

**Agency Purpose**

Pursuant to M.S. 490.15, the purpose of the Board on Judicial Standards is:

- ◆ to promote appropriate judicial conduct, and increase public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Minnesota judiciary;
- ◆ to ensure that all judicial officers employed by the judicial branch adhere to established standards of ethical conduct; and
- ◆ to provide a procedure to review and investigate allegations of judicial disability or misconduct, and to provide a forum to discuss questions concerning appropriate judicial behavior.

**Core Functions**

The board has two basic responsibilities: 1) to educate and advise the public and judicial officers as to appropriate judicial conduct; and 2) to review and investigate the complaints received on judicial disability or alleged misconduct including behavior that interferes with the performance of judicial duties or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice. In support of these functions, the board engages in the following activities:

- ◆ receives, reviews, and investigates complaints filed against judges and judicial officers for violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct and statutes;
- ◆ issues discipline to judges and judicial officers when appropriate, including private warnings and public reprimands;
- ◆ initiates, when necessary, public proceedings against judges and judicial officers and recommends a disciplinary disposition to the Minnesota Supreme Court, including retirement, censure, or removal from office;
- ◆ reviews judges' compliance with M.S. 546.27 and takes appropriate disciplinary action, if necessary;
- ◆ responds to all inquiries concerning judicial ethics from the public, judges, attorneys, legislature, and board members; and
- ◆ educates the public, judges, and judicial officers on judicial ethics.

**Operations**

The agency serves a large statewide customer base. Since 1998, total agency contacts have increased by 98%. The board's primary activity is to serve the interests of the general public by determining and/or answering questions of proper judicial ethical behavior. Any person or entity may file a complaint against a judge.

Additionally, the staff educates and assists judges and judicial officers with questions concerning appropriate judicial behavior. The staff frequently conducts or otherwise participates in a variety of public and judicial seminars and workshops. Newly appointed judges and judicial candidates are provided information assuming the bench and running for office.

**Key Measures**

- ⇒ The agency strives to respond promptly to all inquires and to process complaints in a conscientious, thorough, and timely manner.
- ⇒ The agency has improved the efficiency of its service to the public, judges and judicial officers, attorneys and the legislature, despite the increased number of individuals under the board's jurisdiction – new judgeships, child support magistrates, additional referees, etc.
- ⇒ In calendar year 2003, 1,274 inquires by the public and judges were responded to by the staff within the same or next day, and then an agency pamphlet was sent to each individual.

**At A Glance**

**Two Fiscal Year Budget:** \$504,000

**Jurisdiction:** 427  
Judges and Referees  
Retired Judges  
Child Support Magistrates

**Calendar Year 2003**  
1,274 Total Agency Contacts  
122 Complaints received

**Discipline issued:**  
2 Public reprimands  
8 Warnings  
1 Imposed Conditions

186 Responses to Judge Inquiries  
1,088 Responses to Public Inquiries

- ⇒ The board meets monthly, and resolves matters within a 40-day average (where no additional inquiry or action is necessary).
- ⇒ Agency estimates that 130 complaints will be received and processed in the next fiscal year and will respond to over 1,500 inquiries from the public, judges, attorneys, and legislators.

### **Budget**

The agency received an appropriation \$504,000 from the General Fund for FY 2004-05 budget. The budget consists primarily of salaries and basic operating expenses such as rent, supplies, and telecommunication costs. The FTE has remained constant at two since the creation of the board despite the increased jurisdiction of individuals, positions, and increased educational scope and inquiries. If the board receives a complaint alleging serious misconduct, this greatly increases the expenditures of the agency for investigative costs, court reporters, and attorney services. If this situation arises, the funds allocated for this expenditure in each biennium is insufficient and always requires a request for additional funds for the agency to proceed with its statutory obligation.

### **Contact**

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*Dollars in Thousands*

	Current		Forecast Base		Biennium 2006-07
	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	
<b><u>Direct Appropriations by Fund</u></b>					
<b>General</b>					
Current Appropriation	252	252	252	252	504
<b>Forecast Base</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>504</b>
Change		0	0	0	0
% Biennial Change from 2004-05					0%
 <b><u>Expenditures by Fund</u></b>					
<b>Direct Appropriations</b>					
General	262	277	252	252	504
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>504</b>
 <b><u>Expenditures by Category</u></b>					
Total Compensation	197	207	210	217	427
Other Operating Expenses	65	70	42	35	77
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>504</b>
 <b><u>Expenditures by Program</u></b>					
Judicial Standards Board	262	277	252	252	504
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	