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Court of Appeals

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<https://www.mncourts.gov/>

AT A GLANCE

The 19 judges serving on the Court of Appeals hear cases in three-judge panels in courthouses throughout the state. In 2023, 1,898 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.

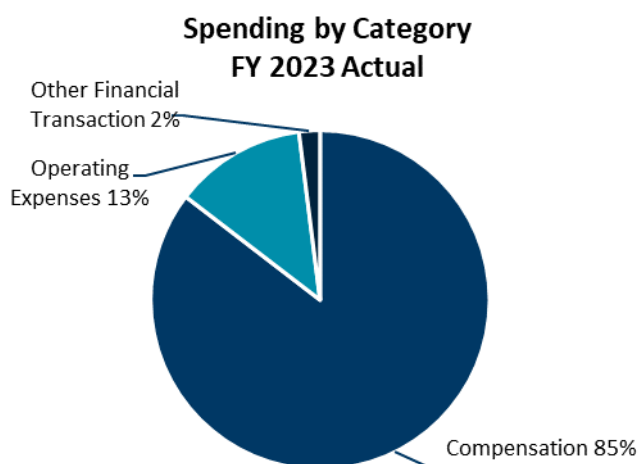
PURPOSE

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.

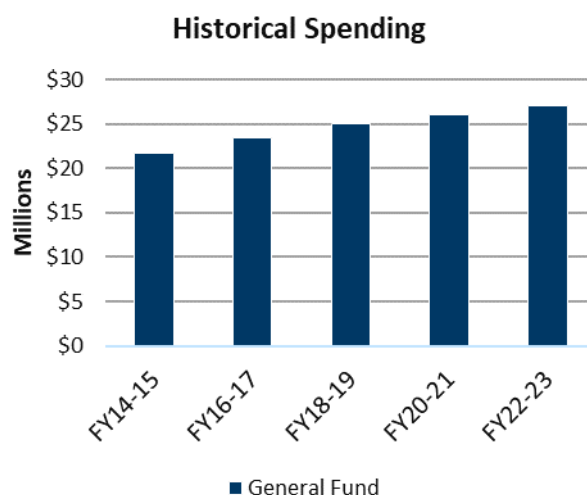
The Minnesota Court of Appeals provides the citizens of Minnesota with prompt and deliberate review of all final decisions of the trial courts, state agencies and local governments.

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



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Court of Appeals' fiscal year (FY) 2023 expenditures were \$14,167,000. The budget is funded 100 percent through the state general fund.

STRATEGIES

The Court of Appeals conducts its functions in support of three strategic goals to deliver its mission:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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. It is critical that the Judicial Branch maintain and continuously improve public trust and accountability, and it 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 precedential opinion, nonprecedential 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 Judicial 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 Judicial 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 percent of the cases disposed within 290 days of filing and 90 percent of cases disposed within 365 days of filing.

Measure name	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Percentage of civil cases disposed within 290 days	Result	The number of civil cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 290 days from filing to disposition	The percentage increased from 86 percent in FY2021 to 94 percent in FY2023	94 percent (FY23)

Measure name	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Percentage of civil cases disposed within 365 days	Result	The number of civil cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 365 days from filing to disposition	The percentage increased from 97 percent in FY2021 to 99 percent in FY2023	99 percent (FY23)
Percentage of criminal cases disposed within 290 days of filing	Result	The number of criminal cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 290 days from filing to disposition	The percentage increased from 44 percent in FY2021 to 60 percent in FY2023	60 percent (FY23)
Percentage of criminal cases disposed within 365 days	Result	The number of criminal cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 365 days from filing to disposition	The percentage increased from 78 percent in FY2021 to 93 percent in FY2023	93 percent (FY23)
Percentage of juvenile protection cases disposed within 290 days	Result	The number of juvenile protection cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 290 days from filing to disposition	The percentage remained the same: 100 percent in FY2021 and 100 percent in FY2023	100 percent (FY23)
Percentage of juvenile protection cases disposed within 365 days	Result	The number of juvenile protection cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 365 days from filing to disposition	The percentage remained the same: 100 percent in FY2021 and 100 percent in FY2023	100 percent (FY23)
Percentage of juvenile delinquency Cases disposed within 290 days	Result	The number of juvenile delinquency cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 290 days from filing to disposition	The percentage increased from 94 percent in FY2021 to 100 percent in FY2023	100 percent (FY23)

Measure name	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Percentage of juvenile delinquency Cases disposed within 365 days	Result	The number of juvenile delinquency cases reflected in the Minnesota Appellate Case-Management System (MACS) showing less than 365 days from filing to disposition	The percentage remained the same: 100 percent in FY2021 and 100 percent in FY2023	100 percent (FY23)

Data are from the *Judicial Branch 2023 Performance Measures – Key Results and Measures Annual Report* (<https://mncourts.gov/mncourtsgov/media/CIOMediaLibrary/Documents/Annual-Report-2023-Performance-Measures.pdf>).

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 FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Estimate FY25	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
					FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27

Expenditures by Fund

1000 - General	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936
Total	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936
Biennial Change				2,713		700		1,711
Biennial % Change				10		2		6
Governor's Change from Base								1,011
Governor's % Change from Base								3

Expenditures by Program

Court Of Appeals	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936
Total	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936

Expenditures by Category

Compensation	11,481	12,076	12,794	13,823	13,823	13,823	14,157	14,500
Operating Expenses	1,453	1,779	1,565	1,627	1,430	1,430	1,430	1,430
Grants, Aids and Subsidies	2							
Other Financial Transaction	3	313	3	6	6	6	6	6
Total	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936

Full-Time Equivalents

	87.42	92.43	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17
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Court of Appeals

Agency Financing by Fund

(Dollars in Thousands)

	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Forecast Base		Governor's Recommendation	
	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY26	FY27
1000 - General								
Balance Forward In		593		197				
Direct Appropriation	13,490	13,574	14,559	15,259	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936
Balance Forward Out	552		197					
Expenditures	12,938	14,167	14,362	15,456	15,259	15,259	15,593	15,936
Biennial Change in Expenditures				2,713		700		1,711
Biennial % Change in Expenditures				10		2		6
Governor's Change from Base								1,011
Governor's % Change from Base								3
Full-Time Equivalents	87.42	92.43	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17	88.17

(Dollars in Thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	Biennium 2026-27
Direct				
Fund: 1000 - General				
FY2025 Appropriations	15,259	15,259	15,259	30,518
Forecast Base	15,259	15,259	15,259	30,518
Change Items				
Operating Adjustment		334	677	1,011
Total Governor's Recommendations	15,259	15,593	15,936	31,529

Court of Appeals

FY 2026-27 Biennial Budget Change Item

Change Item Title: Operating Adjustment

Fiscal Impact (\$000s)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Fund				
Expenditures	334	677	677	677
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Other Funds				
Expenditures	0	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0	0
Net Fiscal Impact = (Expenditures – Revenues)	334	677	677	677
FTEs	0	0	0	0

Recommendation:

The Governor recommends additional funding of \$334 thousand in FY 2026 and \$677 thousand in each subsequent year from the general fund to help address operating cost increases at the Court of Appeals.

Rationale/Background:

The cost of operations rises each year due to increases in employer-paid health care contributions, FICA and Medicare, along with other salary and compensation-related costs. Other operating costs, like rent and lease, fuel and utilities, and IT and legal services also grow. This cost growth puts pressure on operating budgets that remain flat year to year. The Court of Appeals faces challenging decisions to manage these rising costs within existing budgets, while maintaining the services Minnesotans expect. This recommendation provides additional resources to help address these cost pressures and operations.

The Court of Appeals requests funding for salary increases and the employer share of health insurance increases. The Judicial Branch does not negotiate its own insurance agreements – it participates in the general plan negotiated by Minnesota Management and Budget. The Court of Appeals also requests funding for the increased cost of leasing office space in the Minnesota Judicial Center. This request is sought to support the core mission and services of the Court of Appeals and to allow the Courts to continue to undertake initiatives designed to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve public services.

Proposal:

The Governor recommends increasing operating budgets to support current services. For the Court of Appeals, this funding will help cover expected growth in employee compensation and insurance, leasing, and other operating costs.

Dollars in Thousands

Net Impact by Fund	FY 26	FY 27	FY 26-27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 28-29
General Fund	334	677	1,011	677	677	1,354

Results:

This recommendation is intended to help the Court of Appeals address rising cost pressures and mitigate impacts to current levels of service and information to the public.