



# Committee for Equality and Justice FY22-23 Strategic Plan

*shared values • shared purpose • shared priorities*

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## **Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ) 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 Judicial Branch. To accomplish this mission, the CEJ is charged with:

1. Recommending diversity and inclusion education programs and course materials for judges and Judicial Branch employees.
2. Promoting diversity and inclusion in the Judicial Branch employment and in appointments to Judicial Branch committees and boards to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch.
3. 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.
4. Assisting district Equal Justice Committees (EJC) in their work at the local level and providing assistance in outreach efforts to the communities they serve.

## **GOAL I - ACCESS AND FAIRNESS**

Review Judicial Branch race-related and other relevant bias-related data and make recommendations for improvement in court processes, procedures, and policies.

1. Address follow-up items from the 2020-2021 CEJ study on Jury Race Data and Recommendations by:
  - a. Requesting updates from State Court Administration regarding recommendations contained within the report,
  - b. Working with EJCs to address targeted community outreach recommended in the 2020-2021 CEJ's Study on Jury Race Data and Recommendations including, all community outreach efforts referenced in the 2020-2021 Study on Jury Race data, and
  - c. Coordinating with the CEJ's Community Outreach Subcommittee to avoid duplicate efforts.
2. Present information from the 2020-2021 CEJ's Probation Revocation Study to EJCs at judicial district meetings, and answer questions from judicial officers and court administration regarding how to conduct a similar study at the local level.
3. Update the Racial Bias Task Force grid.



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## **GOAL II – OUTREACH**

Assist district EEJCs in their work at the local level and provide assistance in outreach efforts to the communities they serve.

1. Review, update, and expand Community Outreach Guide (formerly Community Outreach Toolkit) to include chapters for various outreach options and develop a SharePoint site for access to the materials.

## **GOAL III – EDUCATION**

Review and make recommendations for diversity, inclusion and implicit bias education programs and courses for judicial officers and Judicial Branch employees.

1. Develop a menu of presentations to be delivered to the CEJ in FY22-23 by committees, projects, community groups and work groups with work that intersects with the work of CEJ.
2. Develop and submit diversity and inclusion course topics and proposals for Judicial Branch employee education, the annual Minnesota District Judges Foundation (MDJF) conference, the Annual Conference of Judges, and other judicial and employee education events and programs.
3. Develop information on the contributions of African Americans to the judiciary and make this material/module available to judicial districts to be held on Juneteenth.
4. Develop a recommendation for a Judicial Branch Race Equity Challenge.
5. Develop a recommendation for a Race Equity Train-the-Trainer curriculum for the Judicial Branch, a proposal to provide this training to faculty judges and staff, and a proposal for how to roll-out this training to the Judicial Districts.

## **GOAL IV - CIVIL JUSTICE**

Increase the number of low-income and disadvantaged people receiving civil legal assistance and reduce barriers to access in Minnesota state courts through collaborative projects of the Judicial Branch and the Minnesota State Bar Association (MSBA).

1. Expand the successful housing court clinic model, including the possibility of remote appearances, to one or more jurisdictions by working in collaboration with civil legal aid (which includes both staffed civil legal aid programs and pro bono attorneys from private firms) and courts outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area.



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2. Increase MSBA and Judicial Branch pro bono coordination by evaluating whether there are court projects that can benefit from paired pro bono assistance, particularly in underserved counties and, conducting pro bono recognition and outreach in each judicial district, possibly in coordination with EJs and judicial district bar associations or MSBA One Profession events.
3. Examine in forma pauperis (IFP) documentation requirements across the Judicial Branch and work with Judicial Education to develop a judicial training on IFP review.
4. Research best practices from courts around the state and country for overcoming barriers to low-income people attending court hearings, including transportation and technology barriers, and make recommendations on findings to promote access to justice.