

Minnesota Judicial Branch Organization

Supreme Court

- Seven Justices.
- The state's court of last resort.
- Reviews more than 800 cases a year.
- Oversees the practice of law

Court of Appeals

- Sixteen judges who hear cases in three-judge panels.
- Considers more than 2,400 appeals each year.

District Courts

- 281 district court judges in 10 judicial districts throughout the state.
- The trial court has original jurisdiction in all civil and criminal actions within district boundaries.
- Each year, there are more than 2 million cases filed in Minnesota's district courts.

Judicial Branch Administration

- The Chief Justice is responsible for management of the Supreme Court and the entire Judicial Branch and also serves as chair of the Judicial Council.
- The Judicial Council serves as the policy-making body for the Judicial Branch.
- The Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals is responsible for management of that Court.
- A chief judge and assistant chief judge, assisted by a judicial district administrator, manage each of the 10 judicial districts. A court administrator is responsible for day-to-day operations in each county.
- The State Court Administrator (SCA) serves as staff to the Judicial Council. The SCA Office provides support services to the Judicial Branch.

For More Information:

State Court Administrator's Office

Sue Dosal

State Court Administrator

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Judicial Branch Website

<http://www.mncourts.gov>

Fifth Judicial District

Richard H. Fasnacht

5th District Administrator

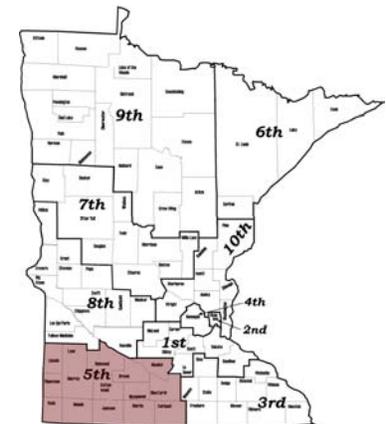
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MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

What You Should Know About Minnesota's Courts...



The Fifth Judicial District

Minnesota's

Third Branch of Government

- Article 1, Section 8 of the Minnesota Constitution states: Every person is entitled to... obtain justice freely and without purchase, completely and without denial, promptly and without delay...
- Administering justice is a **core government function**.
- The Judicial Branch mission is to provide justice through a system that ensures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

The Judicial Branch has targeted three strategic priorities for progress and innovation:

1. Access to Justice
 - Complete transition to unified case management system (MNCIS)
 - Institute electronic case initiation
 - Expand resources for pro se litigants
2. Administering Justice For Effective Results
 - Integrate judicial problem-solving approach for dealing with alcohol and other drug (AOD) offenders
 - Promote judicial approaches which target early resolution of cases involving families and children.
 - Institutionalize Children's Justice Initiative
3. Public Trust and Confidence
 - Strengthen public education regarding the role of the courts.
 - Adopt statewide core judicial branch goals.
 - Assure equitable treatment of all people in the court system regardless of race or ethnicity.
 - Assure impartial decision-making through the examination of judicial selection processes in Minnesota.

Courts in your area Fifth Judicial District:

Chief Judge

George I. Harrelson

Assistant Chief Judge

Douglas L. Richards

Judges:

Leland Bush

David E. Christensen

Timothy K. Connell

Jeffrey L. Flynn

Bruce F. Gross

Kurt Johnson

Allison Krehbiel

David W. Peterson

John R. Rodenberg

Norbert P. Smith

Linda S. Titus

Bradley C. Walker

Robert D. Walker

Todd W. Westphal

5th Judicial District Initiatives

Drug Courts: Currently, there are two operational and highly successful drug courts established within the 5th District. Blue Earth County has been operational since December 2004 and Watonwan County since January 2006. Recently, the 5th District was selected to receive a SCAO grant to pilot establishing drug counts in a multi-county environment.

Two different multi-county drug court models are planned. The Faribault/Martin/Jackson County model involves the drug court team and participants traveling to Martin Co. for drug court. The Brown/Nicollet/Watonwan model involves shared coordination with the judge and coordinator

traveling to conduct court hearings.

Implementation of these multi-county drug courts will result in 70% of the population in the 5th District having access to drug court.

Truancy Court: In 2005, Blue Earth Co. established the first Truancy Court in the state. Authorities link truancy as a high-risk activity in terms of future crime, drug abuse and illiteracy. Goals of the program are to increase attendance, achieve better grades & rapport with staff members, and a stronger connection to the school. Truant students meet weekly at school with a judge, parents and school and corrections staff.

Early Neutral Evaluation Program: 5th District Judges have begun utilizing ENE services to help parents with custody or visitation disputes. With early intervention by the Judge and an ENE team, parents understand and realize what is likely to happen if they pursue the dispute to trial. This "reality check" of a probable outcome saves parents time, money, and heartache. More importantly, the children are not subject to what might otherwise be a long, contentious custody battle.

New Case Management System: Implementation of the court's new case management system, MNCIS, was completed throughout the 5th District in April, 2006.

A side benefit of the new system is that it allows easier access to court information at no cost to other government agencies such as county attorney, public defender, law enforcement, and probation offices. Approximately 75 non-court agencies in the 5th District have been granted MNCIS access.

In addition, public access terminals are located in every 5th District Courthouse. MNCIS has proven to be much more "user friendly" for the general public's use in obtaining court information.

Caseload Increases: Like other parts of the State, 5th District judges have experienced significant caseload increases in recent years.

Current caseload statistics indicate the 5th District now needs one more judge to effectively handle caseloads in all of our 15 counties. The additional judge need is due in large part to an increase in major criminal case filings within counties on the eastern side of the district.