

2019 MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT

THE COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

Committee for Equality and Justice Mission:

“To work collaboratively across the Judicial Branch to advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access to the court, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.”

The Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ) is an advisory committee to the Minnesota Judicial Council. The CEJ is comprised of representatives from each of the 10 Judicial District Equal Justice Committees (EJCs), as well as judicial officers, attorneys, court employees, and members of the public from across the state, reflective of the state’s geographic and demographic diversity.

The Committee for Equality and Justice works to accomplish this mission through quarterly meetings and the Committee’s charge of:

- Recommending diversity and inclusion education programs and course materials for judges and Judicial Branch employees;
- Promoting diversity and inclusion in Judicial Branch employment and in appointments to Judicial Branch committees and boards to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
- Making recommendations for improvement in court processes, procedures, and policies as they relate to race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and any other status protected by law; and,
- Assisting district Equal Justice committees in their work at the local level, and providing assistance in outreach efforts to the communities they serve.



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MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH VISION

The court system will be accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.

MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH MISSION

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

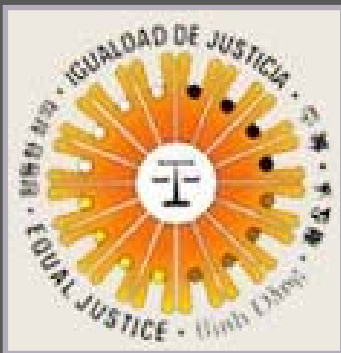
COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE COURTS

National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts (NCREFC) is the oldest and largest national entity devoted to enhancing racial, ethnic, and language access in the state courts.

Participants of the NCREFC's annual conference gain insights, learn about issues of fairness and equity for court users, and share successes with state court systems from across the nation.

Members of the Committee for Equality and Justice and the Equal Justice Committees attended the 31st annual National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts conference in Miami, FL from May 19 - 22, 2019. The theme for the conference was "Pursuing the Dream: Continuing the Struggle for Racial and Ethnic Justice in America."



STRATEGIC GOALS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

The Committee for Equality and Justice consists of three subcommittees; one for each of its three FY20-21 strategic goals.:

- Access and Fairness Subcommittee;
- Diversity and Inclusion Education Subcommittee; and,
- Community Outreach Subcommittee.

In addition to the full committee meetings, these subcommittees meet periodically taking action to fulfill the goals, tasks, and strategies of the full committee. Highlights of accomplishments in 2019 include:

- Creating the "Minnesota Judicial Branch Action Following the 1993 Minnesota Supreme Court Task Force on Racial Bias in the Judicial System" report; and
- Developing the "2008-2018 Committee for Equality and Justice Ten Year Review of Community Dialogues" report.

ELECTRONIC RACE DATA COLLECTION PILOT

Two of Minnesota's largest counties (Hennepin and Ramsey) began collecting race and ethnicity data electronically in late 2018. Parties to a case can report their race/ethnicity electronically rather than by paper when checking into court for a hearing. The electronic race data collection pilot in Hennepin County is at a suburban location and involves criminal and traffic cases. The pilot in Ramsey County is focused on delinquency cases. Preliminary results from the first year of the pilot locations are encouraging. The refusal rate increased only minimally or stayed the same, remaining below 5% in both locations. Electronic collection will increase efficiency and ease of use for the public.

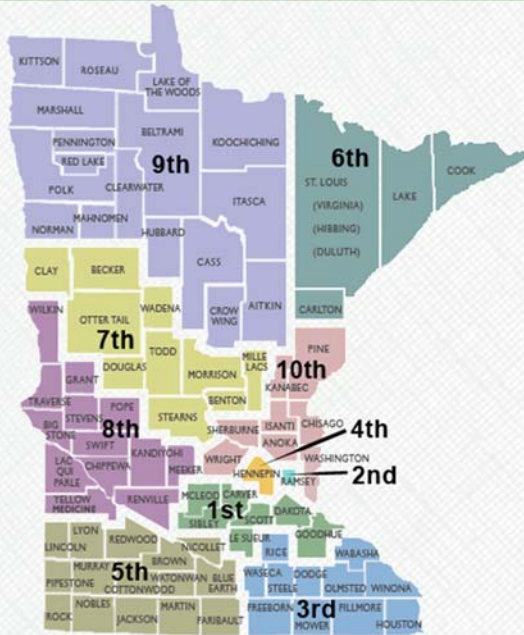


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COMMITTEE FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

With best practice sharing and assistance from the Committee for Equality and Justice, judicial district Equal Justice committees have conducted well over 30 community dialogues, listening sessions, and other outreach activities since 2008. These events serve as an opportunity for community members to have conversations with judges and court staff and are attended by the public, judges and court staff, and other justice partners. Equal Justice Committees are as unique as the local issues and topics that arise for discussion and action. Community Dialogue reports and more information can be found on the Committee for Equality and Justice public website.



FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Carver, Dakota, Goodhue, Le Sueur, McLeod, Scott, and Sibley counties

The First Judicial District Equal Justice Committee (EJC) held a community listening session in collaboration with the Prairie Island Tribal Court judges in May 2019; in Burnsville in August 2019; and at Henry Sibley High School in September 2019. The events gave court users an opportunity to share their experiences with judicial officers and court staff.

Dakota County Tribal Flag presentation ceremonies took place with the Red Lake Nation, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Upper Sioux Community, Lower Sioux Indian Community, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, and Prairie Island Indian Community.

The First Judicial District continues to contribute to a weekly HR Update Newsletter that includes a “Did You Know?” section written by EJC members. The EJC is active in outreach by presenting for local community groups, further strengthening the relationships between the courts and the community. ICWA training was also provided.



JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Ramsey County



In partnership with the Hmong Cultural Center, the Second Judicial District provided training covering the history of Hmong culture, language, etiquette, and communication to all judicial district employees. The EJC worked with the Law Library to provide information about the court and CLE training on “Anti-Discrimination Law & Freedom of Speech & Religion” on Law Day.

The Second Judicial District sponsored a Warrant Resolution Day, along with the St. Paul City Attorney's Office, the ACLU of Minnesota, NAACP Minneapolis, and Pueblos de Lucha y Esperanza. For the first time, counties statewide were invited to participate. Over 1,400 cases were handled, 904 warrants recalled, and 496 drivers' licenses were reinstated.

In an attempt to institutionalize this process, the Ramsey County Bench is piloting a “Walk In Warrant” process at the courthouse. This pilot will be evaluated for future implementation.

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, and Winona counties

The Third Judicial District delivered a customer service training titled “iFACE” during Staff Development Days in September 2019. This training was developed by the Fourth Judicial District and covers how to handle a variety of customer service scenarios.

The Women's Shelter also delivered a session during Staff Development Days to increase awareness of the experience of being a domestic violence victim.

Community leaders in Owatonna (Steele County) started a workgroup called Courageous Community Dialogues. Judicial and court staff attend bi-monthly sessions to address racial issues in the community. The sessions cover racial and inclusion topics and are helping leaders understand how to navigate issues and be more proactive.

EJC members attended the Taste of Nations in Austin, MN, in April 2019 where they also shared employment and listening session information. In addition, EJC members staffed a table at the public library two weeks in advance of their May 2019 community dialogue in Mower County to promote the event.



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JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Hennepin County

The Fourth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee participated in various staff development and outreach events in 2019, including:

- Presentation of tribal flags from the Red Lake Nation, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Prairie Island Indian Community, Upper Sioux Community, and the Lower Sioux Community along with the Dakota County Courts;
- Juror Experience Project and Warrant Hotline Project;
- All Square community outreach program;
- Juvenile Warrant Forgiveness Day and Community Resource Fair;
- Native American Judicial Listening Session with the Division of Indian Work;
- Hennepin County Bar Association’s 1L Minority Summer Law Clerk Program;
- Strategic infrastructure to advance racial equity goals including clear and consistent communication on the judicial district’s commitment to racial equity (i.e. terminology, data, tools and reporting mechanisms);
- A focus on cultural, organizational, and environmental factors as they relate to employee retention; and,
- Hosting the “Bending the Arc Toward Justice: A Review of the Minnesota Supreme Court’s Racial Bias Task Force” CLE event.

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, and Watonwan counties

The Fifth Judicial District EJC conducted a Community Dialogue in October 2019, at the St. Peter Middle School titled “Equal Access to Justice-A Community Discussion for Parents, Students and Community Members.” Topics included accessibility to law enforcement, juvenile court process, truancy, legal matters at school, and child protection concerns. There were approximately 100 people in attendance involving many different members of the community.

Members of the Fifth Judicial District staff also attended a seminar on “Understanding and Applying ICWA: Purpose, Strategies, Practice and Resources.”

Fourth Judicial District Diversity and Inclusion Education Courses
Gray Area Thinking
Workplace Inclusivity and Allyship 101
Race Equity Tool, Assessment, and Survey Results Sessions
Speed Hating
Racial Disparities in Sentencing: Where Are We Now?
Binary, Schminary: Legal and Policy Developments Related to Non-Binary Identities
LGBTQ Youth in Juvenile Courts
Testimony: The Experiences of LGBTQ+ Justice-Involved Youth in Hennepin County
Tribal Justice



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JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Becker, Benton, Clay, Douglas, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Stearns, Todd, and Wadena counties



The Seventh Judicial District Equal Justice Committee held a Community Listening Session November 2019 at the Long Prairie - Grey Eagle High School. Informational flyers were distributed in English and Spanish to various media and community sources, including: La Voz Libre; Dairyland Peach; Long Prairie Leader; Benning Printing Publishing, and the Long Prairie Chamber of Commerce Community Information Site. Earlier in the day, the district participated in a career fair, also held at the high school, and distributed information about the listening session with job seekers. The district also participated in the Project Connect program which included a warrant resolution event.

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Carlton, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties

The Sixth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee continues to meet monthly to discuss and plan events related to diversity and inclusion. The committee has an ongoing book club and searches for ways to stay involved with various justice partners in the community. An Iron Range-focused EJC was established in 2019, and has been very active.

The Sixth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee took part in various education and outreach events in 2019:

- Interactive presentation on Implicit Bias for all Sixth Judicial District court employees;
- 2019 Judge's Retreat featured Implicit Bias, including Afrocentric facial feature bias;
- "Intimidation in the Court System" for Virginia and Hibbing court employees;
- "De-escalation: How to recognize and be aware of mental illnesses for mental health court employees";
- Warrant Resolution Events across the district, including one located at the Ojibwe School Gym;
- Tribal Court Warrant Resolution and State Court event in partnership with Bois Forte Band of Chippewa which included a presentation on Historical Trauma;
- "We Are All Criminals" presentation at the local community college and various local justice and community partners;
- Open Courthouse events at the Virginia Courthouse and the Hibbing Courthouse;
- Consider the Courts youth career exploration event; and,
- The EJC book club held an Equality and Justice Cultural Event in the Renegade Theater at Zeitgeist Teatro which featured a hypothetical meeting between Malcom X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

NINTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau Counties

The Ninth Judicial District EJC has worked closely with the community, in particular, the Leech Lake and White Earth communities. Joint jurisdiction courts exist with the White Earth and Leech Lake Tribal Councils. Cass County Juvenile Court has been held at the Leech Lake Tribal Justice Center to accommodate families.

The Ninth Judicial District has participated in the following outreach and training initiatives in 2019:

- “Everything you ever wanted to know about Indians but were afraid to ask” training for all Ninth Judicial District court staff;
- Management tour of Northwest Minnesota Juvenile Center showcasing Native cultural programming;
- Hosting a Domestic Violence Conference with emphasis on the American Indian community;
- Participation on the Tribal/State Court Forum;
- Screening of the “Tribal Justice” documentary at Hennepin County Library attended by Tribal/State Forum members;
- Speaking to Grand Rapids High School honors sociology classes about the judicial system, and employment opportunities in the Judicial Branch;
- Working with Leech Lake Tribal Court on creating family-centered court models and strategies to address disproportionate probation revocations for Native American probationers; and,
- Meeting with the probation department to discuss revocation data for Native Americans.

EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Big Stone, Chippewa, Grant, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Meeker, Pope, Renville, Stevens, Swift, Traverse, Wilkin, and Yellow Medicine counties

The Eighth Judicial District EJC participated in planning and carrying out a Minnesota Law Day event, hosted by the Kandiyohi County Courthouse. The event invited community members to the courthouse to learn more about the courts and the justice system.

The EJC has worked to focus efforts on local college and high school students, introducing them to the wide variety of career opportunities available within the Courts. The district also has begun discussions with the Upper Sioux Tribe regarding a flag ceremony to be held at Yellow Medicine County in the future.



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JUDICIAL DISTRICT AND EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES



Cultural Perspectives courses take place four times a year and focus on various historical, cultural, and societal issues from various communities. These live, 90-minute webinars generally attract 200-300 attendees consisting of both judicial officers and court employees. Topics in 2019 included:

- Understanding Autism;
- Understanding Korean Culture;
- Understanding Veterans Suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress; and,
- Understanding Homelessness Across Minnesota.

STATE LAW LIBRARY MATERIALS

The State Law Library prepares and updates a list of diversity and inclusion-related articles. Judicial Branch employees and judicial officers have access to scholarly journals from the library



TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright counties

The Tenth Judicial District EJC is comprised of four workgroups: Public Education and Outreach; Education of Court Personnel; Internship\Mentorship; and Public Relations Materials. EJC members attended a training workshop, “Beyond Diversity 101: Micro-inequities, Implicit Bias, and Moving Toward Equity.” In September 2019, the district held staff development days where employees received training from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on mental health issues. Two Tenth Judicial District judges attended a tribal breakfast at the 2019 Annual Conference of Judges. Those judges are working on setting up an education session with a number of tribal communities and will conduct informal listening sessions.

Each new staff member in the district is provided with information on the Tenth Judicial District EJC. In addition, the EJC had an article in the district’s newsletter in November 2019 highlighting the work of the committee. Going forward, the EJC will provide a quarterly update for the newsletter.

JUDICIAL EDUCATION

Through judicial education programs such as the Annual Conference of Judges, the Minnesota District Judges Foundation (MDJF), Family Law Institute, and Bench Retreats, judicial officers receive a variety of diversity and inclusion-related educational opportunities. Topics in 2019 included:

- Custody and Parenting Issues Affecting the LGBTQ+ Community in Minnesota;
- A Conversation with Justice Alan Page;
- From Drug Addict to Trailblazer – A Life Transformed;
- The Latino Legal Experience in Minnesota;
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders & The Impact on Courts;
- Historical Trauma and the Native American Experience; and,
- Generations in the Legal Field.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EDUCATION

EMPLOYEE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Providing opportunities for Minnesota Judicial Branch employees and judicial officers to learn about diversity and inclusion-related topics helps to foster understanding across difference, promote inclusion, and ensure that all are treated equitably and with fairness. Educational offerings are made possible through monthly Why Diversity Matters sessions, Cultural Perspectives courses, court education days, on-demand sessions, and through continuing legal education (CLE) courses.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACT RESOURCES

On-demand training regarding the ADA is available for local ADA contacts and other court employees to help the courts provide assistance for court users who have a disability. The Minnesota Judicial Branch ADA public webpage contains information, tools, and forms (electronic and paper) to help court users in requesting an ADA accommodation. This webpage also provides information for the public on the ADA contact at each court location if questions arise or to make an accommodation request.

LANGUAGE ACCESS RESOURCES

The Minnesota Judicial Branch provides Language Access Basic Training (LABT) which includes tools and resources to help employees assist court users who are limited in their English proficiency. Topics include:

- Language Access Plans and Resources;
- Court Interpreter Program Resources; and
- Court Interpreter Program Tools.

The Committee for Equality and Justice partnered with the Court Interpreter Program to develop and implement a Language Access Court Customer Information Card. This document was translated into the top 10 languages and distributed to Court Interpreters. It is also available on the Minnesota Judicial Branch public website.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INTERNAL WEBSITE

The Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity and Inclusion internal SharePoint website is the main repository of diversity and inclusion-related information, events, and educational resources for judicial officers and court employees, including:

- A calendar of events and holidays;
- Access to diversity and inclusion resources;
- Informational links on various groups and cultures;
- The Minnesota Judicial Branch's diversity statement; and,
- Training and education resources.

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR COURT MANAGEMENT

The Minnesota Association for Court Management (MACM) included courses on "Implicit Bias through the Lens of Privilege" and the session "Now More Than Ever: Why Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work Requires Emotional Intelligence." In addition, sessions were held on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum, Domestic violence and other topics.

**"I've learned that
I still have a lot to learn."**

- Maya Angelou

GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

THE FORUM ON WORKPLACE INCLUSION



Attendees from across the world and from the Minnesota Judicial Branch attended the annual Forum on Workplace Inclusion conference to gain tools to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. This three-day conference challenges participants to learn and grow through facilitated dialogue, structured networking, and experiential learning.

ALLIANCE FOR COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION IN EMPLOYMENT STATE SERVICES (ACCESS)

The Minnesota Judicial Branch is a part of the ACCESS workgroup of state employees. This is a group dedicated to advancing the diversity and inclusion efforts of statewide agencies and is led by Minnesota Management and Budget. The group charge is to create and maintain diversity and equal opportunity best practices to achieve the goal of recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

Making connections with community members and organizations, sharing helpful resources, increasing cultural competency, and gaining a greater understanding of others helps the courts be best equipped to provide equal access to justice. Members of the Minnesota Judicial Branch participate in various groups and committees, many of which are listed on this and the next page.

TWIN CITIES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ROUNDTABLE (TCDIR)

Minnesota Judicial Branch employees meet bi-monthly with diversity and inclusion practitioners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to share knowledge, tools, and resources with each other on relevant workforce diversity matters such as recruitment, retention, and equity.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

In 2019, members of the various districts participated in the following community groups and beyond:

First Judicial District

- Dakota County Domestic Violence Community Response Committee;
- Domestic Child Sex Trafficking Judicial Institute;
- Native American State Court Tribal Liaison Meetings;
- Department of Human Services Child Sex Trafficking Workgroup meetings;

Fourth Judicial District

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE);
- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI);
- Hennepin Community Engagement Community of Practice; and

Fifth Judicial District

- Tapestry Project.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESOURCES

RECRUITMENT

The Human Resources and Development Division of State Court Administration has formed numerous strategic subcommittees with a focus on recruitment initiatives across the Minnesota Judicial Branch. A primary goal of these efforts is to ensure that court employees reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

In addition to these activities, judicial officers, court employees, and the Equal Justice Committees have been intentional about sharing career opportunities via social media (Glassdoor, Handshake, LinkedIn, and Twitter) and by distributing recruitment materials at community dialogues and other community engagement events. The Minnesota Judicial Branch also sends open job postings to the Workforce Community email listserv through the State of Minnesota, which reaches over 500 contacts, community organizations and job seekers.



INTERNSHIPS

Many Equal Justice Committees have continued to explore the possibility of creating a mentor, intern, or other type of program to build a pipeline to attract, retain, and promote under-represented demographic groups. The Fourth Judicial District conducts an annual summer internship program for a cohort of college students who learn professional development skills, such as resume writing and interviewing, along with job-related skills. Other judicial districts also host student workers and interns throughout the year.

2019 CAREER FAIRS ATTENDED BY THE MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

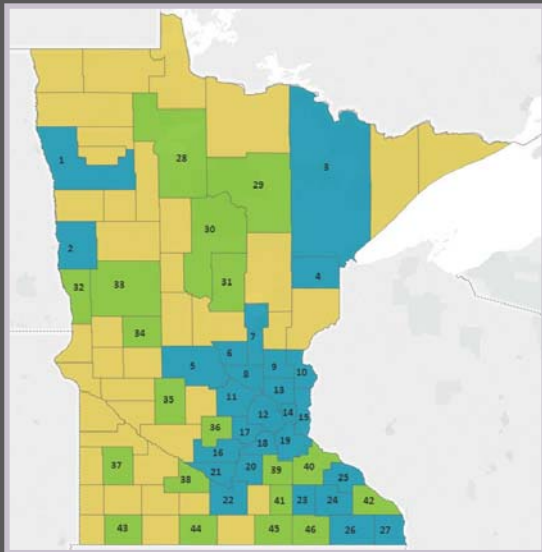
- American Indian OIC Takoda Career Fair
- Law Day Open House
- Metro State University Career Fair
- Government and Non-Profit Career Fair
- Lake Superior College Career Fair
- Head of the Lakes Job and Internship Fair
- Iron Range Job Fair
- Leech Lake Tribal College Career Fair
- Minnesota Private College Job and Internship Fair
- University of Minnesota Job and Internship Fair
- Anoka County Career Fair
- Minnesota State Fair Education Building Booth
- Dakota County Technical/Inver Hills Community College Career Fair
- Humboldt High School Career Fair

Judicial officers and court staff have also presented at local law schools, Anoka Technical College Court Reporting class, the Dakota County Tech/Inver Hills Community College Career Fair and numerous Careerforce Centers to share information about careers in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESOURCES

STATE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data from Minnesota Compass and from the state demographer provide the Minnesota Judicial Branch with a wealth of knowledge on the changing demographics of our state. Using data from the U.S. Census and the American Communities Survey, these sources provide key information to help inform the courts on the changing region, the workforce, and community populations.



Map of Minnesota counties by metropolitan, micropolitan statistical areas, Minnesota State Demographic Center (2017)

BUILDING THE PIPELINE: CAREER EXPLORATION

Judicial officers and employees often speak with student groups from K-12 schools, YMCA's Youth in Government, StepUp, and others to inspire youth to consider a career with the Minnesota Judicial Branch, exposing them to the wide variety of career options within the courts.

The Third Judicial District EJC shared career information with Project Legacy, a non-profit group that helps troubled youth in October 2019. District administration staff presented career information to the Pathways to Prosperity program participants in both May and November 2019. In addition, staff and law clerks have made career presentations at Albert Lea Junior High and Triton High School.

The Fourth Judicial District hosted the Tazel Institute, a community-based organization focused on exposing young, male students of color to a variety of professional careers. Additionally, ten YMCA youth spent a day at the Hennepin County District Courts through the "Y the Courts?!" program. Students participated in a variety of activities, including a speed networking event with judges and court staff, observing a court trial, and taking a tour of the court. The Fourth Judicial District also participated in the national Open Doors Program. The program is a partnership between the legal community and local high schools to provide students with an opportunity to learn about equity and the justice system.

The Sixth Judicial District Equal Justice once again held a half-day event titled, "Consider the Courts," at the St. Louis County Courthouse in Duluth in 2019. The program exposes students from the Fond du Lac Ojibwe school to the possibility of careers within the justice system. Students were introduced to careers within the courts and with other justice partner agencies. The judicial district continues to share career postings with local reservations including the local Careerforce Center.



For more information visit: www.mncourts.gov/cej