

### Agency Purpose

The Minnesota Supreme Court exercising its inherent constitutional authority regulates the practice of law in Minnesota.

The Supreme Court exercises its regulatory authority so that within the state the public is well served by admitting to practice competent attorneys who continuously revitalize their knowledge of the law by attending continuing education programs, by appropriately disciplining after careful investigation those who have been found to have violated the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct, and by reimbursing clients under specified circumstances who have lost funds because of attorney misfeasance. The court has implemented a statewide lawyer assistance program to direct lawyers to appropriate and necessary counseling.

### Core Functions

The Supreme Court has established regulatory boards to assist in key areas of the regulation of the practices of law.

- ◆ The Continuing Legal Education Board certifies 6,000 programs annually in a wide variety of legal subjects to promote professional growth for the state's 23,000 attorneys and monitors each attorney's compliance with continuing education regulations.
- ◆ The Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility, working in conjunction with district ethics committees throughout the state, investigates complaints of unprofessional conduct against lawyers, and recommends discipline where appropriate.
- ◆ The Legal Certification Board certifies agencies, which certify lawyers having specified experience and training as specialists.
- ◆ The Client Security Board reviews claims from clients who have experienced monetary loss because of attorney dishonesty and, where the claim meets criteria established by the board, reimburses the client for the loss up to \$150,000.
- ◆ The Board of Law Examiners reviews the credentials of applicants for admission to the practice of law in Minnesota and administers the bar examination.
- ◆ The Lawyer Assistance Program directs lawyers who are suffering from chemical and substance abuse or emotional distress to appropriate treatment.

### Operations

The boards, consisting of lawyers and lay members, are appointed by the Supreme Court to carry out the functions identified above within the rules for each board promulgated by the Supreme Court. Each board is authorized to hire staff. The Client Security Board contracts with the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility for legal services to examine claims and pursue subrogation claims. The Board of Law Examiners, Continuing Legal Education, and Legal Certification have a single director and share staff.

### Key Goals

The Legal Professions Boards conduct administrative functions in support of the following three Supreme Court 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** – Adopting approaches and processes for the resolution of cases that enhance the outcomes for individual participants and the public.
- ◆ **Public Trust Accountability and Impartiality** – A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.

### At A Glance

#### Business Functions:

- ◆ The Board of Law Examiners tests approximately 900 applicants to the bar annually, and recommends for admission to the bar those persons who establish legal competence and good character.
- ◆ The Board of Continuing Legal Education accredits 6,000 legal education courses annually and monitors 23,000 Minnesota-Licensed attorneys' completion of continuing legal education.
- ◆ The Board of Legal Certification has accredited five legal organizations which certify attorneys as specialist in nine defined specialty fields of law.

**Key Measures**

The Legal Professions Boards seeks to use its personnel:

- ◆ To investigate complaints of unprofessional conduct consistent with timelines set forth by the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct and recommend discipline where appropriate;
- ◆ To process applications and administer the bar exam on a semi-annual basis;
- ◆ To review claims from clients who have experienced monetary loss consistent with procedures set forth in the Rules of the Minnesota Client Security Board;
- ◆ To approve continuing legal education courses and monitor each licensed Minnesota attorney's compliance with continuing education requirements as set forth in the Rules of the Minnesota State Board of Continuing Legal Education.

**Budget**

Dedicated revenue fully funds the activities of the boards. No general fund monies support the operations of these boards. The Supreme Court assesses each lawyer admitted to practice law in Minnesota an annual registration fee which funds these activities. The registration fee revenue is divided among the boards as determined by the Court after public hearing. The Board of Law Examiners assesses a bar examination fee to each applicant for the bar examination. The boards of Continuing Legal Education and Legal Certification assess various administrative fees. The fees for those boards are included in the Department Earnings Report.

The boards have 37.50 FTE employees.

**Contact**

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# LEGAL PROFESSIONS BOARDS

# Agency Overview

*Dollars in Thousands*

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2010-11
	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	
<b><u>Expenditures by Fund</u></b>					
<b>Statutory Appropriations</b>					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	4,783	5,789	5,530	5,629	11,159
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,783</b>	<b>5,789</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>5,629</b>	<b>11,159</b>
<b><u>Expenditures by Category</u></b>					
Total Compensation	2,925	3,266	3,327	3,400	6,727
Other Operating Expenses	1,613	2,128	1,808	1,834	3,642
Local Assistance	245	395	395	395	790
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,783</b>	<b>5,789</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>5,629</b>	<b>11,159</b>
<b><u>Expenditures by Program</u></b>					
Lawyers Board	4,783	5,789	5,530	5,629	11,159
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,783</b>	<b>5,789</b>	<b>5,530</b>	<b>5,629</b>	<b>11,159</b>
<b>Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>36.6</b>	

# LEGAL PROFESSIONS BOARDS

# Agency Revenue Summary

*Dollars in Thousands*

	Actual FY2008	Budgeted FY2009	Current Law		Biennium 2010-11
			FY2010	FY2011	
<b><i>Non Dedicated Revenue:</i></b>					
<b>Total Non-Dedicated Receipts</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b><i>Dedicated Receipts:</i></b>					
<b>Departmental Earnings:</b>					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	5,478	4,993	5,194	5,200	10,394
<b>Other Revenues:</b>					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	185	198	198	198	396
<b>Other Sources:</b>					
Miscellaneous Special Revenue	20	20	20	20	40
<b>Total Dedicated Receipts</b>	<b>5,683</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>5,412</b>	<b>5,418</b>	<b>10,830</b>
<b>Agency Total Revenue</b>	<b>5,683</b>	<b>5,211</b>	<b>5,412</b>	<b>5,418</b>	<b>10,830</b>