

Agency Purpose

Minnesota's Supreme Court is the state's court of last resort, serving as the final guardian of the state constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution. The court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law, and making recommendations for improvement of the judicial system.

- ⇒ The mission of the judicial branch is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair, competent, and timely resolution of cases and controversies.
- ⇒ The judicial branch vision is that the general public and those who use the court system will refer to it as accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well managed.

Core Functions

The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in remedial cases as prescribed by law, appellate jurisdiction over all cases, and supervisory jurisdiction over all courts in the state. The Supreme Court's supervisory jurisdiction includes the authority to prescribe, amend, and modify the rules of practice in all courts; the rules governing the examination and admission of attorneys to the state bar; and the rules governing judicial and attorney professional conduct.

The Chief Justice serves as chair for the Minnesota Judicial Council and is responsible for supervising the administrative operations of the state court system, including the financial affairs of the court system and the assignment of judges to serve in courts needing assistance.

The Supreme Court conducts its administrative functions in support of the following three strategic priority areas:

- ⇒ **Access to Justice** – Ensuring the justice system is open, affordable, effective, and accountable to the people it serves.
- ⇒ **Administering Justice for More Effective Results** – Working across branches of government and with other stakeholders to improve outcomes for and the delivery of services for children, families, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) addicted offenders who come into our courts.
- ⇒ **Public Trust Accountability and Impartiality** – Through education, outreach to diverse communities, and a commitment to system-wide customer service and accountability, improving citizens' understanding of and confidence in the Third Branch of government.

Operations

The adjudicative and supervisory functions of the Supreme Court have an impact on all Minnesota citizens.

Adjudicative Operations

In reviewing more than 800 cases each year, justices are assisted in their work by law clerks and the Supreme Court Commissioner's Office.

At A Glance

- ◆ Supreme Court reviews more than 800 cases a year.
- ◆ The judicial branch operates in a constantly changing environment.
 - ⇒ Laws, case types, and legal sanctions change annually.
 - ⇒ Caseload volume is determined by other branches and levels of government, and by private citizens and business entities who bring disputes for resolution.
- ◆ The Minnesota Judicial Branch contains a judicial system of over 281 judges, 16 Court of Appeals judges, seven Supreme Court Justices, 3,000 employees and 23,000 attorneys.
- ◆ The courts recently completed a major financial transition from county-based funding to state funding for all of its ten judicial districts.
- ◆ Redesign of core court technology is underway.
 - ⇒ Implementation of the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) is underway.
- ◆ The Minnesota Courts regularly review their effectiveness by monitoring
 - ⇒ case filing trends;
 - ⇒ case clearance rates; and
 - ⇒ elapsed case time from filing to disposition.

Supervisory Operations

In the Chief Justice's role as chair of The Minnesota Judicial Council and general supervisory role over the courts, he is assisted by the State Court Administrator's Office, which provides the administrative infrastructure for the judicial branch.

Working at the direction of the Judicial Council, the state court administrator is responsible for providing judicial branch finance, human resources, technology, training, communications, research/evaluation, caseload management, and cross-district judicial assignment services.

Budget

Of the funding for the Supreme Court, 87% is from General Fund direct appropriations. Federal grants represent 10% of the funding for the court. The balance of the funding is from special revenue funds and other grants and gifts, representing 3% of the courts funding.

Contact

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Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2008-09
	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	42,196	43,211	43,211	43,211	86,422
Forecast Base	42,196	43,211	42,171	42,171	84,342
Change		0	(1,040)	(1,040)	(2,080)
% Biennial Change from 2006-07					-1.2%
 <u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	40,393	44,975	42,171	42,171	84,342
Statutory Appropriations					
General	418	163	0	0	0
Misc Special Revenue	1,348	1,224	1,111	1,126	2,237
Federal	4,512	4,564	4,475	4,550	9,025
Miscellaneous Agency	1	1	1	1	2
Gift	55	64	70	49	119
Total	46,727	50,991	47,828	47,897	95,725
 <u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Total Compensation	19,069	21,244	21,027	21,027	42,054
Other Operating Expenses	14,399	16,115	13,474	13,543	27,017
Local Assistance	13,259	13,632	13,327	13,327	26,654
Total	46,727	50,991	47,828	47,897	95,725
 <u>Expenditures by Program</u>					
Supreme Court Operations	33,573	37,466	34,608	34,677	69,285
Civil Legal Services	13,154	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440
Total	46,727	50,991	47,828	47,897	95,725
 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)	 239.3	 249.1	 249.1	 249.1	

Program Description

Minnesota's Supreme Court is the state's court of last resort, serving as the final guardian of the state constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution. The court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law, and making recommendations for improvement of the judicial system.

Program at a Glance

- ◆ Supreme Court reviews more than 800 cases a year
- ◆ Supreme Court oversees judicial system of over 297 judges, 3,000 employees, and 23,000 attorneys

Population Served

The adjudicative and supervisory functions of the Supreme Court have an impact on all Minnesota citizens.

Services Provided

The Minnesota Supreme Court considers appeals from judgments of the Court of Appeals, the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. It hears special term matters, motions, and petitions for extraordinary relief. The Supreme Court also hears mandatory cases. This includes first-degree murder, tax court and workers' compensation court of appeals, as well as attorney discipline.

In addition to this appellate function, the Supreme Court supervises admission to the practice of law in the state and regulates legal practice. The court also promulgates rules governing practice and procedure in the courts throughout the state, a function that involves special advisory committees and requires numerous public hearings.

Key Measures

The Supreme Court seeks to maintain or improve the dispositional time while maintaining the high quality of legal analysis and clarity of its decisions.

The Supreme Court seeks to use its personnel:

- ◆ to manage its workload so that each case receives adequate attention as its importance demands;
- ◆ to decide petitions for review within 60 days;
- ◆ to maintain an orderly and uniform legal process and procedure throughout the state through the promulgation of uniform rules;
- ◆ to regulate the admission to and practice of law in Minnesota so that each citizen seeking legal counsel is assured of competent representation;
- ◆ to ensure the financial integrity of the court system in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and to ensure correct payment of invoices within the statutorily required 30 days; and
- ◆ to ensure the effective operation of the state court system in a way that provides access to all citizens.

Program Funding

The general fund primarily funds the Supreme Court Operations budget. A small amount of support from the special revenue fund is received for the State Law Library, the Court Interpreter Program, and the Attorney Registration Program. Some federal funds are received and directed towards children's initiatives.

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SUPREME COURT

Program: SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS

Program Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium
	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	2008-09
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	29,876	30,891	30,891	30,891	61,782
Technical Adjustments					
One-time Appropriations			(1,040)	(1,040)	(2,080)
Forecast Base	29,876	30,891	29,851	29,851	59,702
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	28,376	32,352	29,851	29,851	59,702
Statutory Appropriations					
General	418	163	0	0	0
Misc Special Revenue	211	322	211	226	437
Federal	4,512	4,564	4,475	4,550	9,025
Miscellaneous Agency	1	1	1	1	2
Gift	55	64	70	49	119
Total	33,573	37,466	34,608	34,677	69,285
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Total Compensation	19,069	21,244	21,027	21,027	42,054
Other Operating Expenses	14,397	16,115	13,474	13,543	27,017
Local Assistance	107	107	107	107	214
Total	33,573	37,466	34,608	34,677	69,285
<u>Expenditures by Activity</u>					
Supreme Court Operations	5,086	5,424	5,259	5,238	10,497
State Court Administration	26,538	29,930	27,315	27,405	54,720
Law Library Operations	1,949	2,112	2,034	2,034	4,068
Total	33,573	37,466	34,608	34,677	69,285
Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)	239.3	249.1	249.1	249.1	

Program Description

Appointed by the Supreme Court, the Legal Services Advisory Committee distributes funds to civil legal services programs to provide legal assistance to low-income persons meeting statutory income eligibility guidelines. By statute, 85% of the funding is granted to six regional legal services programs (Coalition Programs) with 38 offices or projects throughout the state, which had demonstrated an ability as of 7-1-82 to provide legal services with funds provided by the federal Legal Services Corporation.

Program at a Glance

- ◆ Number of grant programs – 27
- ◆ Number of people served – 35,610 individual cases
- ◆ Number of people served – 70,000 (est.) by preventative education

The remaining 15% of the funding is awarded annually on a competitive basis to nonprofit organizations providing legal or alternative dispute resolution services. In FY 2005, 27 programs received grants to provide or support legal services to the poor.

Population Served

An estimated 432,000 or approximately 9% of Minnesota's population, with incomes below the federal poverty level could qualify for civil legal services under the statutory guidelines of this program. (M.S. 480.24-480.244). In the fall of 2005, the Legal Services Corporation issued a report entitled, **Documenting the Justice Gap in America**. This national study (which included Minnesota) established that for every client who received legal aid services, one applicant was turned away. The Minnesota Supreme Court's Minnesota Legal Services Planning Commission, in 2005, after considering a variety of studies, determined that **"nevertheless, in Minnesota, as in the rest of America, a very large percentage, perhaps, more than three-quarters of the legal needs of the disadvantaged remains unaddressed."**

Because of the nature of poverty, nearly 70% of persons served by the Legal Services Coalition are women and their children. Nearly 15% are age 60 or over and over 37% are persons of color. Nearly 20% of legal aid's clients are persons with physical or mental disabilities and 14% are English language learners.

Services Provided

Through representation, negotiation, conciliation, community education, and preventative law work, lawyers in these programs constructively resolve the legal problems of low-income applicants for program services. Most of the legal problems handled by these programs directly and significantly affect the day-to-day lives of persons in need: their homes, family, health, support for their children, and personal safety.

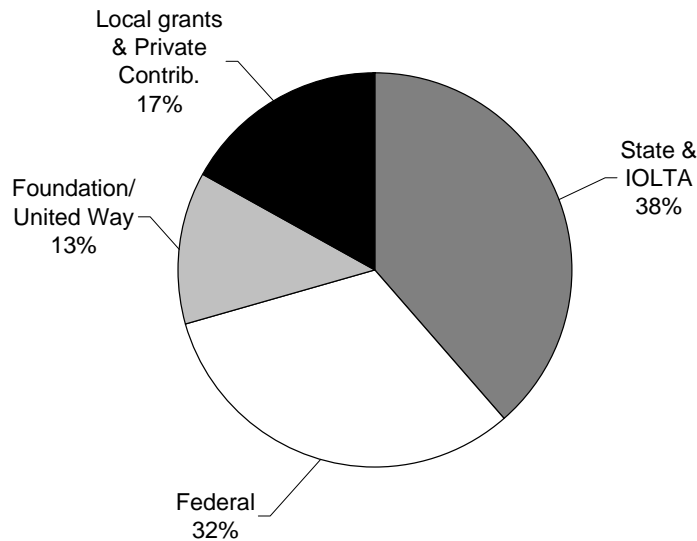
Historical Perspective

Since the early 1980s Legal Services Coalition programs have experienced a 60% increase in requests for services while program income in real dollars has increased only to the extent that programs are able to serve 20% more Minnesotans. Funding for civil legal services in Minnesota is a combination of state, federal, foundation, and private funding. The Minnesota Legal Services Planning Commission has recommended, in 2005, "that the Minnesota legislature increase the funding for delivery of civil legal services to the disadvantaged."

The Supreme Court has assessed attorneys an annual fee to support legal services which raises \$1 million annually. Among the six Legal Services Coalition programs, volunteer attorneys have contributed time valued in excess of \$1.6 million annually.

In 2005 the estimated funding for the Legal Services Coalition programs will be \$25,339,605 from the following sources:

**Civil Legal Services
Estimated Funding
(Total: \$25 million)**



Key Measures

Due to reduced revenue in 2001-2004, legal aid served about 11% fewer clients. State funding increases in 2005 helped to restore some of these legal services. However, further reductions in civil legal services are expected in the next biennium with the further decline in federal funding dollars.

Program Funding

Program grants are funded by a General Fund appropriation and dedicated revenue from a licensed attorney assessment.

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SUPREME COURT
 Program: CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES

Program Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2008-09
	FY2006	FY2007	FY2008	FY2009	
<u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u>					
General					
Current Appropriation	12,320	12,320	12,320	12,320	24,640
Forecast Base	12,320	12,320	12,320	12,320	24,640
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>					
Direct Appropriations					
General	12,017	12,623	12,320	12,320	24,640
Statutory Appropriations					
Misc Special Revenue	1,137	902	900	900	1,800
Total	13,154	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>					
Other Operating Expenses	2	0	0	0	0
Local Assistance	13,152	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440
Total	13,154	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440
<u>Expenditures by Activity</u>					
Legal Services	13,154	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440
Total	13,154	13,525	13,220	13,220	26,440

SUPREME COURT

Agency Revenue Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Actual FY2006	Budgeted FY2007	Current Law		Biennium 2008-09
			FY2008	FY2009	
<u>Non Dedicated Revenue:</u>					
Departmental Earnings:					
General	603	600	600	600	1,200
Total Non-Dedicated Receipts	603	600	600	600	1,200
<u>Dedicated Receipts:</u>					
Departmental Earnings:					
General	243	130	0	0	0
Misc Special Revenue	1,320	1,114	1,111	1,111	2,222
Grants:					
Misc Special Revenue	0	80	0	0	0
Federal	374	300	310	310	620
Other Revenues:					
Federal	3,172	4,190	4,190	4,190	8,380
Gift	61	50	50	49	99
Other Sources:					
Misc Special Revenue	0	4	4	4	8
Miscellaneous Agency	1	1	1	1	2
Total Dedicated Receipts	5,171	5,869	5,666	5,665	11,331
Agency Total Revenue	5,774	6,469	6,266	6,265	12,531