

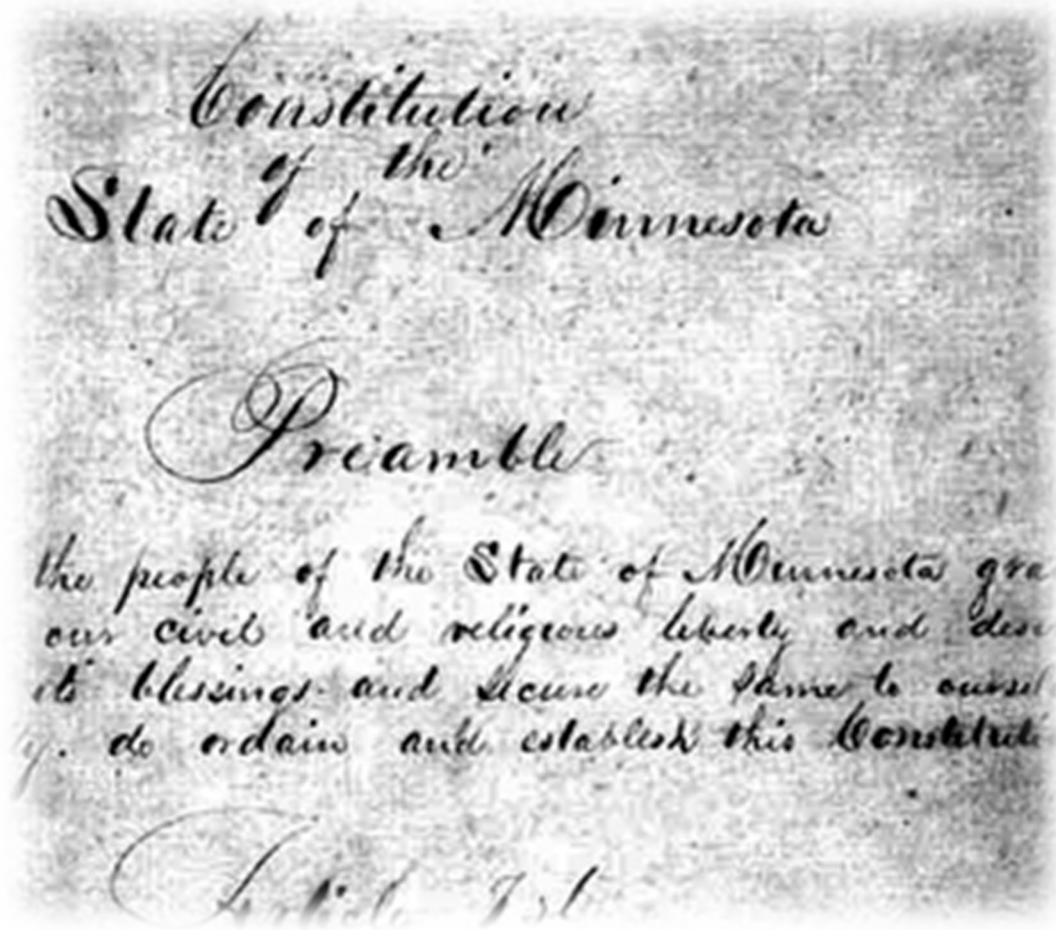


MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Overview & FY 2026-27 Budget Request
Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator

January 22, 2025

Core Government Function



Minnesota Constitution

Article 1, Section 8

“Every person is entitled to... obtain justice **freely** and without purchase, completely and without denial, **promptly** and **without delay**, conformable to the laws.”

Minnesota Judicial Branch By the Numbers



Three levels:

1. Supreme Court
2. Court of Appeals
3. 87 District Courts



322 Judges



Approx. 2,850
employees



103 Locations

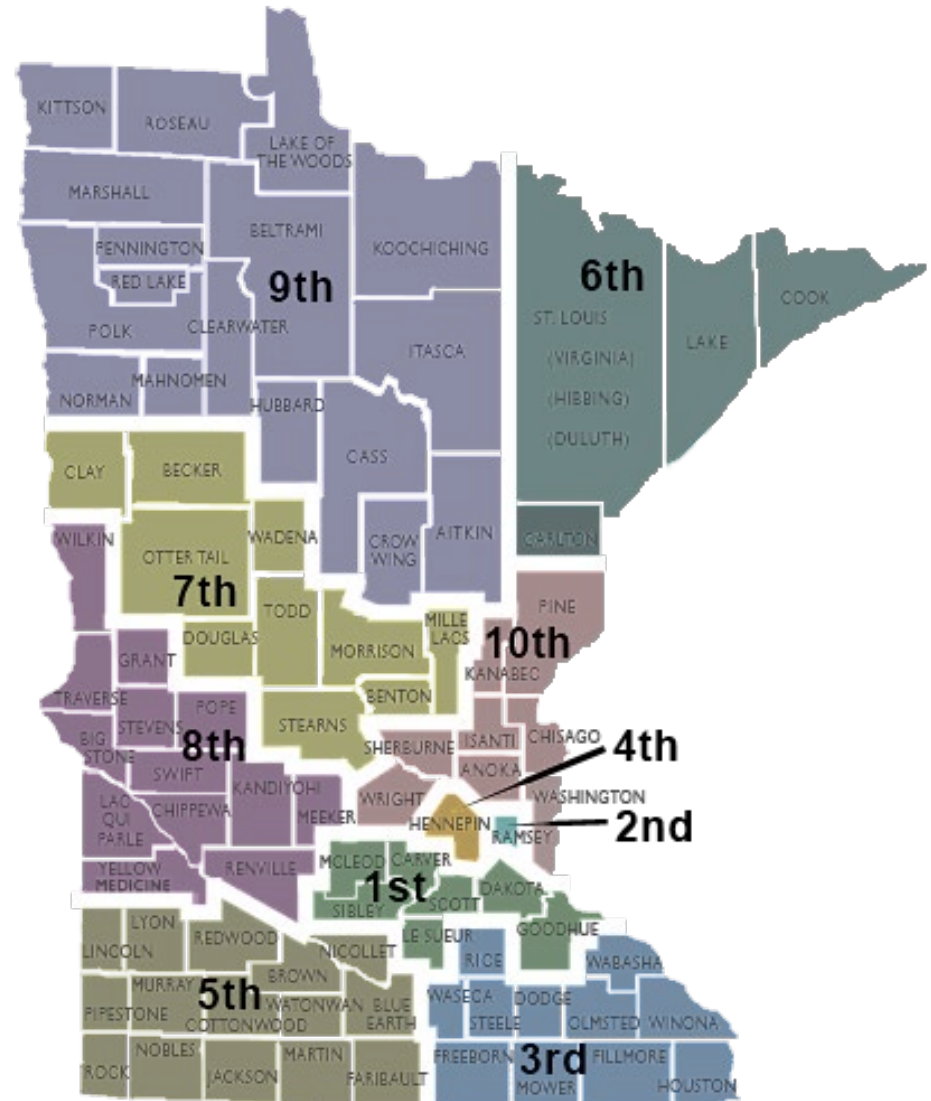


1,004,970 cases filed
in 2024

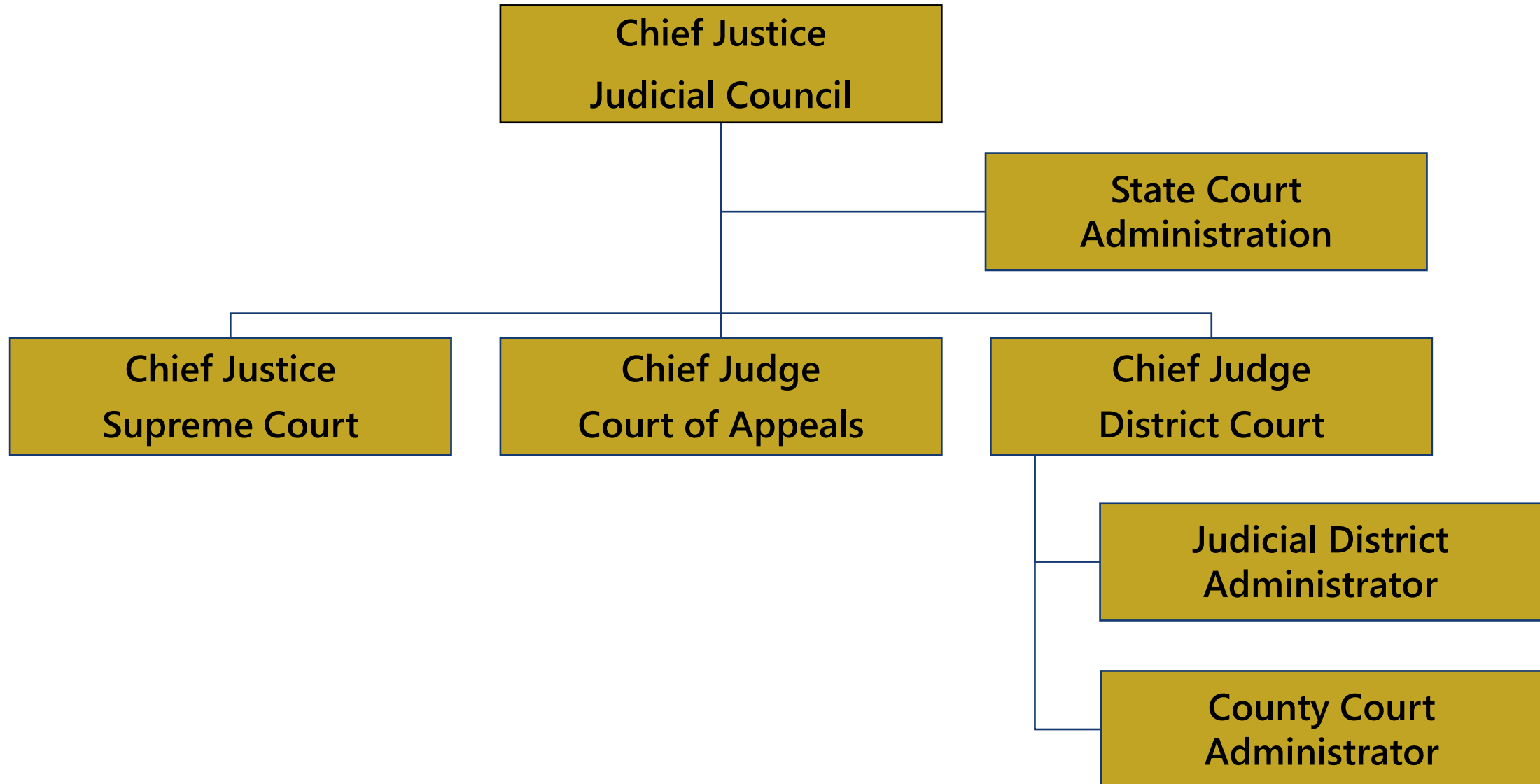


\$919.6 million
FY2024-25 budget
(Not including Civil Legal Services)

Minnesota Judicial Branch: Judicial Districts



Judicial Branch Administrative Structure

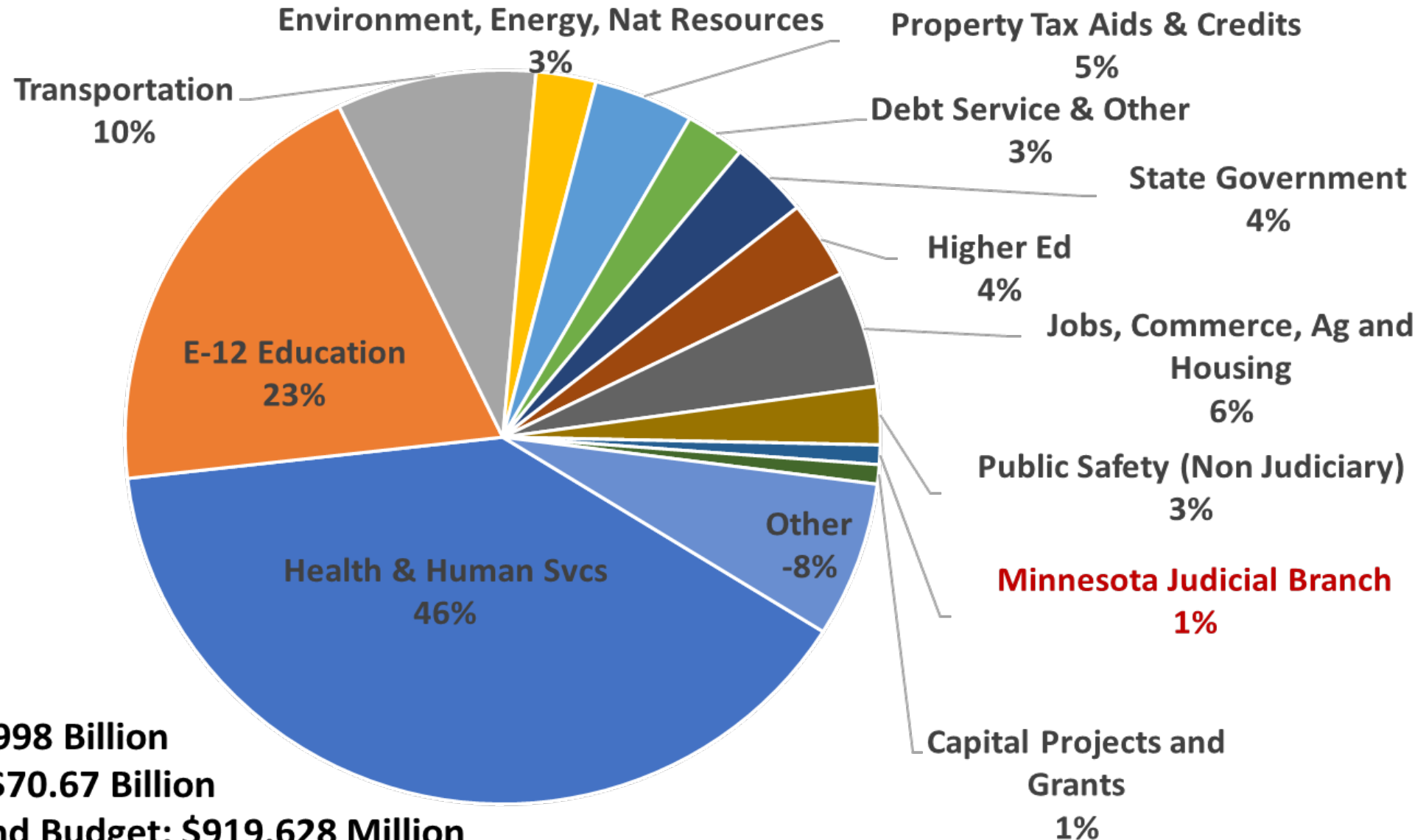


Judicial Branch Mandated Services

Minnesota Statute §480.182 requires state courts to pay for the following court-related costs:

- Court Interpreters
- Guardian ad Litem program and personnel costs
- Examination costs for mental commitments and related proceedings under chapter 253B
- Examination costs under Chapter 611 or Rule 20 of the Rules of Criminal Procedure
- In forma pauperis costs
- Costs for transcripts mandated by statute
- Jury Program costs
- Witness fees and mileage fees specified in certain statutes

FY 2024-25 State Budget



FY24-25 All Funds: \$128.998 Billion

FY24-25 General Funds: \$70.67 Billion

FY24-25 MJB General Fund Budget: \$919.628 Million

FY2024-25 Judicial Branch Funding Increases

Appropriations from the Judiciary Bill (<i>numbers in thousands</i>)	Amount
Judicial Branch Workforce	\$79,430
Treatments Courts	\$844
Courtroom Technology Enhancements (one-time)	\$7,400
Pandemic Case Backlog (one-time)	\$4,200
Mandated Psychological Services Deficit (one-time)	\$24,268
Interpreter Pay Increase	\$635
Law Clerk Pay Increase	\$4,066
Competency Exam Delay	(\$3,542)
Psych Examiner Pay Increase	\$1,070
Interpreter Program Deficit (one-time)	\$5,160
Interpreter Travel Time	\$170
Jury Program Deficit (one-time)	\$2,384
Vicarious Trauma Services for Jurors	\$50
Cyber Security Funding (one-time)	\$5,163
Safe and Secure Courthouse Initiative (one-time)	\$500

Appropriations from Other Bills	Amount
Treatment Courts-Cannabis Bill	\$3,000
Cannabis Expungement (one-time)	\$1,090
Extreme Risk Protection Order Implementation	\$273
Paid Family and Medical Leave Interest Change (one-time)	\$30
Supreme Court Council on Child Protection (one-time)	\$1,000
Eviction Records Expungement (one-time)	\$545
Total	\$137,736 *

**\$51,740 of the total amount is one-time funding*

Impact of FY 2024-25 Expenditures

- **Made the Judicial Branch's compensation structure more competitive with our public sector peers.**
- **Eliminated the Pandemic Backlog of Felony and Gross Misdemeanor Cases.**
- **Enhanced courtroom technology.**
- **Sustained four recently launched treatment courts.**
- **Temporarily addressed budget deficits in critical court programs, such as Psychological Services, the Court Interpreter Program, Jury Services, and our Cyber Security Program.**
- **Raised payment rates for court interpreters and psychological examiners.**

Other Recent Judicial Branch Accomplishments and Initiatives

New District Court Hearing Framework

Technology Enhancements

New Mental Health Justice Initiative

Interpreter and Psych Examiners workgroups

FY2026-27 Budget Request Overview



Necessary to ensure courts remain accessible, secure, and effective for all Minnesotans.

Will protect constitutional rights, improve the efficiency of the state's courts, and help the judicial system serve the people of Minnesota more equitably and fairly.

Focused on the highest priorities and most pressing issues facing our statewide court system.

Maintain Core Justice Operations

Key Challenges:

- **Compensation Gap:** Judicial and staff salaries remain significantly behind other public-sector employers in Minnesota, creating competitive disadvantages.
- **Increasing Turnover:**
 - Since 2020, the Judicial Branch's employee turnover rate has increased by 15%, while the number of applicants for each open position has fallen by 27%.
 - The top reason departing employees provide for leaving the Judicial Branch is wage/salary.

Request

\$77,301,000 in **FY 26-27** to:

- Increase judicial officer salaries by 6%
- Create a 6% employee compensation increase pool
- Fund the employer share of anticipated health care cost increases
- Fund the increased cost of leasing office space in the Minnesota Judicial Center

Digital Accessibility

- In April 2024, the US Department of Justice amended the Americans with Disabilities Act with new digital accessibility requirements for state and local governments.

Amendments take effect April 24, 2026.

- Minnesota Judicial Branch launched a statewide project to ensure compliance with these new federal requirements

Request

\$5,100,000 in **FY 26-27** and **\$1,764,000** in **FY 28-29** to:

- Remediate over one million web and case-related documents
- Revise over 1,800 web and Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) templates, and
- Update approximately 22 information technology applications.
- Maintain permanent compliance with federal digital accessibility requirements

Justice Partner Access

- MJB has provided electronic access to court documents for statewide justice partner agencies through legal applications since 2003.
- Over the last two years, vendor support for several of these aging applications was discontinued due to cyber security and ongoing maintenance concerns.
- In 2024, the Judicial Branch convened the Justice Partner Access User Group to discuss improvement to electronic court record access.

Request

\$4,000,000 in FY 2026-27 and \$800,000 in FY 2028-29 to:

Implement the technological enhancements and improved data sharing recommended by the Justice Partner Access User Group.

Forensic Examiner Pay Increase

- The Judicial Branch is facing a shortage of qualified examiners despite recent legislative investments.
- Difficulty finding examiners delays the administration of justice.
- MJB's current hourly pay rate is behind the current market for these services.
- Increasing the hourly pay rate will attract and retain qualified examiners.

Request

\$7,222,000 in FY 2026-27 to:

Increase contract forensic examiner pay rates to \$175/hour, aligning with market rates.

Jury Per Diem and Mileage

- Jurors have expressed concerns due to the financial hardships associated with jury service.
- The requested funding aims to alleviate the financial hardship to help increased reporting rates and improved jury diversity.
- Increasing jury per diem to \$100 per day aligns with the statewide average for minimum wage paid for an eight-hour workday.
- Increasing the mileage reimbursement rate from \$0.54 to \$0.67 to match the federal rate as of 12/31/2024.

Request

\$18,448,000 in FY 2026-27 to:

- Increase jury per diem from \$20/day to \$100/day
- Increase the juror mileage reimbursement rate from \$0.54/mile to \$0.67/mile (the current IRS standard mileage rate).

Mandated Services Permanent Funding

- In 2024, the Legislature provided temporary funding to address budget deficits in three mandated services:
 - **Psychological Services Program**
Key Challenge: The volume of exams has increased 143% between FY20-FY24.
 - **Interpreter Program**
Key Challenge: Interpreter events have nearly doubled in the last 5 years, requiring higher number of interpreters in court proceedings.
 - **Jury Program**
Key Challenge: Rising costs in administering jury service due to inflation.
- The Judicial Branch is seeking permanent funding to address these long-term deficits.

Request

\$14,790,000 in FY2028-29 to address long-term deficits in the Judicial Branch Psychological Services, Court Interpreter, and Jury Programs

Psychological Services: \$10,634,000 in FY 2028-29

Court Interpreter Program: \$2,580,000 in FY 2028-29

Jury Program: \$1,576,000 in FY 2028-29

Cyber Security Permanent Funding

- The Cyber Security Program maintains and ensures the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of this data through a carefully coordinated suite of technology, process, and procedure.
- Cyber crime is becoming increasingly organized, and cybercriminals are continually modifying their attacks.
- The branch needs ongoing funding to constantly evolve to defend against and respond to those changing threats.

Request

\$3,500,000 in FY 2028-29 to:

Enhance the Judicial Branch's Cyber Security Program to better protect the courts from cyber attacks and protect Minnesotans' private and sensitive data.

2025 Legislative Session Funding Request

Change Item Request (Numbers in thousands)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2026-27	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2028-29
Maintain Core Justice Operations	\$25,103	\$52,198	\$77,301	\$52,198	\$52,198	\$104,396
Digital Accessibility	\$2,550	\$2,550	\$5,100	\$882	\$882	\$1,764
Justice Partner Access	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$400	\$400	\$800
Forensic Examiner Rate Increase	\$3,611	\$3,611	\$7,222	\$3,611	\$3,611	\$7,222
Jury Per Diem/Mileage	\$9,224	\$9,224	\$18,448	\$9,224	\$9,224	\$18,448
Cyber Security Ongoing Funding				\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500
Psych Services Deficit				\$5,317	\$5,317	\$10,634
Interpreter Program Deficit				\$1,290	\$1,290	\$2,580
Jury Program Deficit				\$788	\$788	\$1,576
Total Budget Request	\$42,488	\$69,583	\$112,071	\$75,460	\$75,460	\$159,920

THANK YOU!

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