

<http://www.bjs.state.mn.us/>

**AT A GLANCE**

The Board on Judicial Standards:

- Investigates complaints of judicial misconduct or disability
- Seeks or imposes discipline on judges when appropriate
- Advises and educates judges on proper conduct
- Has jurisdiction over all Minnesota trial and appellate judges (315 positions), retired judges in active service (90), referees, and other judicial officers.

**PURPOSE**

The mission of the Board on Judicial Standards is to maintain public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Minnesota judiciary by enforcing the Minnesota Code of Judicial Conduct and by educating and advising judges how to comply with the Code.

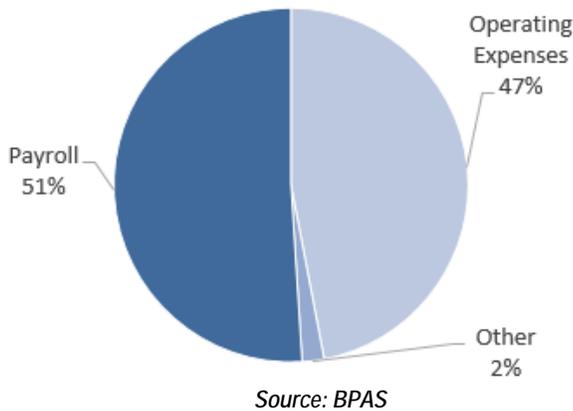
A society cannot function without a fair and effective way to resolve disputes. Acceptance of judicial rulings is based on public recognition that the judiciary and the court system are worthy of respect and trust. Public confidence in our judicial system directly depends on the proper conduct of our judges.

The Minnesota Constitution authorizes the Legislature to provide for the retirement or discipline of any judge who is disabled or guilty of conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. The Legislature created the Board on Judicial Standards to carry out this task. The Minnesota Supreme Court adopted the Code of Judicial Conduct which sets forth the standards for judges to follow.

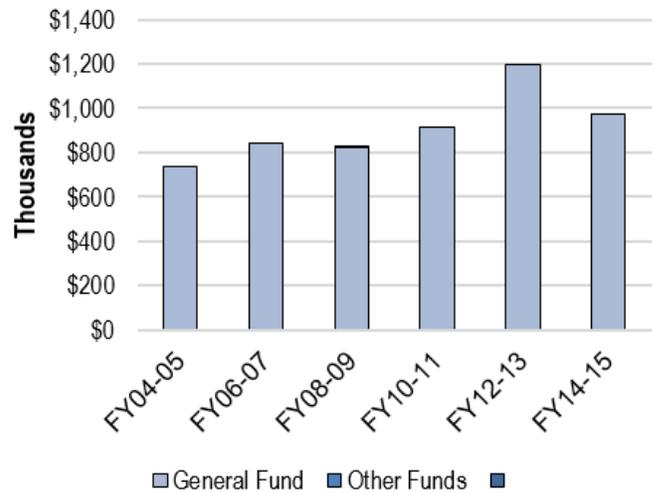
The Board has ten members: one judge from the Court of Appeals, three district court judges, two lawyers, and four citizens who are not judges or lawyers. All members are appointed by the Governor and, except for the judges, require confirmation by the Senate. The Board is supported by an Executive Secretary, a Staff Attorney, and an Executive Assistant. The Board on Judicial Standards supports the statewide outcome of efficient and accountable government services.

**BUDGET**

**Spending by Category  
FY 15 Actual**



**Historical Spending**



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

## STRATEGIES

To accomplish its mission, the Board uses the following strategies:

- The Board promptly reviews complaints alleging judicial misconduct or disability, conducting investigations when necessary.
- The Board uses fair and open procedures that respect the judge's right to due process.
- If the Board finds misconduct, the Board may issue a public reprimand or private discipline if the misconduct is isolated and non-serious.
- In serious cases, the Board files a formal complaint against the judge, which can result in a public hearing by a panel and a recommendation to the Minnesota Supreme Court for discipline such as censure, suspension, or removal from office.
- The Board and its Executive Secretary advise and educate judges on applications of the Code of Judicial Conduct.
- The Board is not a substitute for appeal. The Board does not review judicial decisions for legal error unless the judge acts in bad faith.

Beginning in fiscal year 2014, the Board successfully reduced its expenditures for litigation by increasing its educational activities and through the thorough preparation of cases before seeking public discipline.

The Board continually strives to become more transparent to the judges, the public, and the Legislature. In 2013 the Board created a new website with greatly revised and supplemented content to display more information about the Board's activities and to provide better guidance on ethics issues faced by judges.

## RESULTS

| <i>Type of Measure</i> | <i>Name of Measure</i>   | <i>Previous</i> | <i>Current</i> | <i>Dates</i> |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Quantity               | Formal advisory opinions (published)   | 2               | 2              | 2014-2015    |
| Quantity               | Informal advisory opinions to individual judges  | 93              | 83             | 2014-2015    |
| Quantity               | Supreme Court discipline   | 1               | 1              | 2014-2015    |
| Quantity               | Public reprimands  | 2               | 1              | 2014-2015    |
| Quantity               | Private admonitions, letters of caution, deferred dispositions   | 7               | 4              | 2014-2015    |
| Quality                | Beginning in 2014, informal advisory opinions that were formerly rendered orally are now usually rendered in writing, with more thorough citations and analysis. |                 |                | 2014-2015    |

Performance Measures Notes:

The data shown is for calendar years 2014 (previous) and 2015 (current). The Board's activities in previous years are described in the Board's Annual Reports, available at the Board's website at <http://www.bjs.state.mn.us/>.

The Minnesota Constitution authorizes the Legislature to "provide for the retirement, removal, or other discipline of any judge who is disabled, incompetent, or guilty of conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice." Minn. Const. Art. 6, Sec. 9.

The 1971 Legislature created the Board on Judicial Standards to carry out this task. M.S. 490A.01-.03, [https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=490A&view=chapter&year=2013&keyword\\_type=all&keyword=490A.01](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=490A&view=chapter&year=2013&keyword_type=all&keyword=490A.01)

The Board operates under the Rules of Board ([https://www.revisor.mn.gov/court\\_rules/rule.php?name=prstan-toh](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/court_rules/rule.php?name=prstan-toh)) on Judicial Standards adopted by the Minnesota Supreme Court.