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AT A GLANCE

- The seven members of the Supreme Court review petitions in approximately 760 cases a year and accept review in about 1 in 8 cases.
- In 2015, 143 direct appeals and 615 petitions for further review were filed with the Supreme Court.
- The Chief Justice is the administrative head of the Judicial Branch, which includes 316 justices and judges and 2,500 employees.
- The Supreme Court serves all Minnesota citizens.

PURPOSE

The Supreme Court is the highest court in Minnesota, serving as the final guardian of the Minnesota Constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution.

The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in remedial cases as prescribed by law, appellate jurisdiction over all cases, and supervisory jurisdiction over all courts in the state. These cases can come from the Minnesota Court of Appeals, Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, Tax Court, Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board, and Board of Judicial Standards. Election contests and appeals for first-degree murder cases are automatically appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is solely responsible for the regulation of the practice of law and for judicial and lawyer discipline. The Court also promulgates rules of practice and procedure for the legal system in the state.

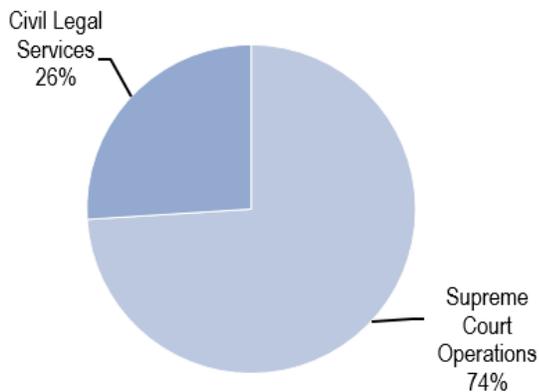
The Chief Justice serves as the chair of the Judicial Council, the policy making body for the Judicial Branch. The Chief Justice is responsible for supervising administrative operations of the state court system.

The Chief Justice is assisted by the State Court Administrator's Office, which provides the administrative infrastructure for the Judicial Branch. The State Court Administrator's Office is responsible for providing Judicial Branch finance, human resources, technology, education, communications, research/evaluation, caseload management and cross-district judicial assignments.

Supreme Court responsibilities contribute to **strong and stable families and communities**, and the administration of the state's court system ensures the **people in Minnesota are safe** and provides **efficient and accountable government services**.

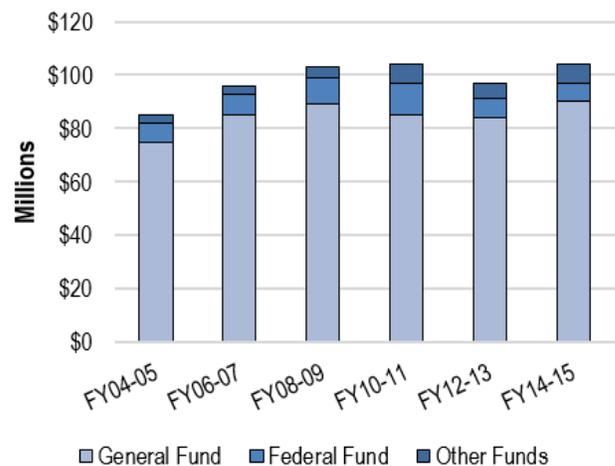
BUDGET

**Spending by Program
FY 15 Actual**



Source: SWIFT

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Supreme Court expended \$54 million in FY2015. Of this amount, \$47 million (87%) was from state general fund appropriations, with the remaining \$7 million (13%) being funded through various sources such as federal and local government grants, Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts, and fees.

STRATEGIES

As the state's highest court, the Supreme Court hears oral arguments in the State Capitol Courtroom and the Minnesota Judicial Center. The Supreme Court reviews matters on certiorari, meaning it reviews cases to set precedent, to clarify legal issues, to resolve statutory conflicts, and to answer constitutional questions.

In addition to hearing appeals, the Supreme Court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law, and making recommendations for improvement of the judicial system.

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 Supreme Court conducts its administrative functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission and to support the statewide outcome of strong families and communities:

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.

The Judicial Council – chaired by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court – conducts a rigorous strategic planning process that guides the work of the State Court Administrator's Office in support of the Judicial Branch's three strategic goals. The strategic plan is reviewed and updated biennially.

In recent years, as part of the Judicial Council's strategic planning, the Judicial Branch has begun implementing an ambitious reform agenda involving the use of technology and the re-engineering of business practices in a system-wide effort to expand services and ensure equal access to justice. The centerpiece of this effort – the eCourtMN Initiative – is transforming Minnesota's courts from a paper-based environment to an electronic information environment that will ensure convenient, timely, and appropriate access to case information for all stakeholders, and result in more timely and efficient processing of cases. Electronic filing of cases, at both the trial and appellate levels, became mandatory on July 1, 2016. Efforts continue to ensure convenient, timely, and appropriate access to case information for all stakeholders

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

Program: Supreme Court Operations

www.mncourts.gov/

AT A GLANCE

- In 2015, 143 direct appeals and 615 petitions for further review were filed with the Supreme Court.
- The Chief Justice is the administrative head of the Judicial Branch, which includes 316 justices and judges and 2,500 employees.
- The Supreme Court publicly disciplined 65 Minnesota lawyers in 2015.

PURPOSE & CONTEXT

The Supreme Court is the highest court in Minnesota, serving as the final guardian of the Minnesota Constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution.

The Supreme Court is solely responsible for the regulation of the practice of law and for judicial and lawyer discipline.

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 Supreme Court conducts its adjudicative and administrative functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission and to support the statewide outcome of strong families and communities:

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.

The Supreme Court serves all Minnesota citizens. The administrative and adjudicative functions of the Supreme Court support the following statewide outcomes:

- Strong and stable families and communities;
- People in Minnesota are safe; and
- Efficient and accountable government services.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Minnesota Supreme Court considers appeals from judgments from the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. It hears special term matters, motions, and petitions for extraordinary relief. The Supreme Court also hears mandatory cases, including first degree murder convictions and election contests. The Court promulgates rules of practice and procedure for the legal system in the state.

The Chief Justice is responsible for supervising administrative operations of the state court system. The Chief Justice serves as the chair of the Judicial Council, the policy making body for the Judicial Branch.

The Chief Justice is assisted by the State Court Administrator’s Office, which provides the administrative infrastructure for the Judicial Branch. The State Court Administrator’s Office is responsible for providing Judicial Branch finance, human resources, technology, education, communications, research/evaluation, caseload management and cross-district judicial assignments.

RESULTS

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 Supreme Court reviews performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch’s governing body) twice a year.

The Supreme Court adopted revised timing objectives in January, 2015 that were effective April 1, 2015. The new timing objectives identify the Court’s performance based on case type: Mandatory/Original Cases (e.g. First Degree Murder cases and Election Contests); Discretionary Cases (e.g. appeals from judgments from the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court); and Expedited Cases (Appeals in termination of parental rights and adoption cases).

There is no historic information available to compare the Supreme Court’s performance to past years because of the new timing objectives.

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Total Cases	Current	Dates
Results	<i>Mandatory/Original Cases</i> Ninety five percent of the cases will be disposed of within 180 days of submission to the Supreme Court.	30	88%	2015
Results	<i>Discretionary Cases</i> Ninety five percent of petitions for further review should be disposed of within sixty days of the filing of the request for review.	479	96%	2015
Results	<i>Expedited Cases</i> Ninety five percent of expedited appeals (termination of parental rights, adoptions) should be disposed of within 25 days of filing the appeal.	25	100%	2015

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

The Minnesota State Constitution, Article VI, provides the legal authority for the Supreme Court. M.S. 2.724 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=2.724> provides the legal authority for the chief justice’s administrative responsibilities. M.S. 480.05 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=480.05> provides legal authority for the Supreme Court’s rule making authority. M.S. 480.13-.17 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=480> provides legal authority for the position and duties of the state court administrator.

Program: Civil and Family Legal Services

www.mncourts.gov/

AT A GLANCE

- In 2015, Civil Legal Services served 46,881 households consisting of more than 115,000 people throughout all 87 Minnesota counties.
- There is one Civil Legal Services attorney for every 3,437 eligible clients, compared with one practicing attorney for every 363 Minnesotans.
- Eighteen percent (18%) of clients represented are seniors, 24% are people with disabilities, and 65% are women.

PURPOSE & CONTEXT

The statewide civil legal services network (CLS) is a core function of the justice system. It ensures access to justice for vulnerable Minnesotans and increases efficiency in the justice system. CLS focuses on resolving civil legal matters that directly affect the basic human needs for safety, shelter and household sustenance. All CLS clients have low incomes, disabilities, or are elderly. Network innovations to increase efficiency include expanded public access to services through technology, controlled cost through shared service coordination, and leveraging of volunteer resources.

The Supreme Court administers CLS funding. There are three sources of Court-administered funding: general fund, Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts and attorney registration fees. The Court administers these funds through its Legal Services Advisory Committee. By statute, 85% of the general fund support is distributed on a poverty population basis to the Minnesota Legal Services Coalition, six regional CLS organizations that provide a full range of civil legal help in all 87 counties. The remaining 15% of general fund support is awarded on a competitive basis to CLS organizations. CLS also receives funding from federal and local government grants, foundations, the United Way, law firms, corporations, and individual private donors.

SERVICES PROVIDED

CLS opens the doors of the justice system to the most vulnerable in our community. It creates strong and stable families and communities by helping people find solutions to civil legal disputes. In 2015, CLS provided legal representation and advice to 46,881 families and individuals. Additionally, CLS provided education and self-help services to nearly 449,000 Minnesotans. CLS attorneys and advocates work from offices throughout the state, giving direct service to people in all 87 Minnesota counties. CLS also developed, and is continuously expanding, a public internet resource, www.LawHelpMN.org. This website has dozens of self-help resources including easy-to-use legal forms, and is used by the court system, public libraries, and social service agencies as well as the general public.

CLS priorities are: helping victims of domestic violence achieve safety; preventing homelessness due to improper eviction or foreclosure; protecting vulnerable Minnesotans from financial exploitation; and maximizing the ability of people who are elderly or have disabilities to live safely and independently in their community. An essential part of the state’s domestic violence intervention system, CLS gives legal help to women and children served by the state’s network of domestic violence shelters and support programs. CLS has a similar relationship with social service systems that address homelessness or independent living for seniors or people with disabilities. The CLS partnership with the justice system is also critical. CLS creates efficiencies in the justice system by redirecting cases that are without merit or can be resolved in another manner, and by ensuring efficient use of the courts when CLS clients come before a judge. CLS also creates efficiency by providing essential infrastructure to leverage and support volunteer attorneys through training, mentoring, www.ProJusticeMN.org, and a new volunteer program Minnesota Legal Advice Online (MLAO).

In 2009, CLS met the legal need for one of every two eligible clients seeking services. By 2012, the gap had grown, and CLS met the need for only one of every three eligible clients seeking help. This gap persisted through 2014. In 2015, CLS narrowed this gap slightly by meeting the legal need for almost two of every five eligible clients seeking services. CLS still lags behind the 2009 level of service. CLS seeks to narrow the gap by increasing service capacity. CLS will also continue to create efficiencies through technological innovations, coordination, and leveraging volunteers.

RESULTS

Type of Measure	Name of Measure	Previous	Current	Dates
Results	Percentage of families and individuals served who successfully resolved critical legal problems.	89% of 48,043	89% of 46,881	2013 and 2015
Results	Number of children and women who are victims of domestic violence who achieved safety.	1,965	3,910	2013 and 2015
Results	Number of families and individuals faced with foreclosure or eviction who remained housed.	3,252	4,211	2013 and 2015
Results	Number of seniors and people with disabilities who continue to live safely and independently in the community.	3,587	3,500	2013 and 2015
Quantity	Number of people obtaining education and self-help resources about legal rights and responsibilities through technological innovation.	350,381	448,842	2013 and 2015

M.S. 480.24 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=480.24> to 480.244 <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=480.244> provides the legal authority for Civil and Family Legal Services.