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AT A GLANCE

- Each year about 1.3 million cases are filed in District Courts.
- District Court proceedings are held in 104 locations throughout all 87 Minnesota counties.
- District Courts are organized into ten judicial districts for administrative purposes.
- There are 290 judges at the District Court level.
- District courts serve all Minnesota citizens.

PURPOSE

District Courts are the backbone of the state’s court system, processing roughly 1.3 million case filings every year.

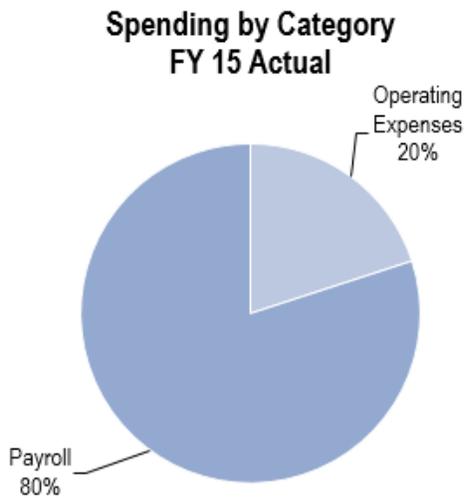
District Courts provide access to the justice system across the state, with courthouses located in all 87 counties. For administrative purposes, district courts are divided between ten judicial districts.

District Court judges hear everything from traffic tickets, to civil and family conflicts, to first degree murder trials. Some District Courts may have separate divisions, such as criminal, civil, probate, family, and juvenile courts.

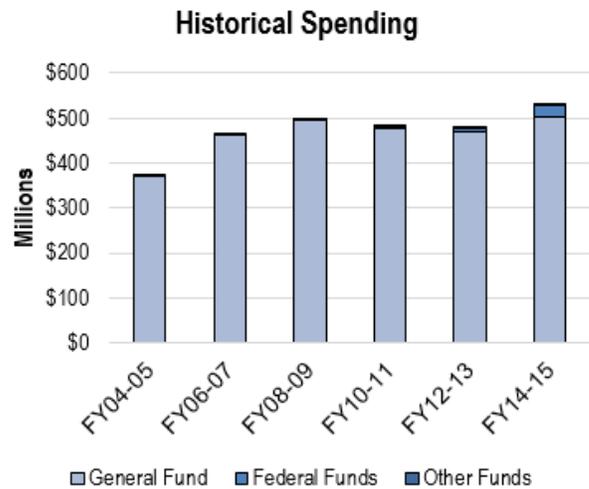
A chief judge serves as the administrative head in each judicial district. Judicial District Administrators assist the Chief Judge in carrying out his/her responsibilities. Court administration staff at the county level manage scheduling, case flow, finance, personnel and juries.

The work of the District Courts promotes **strong and stable families and communities**, helps to insure **people in Minnesota are safe** and provides **efficient and accountable government services**.

BUDGET



Source: SWIFT



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The District Courts spent \$283 million in FY 2015. Of this amount, \$266 million (94%) was from state general fund appropriations, with the remaining \$17 million (6%) funded from various sources such as federal and local government grants, and foundations.

STRATEGIES

The mission of the Judicial Branch is “*To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.*” The District Court conducts its functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission and to support the statewide outcomes of promoting strong families and communities, insuring people in Minnesota are safe and providing efficient and accountable government services:

1. Access to Justice – Ensuring the justice system is open, affordable, effective and accountable to the people it serves.
2. Administration of Justice for Effective Results – Working across branches of government and with other justice system stakeholders to improve outcomes for and the delivery of services for children, families, and alcohol and other addicted offenders who come to its courts.
3. Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality – Through education, outreach to diverse communities and a commitment to effective and efficient customer service and accountability, improving citizens’ understanding of and confidence in the Third Branch of government.

To further the Judicial Branch’s mission, many District Courts operate or partner in drug court programs, such as Adult Substance Abuse Courts, DWI Courts, Mental Health Courts, and Veterans Courts.

RESULTS

District Courts conduct frequent assessments to ensure efficient court operations. It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to establish core performance goals and to monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals in order to ensure accountability of the Branch, improve overall operations of the court and enhance the public’s trust and confidence in the Judiciary. Throughout the year the District Courts are directed to review performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch’s governing body) twice a year. An important goal is whether courts handle cases in a timely manner.

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Results	Statewide Clearance Rate – The Clearance Rate measures whether courts are disposing of as many cases as are filed in the same year.	94%	96%	2010 and 2014
Results	Statewide Time to Disposition - Time to Disposition assesses the length of time it takes a court to process cases.	98% disposed of within Judicial Branch time limits.	97% disposed of within Judicial Branch time limits.	2010 and 2014

Data are from the *Judicial Branch 2015 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Report* and the *Judicial Branch 2011 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Report*. The reports can be found at www.mncourts.gov/.

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI provides the legal authority for the District Court: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6.