



Minnesota Judicial Branch
STRATEGIC PLAN
shared values • shared priorities • shared purpose

FY20-21



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Letter from the Chief Justice

Dear Fellow Minnesotans:

I am pleased to share the FY20-21 Strategic Plan for the Minnesota Judicial Branch. The court system in Minnesota is nationally recognized for its professionalism, efficiency, and innovation. That national reputation is a result of deliberate and planned strategic vision. We regularly assess our work, processes, and systems to ensure we are meeting the high expectations and needs of Minnesotans. The FY20-21 Strategic Plan is our most recent reflection of what Minnesotans can expect to see from their court system as we continue to innovate, develop, and modernize.

In the last decade we have made significant technological leaps, focused on the people we serve and on our core mission: To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies. We are committed to continuing to reduce administrative costs, increasing our efficiency, and making use of new technologies and data to improve service to court users.

Maintaining and expanding access to justice, ensuring the effective administration of justice, and enhancing public trust and confidence are the strategic goals we will continue to strive for in the next biennium. To fulfill our Strategic Plan, we will rely upon the support of our partners in the Executive and Legislative branches, along with our justice system partners.

Our Strategic Plan comes as a result of months of conversations, visioning, meetings, and planning by court staff, administrative staff, State Court Administration, judicial officers, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Minnesota Judicial Council. The resulting Plan reflects our shared vision, shared priorities, and shared purpose for this biennium.

Thank you for your review of our Plan and your interest in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Sincerely,

Lorie S. Gildea

Chief Justice



Judicial Council Membership for FY20

Hon. Lorie S. Gildea (Chair)
Chief Justice, Supreme Court

Hon. Jamie Anderson
Judge, Fourth District

Hon. Douglas Meslow
Chief Judge, Tenth District

Hon. G. Barry Anderson
Associate Justice, Supreme Court

Hon. Michelle Dietrich
Chief Judge, Fifth District

Hon. Krista Martin
Judge, Tenth District

Hon. Edward Cleary
Chief Judge, Court of Appeals

Hon. Sally Tarnowski
Chief Judge, Sixth District

Hon. John Hoffman
Judge, Tenth District

Hon. Lucinda Jesson
Judge, Court of Appeals

Hon. Leslie Beiers
Judge, Sixth District

Jeffrey G. Shorba
State Court Administrator

Hon. Kathryn Messerich
Chief Judge, First District

Hon. Jay Carlson (Vice Chair)
Chief Judge, Seventh District

AnnMarie O'Neil
Clerk of Appellate Courts

Hon. John Guthmann
Chief Judge, Second District

Hon. Dwayne Knutsen
Chief Judge, Eighth District

Heather Kendall
District Administrator, Second District

Hon. Jodi Williamson
Chief Judge, Third District

Hon. Tamara Yon
Chief Judge, Ninth District

Sarah Lindahl Pfeiffer
District Administrator, Fourth District

Hon. Ivy Bernhardson
Chief Judge, Fourth District

Hon. Shari Schluchter
Judge, Ninth District

Tim Ostby
District Administrator, Seventh & Eighth districts

Karen Messner
Court Administrator, McLeod & Sibley counties



Introduction

Vision, Mission, & Core Values

Introduction

The Minnesota Judicial Council began the process of developing this Strategic Plan by forming a Strategic Planning Workgroup, which was overseen by the Chief Justice. The Workgroup reviewed the FY18-19 Strategic Plan to determine whether the initiatives would be completed by the end of the FY19 biennium, and whether any of the initiatives should be continued as strategic initiatives in the FY20-21 plan. The Workgroup also assessed new initiatives and crafted a robust and forward-looking Plan.

This Strategic Plan sets forth the shared vision, shared priorities, and shared purpose that will lead the Minnesota Judicial Branch in this biennium. In support of three broad objectives, the Judicial Council also adopted priorities to support each goal, as well as initiatives that will be undertaken in the next two years to help achieve these desired outcomes.

The strategic goals, priorities, and supportive initiatives of the FY20-21 Strategic Plan are designed to support the vision, mission, and core values of the Minnesota Judicial Branch. Strategic goals are the overarching values the Minnesota Judicial Branch will strive for in FY20-21. Priorities are the more specific efforts that reflect the work toward the strategic goals. Supportive initiatives are the tactical work and efforts that the Minnesota Judicial Branch will undertake in FY20-21.

Vision

The court system will be accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.

Mission

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

Core Values

Core values that the judicial system must embrace if it is to perform successfully its unique role in society:

- Equal Justice for All
- Public Trust and Confidence
- Innovative
- Collaborative

Strategic Goal 1 – Access to Justice

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

Ensuring access to justice for all is an enduring commitment for Minnesota’s court system. It is also an increasingly challenging concern given changing court customer¹ expectations, shifting demographics and increased competition for scarce resources. Ensuring access to justice also requires keeping our courthouses safe.

Priority 1A for Strategic Goal 1

Modify access and service delivery levels in the context of technology developments, demographics, business process changes, and limited state resources.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 1A

- i. Explore options for more effective judicial resource allocation.
- ii. Examine ways to maximize services provided for judicial officers.
- iii. Identify, secure funding for, and implement courthouse security measures.
- iv. Implement customer-focused website updates.

Priority 1B for Strategic Goal 1

Provide resources to improve accessibility to the courts for self-represented litigants and vulnerable adults.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 1B

- i. Promote access to pro bono and self-help services.
- ii. Explore role flexibility for professionals in the Civil Justice System, e.g. creation of expanded paralegal roles.

Strategic Goal 2 – Effective Administration of Justice

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

Over the last two decades, Minnesota courts have worked diligently to become increasingly efficient and effective. The Judicial Branch is focused on being a well-managed court system that seeks innovative ways to promote justice for individual litigants in individual cases.

¹ The term *court customer* is used in this document to refer broadly to those who use court services – such as litigants, attorneys, justice partners, and members of the public who are accessing court records or information. The Judicial Branch recognizes that many court users may not consider themselves to be *customers* of the court system. However, the Judicial Branch chooses to use the term *court customer* to reflect its commitment to providing high-quality service, treating court users with dignity and respect, and maintaining the public’s trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Priority 2A for Strategic Goal 2

Expand oneCourtMN to establish a high-quality, consistent, and convenient external court customer experience.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 2A

- i. Support efforts to stabilize funding for Treatment Courts.
- ii. Produce a consistent user service experience throughout the state, through the use of technology, cross-county and district collaborations, and implementation of uniform court business practices.
- iii. Examine ways that current laws, court rules, and court processes can be changed to simplify the processing of family court cases.
- iv. Support court interpreter program initiatives aimed at effective administration of justice that ensure high-quality, consistent, and convenient services to limited English proficiency litigants.
- v. Explore, identify, and recommend cost effective improvements to mandated psychological/psychiatric services while continuing to provide high-quality services.

Priority 2B for Strategic Goal 2

Explore cost effective and efficient ways to use court operations resources to carry out high-quality, consistent, and convenient internal customer services.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 2B

- i. Explore cost effective and efficient ways to create and maintain the court record.
- ii. Attract and retain quality employees.
- iii. Support educational and development opportunities for judges and employees.

Priority 2C for Strategic Goal 2

Maintain a strong and secure cyber security infrastructure to effectively protect the data and records of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 2C

- i. Implement cyber security strategies to protect Branch data and records.

Strategic Goal 3 – Public Trust & Accountability

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

The Judicial Branch is accountable to the public. An overwhelming majority of Minnesotans have confidence in the state's judicial branch as an institution. It is critical that the Judicial Branch maintain and continuously improve public trust and accountability. The Judicial Branch must meet this challenge by collaborating with court customers to eliminate disparities in the court system.

Priority 3A Strategic Goal 3

Seek input from court customers on court practices and collaborate to identify, reduce, and eliminate disparities in the court system.

Supportive Initiatives for Priority 3A

- ii. Utilize Access and Fairness Survey results and take actions to promote public trust and accountability.
- iii. Support the Committee for Equality and Justice's FY20-21 Strategic Plan.
- iv. Monitor implementation of the Pretrial Release Initiative recommendations.

View the Minnesota Judicial Branch FY20-21 Strategic Plan online and learn more about the Minnesota Judicial Council at:
www.mncourts.gov/MinnesotaJudicialCouncil