
Report to the Community

The 2011 Annual Report of the Minnesota Judicial Branch



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL
BRANCH**

Letter from the Chief Justice

Dear fellow Minnesotans,



The 315 judges and 2,500 employees of the Minnesota Judicial Branch have been working hard to continue to fulfill our Constitutional charge to ensure “a remedy for all injuries or wrongs to person, property or character...promptly and without delay” in an era of shrinking resources.

These challenging economic times have given all of us in government an opportunity to improve how we do the people’s work. We, in the Judicial Branch, have embraced this opportunity. We are implementing state-of-the-art information technology to automate work once done by hand, eliminating redundancy and speeding case processing, and improving public access to the courts. We are employing innovative adjudicatory strategies to resolve cases faster and more effectively for the parties involved, and to improve public safety.

As a result, 2011 was a year of great progress. After several years of planning and preparation, many new efficiencies and innovations came to fruition, which are now lowering costs and streamlining case processing. This report details many of those innovations and the remarkable progress that has been made.

The Judicial Branch is committed to innovation and redesign to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Minnesota’s justice system. Minnesota’s Judicial Branch is necessary government, and it is good government.

Sincerely,

Lorie Skjerven Gildea
Chief Justice
Minnesota Supreme Court

The Minnesota Judicial Branch

By the Numbers

The Judicial Branch Mission

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

Judicial Branch FY2011 Budget

\$232,200,000 - District Courts
\$30,687,000 - Supreme Court/State Court Administration/State Law Library
\$10,068,000 - Court of Appeals
\$272,955,000 - Total

Judicial Branch Staff and Judges

2,536 - Permanent full-time employee positions authorized
315 - Number of authorized judgeships
Supreme Court- 7
Court of Appeals- 19
District (Trial) Courts- 289

Judicial Districts: 10

Number of Judicial Branch hearing facilities: 101

Oldest Courthouse: Washington County Courthouse, 101 West Pine Street, Stillwater, 1869.

Number of Courthouses on the National Register of Historic Places: 62

2011 Report to the Community

Minnesota's courts have a national reputation for professionalism, efficiency, and innovation. We have earned this reputation by taking seriously the need to periodically assess Judicial Branch performance and identify new and innovative ways of more effectively handling cases and delivering quality services as cost-efficiently as possible. Under the broad goals of Access to Justice; Administering Justice for Effective Results; and Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality the FY12-13 Judicial Branch Strategic Plan continues the Branch's tradition of self-assessment and improvement.

Every two years the Minnesota Judicial Branch adopts a strategic plan for the upcoming biennium. The year 2011 saw significant progress on many of the initiatives and goals established in Focus on the Future: Priorities and Strategies for Minnesota's Judicial Branch FY2010-2011.

Priorities & Strategies

Goal 1: Access to Justice – A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.

Data Sharing

The statewide implementation of the Web-based Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) in 2008 enabled the Judicial Branch to establish automated data sharing arrangements with other partners in the justice system. As a result, by the end of 2011, the Judicial Branch was exchanging more than 55,000 data messages each workday with our justice partners.

For example, this new information technology has enabled the Judicial Branch and the Department of Corrections (DOC) to electronically share information on offenders, helping to reduce errors and increase efficiency. In the second half of 2011, the DOC received 52,500 notifications about MNCIS case data and sent an average of 900 queries per month regarding information on offenders being sentenced to DOC facilities.



2011 Annual Report

“This is exactly the kind of efficiency we were aiming for when we created our new case management system,” said Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea. “For the first time we have the ability to share case information as soon as action is taken in the courtroom.”

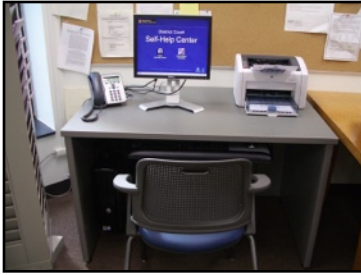
“Electronic court notifications have become an important tool of the Department of Corrections, allowing us to better do our job of holding an offender accountable and protecting the public through the timely and accurate administration of district court sentences,” said Patrick Courtney, Program Manager, Sentence Administration and Records, Minnesota Department of Corrections.

Other criminal justice system partners, including government agencies responsible for probation, law enforcement, prosecution, and public defense are also benefiting from the ability to obtain court case information quickly.

Other examples of automated data exchanges with justice system partners include, but are not limited to:

- Adult and juvenile case disposition data is shared with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA).
- Information regarding Domestic Abuse No Contact Orders is passed to the BCA, including a court-verified driver's license photo of the defendant, if available.
- Case data is passed to the BCA when there is a finding of incompetency, a dismissal or acquittal due to mental illness or deficiency, a civil commitment, or restoration of an individual's firearm rights in the criminal, juvenile, or probate/mental health case categories. The BCA passes the data to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) maintained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- Case information involving overdue fines or fees is passed to the Minnesota Department of Revenue, the Judicial Branch's official collection agent, when collection activity needs to be initiated or updated.
- Adult and juvenile disposition data on Department of Natural Resources (DNR) citations is passed to the DNR on a scheduled basis.
- Adult and juvenile convictions are passed to the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to be applied to driver's license records.
- Court actions that impact an individual's voting rights are passed to the Secretary of State, including legal name changes, voting rights removal due to felony convictions, civil commitments, guardianship judgments, and restoration of voting rights upon discharge of a felony sentence, or the end of an individual's commitment or guardianship status.

Self-Help Center



The Access to Justice goal of the strategic plan also called for expanding centralized self-represented litigant services to Minnesotans. As part of this ongoing effort, the Judicial Branch provides a Web-accessible Self-Help Center (www.mncourts.gov/selfhelp) that includes explanations, required forms, and tutorials on the most common types of court actions. In addition, every courthouse has a public access terminal that anyone can use to access this information. In 2011,

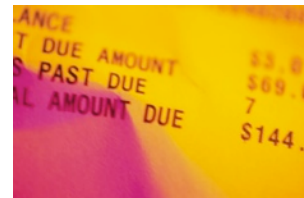
the Self-Help Center (SHC) was accessed 693,000 times, an increase of approximately 18 percent over the prior year.

Another service of the SHC staff is the review of court forms filled out by litigants for completeness and consistency. In 2011, SHC staff screened 1,402 forms as part of their efforts to assist self-represented litigants.

The Branch also operates a Self-Help Call Center through which court staff assists people with questions about common court matters. In 2011, the Call Center assisted 17,769 callers and responded to 3,725 e-mails, an increase of about 20 percent over the prior year.

Court Payment Center

2011 also saw the completion of the first phase of the Court Payment Center (CPC), which centralizes the processing of hundreds of thousands of payable citations filed each year in 85 district courts. In addition to requiring the participation of fewer court staff, the CPC allows for the payment of fines by credit card 24/7 through the Judicial Branch Website or over the phone, automates the calculation and distribution of fees to state and local government, and automates the referral of overdue fines to the Judicial Branch's collections agent. "We expect it will also lead to an increase in collections of fine payments, money that is badly needed by state and local governments," said State Court Administrator Sue Dosal.



The Court Payment Call Center, which began operation in Oct. 2009, logged its one millionth phone call on Nov. 22, 2011. The Call Center is the gateway to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, the tool that permits a caller to pay a citation with their credit card and allows callers to connect to a court representative about their citation. "The creation of the Call Center has enabled us to give people the assistance they need to pay their citation or get questions answered over the phone," said Dosal.

Re-engineering for Greater Efficiency

The Judicial Branch continues its focus on finding ways to address the expectations of the public, the business community, justice partners, and other stakeholders for the same 24/7 access and self-service capability that airlines, banks, grocery stores, and many businesses provide in a cost-effective manner.

2011 Annual Report

This focus is best showcased through our efforts to move the Judicial Branch from its historic framework of paper files to an electronic information environment (eCourtMN) in which judges, court staff, and court users will rely on a digital record.

In 2011, courts in the Second Judicial District (Ramsey County) and the Fourth Judicial District (Hennepin County) served as pilots for the voluntary eFiling of civil cases, and Dakota County District Court piloted the conversion of paper case files to digital images in the Branch case management system. In addition, the eFiling of citations by law enforcement and criminal complaints by prosecutors continued to expand across the state.

Conservator Account Monitoring Preparation and Electronic Reporting

Since January 1, 2011, conservators appointed by courts statewide to make financial decisions for adults found unable to manage their financial affairs have completed their annual reports to the court online. The Conservator Account Monitoring Preparation and Electronic Reporting system (CAMPER) was developed as part of a Judicial Branch effort to improve conservatorship oversight and reduce administrative costs.

The CAMPER system provides a number of benefits to courts and conservators, including: deterring errors and possible exploitation, saving conservator and court staff time, reducing paperwork, allowing ready identification of overdue and incomplete reports, allowing ready access to expense and receipt details, allowing analysis across all or selected groups of conservators and conservatorships, and improving the Branch's ability to audit accounts.

Civil Justice Reform

In an effort to address concerns that the civil justice system has become too expensive for litigants and takes too long, the Minnesota Supreme Court's Civil Justice Reform Task Force was charged with making recommendations to streamline civil case processing. The Task Force submitted a number of recommended changes to the Supreme Court in December 2011.

Strategic Goal 2: Administering Justice For Effective Results - Adopting approaches and processes for the resolution of cases that enhance the outcomes for individual participants and the public.

Problem-Solving Courts

In recent years, new strategies have proven effective in achieving better outcomes for court participants who continually come back into the justice system because of underlying substance abuse, mental health, or other psychosocial problems. These strategies stress a collaborative, multidisciplinary, problem-solving approach for addressing the underlying problems, as well as the legal issues that bring these individuals into court. The coercive power of the court is used to require substance abuse treatment and frequent drug testing. Sanctions and incentives are also used to support the offender's transition to sober, law-abiding behavior.

2011 Annual Report

One example of problem-solving courts is drug court. Approximately 1,500 people participated in Judicial Branch drug court programs during 2011. About 300 participants successfully completed their program during the year. Research has shown that defendants who participate in drug courts are less likely to reoffend.

Veterans Court

The Judicial Branch's first Veterans Court, a collaborative effort between justice system partners and the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to more effectively address cases involving military veterans, began operating in 2011. The Rand Corporation estimates that more than one-third of veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom suffer from a traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder. Fewer than half have reported or been treated for their condition. Without treatment, many of these psychologically-injured veterans act out in reckless, self-destructive, and sometimes violent ways that can bring them into contact with the criminal justice system.

In its first year, Hennepin County Veterans Court screened 109 defendants to determine an appropriate treatment plan. Most defendants were then linked with VA medical services or other community-based services. Fourteen veterans began recommended treatment plans, participated in Veterans Court for a period of time, and then elected to discontinue their participation. At the end of the first year, 71 veterans were actively participating in Veterans Court. Two participants had completed program requirements and graduated from the program.

Operational Drug Courts

Adult

Crow Wing County
Dakota County
Hennepin County
Itasca County
Ramsey County
St. Louis County - South
St. Louis County - North
Stearns County

Multi-County Adult

Brown-Nicollet-Watonwan Counties
Clay-Becker counties
Faribault-Martin-Jackson Counties
Southwest Community Drug Court (Lincoln-Lyon-Redwood counties)

Juvenile

Brown County
Chisago County
Dakota County
Ramsey County

Family Dependency

Blue Earth County
Dakota County
Koochiching County
Otter Tail County
Stearns County
St. Louis County – Duluth

DWI Court

Beltrami County
Cass County
Crow Wing County
Hennepin County
Lake of the Woods County
Otter Tail County
Ramsey County
Roseau County
St. Louis County – South

DWI Hybrid (Combination of Adult Drug and DWI Court)

Aitkin County
Blue Earth County
Dodge County
Koochiching County
Wabasha County

Family Early Case Management/Early Neutral Evaluation

Family Early Case Management is a district court model for processing marital dissolution cases more effectively and efficiently, especially in cases involving disputed issues, such as custody and parenting time. It involves active judicial management to help facilitate early settlement of the disputed issues.

A component of this model is the use of Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) to help litigants settle their disputes early in marriage dissolution cases as an alternative to the expensive, time-consuming, and often acrimonious process of conducting custody evaluations. ENE is a short-term, confidential, evaluative process using a male and female team of experienced custody evaluators to facilitate resolution of custody and parenting time matters.



Jurisdictions utilizing these strategies report high rates of early settlement of these often difficult cases. By the end of 2011, programs were offered in all 10 judicial districts and in nearly 60 percent of Minnesota counties.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals Family Law Appellate Mediation Program

The Court of Appeals Family Law Appellate Mediation Program mirrors the early neutral evaluation and other alternative dispute resolution processes being applied in the district courts.

Referral to mediation takes place after the statement of the case has been filed and the filing fee has been paid, but occurs before the briefing stage and before litigants incur the substantial costs of ordering transcripts from the district court where the case originated. Although the mediation involves a cost, which is shared by the appellant and the respondent, research shows that appellate family law mediation has a great potential to save litigants significant time and money. Cases that do not settle are returned to the regular appellate process for briefing and oral arguments. The mediation program moved from pilot status to permanent in January 2011. During the pilot period, the program had an overall settlement rate of 52 percent. The Court provides litigants with helpful information on the program by mail and through its Website.

Strategic Goal 3: Public Trust, Accountability, and Impartiality - A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch strives to establish core performance goals, and monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals, in order to ensure accountability of the Branch, improve overall operations of the courts, and enhance the public's trust and confidence in the judiciary. Current efforts relate to timeliness in case resolution; maintaining accurate,

complete, and timely records; fairness and equity in case disposition; summoning jurors who are representative of the population from which the jury is drawn; and maintaining a quality court workplace environment. Performance Measures for the Judicial Branch can be accessed at www.mncourts.gov in the “Publications and Reports” section of the Website.

Community Outreach

In order to help the public better understand the role of the courts in our democracy and in the justice system, the Judicial Branch each year undertakes a number of initiatives. In 2011, judges and court staff spoke at more than 450 events at schools, and in front of civic and community groups, reaching over 12,000 Minnesotans.

Supreme Court Traveling Oral Argument Program

Every spring and fall the Supreme Court holds an oral argument in a high school. The arguments are followed by a question and answer session with students, lunch with students, and visits to classrooms. In addition, the arguments are often broadcast by a local television station. During the fall visit, the Court hosts a community dinner open to the public.



The members of the Minnesota Supreme Court with their student hosts at Eden Prairie High School.

In May 2011, the Supreme Court’s traveling oral argument program was held at Eden Prairie High School. In October, the court visited Brainerd High School. A community dinner attended by more than 175 area citizens was held at Central Lakes College in Brainerd in conjunction with the visit. More than 2,400 students participated in these two events.

The Court also holds oral arguments at area law schools, giving law students an opportunity to observe the court in action and to interact with the justices.

In another effort to expand public understanding of the Court’s work, all Supreme Court oral arguments are recorded and made available for viewing at www.mncourts.gov, the Judicial Branch Website. In 2011, Supreme Court oral argument videos were viewed more than 11,900 times.

2011 Annual Report

Tours

The Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul is the home of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and State Court Administration. In 2011, more than 1,200 people, including 1,100 Minnesota school students, visited the Judicial Center and the historic courtroom in the State Capitol. Visits and tours are arranged through the State Court Information Office.

Partnerships

The Judicial Branch partners with several organizations throughout the year, providing support through use of court facilities and judge and staff volunteers. During the 2011 YMCA Youth in Government Model Assembly program held at the Minnesota Capitol complex, Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges helped prepare students for service as judges, and administered oaths of office to Youth Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branch officials.

High School Legislative Page Program

Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges spoke throughout the 2011 Legislative Session to more than 175 high school juniors participating in the Minnesota House of Representatives High School Legislative Page Program.

Volunteering in the Community

Minnesota Supreme Court justices and Court of Appeals judges, retired judges, law clerks, and court staff served lunch to more than 600 persons at the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul on May 27, 2011. Judges and staff have served more than 4,700 meals during these events over the past nine years.



Court members and staff at the Dorothy Day Center.

Newspaper Columns by Judges

In 2011, several Minnesota judges published columns in area newspapers explaining the workings of the courts and making the legal process more understandable to citizens. More than one million subscribers to various newspapers across Minnesota were able to learn more about their justice system through these columns.

Around the Branch in 2011

First Judicial District

New Calendaring Approaches

The First Judicial District has developed “ITV Calendars” which allows cases to be heard using Interactive Television (ITV) equipment. Use of ITV for remote hearings is seen as a viable option to canceling calendars when emergencies arise due to weather or judge shortages.



ITV being used in Sibley County District Court. Judge Thomas McCarthy presiding.

The District also developed “Senior Judge Friendly Calendars” that can be heard by retired judges without the need for law clerks.

Pro Bono Pilot Begins

The Pro Bono Attorney Conciliation Court Referee Pilot program began June 2, 2011, when First Judicial District Chief Judge Edward Lynch signed an order appointing 10 attorneys to act as referees in Dakota County. The attorneys, from the law firm of Lindquist & Vennum in Minneapolis, are part of the pilot program in the West St. Paul location of Dakota County District Court and will preside over conciliation court cases. Conciliation court procedures are easier for pro se (self-represented) litigants to follow and the filing fees are substantially lower than those of other civil filings. The majority of litigants in conciliation court cases represent themselves. “The program has provided relief to Dakota County judges and quality service to the people of our community,” said Chief Judge Lynch. “The referees know they are helping people resolve their problems in an amicable manner and have gained a greater appreciation for the judges and court personnel with regard to how they professionally handle challenging matters of such a diverse nature.”

Based upon the success of the pilot project in West St. Paul, Chief Judge Lynch is hopeful that the program can be expanded.

Second Judicial District

Civil Commitment Court Opens

The Second Judicial District’s Civil Commitment Court opened for business September 26. The new facility, located at 402 University Avenue E. in St. Paul, also includes a Mental Health Crisis Center, Chemical Health Assessment, and a detoxification facility. The Mental Health Crisis

2011 Annual Report

Center will serve the east metro counties of Ramsey, Washington, and Dakota. The facility is located adjacent to the Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center and the Emergency Communications Center.

The new building includes a courtroom, court administration offices, chambers for judges and their law clerks and court reporters, a public waiting room, adjacent conference rooms, an exam room, county attorney office space, work areas for partner agencies and attorneys, and sheriff's holding rooms.

Third Judicial District

Houston County District Court Moves into New Justice Center

Judges and staff in Houston County District Court moved to a new justice center in Caledonia on October 10, 2011. The new facility includes improved security, a new jail and added workspace. The plan and construction of the new Houston County Justice Center began with the site selection in 2005.



Houston County Justice Center exterior.

Third Judicial District Centralizes Services

The Third Judicial District centralized the processing of child support magistrate orders, probate batch reminder notices, and jury qualification questionnaires in 2011 to maximize efficiency, maintain consistency, and equitably distribute court administration workload. Child support orders and probate notices for all 11 counties in the district are now processed in one county, and jury questionnaire processing has been centralized for nine counties.

Winona County District Court Plans for New Drug Court

Winona County District Court worked extensively with the Winona Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in 2011 to plan for a new drug court. Training for the drug court team was conducted in March, and the target date to open the court was set for February 2013.

Fourth Judicial District

Records Imaging Project Advances

Imaging court records continues to rapidly advance in the Civil, Family, Psychological Services and Probate/Mental Health divisions. In fiscal year 2011, almost 7 million pages of documents were scanned, indexed, and integrated into the Judicial Branch's case management system. The conversion to electronic records stopped the flow of paper records to a third-party storage facility, helping to restrain the growth in paper storage costs. As paper files are converted, court staff are

actively searching, retrieving, and viewing documents electronically. Reducing reliance on paper case files is also transforming court business practices and reducing costs associated with responding to requests for case files from both internal and external customers.

Public Defender Kiosks Installed

Public kiosks that can be used to clarify eligibility for assignment of a public defender were installed at the Hennepin County Public Safety Facility and at the court locations at Brookdale, Ridgedale, and Southdale. Translation into Spanish and Somali is planned.

Fifth Judicial District

The November 2011 Judicial Council meeting resulted in the approval of the Fifth Judicial District's request to implement new drug courts. The Fifth Judicial District is now on track to be the first district to provide drug court services in all of its counties.

Sixth Judicial District

Facilities Upgraded and New Technologies Implemented

The Sixth District upgraded its office space and installed new office technologies in 2011. Office space in the city of Duluth and in Carlton County was remodeled and reconfigured along with the installation of ergonomic workstations. Work spaces in the courthouses in Hibbing and Virginia were also enhanced.

The jury lounge at the courthouse in Duluth was remodeled to make it into a more friendly location for members of the public serving as jurors, and to allow the room to be used for training and meetings.

Seventh Judicial District

Multi-County Drug Court Wins Grant

The Multi-County Adult Drug Court serving the counties of Clay and Becker was awarded a \$100,000 Byrne Justice Assistance Grant in 2011 from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety – Office of Justice Programs (OJP). The one-year grant will be used to pay for a full-time probation agent, a part-time surveillance agent, and a program evaluator. The application process was highly competitive, with 43 applicants requesting more than \$5.5 million. OJP awarded \$3.5 million in continuation funds for 33 proven-effective youth intervention, drug court, and reentry projects. The Clay/Becker Drug Court has a capacity to serve 30 participants at any given time, and has been in operation since August 2007. To date, 34 participants have successfully graduated from the program.

Eighth Judicial District

Grant County Courthouse Renovation

Renovation continued on the Grant County Courthouse in Elbow Lake, with completion scheduled for mid-2012. During the renovation of the courtroom a mural of historical significance was uncovered that is believed to have been painted by artist Axel Edward Soderbuerg. Local historical society officials hope to arrange for the mural to undergo restoration.



Ninth Judicial District

Kittson County joined Roseau County to form the Roseau-Kittson County DWI Court in 2011.

Aitkin and Crow Wing counties became a combined work area in 2011 under a single court administrator.

Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomon and Norman became a combined work area under a single multi-court court administrator, with Lori Wiebolt becoming the first court administrator in the state to serve four counties.

The State Highway Patrol completed the transition to e-citations in all 17 counties in the Ninth Judicial District in 2011.

Tenth Judicial District

District Administrator's Office to House Conservator Account Auditing Program

The Tenth Judicial District Administrator's Office, located in Ramsey, MN, was selected in 2011 to house and manage the new statewide Conservator Account Auditing Program (CAAP) under the leadership of Tenth Judicial District Administrator Mike Moriarity.

In 2011, there were more than 8,000 pending conservator cases statewide involving more than \$400 million in assets. To enhance the judiciary's oversight for these important cases, the Judicial Council approved funding for the creation of CAAP to review all initial account filings and conduct annual examinations for conservator accounts in excess of \$3,000. The staff of CAAP, who have specialized auditing and accounting expertise, will also perform audits upon county request and when potential problems are identified, and will manage and support the Conservator Account Monitoring Preparation and Electronic Reporting (CAMPER) system.

Statewide News

Multi-County Court Administrators Becoming More Common

As of the end of 2011, 24 multi-county court administrators oversee courts in 60 counties. Thirteen court administrators have responsibility for two counties, 10 for three counties, and one directs courts in four counties. Twenty-four court administrators are now doing the work formerly done by 60 people.

Calendar Display Monitors Installed

Court calendar display monitors are now available in numerous courthouses throughout the state. An alphabetical list of parties by last name appears on the monitor, along with case file numbers, courtroom locations, and the name of the judicial officer. The monitors are similar to those found at airports. In 2011, monitors were installed in courthouses located in Carlton County and in the cities of Hibbing and Virginia in the Sixth Judicial District. They were also installed at the downtown Minneapolis Government Center, the Public Safety Facility, and at the court locations in Brookdale, Ridgedale and Southdale in the Fourth Judicial District.



Public Defender kiosk in Hennepin County District Court.

District Courts



289 Judgeships, 10 Judicial Districts

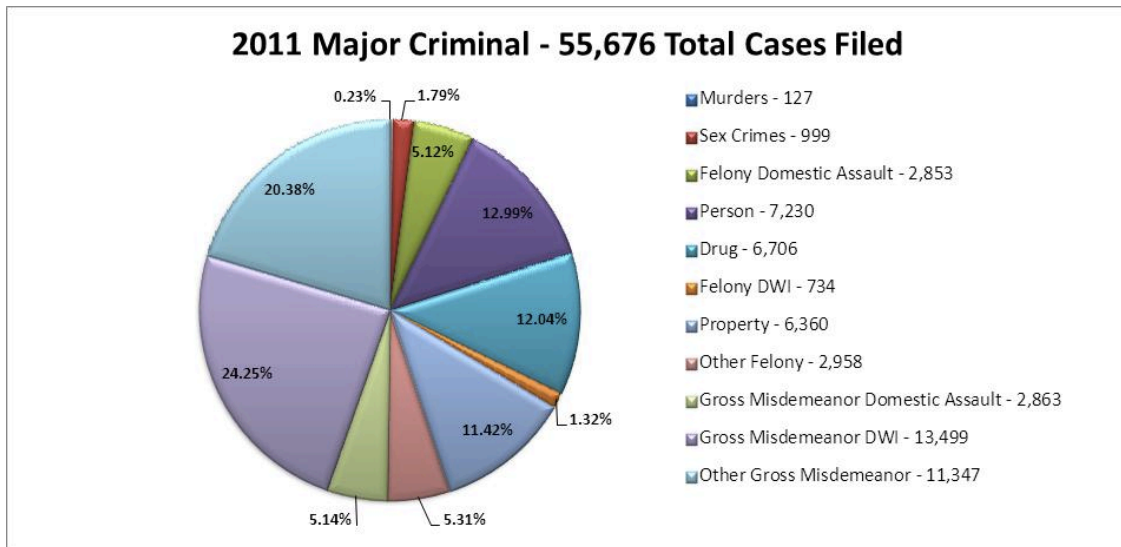
Jurisdiction: Civil Actions, Criminal Cases, Family, Juvenile, Probate, Violations of City Ordinances

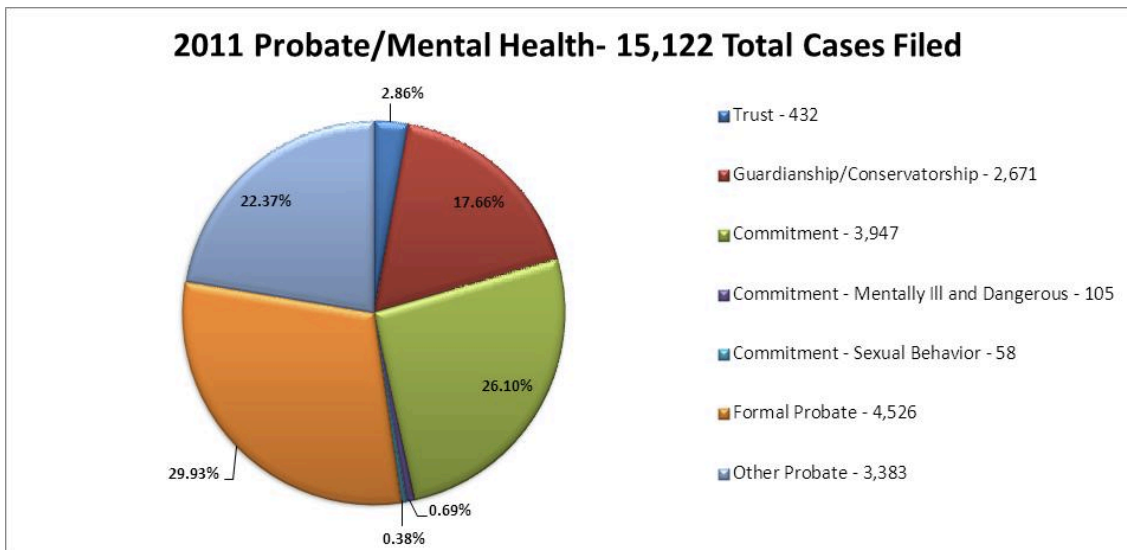
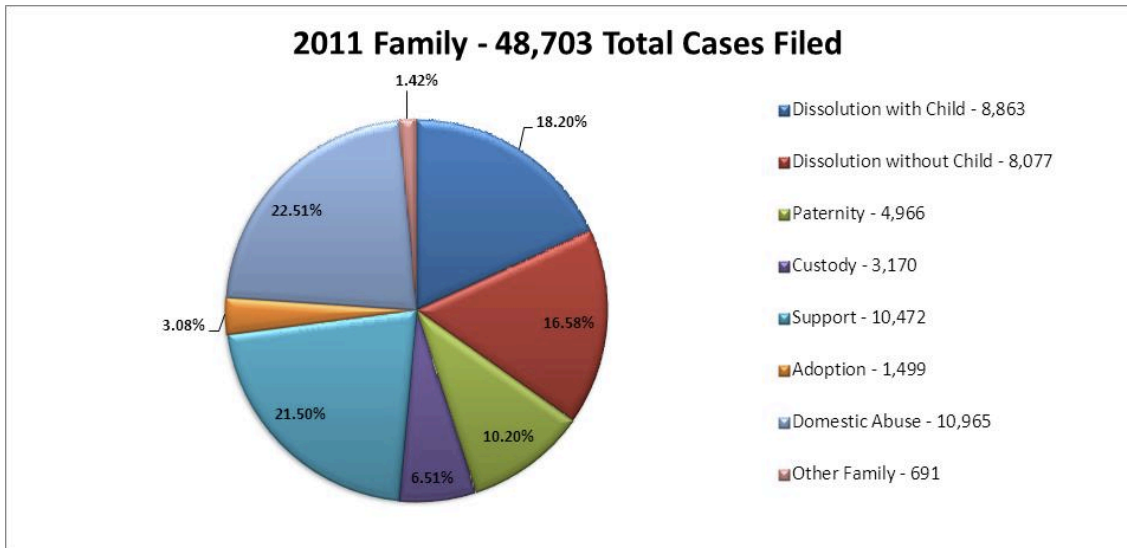
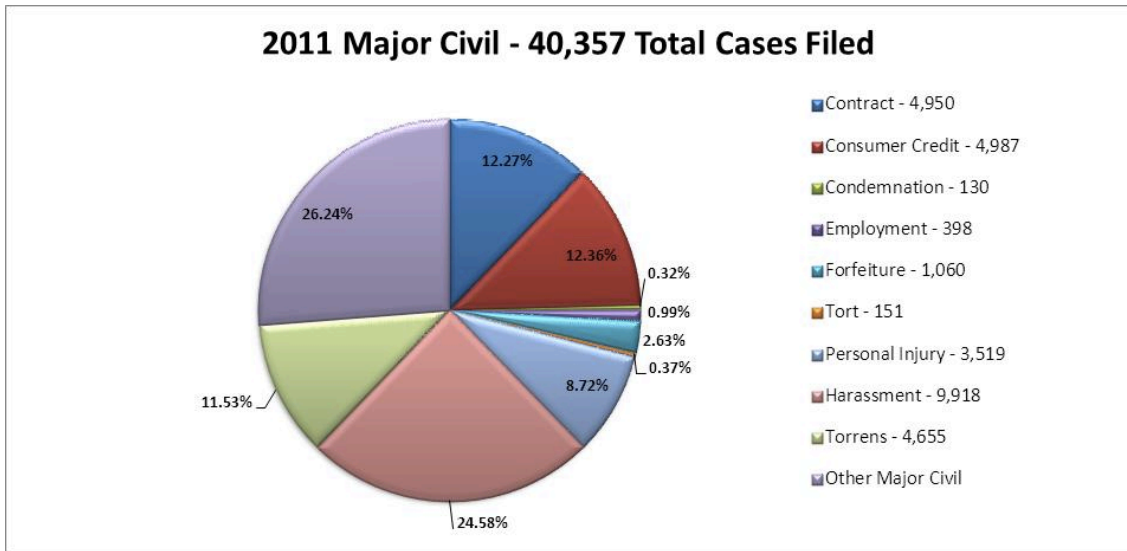
Appeals from: Conciliation Court*

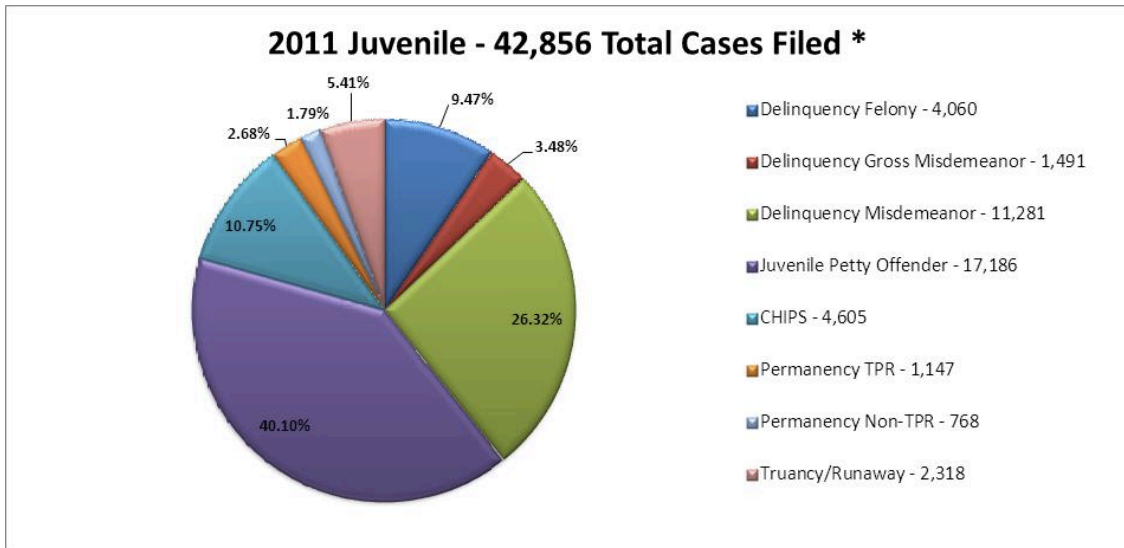
Conciliation Division: Civil Disputes up to \$7,500

*Called trial de novo - actually a new trial, not just a review of the conciliation court

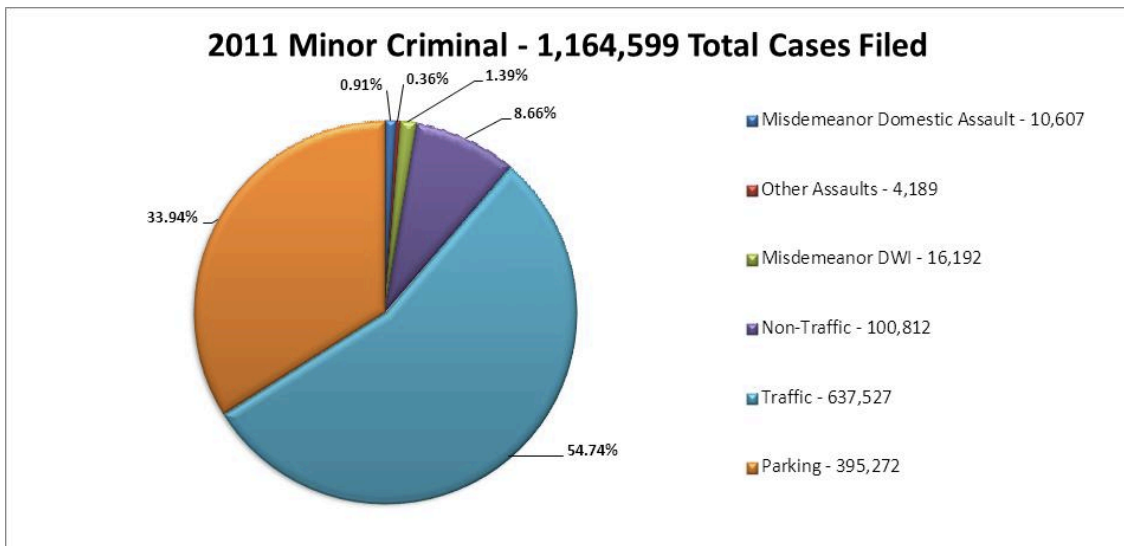
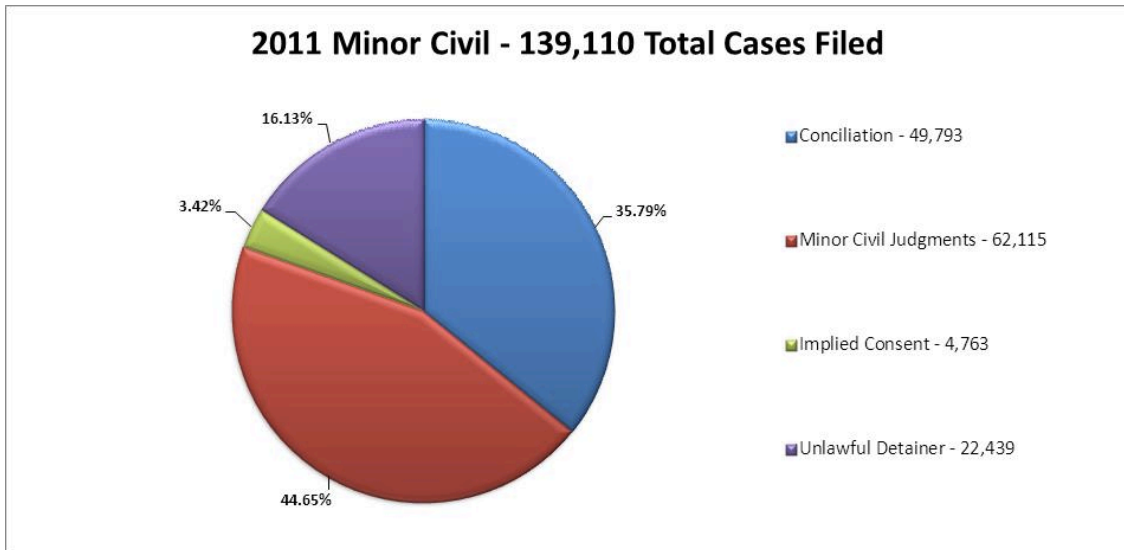
The district courts handled over 1.5 million cases that entered the judicial system in Minnesota in 2011. For administrative purposes, the district courts are organized into 10 judicial districts with a total of 101 hearing facilities across the state.







* Juvenile Petty Offender - i.e. smoking and drinking violations, curfew violations, etc.; CHIPS - Child in need of protection or services



Court of Appeals

19 Members, Three-Judge Panels

Chief Judge Matthew Johnson Judge: 2008 - Nov. 2010, Chief Judge: Nov. 2010 - present
Judge Harriet Lansing 1983 - May 2011
Judge Thomas Kalitowski 1987 - present
Judge Roger Klaphake 1989 - present
Judge Randolph Peterson 1990 - present
Judge Edward Toussaint, Jr. Chief Judge: 1995 - Nov. 2010, Judge: Nov. 2010 - July 2011
Judge Gordon Shumaker 1998 - Oct. 2011
Judge Jill Flaskamp Hallbrooks 1998 - present
Judge Terri Stoneburner 2000 - present
Judge David Minge 2002 - present
Judge Natalie Hudson 2002 - present
Judge Wilhelmina Wright 2002 - present
Judge Renee Worke 2005 - present
Judge Kevin Ross 2006 - present
Judge Heidi Schellhas 2008 - present
Judge Francis Connolly 2008 - present
Judge Michelle Larkin 2008 - present
Judge Larry Stauber, Jr. 2008 - present
Judge Louise Bjorkman 2008 - present
Judge Edward J. Cleary December 2011 - present

Appeals from:

District court decisions (except first-degree murder convictions), administrative agency decisions (except Tax Court & Workers' Compensation Court), decisions of local governments

Original Actions:

Writs of mandamus or prohibition, which order a trial judge or public official to perform a certain act or not perform

2011 Court of Appeals Case Information		
	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	604	599
Criminal	711	696
Administrative Rule	1	1
Economic Security	354	331
Writs - Certiori	69	63
Habeas / Certified Questions	14	20
Commitment	47	62
Family	227	252
Juvenile Delinquency	17	18
Juvenile Protection	56	60
Implied Consent	25	24
Discretionary Review / Writs	96	96
Total	2,221	2,222

Court of Appeals in 2011

The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides citizens with prompt, deliberate review of all final decisions of the district courts and some decisions of state agencies and local governments. A decision of the Court of Appeals was the final judicial resolution in approximately 95 percent of the cases filed in the state appellate courts of Minnesota. The Court is comprised of 19 judges who hear cases in three-judge panels at the Judicial Center in St. Paul and at various locations around the state.

In January 2011, following a successful pilot project, the Court of Appeals formally implemented its Family Law Appellate Mediation Program. With the assistance of certified mediators, the Program continues to be successful in enabling litigants and lawyers save considerable time and expense that would otherwise be incurred by briefing and oral argument. The Program has also produced benefits for the Court. Every appeal that is voluntarily settled allows the Court to conserve and reallocate its scarce resources.

In July 2011, the Court of Appeals, through the Clerk of the Appellate Courts, implemented “e-notification,” the sending of notices, orders, and opinions to lawyers and litigants electronically via e-mail messages. This innovation provides lawyers and litigants with faster notice of Court actions and allows the Court to enjoy savings in terms of staff time, paper costs, and postage. The Court of Appeals continues to explore and implement new technologies that allow judges and staff to work more efficiently.

Throughout 2011, the Court of Appeals decided 95 percent of its appeals within one year, which is better than the timeliness standards recommended by the American Bar Association. This year’s timeliness was an improvement over 2010, when the Court decided 92 percent of its appeals within one year.



Supreme Court

7 members, En Banc panel

Appeals from:

Court of Appeals decisions

Trial court decisions if Supreme Court chooses to bypass the Court of Appeals

Tax Court decisions, Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals

Original Actions:

Review of all first-degree murder convictions

Writs of Prohibition, Writs of Habeas Corpus, Writs of Mandamus

Legislative election disputes

<p>Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea Associate Justice: 2006 - June 2010, Chief Justice: July 2010 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Alan C. Page 1993 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Paul H. Anderson 1994 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Helen M. Meyer 2002 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson 2004 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice Christopher J. Dietzen 2008 - present</p>
<p>Associate Justice David R. Stras 2010 - present</p>

2011 Supreme Court Case Information		
Direct Appeals		
	Cases Filed	Dispositions
Workers' Compensation	20	18
Civil	5	0
Tax Court	13	7
Attorney Discipline	54	51
Writs	2	2
First Degree Homicide	28	19
Total Direct Appeals	122	95
Petitions for Further Review (PFR)		
Filed		641
Denied		508
Granted Further Review		103
Other		18
Dispositions		
Affirmed		28
Mixed		6
Remand / Reverse		30
Other Decision / Dismissal		8
Total		72

About the Supreme Court

Seven justices make up the Minnesota Supreme Court, the state's Court of last resort. The Court, sitting en banc, hears appeals from the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. The Court also hears and decides attorney and judicial discipline matters, and all first-degree murder conviction appeals from the district courts. Supreme Court justices oversee the administration of the Judicial Branch by serving as liaisons to the state's 10 judicial districts, and to various boards, committees, and task forces that set policy and study justice system issues.



In Memorium

In remembrance of the former justices and judges of the Minnesota Judicial Branch who died in 2011.

<p><i>Judge Howard Albertson</i> Died January 2011; retired in January 1997, Tenth Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Judge William Christensen</i> Died May 2011; Retired in January 1997, Fourth Judicial District</p>
<p><i>Judge John Thoreen</i> Died January 2011; retired in February 1986, Tenth Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Judge James Lynch</i> Died May 2011; retired in January 1991, Second Judicial District</p>
<p><i>Judge Thomas Bujold</i> Died February 2011; retired in February 1985, Sixth Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Judge Ladean Overlie</i> Died May 2011; retired in July 1984, Sixth Judicial District</p>
<p><i>Judge Michael Haas</i> Died April 2011; retired in January 2003, Ninth Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Judge Edward Mulally</i> Died June 2011; retired in October 1986, Second Judicial District</p>
<p><i>Judge Kenneth Bull</i> Died April 2011; retired in February 1988, First Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Associate Justice John Simonett</i> Died July 2011; retired in July 1994, Minnesota Supreme Court</p>
<p><i>Judge Allan Buchanan</i> Died April 2011; retired in June 1995, Eighth Judicial District</p>	<p><i>Judge James D. Gibbs</i> Died September 2011; retired in 2000, Tenth Judicial District</p>

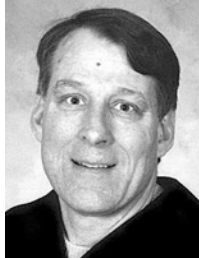
Minnesota Judicial Council

Membership for Fiscal Year 2011

Hon. Lorie S. Gildea (Chair) <i>Chief Justice, Supreme Court</i>	Hon. Peter Irvine <i>Chief Judge, Seventh District</i>
Hon. John Rodenberg (Vice-Chair) <i>Judge, Fifth District</i>	Hon. Steven E. Drange <i>Chief Judge, Eighth District</i>
Hon. G. Barry Anderson <i>Associate Justice, Supreme Court</i>	Hon. Gerald J. Seibel <i>Judge, Eighth District</i>
Hon. Matthew Johnson <i>Chief Judge, Court of Appeals</i>	Hon. Jon A. Maturi <i>Chief Judge, Ninth District</i>
Hon. Thomas J. Kalitowski <i>Judge, Court of Appeals</i>	Hon. Timothy R. Bloomquist <i>Chief Judge, Tenth District</i>
Hon. Edward Lynch <i>Chief Judge, First District</i>	Sue K. Dosal <i>State Court Administrator</i>
Hon. David L. Knutson <i>Judge, First District</i>	Jeffrey G. Shorba <i>Deputy State Court Administrator</i>
Hon. Kathleen R. Gearin <i>Chief Judge, Second District</i>	Larry Dease <i>District Administrator, Second District</i>
Hon. Robert R. Benson <i>Chief Judge, Third District</i>	Timothy Ostby <i>District Administrator, Seventh and Eighth Districts</i>
Hon. James T. Swenson <i>Chief Judge, Fourth District</i>	Michael Moriarity <i>District Administrator, Tenth District</i>
Hon. Denise D. Reilly <i>Judge, Fourth District</i>	Chuck Kjos <i>Court Administrator, Olmsted County</i>
Hon. Douglas L. Richards <i>Chief Judge, Fifth District</i>	Hon. Susan Miles <i>MDJA President, Tenth District</i>
Hon. James B. Florey <i>Chief Judge, Sixth District</i>	

Minnesota Judicial District Chief Judges

Fiscal Year 2011



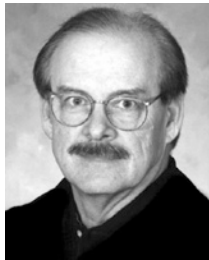
Hon. John A. Maturi
9th Judicial District



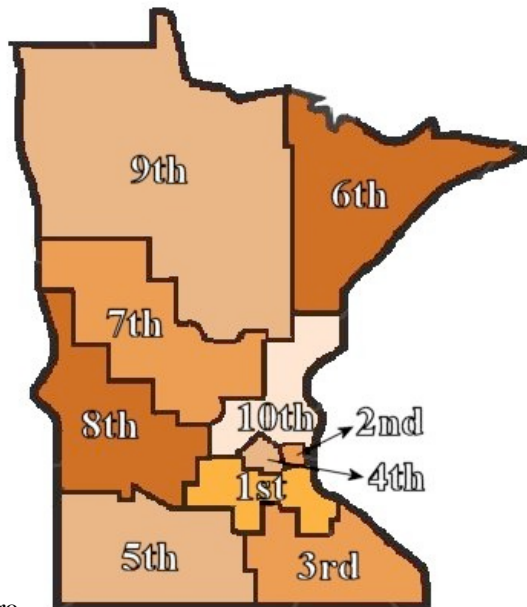
Hon. James B. Florey
6th Judicial District



Hon. Timothy R. Bloomquist
10th Judicial District



Hon. Peter Irvine
7th Judicial District



Hon. Kathleen R. Gearin
2nd Judicial District



Hon. Steven E. Drange
8th Judicial District



Hon. James T. Swenson
4th Judicial District



Hon. Douglas L. Richards
5th Judicial District



Hon. Edward Lynch
1st Judicial District



Hon. Robert R. Benson
3rd Judicial District