



Minnesota Judicial Branch Policy

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Mandated Services Cost Saving Measures

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to provide quality service while exercising fiscal responsibility in the provision of the following mandated services: Court Interpreters, Guardians Ad Litem, Jury Management, and Psychological/Psychiatric Examiner Services. In an effort to address current budget shortages, the district courts shall implement the following measures to reduce costs and achieve more efficient management of the mandated services budgets:

A. Court Interpreters

1. Develop district continuance and settlement policies.
2. Schedule interpreter hearings in blocks so one interpreter can interpret multiple hearings during same visit. Group hearings and trials with common language needs.
3. Invest in equipment for telephone interpreting services in areas where travel time is high.
4. Regularly review interpreter management and statistical reports at district bench and administrator meetings.
5. Establish a single “point of contact” / interpreter scheduler in each Court Administrator's office. The scheduler shall reduce reliance on interpreter agencies for services to reduce travel costs.
6. Coordinate interpreter scheduling at the district level or regionally, particularly in those areas where travel time is highest.
7. Where cost effective, hire employee interpreters for single or multi-county regions.
8. Work with State Court Administration to recruit and develop additional qualified interpreters.

B. Guardians Ad Litem

1. Assess reimbursement fees per current Council policy.
2. Send delinquent court-ordered GAL reimbursements to collections (ACS).
3. Regularly review GAL management and statistical reports at district bench meetings.

C. Jury Management

1. Develop district continuance and settlement policies.
2. Establish a statewide policy for case type panel sizes except in exceptional circumstances.
3. Utilize a call-in process for juror check-in.
4. Regularly review jury management and statistical reports at district bench and administrator meetings.

D. Psychological/Psychiatric Examiner Services

1. Authorize examiner payment (for court attendance) for testimony only. Permit expanded payment only on case-by-case basis and document such exceptions and their rationale.
2. Require the parties to review the first examiner's report before ordering a second exam.
3. Discontinue the automatic practice of ordering Rule 20.01 and 20.02 exams concurrently.
4. Order the prosecutor to provide the examiner with a chronologically organized set of materials for examiner review in SPP & SDP cases.
5. Utilize qualified *psychologists* whenever available in all hearings where appropriate.
6. Restrict examiner extraordinary expenses such as parking, meals and mileage.
7. Establish flat rates for case types or maximum hourly rates at the district level.
8. Only utilize employee or contract examiners or those found on the roster.
9. Utilize contract, employee, or roster examiners rather than State Operated Services (SOS) examiners for Rule 20 evaluations.
10. When it results in travel cost savings, utilize ITV to the extent possible for commitments, excluding SPP and SDP hearings.
11. Regularly review Psychological Services management and statistical reports at district bench & administrator meetings.
12. Establish examiner employees or contractors within county, district or region.

II. IMPLEMENTATION AUTHORITY

Implementation of this policy shall be the responsibility of the Chief Judges of the Judicial Districts. The State Court Administrator shall provide technical assistance to the districts.

III. EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

Each Judicial District shall report to the Judicial Council on a quarterly basis progress in implementing these program measures as well as any other activities directed at reducing costs and managing the mandated services budgets within the appropriation. Measures that are determined to have a positive appreciable impact on budget management without sacrificing the quality of the service provided will be developed into permanent policy within that mandated court service area.