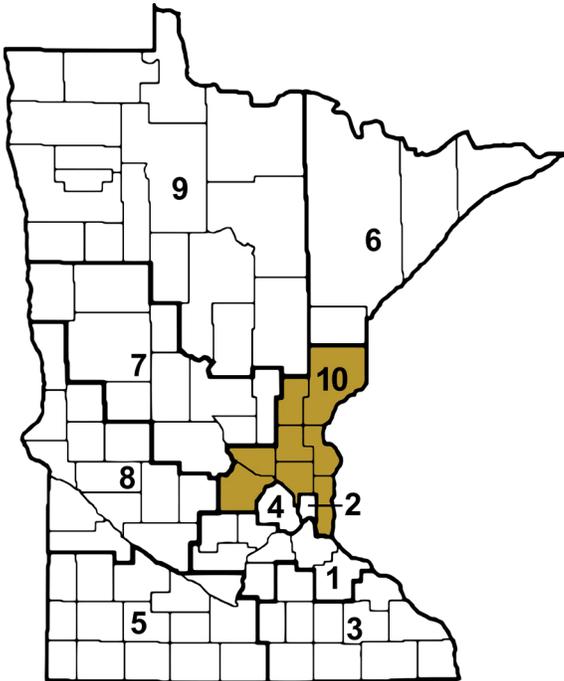
The Ninth District held a two-day DWI court training in Bemidji in 2022 for 68 attendees from seven different DWI courts in Minnesota. Topics covered included: Working as a Team, Selecting the Right Participants, Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care, Action Planning, Responding to Behavior, Revisiting Phases, Law School 101 for Treatment Providers, and Intent v. Impact: Are we set up to fail? Each DWI court team left the training with a specific area of work to focus on in the future.

## **Domestic Violence Court recognizes 10 years**

---

2022 marked 10 years since the Ninth District received its first Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women grant to develop and implement the Domestic Violence Court in Beltrami County. The program was expanded to include Roseau County in 2016. Beltrami County holds court weekly, and Roseau County holds court bi-weekly, with nearly 2,200 cases heard over the past 10 years. Domestic violence courts are one way for judicial systems to respond creatively and effectively to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence cases. In 2022, the Ninth District Domestic Violence Court Program offered nine training events attended by 124 criminal justice partners, further empowering them to respond to these complex and dangerous situations with best practices and increased confidence. A new Office on Violence Against Women grant was also awarded in 2022 to develop and implement a Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Center in Beltrami County. The vision for this much-needed Center is to provide free and safe exchange and visitation services to families living within the Ninth District who are experiencing violence, and to create a place of hope and healing for the community.

# Tenth Judicial District



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



45 Judgeships, 4 Child Support Magistrates

Hon. Stoney L. Hiljus, Chief Judge

Hon. Elizabeth H. Strand, Assistant Chief Judge



Tenth Judicial District Administration

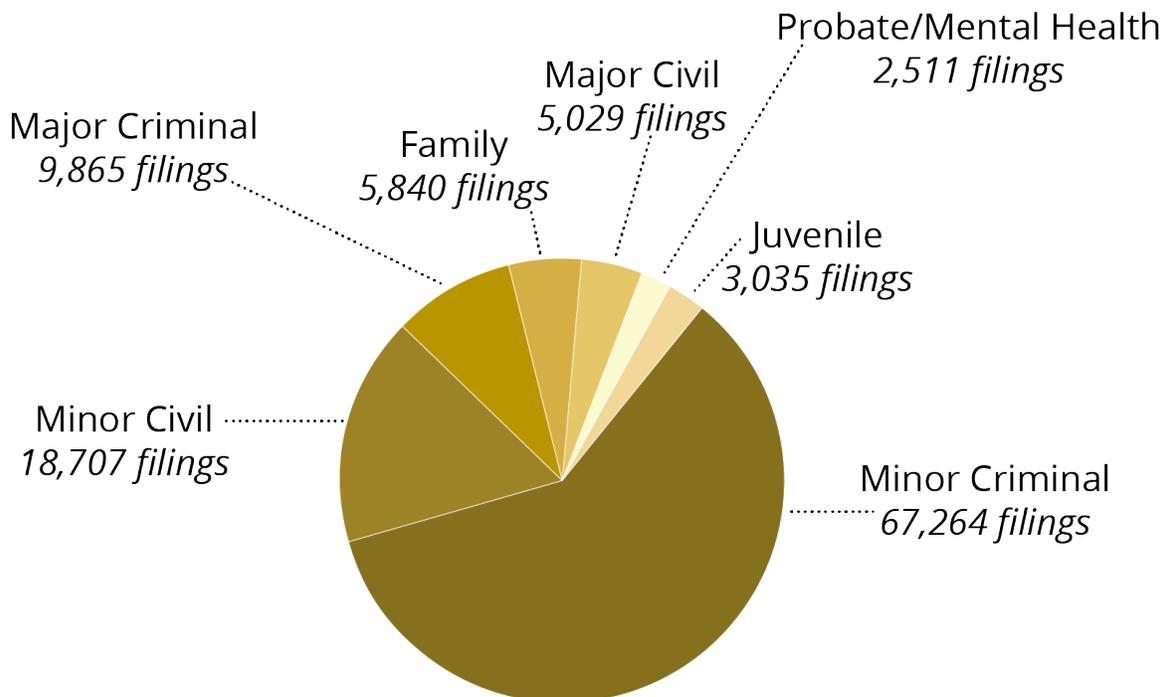
7533 Sunwood Drive NW, Suite 306

Ramsey, MN 55303

Sarah Lindahl-Pfieffer, District Administrator

## 2022 Tenth Judicial District Case Filings

2022 Total Filings: 112,251



## District wide changes result in innovation and improved service

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The Tenth Judicial District made many changes in 2022, resulting in innovations, improved customer service, and efficiencies. Centralized districtwide processes were implemented with mail and notice processing, returned mail, district referee calendars, and specialized judges and staff. Also, four counties in the District (Pine, Isanti, Chisago, and Kanabec) restructured to create specialized court calendars and operational units crossing county lines.

# COURT OF APPEALS

The Minnesota Court of Appeals continued to work in 2022 to earn the public’s trust and to provide timely, fair, well-reasoned opinions.

In September, the Court of Appeals resumed hearing all oral arguments in person. Remote technology is still used for oral arguments involving distant parties and when needed to accommodate medical or other issues.

In response to feedback received from surveys of litigants, the Court permanently suspended its requirement that parties file paper copies of appellate briefs. The Court also worked with the State Law Library to make available online, in an easily searchable format, the Court’s special term orders, which were posted starting January 2023. The Court of Appeals also started planning for a livestream option for parties and the public to view in-person oral arguments from anywhere.

## 2022 Court of Appeals Case Information

Case Type	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	399	400
Criminal	694	593
Administrative Rule	3	2
Economic Security	84	127
Writs - Certiorari	60	68
Habeas/Certified Questions	2	3
Commitment	38	38
Family	212	204
Juvenile Delinquency	19	16
Juvenile Protection	69	74
Implied Consent	9	9
Discretionary Review/Writs	85	86
Probate	34	30
Unlawful Detainer/Eviction	41	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>1677</b>

Chief Judge Susan Segal  
Judge:  
2019 - April 2020

Chief Judge:  
May 2020 - present

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 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 - 2022

Judge Jeanne M. Cochran  
2018 - present

Judge Randall J. Slieter  
2018 - present

Judge Jeffrey Bryan  
2019 - present

Judge Jennifer L. Frisch  
2020 - present

Judge Theodora Gaitas  
2020 - present

Judge Sarah I. Wheelock  
2022 - present

Judge Elise L. Larson  
2022 - present

# SUPREME COURT

In its September 2022 term, the Minnesota Supreme Court resumed its long-standing practice of holding its first week of oral arguments in the Capitol Courtroom, and its second week of oral arguments in Courtroom 300 of the Minnesota Judicial Center. During the pandemic, Courtroom 300 had been reserved exclusively for remote arguments. The Courtroom was outfitted with new technology before the start of the new term which allowed it to be available for both in-person oral arguments and remote arguments, if necessary.

2022 also marked the resumption of traveling oral arguments. The Supreme Court heard arguments in April at the University of Minnesota Law School and in October at Shakopee High School. All oral arguments and public hearings continue to be available live over the internet and on-demand on the Judicial Branch’s website.

Finally, the Supreme Court enhanced public website page in 2022 by listing the issues every Thursday for which the Court has granted review. Previously, only the list of orders for each case with a petition for further review was posted, with notes as to which ones were granted and which ones were denied.

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

Associate Justice  
G. Barry Anderson  
2004 - present

Associate Justice  
Natalie E. Hudson  
2015 - present

Associate Justice  
Margaret H. Chutich  
2016 - present

Associate Justice  
Anne K. McKeig  
2016 - present

Associate Justice  
Paul C. Thissen  
July 2018 - present

Associate Justice  
Gordon L. Moore, III  
August 2020 - present

<b>2022 Supreme Court Case Information</b>	
<b>Direct Appeals &amp; Original Actions</b>	
Workers' Compensation	10
Tax Court	6
Professional Regulation	43
First Degree Murder	30
Writs/Miscellaneous	11
Total Direct Appeals / Original Actions	100
<b>Petitions for Further/Accelerated Review (PFR/PAR)</b>	
Filed (PFR/PAR)	456
Review Denied	386
Granted Further/Accelerated Review	61
Other (Remand, Dismiss)	9
<b>Opinions/Disposition Orders</b>	
Affirmed	40
Affirmed in Part	6
Reverse/Remand	20
Other (Discipline, dismiss, other disposition)	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>

# 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 were reported in 2022.

## 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	854	411	269	148	21	5
Black/African American	649	274	169	120	71	15
Hispanic/Latino	364	187	90	56	28	3
Native American/ Alaskan	115	35	31	28	17	4
White/ Caucasian	19,531	5,086	5,368	3,962	3,113	2,003
Multiple	377	217	103	45	9	3
Choose Not to Answer	3,660	1,044	1,167	727	496	226
Unknown	640	595	18	13	8	6
Total	26,190	7,849	7,215	5,099	3,763	2,265

## 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	158	50	65	34	7	2
Black/African American	92	14	32	24	17	5
Hispanic/Latino	48	7	22	12	6	1
Native American/ Alaskan	9	1	4	4	0	0
White/ Caucasian	3,099	306	892	845	756	300
Multiple	51	13	23	10	5	0
Choose Not to Answer	525	78	168	135	105	39
Unknown	8	0	2	2	3	1
Total	3,990	469	1,208	1,066	899	348

# 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 were reported in 2022.

## 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	369	173	117	64	12	3
Black/African American	337	123	87	75	41	11
Hispanic/Latino	174	85	42	23	21	3
Native American/ Alaskan	64	21	15	14	10	4
White/ Caucasian	11,277	2,621	2,689	2,205	2,053	1,710
Multiple	168	88	50	24	3	3
Choose Not to Answer	772	199	195	149	145	84
Unknown	21	3	5	4	5	4
Total	13,182	3,313	3,200	2,558	2,290	1,822

## 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	71	25	25	17	4	0
Black/African American	36	5	14	10	5	2
Hispanic/Latino	23	5	8	8	1	1
Native American/ Alaskan	5	1	2	2	0	0
White/ Caucasian	1,490	144	382	363	386	215
Multiple	24	4	10	7	3	0
Choose Not to Answer	100	18	30	22	18	12
Unknown	3	0	0	0	2	1
Total	1,752	202	471	429	419	231

# 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 were reported in 2022.

## 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	479	235	150	83	9	2
Black/African American	310	151	81	45	30	3
Hispanic/Latino	187	99	48	33	7	0
Native American/ Alaskan	51	14	16	14	7	0
White/ Caucasian	8,177	2,421	2,660	1,750	1,055	291
Multiple	203	126	50	21	6	0
Choose Not to Answer	521	190	172	91	57	11
Unknown	12	3	3	3	2	1
Total	9,940	3,239	3,180	2,040	1,173	308

## 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	86	25	39	17	3	2
Black/African American	56	9	18	14	12	3
Hispanic/Latino	24	2	13	4	5	0
Native American/ Alaskan	4	0	2	2	0	0
White/ Caucasian	1,594	162	504	477	366	85
Multiple	25	8	12	3	2	0
Choose Not to Answer	78	14	26	21	13	4
Unknown	3	0	2	0	1	0
Total	1,870	220	616	538	402	94

# 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 were reported in 2022.

## 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	6	3	2	1	0	0
Black/African American	2	0	1	0	0	1
Hispanic/Latino	1	1	0	0	0	0
Native American/ Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	55	32	10	7	4	2
Multiple	3	1	2	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	2,365	655	799	486	294	131
Unknown	607	589	10	6	1	1
Total	3,039	1,281	824	500	299	135

## 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	1	0	1	0	0	0
Black/African American	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	1	0	1	0	0	0
Native American/ Alaskan	0	0	0	0	0	0
White/ Caucasian	14	0	5	5	4	0
Multiple	1	0	1	0	0	0
Choose Not to Answer	347	46	112	92	74	23
Unknown	2	0	0	2	0	0
Total	366	46	120	99	78	23

## Retired

	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American/ Alaskan	White/ Caucasian	Multiple	Choose Not to Answer	Unknown
Total	4	16	4	3	1602	7	185	2544

# APPELLATE CLERK'S OFFICE

## E-filing continues to account for vast majority of submissions

Appellate e-filing accounted for at least 93% of all appellate filing submissions in 2022, consistent with the previous three years' usage statistics. The appellate courts also continued to rely on the C-Track system, which provides appellate court personnel and judicial officers 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.

## Appellate document retention schedule adopted

Appellate courts adopted a court document retention schedule in May 2022 as part of a continuing process to improve records management within the Judicial Branch. The schedule sets minimum time periods for keeping court records and applies to Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, and Commitment Appeal Panel cases, including all filings, and recordings of oral arguments.

## 203 Commitment Appeal Panel cases initiated

203 Commitment Appeal Panel cases were initiated in 2022. Commitment Appeal panels are three-judge panels that conduct hearings when a civilly-committed patient petitions for release from a state security hospital or requests a less restrictive placement. There are three panels in Minnesota. District court judges from the Second and Fourth Judicial districts serve as chief judges of two of the panels, and a senior (retired) judge serves as the chief of the third panel. All panels are currently working remotely.

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
2020	202
2021	200
2022	203

# MINNESOTA STATE LAW LIBRARY

## Legal information services

Law librarians at the Minnesota State Law Library answered more than 8,300 legal information questions in 2022. Additionally, almost 500 people visited the Library for tours or to use its resources without requiring Library staff assistance. In addition to providing legal information service to the courts, attorneys, state employees, and the general public, the Law Library Service to Prisoners program provides legal materials to Minnesota state inmates. The librarians who staff this prisoner-funded program answered more than 22,000 questions from 2049 incarcerated people in 2022.

## New self-help clinic launched

In 2022, the State Law Library partnered with the Probate, Trusts and Estates Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA) to create a new probate self-help clinic. The clinic assists people who have questions about the informal probate process, or are unsure whether probate is needed for an estate. The clinic started in October, and is offered monthly via phone.

The Law Library also continues to host two self-help clinics to provide free assistance to individuals seeking to file an appeal with the Minnesota Court of Appeals or the Minnesota Supreme Court. These clinics offer 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. Over a quarter of all appeals in Minnesota involve a party who is not represented by an attorney.



The Law Library's general appeals clinic, which is staffed by volunteer attorneys from the MSBA's Appellate Practice Section, assisted 132 people in 2022. Additionally, the Unemployment Appeal Self-Help Clinic assisted 41 people. There were 91 unemployment appeals filed in 2022. More than 80% of this type of appeal involve a party who is unrepresented. The Clinic's volunteer attorneys are primarily members of the Labor and Employment Law Section of the MSBA.

# AWARDS & RECOGNITION

## Megan Bergman wins 2022 State Court Administrator Award for individuals

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Megan Bergman, Court Administrator for Benton and Mille Lacs counties, was presented with the Individual Award by State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba in 2022. The State Court Administrator Awards honor court staff who have made significant contributions toward

court administration excellence and demonstrated commitment to creating, maintaining, and promoting the oneCourtMN culture.

Since becoming a court administrator in December 2021, Bergman has made employee well-being and a quality workplace her number one priority. She has launched numerous initiatives to promote employee wellness, encourage employee engagement, and create a positive, collaborative, and flexible work environment.

Examples of Bergman's innovative leadership include establishing small case type teams who routinely gather to discuss case processing questions; soliciting staff ideas for improvement; working to develop consistent processes; and mentoring court staff who are interested in furthering their careers within the Judicial Branch. In addition, Bergman has launched a book club focused on leadership and created an initiative to give staff a direct say in activities that build teamwork and job satisfaction.

## Zoom Practice Session Team wins 2022 State Court Administrator Award for teams

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The Zoom Practice Session Team from the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth judicial districts was recognized with the 2022 State



Court Administrator Team Award for improving customer service by helping litigants prepare for their upcoming remote court hearings. The Team began in 2021 after court staff in the Sixth District recognized the frustration some court customers were experiencing in their remote hearings. Staff began to schedule regular Zoom practice sessions, where court customers could join, test their connections, and try out Zoom functions before their official court dates. The Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth judicial districts soon joined the effort for their customers. Today, the regionalized Team shares coverage of the practice sessions. More than 900 customers have joined the Zoom practice sessions since they began, and feedback from court customers, judges, and court staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

Members of the Zoom Practice Session Team include Kelli Deasy, Court Operations Supervisor, Sixth Judicial District; Nicole Korby, Performance Analyst, Sixth Judicial District; Chelsea Koranda, Court Business Systems Coordinator, Seventh Judicial District; Jenny Schmidt, Court Business Systems Coordinator, Seventh Judicial District; Kellie Hentges, Court Business Process Specialist, Eighth Judicial District; Pam Norenberg, Court Administrative Manager, Ninth Judicial District; Julie Mackcow, Court Business Process Specialist, Ninth Judicial District; and Kelcie Groth, Court Business Systems Coordinator, Ninth Judicial District.

## Justice Ann McKeig elected to American Law Institute

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Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice Anne McKeig was elected to the American Law Institute in 2022. She was one of 60 new members elected, and the only person elected from Minnesota.

The American Law Institute is a private and independent nonprofit that publishes materials that can be used throughout the legal system to better the administration of justice. The organization's publications — known as restatements, model codes, and principles — are not controlling law but have long been used as secondary sources to help attorneys and others in the legal system interpret laws and precedents.



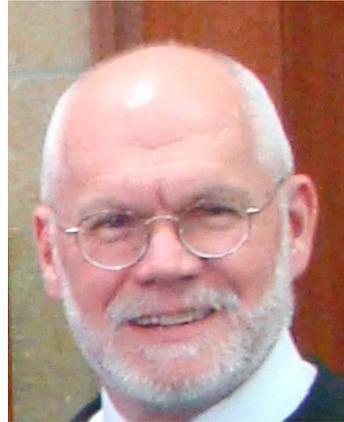
## Judge Robert Blaeser inaugural recipient of Indian Child Welfare Excellence Award

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Retired Fourth Judicial District Judge Robert Blaeser was the inaugural recipient of the Hon. Robert Blaeser Indian Child Welfare Excellence Award. The Award will be given annually to a person who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in working to improve outcomes for Native American children and families. The Award was named after Judge Blaeser in honor of his life-long work, including as Minnesota's first Indian Child Welfare Act court judge and as Chief Judge of the White Earth Nation.

## Judge Joseph Chase named Trial Judge of the Year

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The Minnesota Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) selected Third Judicial District Judge Joseph Chase to receive its 2022 Trial Judge of the Year Award. Judge Chase was recognized for his contributions as a skilled and knowledgeable trial judge, his commitment

to treating all participants in the judicial system with respect and fairness, and his efforts to educate the public about the legal system and its importance.

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.

## Senior Judge Susan R. Miles receives Elmer H. Wilbishauser Author's Award

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The Publications Committee of *Bench & Bar*, the official publication of the Minnesota State Bar Association, recognized Senior Judge Susan R. Miles with the Elmer. H. Wilbishauser Author's Award in 2022.

The Award recognizes the author of the best article contributed to *Bench & Bar* during the previous year. Judge Miles authored, "Stress is what you think: the importance of a clear mind."

## Judge Jamie Cork appointed to National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

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First Judicial District Judge Jamie Cork was appointed to the Board of Directors for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) in 2022.



The NCJFCJ began in 1937 to improve the effectiveness of the nation's juvenile courts. Its mission is to provide all judges, courts, and related agencies involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases with the knowledge and skills to improve the lives of the families and children who seek justice. As one of the nation's largest and oldest judicial membership organizations, the NCJFCJ serves an estimated 30,000 juvenile and family justice professionals, including judges, referees, commissioners, court masters and administrators, social and mental health workers, police, and probation officers.

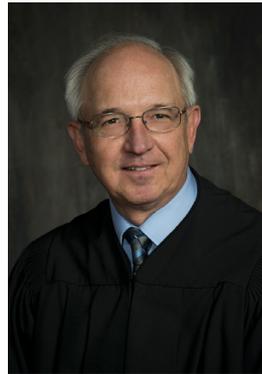
## State Law Library receives Excellence in Community Engagement Award

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The Minnesota State Law Library received the 2022 Excellence in Community Engagement Award from the American Association of Law Libraries for the creation of its appellate self-help videos.

## Judge Matthew Opat receives Professional Excellence Award

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The Minnesota State Bar Association recognized Third Judicial District Judge Matthew J. Opat with its Professional Excellence Award in 2022. The Award recognizes attorneys who improve the administration of justice and practice of law, promote access to justice, serve and govern the profession, and benefit the community.



# MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

2022 Annual Report to the Community

Produced by the State Court Administrator's Office

July 2023