

# Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity Update

July 2011 - December 2012



**MINNESOTA  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

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

[www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov)

# 2011-2012 Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity Update



## MINNESOTA JUDICIAL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION LOCATIONS:

State Court Administrator's Office, Supreme Court and Court of Appeals - Minnesota Judicial Center, St. Paul

First Judicial District - Hastings

Second Judicial District - St. Paul

Third Judicial District - Rochester

Fourth Judicial District - Minneapolis

Fifth Judicial District - Mankato

Sixth Judicial District - Duluth

Seventh Judicial District - St. Cloud

Eighth Judicial District - Willmar

Ninth Judicial District - Bemidji

Tenth Judicial District - Ramsey

## A Message from the Chief Justice, State Court Administrator and Committee for Equality and Justice Co-Chairs

Dear Fellow Minnesotans:

It is no surprise to hear that Minnesota's population of 5.3 million is experiencing major demographic shifts. One of the most striking of these changes is in the state's racial and ethnic diversity. Although Minnesota is still not as racially or ethnically diverse as other parts of the nation, the percentage of residents of color is changing at a great rate in Minnesota. Between 2000 and 2010, the State's population of color grew by 55 percent.

Another trend relates to our aging population. It is estimated that by the year 2030, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 will nearly double.

These changes provide opportunities for us to reaffirm our responsibility to address the needs of our court customers. In addition to being proactive and responsive to our court customers, we must also keep in mind the changing needs of our workforce.

This edition of the Diversity Update provides an overview of efforts across the Judicial Branch to prepare for and address these changing demographics. Our efforts are helping to ensure that we continue to provide a court system that is accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed for all residents of Minnesota.

Lorie Skjerven Gildea  
Chief Justice  
Minnesota Supreme Court

Jeff Shorba  
State Court Administrator

Judge Tanya Bransford  
Committee for Equality and  
Justice Co-Chair

Judge Mary Vasaly  
Committee for Equality and  
Justice Co-Chair



## JUDICIAL BRANCH VISION

The general public and those who use the court system will refer to it as accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.

## JUDICIAL BRANCH MISSION

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

# 2011-2012 Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity Update

## INTRODUCTION

This Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity Update details the diversity and inclusion efforts undertaken by the Minnesota Judicial Branch in support of the Judicial Branch's Strategic Plan between July 2011 and December 2012.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Over the past 18 months, several members of the ten Judicial District Equal Justice Committees, the Judicial Branch Committee for Equality and Justice and others have participated in community involvement initiatives. These opportunities promote open communication and encourage interaction between judges, court employees and individuals from diverse backgrounds.



### Data Collection and Analysis

The Committee for Equality and Justice Data Collection and Analysis Subcommittee conducted two public hearings to obtain data and information from community experts. Approximately 140 legal professionals, community members and justice partners attended the October 2011 [Racial Disparities, Data and the Criminal Justice System](#) event. Approximately 25 people attended the November 2011 hearing on [Data Needs and the Court System](#). Presenters at the public hearings provided a baseline of the data available on ethnicity, age, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, race and gender.

### Second Judicial District

The Second Judicial District Equal Justice Committee was an active participant in the Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative. This initiative exists to address ethnic and racial disparities in the juvenile justice system, including the disproportionate confinement of juveniles of color in detention facilities.

## COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

In June 2010, the Minnesota Judicial Council established the Committee for Equality and Justice. The Committee was created to advance the Judicial Branch's efforts to eliminate from court operations bias that is based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation and any other status protected by law.

### The 33-member committee is charged with:

1. Ensuring equal access to the courts and a fair and impartial courtroom;
2. Providing fair treatment of court users and employees;
3. Recommending education programs and course materials for judges and Judicial Branch employees;
4. Continuing to implement and monitor the recommendations of the Minnesota Task Force on Gender Fairness in the Courts;
5. Continuing to implement and monitor the recommendations of the Race Bias Task Force;
6. Promoting diversity in the appointments to Judicial Branch committees and boards to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
7. Promoting diversity in selection and retention of court employees to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
8. Promoting diversity in the selection of judges to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
9. Promoting a high level of trust and public confidence in the judicial system.

### The Committee for Equality and Justice consists of six subcommittees:

1. Data Collection and Analysis
2. Elimination of Barriers to Access
3. Disability
4. Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity
5. Racial Fairness
6. Gender Fairness

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## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT GROUPS

Representatives from across the Judicial Branch participate in groups such as:

***Alliance for Cooperation & Collaboration in Employment & State Services (ACCESS):*** A workgroup of state agencies charged with creating and maintaining diversity and equal opportunity best practices to achieve the goal of recruiting, hiring, developing and retaining a diverse workforce.

***Multicultural Forum on Workplace Diversity:*** The largest diversity and inclusion conference in the country that exists to provide a compelling learning experience fostering business and thought leadership in workplace diversity and inclusion.

***Boomers Mean Business Forum:*** In partnership with the Department of Human Service's "Aging 2030," an annual forum to align systems and services with demographic changes.

***Minnesota Department of Human Rights Symposium:*** Annual event for attorneys, employers, educators, and others concerned with human rights and social justice focused on the latest updates and trends on human rights issues.

***Twin Cities Diversity Roundtable (TCDR):*** Best-practice sharing through bi-monthly meetings with local public and private sector diversity practitioners.

### Third Judicial District

The Third Judicial District Equal Justice Committee worked with local school districts to translate truancy policies into other languages, and is working to develop a video to educate the Somali community about truancy laws in Minnesota. In addition, a subcommittee is meeting with members of the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association in Rochester to discuss ways to assist with educating the Somali community about the state judicial system.

### Sixth Judicial District

The Sixth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee received a three-year grant for a *Racial Improvement Project* to address racial inequality, particularly in Native American and African American communities. The committee is also working on a Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

### Tenth Judicial District

The Tenth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee conducted a [Community Dialogue Session](#) on February 25, 2012, attended by approximately 50 community members. The event continued a dialogue between the Judicial District and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.

Other highlights included hosting an Ask-A-Lawyer Day for the public to receive legal advice on April 7 and October 6, 2012. The committee also held Mock Court Days and hosted several volunteer speakers:

- Pamela Alexander of the Council on Crime and Justice presented on expungements;
- John Keller of the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota presented on immigration topics;
- Andre Koen of Anoka County provided diversity training; and
- Alexander Maldonado of the Department of Human Services spoke about Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs.



## EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEES

Each judicial district has established an Equal Justice Committee to advance efforts of equality and promote multicultural understanding and competency among judges and court employees. The District Equal Justice Committees may come to the Committee for Equality and Justice and/or its subcommittees for advice, counsel and exchange of ideas. The combined groups meet on an annual basis.

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## INCREASING ACCESS TO JUSTICE: AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) REQUESTS

At the direction of the State Court Administrator's Office and by request of the CEJ Disability subcommittee, a simplified process for court users to make ADA requests was created in September 2012. Court users may now complete an [ADA contact listing and public web-site](#) or [ADA Request form \(electronic and paper\)](#). Judicial Branch ADA Contacts are receiving training on the use of an Outcome Reporting Tool to track the outcome of ADA accommodation requests.

The resources listed above are available upon request or on the Judicial Branch's homepage at [www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov).

## EDUCATION

Providing employees with educational opportunities to increase their cultural competence increases their ability to deliver culturally sensitive service to the public.

The Judicial Branch Strategic Plan has included Implicit Bias training. This training has been presented through: the Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM) Conference for Court Managers; the Annual Judges Conference; the Fourth Judicial District Judges Spring Retreat; and with judges in the Sixth Judicial District.

Branch-wide diversity and inclusion training is available for all employees through quarterly *Why Diversity Matters* webinars, as well as recorded trainings on *ADA Accommodations for the Public* and *Limited English Proficiency Resources*.

### Judicial Branch CourtNet Diversity Website:

An intranet site is maintained for judges and employees to access a wealth of information:

- Judicial Branch Diversity Statement
- Diversity Efforts and Resources
- [Calendar of Events](#) of statewide events and holidays
- [Diversity Links](#) for various groups and cultures

## RECENT EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS:

- Respectful Workplace Training
- Valuing Diversity
- Generations Working Together
- Bridges Over Poverty
- Exploring Latino's Fear and Suspicion Upon Having Contact with Minnesota's Court System
- Understanding Clients with Disabilities
- Working with Karen Clients
- Understanding Homelessness
- Helping Customers with Limited English Proficiency
- Little Things Mean A Lot: What are Micro-Inequities?
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- The New Science of Unconscious Bias
- Arab Culture Workshop
- Getting to Know the Muslim Culture
- A Taste of Okinawa - Learning More about the Japanese Culture
- Annual Judges Conference: Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence Issues; LGBT Issues in the Courts
- Annual Judicial Decision Making Education Program includes training on ethics and bias, with an emphasis on specific topics (i.e. poverty, gender, etc.)



## ON-DEMAND TRAINING

Recorded trainings are available to judges and employees on a variety of diversity-related topics and are accessible at any time. The *Cultural Perspectives* series provides training on working with court users from various backgrounds. All recorded trainings are available via the Judicial Branch Intranet.



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## OTHER INITIATIVES:

### *Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Plan Updates:*

- LEP plans are maintained by each court to assess how services are delivered to the non-English speaking public outside of the courtroom.
- A branch-wide LEP survey was conducted to assess resource utilization.

### *Policy and Procedures Updates:*

- The [Racial, Ethnic and Gender Fairness Policy](#) was updated to be reflective of all protected classes.
- The [Non-Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) was updated to reinforce the organization's expectations in preventing discrimination and harassment.

### *Diversity Bibliography*

The State Law Library maintains a listing of materials which are available upon request ([www.mn.gov/lawlib](http://www.mn.gov/lawlib)). Information includes links to articles about diversity in the law and in the workplace/

### *National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts*

The Committee for Equality and Justice sends one or more representatives to the annual conference to learn about best practices from courts across the country. One of the roles of the Consortium is to serve as a central forum for the exchange of information relative to identifying and eliminating racial and ethnic bias in the courts.

## RECRUITMENT

As court users become more diverse, so does the need to attract, recruit, and retain employees reflective of the communities served. The Judicial Branch works continuously to monitor and enhance diversity-specific content in job postings as well as on the Judicial Branch public Website for employment and volunteer, intern and student worker inquiries.

A key recruitment strategy involves working to build relationships with local community organizations. One way the Branch makes these connections is through the Community Resource Guide, a resource of over 200 community-based organizations for sharing job postings. The Second Judicial District has also created a Diversity Plan Recruitment Guide for managers, supervisors and judges.

In October 2012, representatives of the Judicial Branch attended the Hmong Resource Fair and the University of Minnesota Government Job Fair. The goal of participating in the events is to encourage individuals to consider a career in the courts and help prospective employees move beyond a commonly held perception that the Judicial Branch employs only judges and attorneys.

The Judicial Branch promotes itself as an employer of choice to students through programs such as:

- Judge visits to schools
- Cristo del Rey Hire4Ed Program
- Achieve!Minneapolis Step-Up Program
- Career exploration with students from William Mitchell College of Law's Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) program

The Judicial Branch's Volunteer, Intern, and Student Worker (VIS) Program helps provide a pipeline of potential job applicants with court experience. Goals of the VIS Program include:

- Increasing diversity (racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, generational, etc.)
- Providing assistance to managers and supervisors
- Cultivating community relationships

## PARTICIPATION IN THE STATE-TRIBAL COURT FORUM

Providing information to State Court judges and staff on State-Tribal Court issues is important to help build cooperation and communication between the two courts and to provide greater access to justice to the citizens of this state. The Judicial Branch will continue its work to foster relationships with local American Indian communities and Tribal Governments.

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## JUDICIAL DISTRICT DIVERSITY CONTACTS

**First Judicial District:** Brian Jones, Assistant District Administrator  
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**Second Judicial District:** Sharon Harper, Human Resources Manager  
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**Third Judicial District:** Sara Daley, Human Resources Coordinator  
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## STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE CONTACTS

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## EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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If you have any questions about this report or other diversity-related matters, please contact:  
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