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Court of Appeals

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AT A GLANCE

The 19 judges serving on the Court of Appeals hear cases in three-judge panels in courthouses throughout the state. In 2019, 2,000 cases were filed with the Court of Appeals.

Court of Appeals decisions are the final ruling in about 95 percent of the appeals filed each year. Only about five percent of the Court’s dispositions are accepted by the Minnesota Supreme Court for further review.

The Court of Appeals serves all Minnesota citizens.

PURPOSE

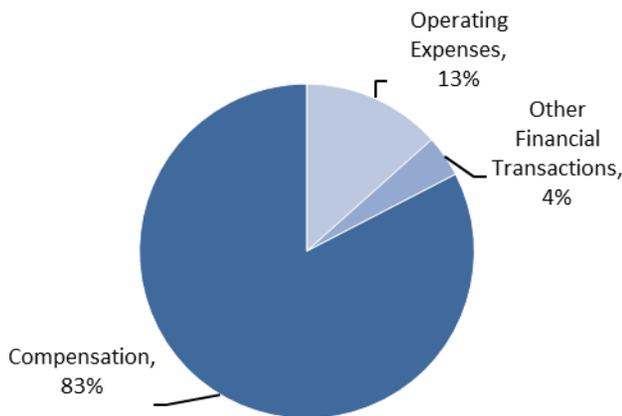
The mission of the Judicial Branch is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides the citizens of Minnesota with prompt and deliberate review of all final decisions of the trial courts, state agencies and local governments.

- The Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over all final decisions of the district courts, except first degree murder convictions, which are appealed directly to the Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals also has jurisdiction to review certain decisions of administrative agencies and local governments.

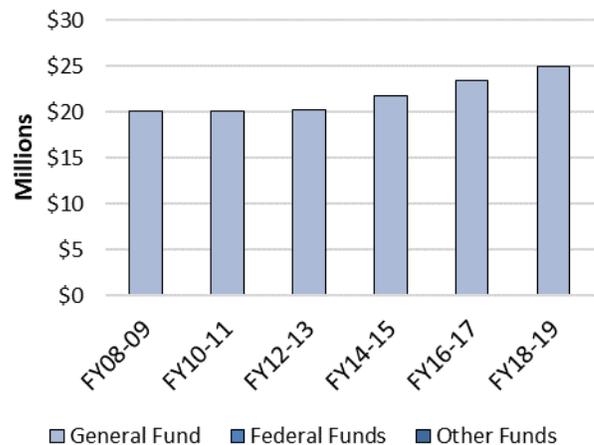
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2019 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Court of Appeals FY19 expenditures were \$13,145,000. The budget is funded 100% through the state general fund.

STRATEGIES

The mission of the Judicial Branch is *“To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.”* The Court of Appeals conducts its functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission:

1. *Access to Justice – A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.*
Ensuring access to justice for all is an enduring commitment for Minnesota’s court system. It is also an increasingly challenging concern given changing court customer expectations, shifting demographics and increased competition for scarce resources. Ensuring access to justice also requires keeping our courthouses safe. Ensuring the justice system is open, affordable, effective and accountable to the people it serves.
2. *Effective Administration of Justice - A justice system that adopts approaches and processes for the fair and just resolution of all cases.*
Over the last two decades, Minnesota courts have worked diligently to become increasingly efficient and effective. The Judicial Branch is focused on being a well-managed court system that seeks innovative ways to promote justice for individual litigants in individual cases.
3. *Public Trust and Accountability - A justice system that engenders public trust and confidence through impartial decision-making and accountability for the use of public resources.*
The Judicial Branch is accountable to the public. An overwhelming majority of Minnesotans have confidence in the state’s judicial branch as an institution. It is critical that the Judicial Branch maintain and continuously improve public trust and accountability. The Judicial Branch must meet this challenge by collaborating with court customers to eliminate disparities in the court system.

As part of the court’s effort to expedite justice and to make access to the appellate system less burdensome and expensive, the court’s 19 judges sit in three-judge panels and travel to locations throughout Minnesota to hear oral arguments.

By law, the Court must issue a decision within 90 days after oral arguments. This deadline is the shortest imposed on any appellate court in the nation. The Court expedites decisions on child protection cases, child custody cases, mental health commitments and other requested matters.

The Court of Appeals issues a published opinion, unpublished opinion, or order opinion on each case it considers on the merits.

RESULTS

It is the policy of the Minnesota Judicial Branch to establish core performance goals and to monitor key results that measure progress toward meeting these goals in order to ensure accountability of the Branch, improve overall operations of the court and enhance the public’s trust and confidence in the Judiciary. Throughout the year the Court of Appeals reviews performance measure results. This review is shared with the Judicial Council (the Branch’s governing body) twice a year.

The Court of Appeals has adopted the American Bar Association (ABA) standards for intermediate appellate courts, which measure cases from beginning (filing) to end (disposition). The goals are to have 75% of the cases disposed within 290 days of filing and 90% of cases disposed within 365 days of filing.

Court of Appeals Cases Disposed Within 290 Days of Filing, 2017 - 2019

Court of Appeals Percentage of Cases Disposed Within 290 Days of Filing						
Goal = 75% of Cases						
	FY2019		FY2018		FY2017	
	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective
Civil	984	84%	999	93%	985	91%
Criminal	828	48%	812	54%	798	54%
Juvenile Protection	95	99%	81	100%	76	100%
Juvenile Delinquency	18	100%	19	95%	14	86%
Total Cases	1,912	69%	1,911	77%	1,873	75%

Percent of Court of Appeals Cases Disposed Within 365 Days of Filing

Court of Appeals Percentage of Cases Disposed Within 365 Days of Filing						
Goal = 90% of Cases						
	FY2019		FY2018		FY2017	
	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective	# of cases	% of cases meeting objective
Civil	971	97%	999	99%	985	99%
Criminal	828	88%	812	91%	798	89%
Juvenile Protection	95	100%	81	100%	76	100%
Juvenile Delinquency	18	100%	19	100%	14	100%
Total Cases	1,912	93%	1,911	96%	1,873	95%

Data are from the *Judicial Branch 2019 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Report*. The report can be found at www.mncourts.gov.

The Minnesota Constitution, Article VI, provides the legal authority for the Court of Appeals; https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_6. Minn. Stat. Chapter 480A; <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/480A> provides the authority for Court of Appeals operations.

Court of Appeals

Agency Expenditure Overview

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY18	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimate FY21	Forecast Base	
					FY22	FY23
<u>Expenditures by Fund</u>						
1000 - General	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
Total	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
Biennial Change				1,023		332
Biennial % Change				4		1
<u>Expenditures by Program</u>						
Court Of Appeals	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
Total	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
<u>Expenditures by Category</u>						
Compensation	10,624	10,859	11,163	11,772	11,772	11,772
Operating Expenses	1,199	1,758	1,451	1,599	1,385	1,385
Other Financial Transaction	2	527	3	6	6	6
Total	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
<u>Full-Time Equivalent</u>						
	88.92	88.86	88.43	88.43	87.23	85.86

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual FY18	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimate FY21	Forecast Base	
					FY22	FY23
1000 - General						
Balance Forward In		499		214		
Direct Appropriation	12,311	12,646	12,831	13,163	13,163	13,163
Balance Forward Out	486		214			
Expenditures	11,825	13,145	12,617	13,377	13,163	13,163
Biennial Change in Expenditures				1,023		332
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				4		1
Full-Time Equivalents	88.92	88.86	88.43	88.43	87.23	85.86

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY21	FY22	FY23	Biennium 2022-23
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2021 Appropriations	13,163	13,163	13,163	26,326
Forecast Base	13,163	13,163	13,163	26,326



THE SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA
MINNESOTA JUDICIAL CENTER
25 REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155

CHAMBERS OF
LORIE S. GILDEA
CHIEF JUSTICE

(651) 296-3380

October 13, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor
321 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Commissioner Jim Schowalter
Minnesota Management & Budget
658 Cedar Street
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz and Commissioner Schowalter:

On behalf of the people of Minnesota and the members of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, I transmit the Judicial Branch's FY22-23 biennial budget request. The budget request is focused on:

- Ensuring access, fairness, and equity in the judicial system;
- Recognizing the vital role judges and employees have in ensuring access to justice; and
- Maintaining the quality and capacity of employees and judges necessary to effectively and efficiently address a growing caseload and long-term impacts from the pandemic.

The Judicial Branch requests \$17.726 million, a modest increase of 2.4 percent, over our biennial base budget. We recognize the severe fiscal challenges facing our state. To that end, we are presenting a two-part budget that reflects this difficult challenge, yet makes investments in core judicial operations that will help ensure the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

- In FY22, the Judicial Branch requests \$2.802 million in new funding to cover the employer-share of unavoidable health care cost increases. Without additional funding, the Judicial Branch would need to divert funding from other court functions to pay for these cost increases.
- In FY23, the Judicial Branch requests \$8.876 million in new funding for a 3% compensation pool increase for employees and a 3% salary increase for judges. We also request \$6.048 million to offset employer health care cost increases.

Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Jim Schowalter
October 13, 2020
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This request does not fully address every funding need facing Minnesota's courts, but it does prioritize the Judicial Branch's most important asset: our people. As the economy improves and the state returns to a more solid fiscal footing, we look forward to working collaboratively with you to address other needed investments in the Judicial Branch, such as additional judgeships and enhanced cyber and courthouse security.

In the meantime, and despite being challenged this year in our ability to fulfill our constitutional responsibilities, the state's courts never stopped working. We preserved an open door for justice by transforming services and operations.

For example, there are more than 4,000 remote and in-person hearings taking place each day in Minnesota's courts. District courts in all 87 counties have restarted criminal jury trials. As of September 30, 82 jury trials have been completed. Civil jury trials have also begun to take place and are anticipated to increase in December. There is at least one public service counter open in each courthouse in Minnesota. We also increased access to online services so people, particularly those who represent themselves in legal matters, could ask questions and receive support from our Court Payment Center and Self-Help Centers.

We are proud of the work we have accomplished and recognize the challenges that lie ahead, which include a growing case backlog. To protect the rights of our citizens, and to ensure prompt services and efficient dispute resolution, the Judicial Branch must maintain the ability to retain and recruit qualified and skilled staff and judges. Our budget request is designed with that goal in mind.

The courts are one of the first promises made in our Constitution. A fully-functioning court system is essential to safeguarding our democracy, securing the rule of law, and ensuring public safety. We appreciate your past support, and ask again for your support for the Judicial Branch's FY22-23 budget request so that we are able to continue to meet our constitutional obligation and preserve an open door for justice in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Lorie S. Gildea
Chief Justice

Court of Appeals

FY 2022-23 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Maintain Core Justice Operations

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
General Fund				
Expenditures	71	471	471	471
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	71	471	471	471
FTEs	1.2	2.6	2.6	2.6

Request:

Maintain Core Justice Operations.

The Judicial Branch seeks \$542,000 in the FY2022-23 biennium to increase the compensation of Court of Appeals judges by 0% in FY2022 and 3% in FY2023, provide a 0% compensation pool for employees in FY2022 and 3% compensation pool in FY2023, and to fund unavoidable health insurance premium increases in each year. The request represents a 2.06% increase in the Court of Appeals biennial base budget. The request maintains the current complement of employees.

Rationale/Background:

The budget request is focused on:

- Ensuring access, fairness and equity in the judicial system;
- Recognizing the vital role judges and employees have in ensuring access to justice; and
- Helping to maintain the quality and capacity of employees and judges necessary to effectively and efficiently address a growing caseload and long-term impacts from the pandemic.

In order for the Judicial Branch to continue driving innovation in our court system and improve services to Minnesotans, the Judicial Branch needs to retain and attract skilled and knowledgeable employees and judges who can maintain and operate a modern, efficient, and technology-based court system.

In recognition of the severe fiscal challenges facing our state, the request provides for a two-part budget increase that reflects this difficult challenge yet makes investments in core judicial operations that will help ensure the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

The Court of Appeals also requests funding for unavoidable health insurance increases. Health insurance premiums are estimated to increase by 5.32% in 2022 and 5.35% in 2023. The Judicial Branch does not negotiate its own insurance agreements – it participates in the general plan negotiated by Minnesota Management and Budget. The Judicial Branch cannot absorb the increased employer insurance contribution costs and would need to divert funding from court functions to pay for the increases without additional funding.

Proposal:

The FY2022-23 biennial budget request maintains the current level of services provided by the Judicial Branch. Without new funding to the employer-share of unavoidable health care cost increases, the Judicial Branch would need to divert funding from other court functions to pay for these cost increases. The salary increases in the

second year of the biennium are meant to continue efforts to protect the rights of our citizens, ensure prompt services, and efficient dispute resolution, through the Branch's ability to retain and recruit qualified, skilled staff and judges.

IT Related Proposals:

This request contains no information technology recommendation.