

2024 Annual Report



MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH

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Justice Theodora Gaïtas' Investiture Ceremony

From the Chief Justice

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This year has been marked by significant milestones that reflect our shared efforts to enhance access to justice, modernize our courts, and better address the needs of our communities. Two achievements, in particular, highlight the transformative progress we have made together. First, the adoption of our new district court hearing framework ushers in a new era for our courts, incorporating lessons learned over the past three years, and positioning us to better serve Minnesotans. Second, the elimination of our pandemic case backlog represents a historic milestone, achieved through tireless dedication, and ensuring timely access to justice for the people of our state.

Other highlights from the past year include the launch of the Mental Health Justice Initiative, the formation of our Workplace Advisory Council, and making the Legal Paraprofessional Program a permanent effort to increase access to legal representation in Minnesota.

These accomplishments reflect our ongoing commitment to innovation, accessibility, and the well-being of those we serve and those who serve within our courts.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are committed to

building on this year's successes. First, we will begin implementing our new district court hearing framework, ensuring consistent and fair processes across Minnesota, while maintaining flexibility to address unique case needs.

We also will continue to expand the Mental Health Justice Initiative, building partnerships and developing solutions to better support justice-involved individuals living with mental illness.

Lastly, our work on digital accessibility will ensure that all Minnesotans can access court resources and services.

These initiatives reflect the collective efforts of judges and staff, whose dedication and innovation drive the success of our Branch.



Chief Justice Natalie Hudson

“These accomplishments reflect our ongoing commitment to innovation, accessibility, and the well-being of those we serve.”

State Court Administrator



State Court Administrator
Jeff Shorba

This past year has been one of real impact for the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

In 2024, we finished the oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative, transforming how hearings take place by balancing statewide consistency with local flexibility.

We eliminated the criminal case backlog: a major achievement that required thoughtful planning, coordination, and resources to help our courts move forward post-pandemic.

We also navigated a court interpreter work stoppage, ensuring continued access to justice despite significant disruption. At the same time, we modernized court operations through the Minnesota Digital Exhibit System and new digital accessibility efforts, both designed to make our courts more efficient and accessible.

We also strengthened key justice system partnerships—through the Justice Partner Access Workgroup, the new Jury Taskforce, and the Mental Health Justice Initiative—each focused on keeping our courts responsive to the people we serve.

These accomplishments didn't happen by chance. They are a result of the innovation and collaboration of the Minnesota Judicial Branch's dedicated, creative staff.

Of course, success isn't a finish line; it is a foundation. And while we've made great progress, bigger challenges are on the horizon.

We are well positioned to face those challenges because we have laid a strong foundation: Through eCourtMN, we moved from paper files and manual processes to a streamlined digital system; we embraced the oneCourtMN vision, breaking down silos and standardizing processes statewide; and through the oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative, we reimagined how hearings are conducted to be more accessible and sustainable. We've also created Access & Service Delivery committees to reimagine how we staff and structure court operations, and are exploring Artificial Intelligence to reduce administrative burdens, automate repetitive tasks, and free up staff to focus on higher-value work.

Minnesotans expect a modern, efficient, accessible court system. And we will deliver. Because access to justice not only upholds the rule of law, it breathes life into it.

"Access to justice not only upholds the rule of law, it breathes life into it."

Backlog Reduction

Talking History Center
NEW YORK
JUDICIAL
BRANCH

“Maine courts must invest in tech, staff to solve backlog”

“Alaska’s courts are mired in cases”

“Milwaukee court system struggles to clear backlog”

“Hundreds of San Francisco cases dismissed”

“Georgia courts still struggle with pandemic backlogs”

“Vermont struggles to reduce pandemic-era backlog”



The Courts

MISSION

To provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair and timely resolution of cases and controversies.

Minnesota has three court levels:

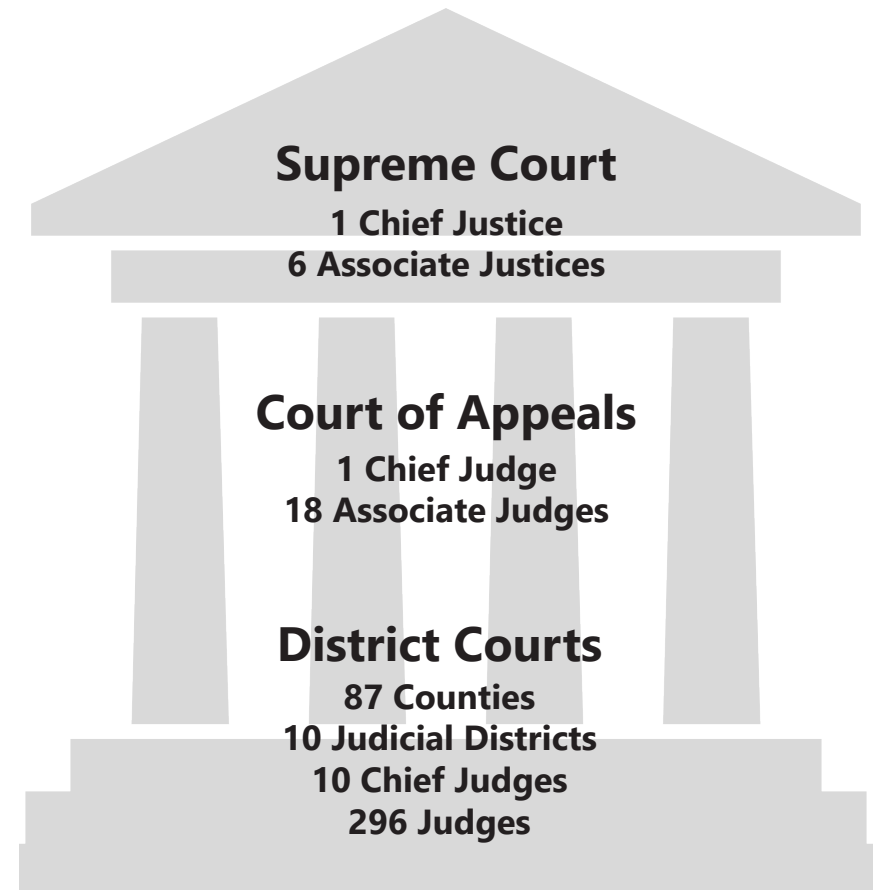
- District Court
- Court of Appeals
- Supreme Court

The Chief Justice leads the Supreme Court. This court resolves cases, regulates the practice of law, and promotes statewide rules of procedure and practice for all state courts.

The Court of Appeals has a Chief Judge, who is appointed by the governor for a three-year term to serve as the head of the Court.

In District Court, judges in each district elect a chief judge to serve a two-year term to manage the district.

The chief judge is assisted by a judicial district administrator.



VISION

The general public and those who use the court system will refer to it as accessible, fair, consistent, responsive, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.

Administration

The Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court is the administrative head of the Judicial Branch and responsible for its overall Management. The Chief Justice chairs the Minnesota Judicial Council, which is the Administrative, policy-making body for the Judicial Branch. The State Court Administrator serves as

staff to the Judicial Council. The state Court Administrator's office provides central administrative infrastructure services to the entire Judicial Branch, including human resources, finance, legal research, information technology, communications, statewide program management, and research and evaluation services.

Judicial Council

Chief Justice, Chair, 25 Members

Governing & administrative policymaking body for the Minnesota Judicial Branch

State Court Administration

Executive Office

- Court Information
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Internal Audit
- Legal Counsel
- Strategic Planning & Projects

Court Services

- Finance**
- Human Resources & Development**
- Information Technology**

Access to Justice

A justice system that is open, affordable, understandable, and provides appropriate levels of service to all users.

Effective Administration of Justice

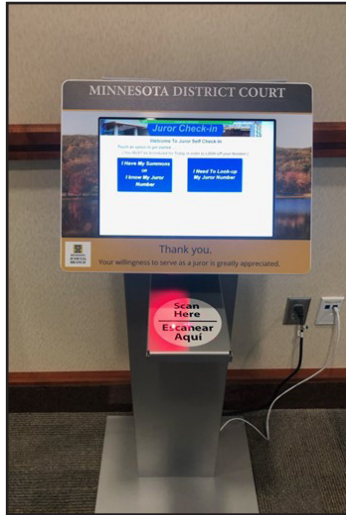
A justice system that adopts approaches and processes for the fair and just resolution of all cases.

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.

2024 At a Glance

The 1st Judicial District unveiled new electronic kiosks that make it easier for jurors to check in for hearings.



Chief Justice Natalie Hudson commemorates the opening of the new Wright County Justice Center



Carlton County's new Justice Center opened in 2024. It includes a courtroom specifically designed to support treatment court and child protection cases involving the Indian Child Welfare Act. The custom-made round table honors Native American traditions and beliefs while fostering equality, inclusion, and open dialogue.



The 2nd Judicial District celebrated 10th Anniversary of its Veterans Treatment Court

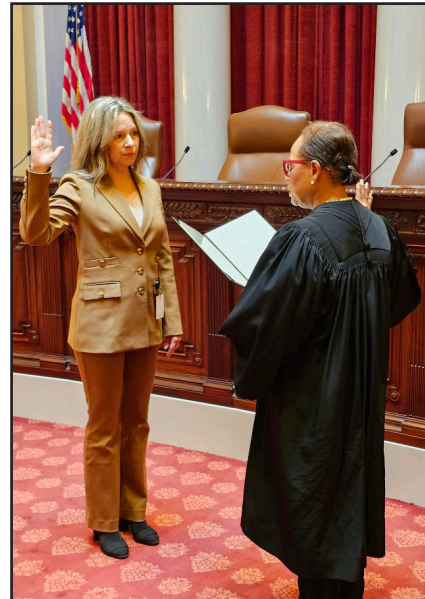


The 6th Judicial District attended the Head of the Lakes Career Fair to encourage people to consider jobs with the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

Judge Karl Schmidt was sworn in as a new judge in Benton County.



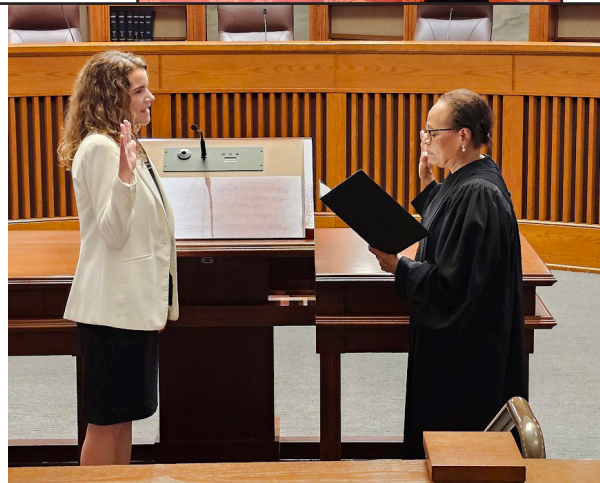
Sarah Hennesey was sworn in as a Supreme Court Justice



Les Gruwell, Litchfield district supervisor, and Wille Swanson, corrections program director, grilled hamburgers and hotdogs for the 6th District's all-treatment court picnic.



Court of Appeals Chief Attorney Cindy Lehr retired after 41 years.

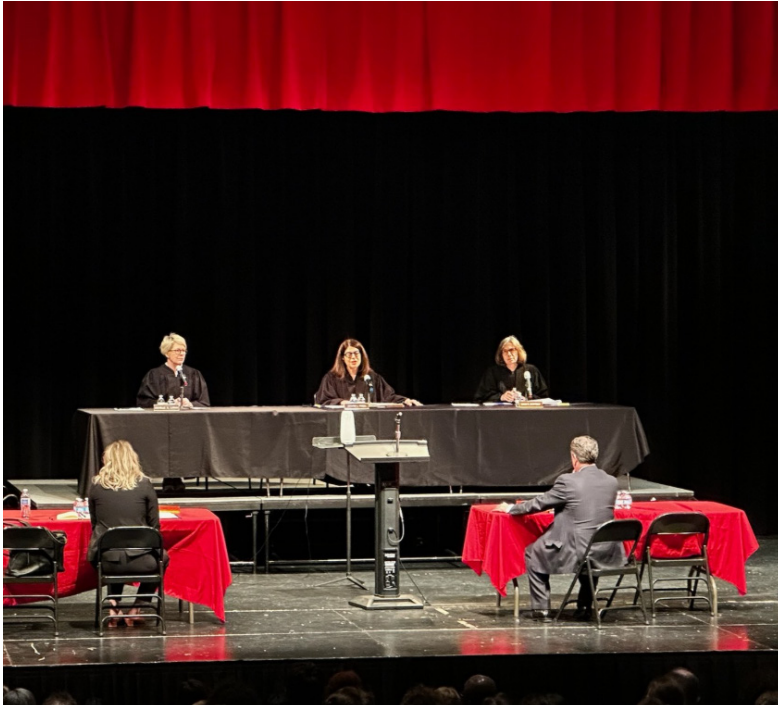


Theodora Gaitaswas was sworn in as a Supreme Court Justice.



Court of Appeals Judge Elizabeth Bentley was sworn in by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

2024 Social Media



mncourts [🔵](#) If it looks like judges are hearing a case in a school auditorium, that's because they are! Minnesota's Court of Appeals took oral arguments on the road today to Central High School in St. Paul. More than 150 students watched as attorneys argued a real case in the school's auditorium. It's a great way for students to learn how the court system works in Minnesota.



mncourts [🔵](#) Busy day here at the Minnesota Judicial Center! Supreme Court Justices hung out with students from throughout the state, educating them about what we do (and also wowing them with some interesting history).



Follow us:



@mncourts



mncourts Last Friday, we had the pleasure of meeting with a group of Owatonna students studying government as a part of a homeschool cooperative! 🇺🇸

Judge Keala C. Ede talked with the students about the important work of both the Minnesota Judicial Branch and the Minnesota Court of Appeals.



mncourts Congratulations to Dakota County's Housing Court Clinic for its National Association of Counties Achievement Award! 🏆

@dakota_county also collected an additional 6 NACo Achievement Awards for their Career Fairs, Kaposia Library Opening, Mental Health Crisis Continuum, Program and Service Inventory, Mothers and Babies Program, and Thompson Oaks restoration.

NACo Achievement Awards annually recognize innovative county government programs in 18 categories.

Awards & Honors



Hennepin County Business Practices Unit Manager Gail Clapp received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minnesota Association for Court Management. Clapp was nominated by her team who called her an inspiration for how she "leads by example in the way she supports our team through change and challenges [and] encourages and pushes us to be resourceful and to think 'big picture' when faced with challenging questions or other issues."



7th & 8th Judicial District Administrator Deb Mueske received the Champion of Change award from the Minnesota Association of Court Management. This award recognizes the accomplishments of a court leader who expertly navigates the courts through a multitude of change initiatives.

Judge Korey Wahwassuck and Minnesota Judicial Branch Attorney Judy Nord received the Hon. Robert Blaeser Indian Child Welfare Excellence Award from the Children's Justice Initiative. This award honors people who improve the wellbeing of American Indian children & families and make a significant contribution toward achieving full compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Minnesota Indian Family Preservation Act.



Anoka County Court Administrator Lori O'Brien received the Minnesota Association for Court Management Distinguished Service Award for her many years of service to the Minnesota Judicial Branch.





The National Center for State Courts' inducted Minnesota State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba into the Warren E. Burger Society, which honors people who have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to improving the administration of justice.



3rd Judicial District Judge Karen Duncan received the Minnesota District Judges Foundation's Community Service Award. This award is given to a Minnesota District Judge in recognition of significant contributions to the community and to honor those who exemplify the spirit of giving back and improving the lives of others.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Sarah Hennesy is named the 2024 Trial Judge of the Year by the American Board of Trial Advocates Minnesota Chapter



2nd Judicial District Administrator Heather Kendall and Senior Judge Kathryn Messerich received the Chief Justice Award, a rare and high honor, for their role as co-chairs of the oneCourtMN Hearing Initiative Steering Committee.



Supreme Court

Traveling Oral Arguments

In 2024, the Supreme Court continued its tradition of hosting oral arguments at Minnesota high schools. This year, the court visited Mora High School in Mora, Minn., and Rock Ridge High School in Virginia, Minn. The Minnesota Supreme Court Traveling Oral Arguments program began in 1995 to educate students and build public trust, confidence, and understanding of the judiciary. These were the 54th and 55th traveling events.



Top photo: The Court at Mora High School

Bottom photo: The Court at Rock Ridge High School in Virginia, Minn.



Justices Anderson and Chutich Retire

The Supreme Court said goodbye to two longtime justices in the 2024. Justice G, Barry Anderson reitred in May after 20 years on the bench. Justice Margaret Chutich reitred in July after 12 years on the bench.

Associate Justice
Sarah Hennesy
Appointed 2024

Associate Justice
Gordon Moore
Appointed 2020
Elected 2022

Associate Justice
Anne McKeig
Appointed 2016
Elected 2018

Chief Justice
Natalie Hudson
Associate Justice
2015-October 2023
Chief Justice
October
2023-Present

Associate Justice
Paul Thissen
Appointed 2018
Elected 2020

Associate Justice
Karl Procaccini
Appointed 2023
Elected 2024

Associate Justice
Theodora Gaitas
Appointed 2024



Supreme Court Traveling Oral Arguments, Rock Ridge High School, Virginia, Minn., October 2024

**Direct Appeals &
Original Actions**

Workers' Compensation 10
Tax Court4
Professional Regulation47
First Degree Murder28
Writs/Miscellaneous20
Total Direct Appeals/
Original Actions..... 109

**Petitions for Further/
Accelerated Review
(PFR/PAR)**

Filed (PFR/PAR) 609
Review Denied 528
Granted Further/Accelerated 78
Other (Remand/Dismiss)3

**Opinions/Disposition
Orders**

Affirmed.....60
Affirmed in Part4
Reverse/Remand.....24
Other (Discipline, dismiss, other
disposition).....62

Total = 150

Court of Appeals

Continued focus on efficiency and quality

In 2024, the Court of Appeals' caseload was on pace to equal or exceed pre-pandemic numbers. Despite the increased caseload, the court continued to be caught-up, scheduling oral arguments and submission of non-oral cases within six to eight weeks after the parties have filed their briefs.

In one of the shortest timelines of any state intermediate court of appeals, the Minnesota Court of Appeals issues its opinions within 90 days after submission (45 days for cases involving child custody or protection matters). The Court has once again met or exceeded the timeliness standards set by the American Bar Association.

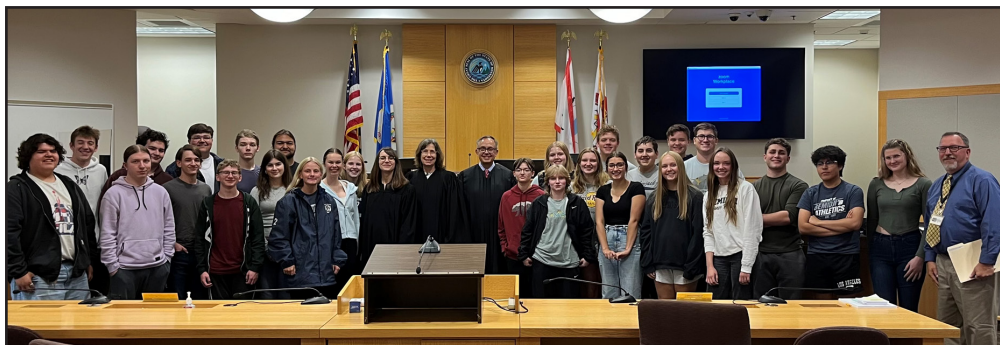
The court also continues to serve its mission of providing not only timely, but well-reasoned decisions. To this end, the Court updated its strategic plan in 2024 with a focus on ensuring the quality of its work. Based on feedback from district courts and members of the bar, the court is placing greater emphasis on issuing precedential opinions when appropriate to provide clarity in unsettled areas of the law.



Court of Appeals Chief Judge Jennifer Frisch speaks with a community group.



Judges answer questions from high school students after oral arguments.



In 2024, the Court of Appeals brought oral arguments to Bemidji High School...



...and also to New Ulm High School.

2024 Court of Appeals Case Information

	FILED	DISPOSITIONS
General Civil	480	431
Criminal	742	541
Administrative Rule	3	3
Economic Security	49	45
Writ of Certiorari	88	75
Habeas / Certified Q's	2	2
Commitment	34	32
Family	248	232
Juvenile Delinquency	17	17
Juvenile Protection	81	79
Implied Consent	34	30
Discretionary Review	27	27
Probate	25	3
Unlawful Detainers/Evictions	37	36



Minnesota Court of Appeals' judges, their law clerks, and Supreme Court justices celebrated their 20th year serving lunch at Catholic Charities Dorothy Place in St. Paul. The annual barbecue is one of many community service events the appellate courts do to engage with the people they serve.

State Law Library

Digital Library goes live

In 2024 the State Law Library launched the Minnesota Digital Law Library. The new Digital Law Library contains items digitized from the library's collections. They are historical in nature and shed light on the history of the Minnesota court system as well as the State Law Library.

Content includes two TV series - "Meet Your Court" and "Law in Action" as well as the Minnesota Code of Agency Rules, which is a collection of state agency rules published from 1977 to 1982. Prior to digitization, these materials were difficult to locate and navigate.



Chief Justice Natalie Hudson and former State Law Librarian Marvin R. Anderson, in front of his portrait inside the library's Special Collections Room.

Marvin R. Anderson portrait unveiled

The State Law Library unveiled a portrait of Marvin R. Anderson, who served as State Law Librarian from 1980 to 2002. Under Marvin's leadership, several programs and services, which are still in existence today, were created. These include the appellate opinion ar-

chive, Minnesota Justice Series (career books for retired justices), Minnesota Legal Periodical Index, County Law Library Program, and the Law Library Service to Prisoners program. The portrait now hangs in the library's Marvin R. Anderson Special Collection Room.

174th Territorial Court & Library celebrated

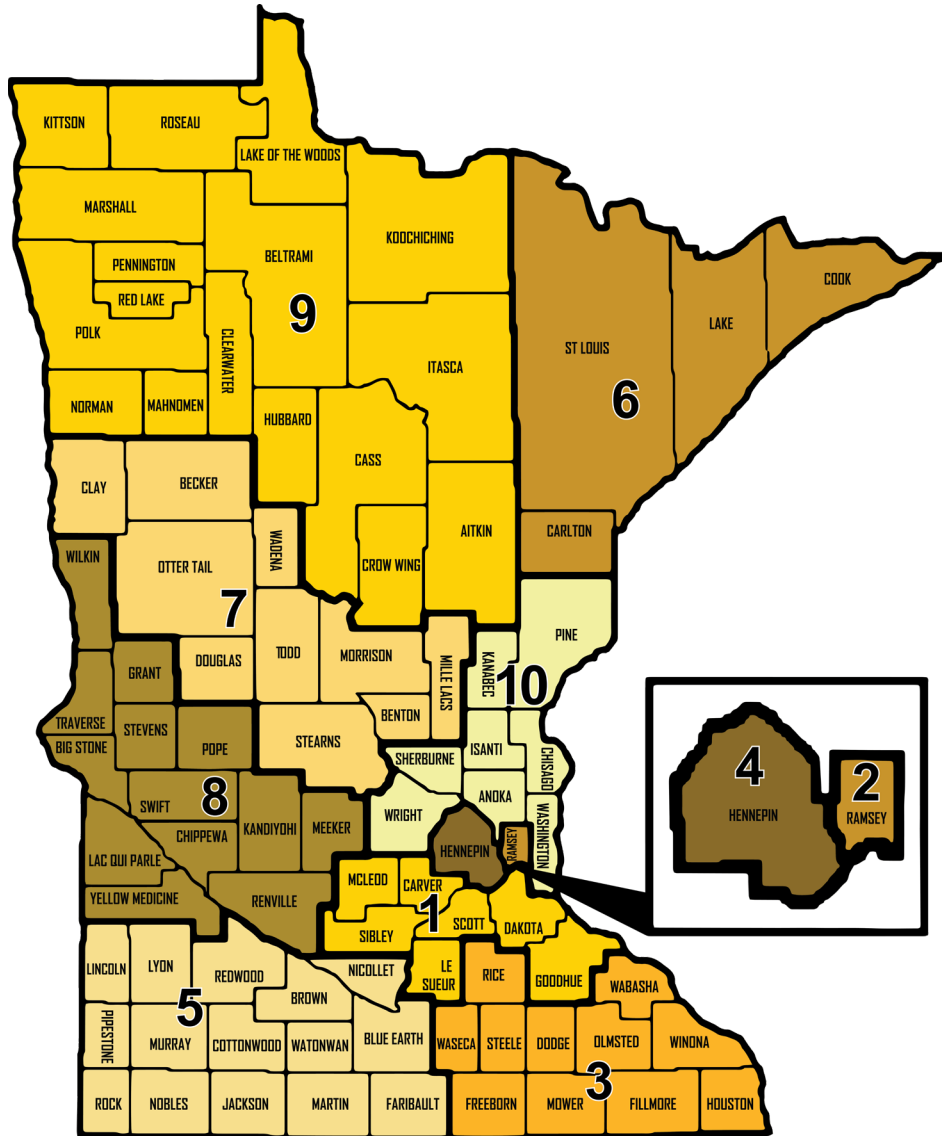
March 3, 2024, was the 175th anniversary of the Territorial Court and Territorial Library. To honor the occasion, the State Law Library created a banner exhibit that covered the founding of the Minnesota Territory and its corresponding legal system from 1849 to 1858. Through a series of panels, the

exhibit looked at the establishment of a new court system and some of the earliest cases in the new territory. The exhibit also provided biographies of each of Minnesota's first 10 Territorial Supreme Court Justices. Additional banners also outlined the founding of the ancestor of the Minnesota

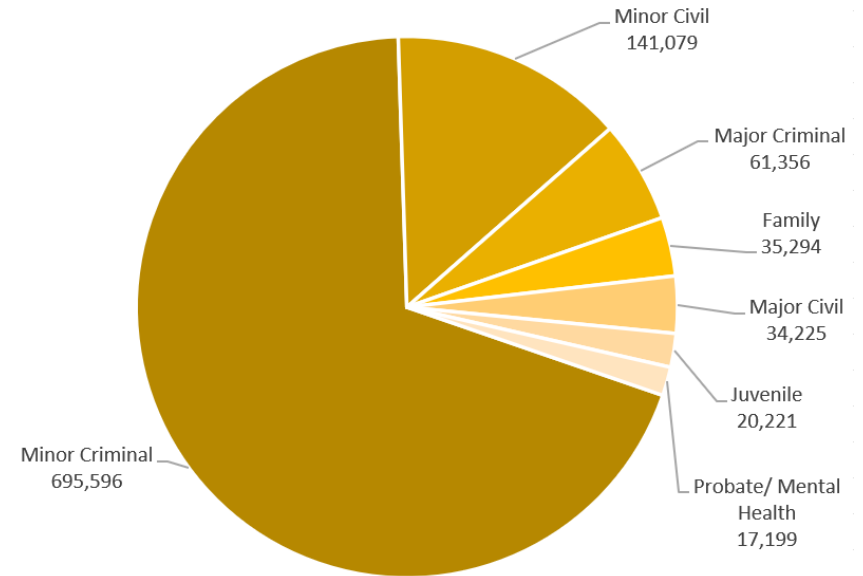
State Law Library in 1849, its structure and collection, and the first three Territorial Librarians. In conjunction, the library hosted a continuing legal education program entitled "Tales from our Territorial Days: Early Court History".



District Courts

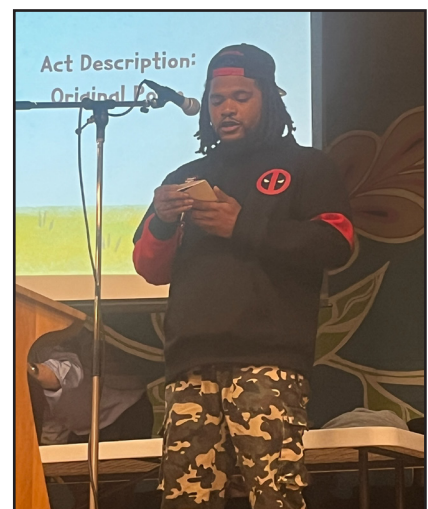
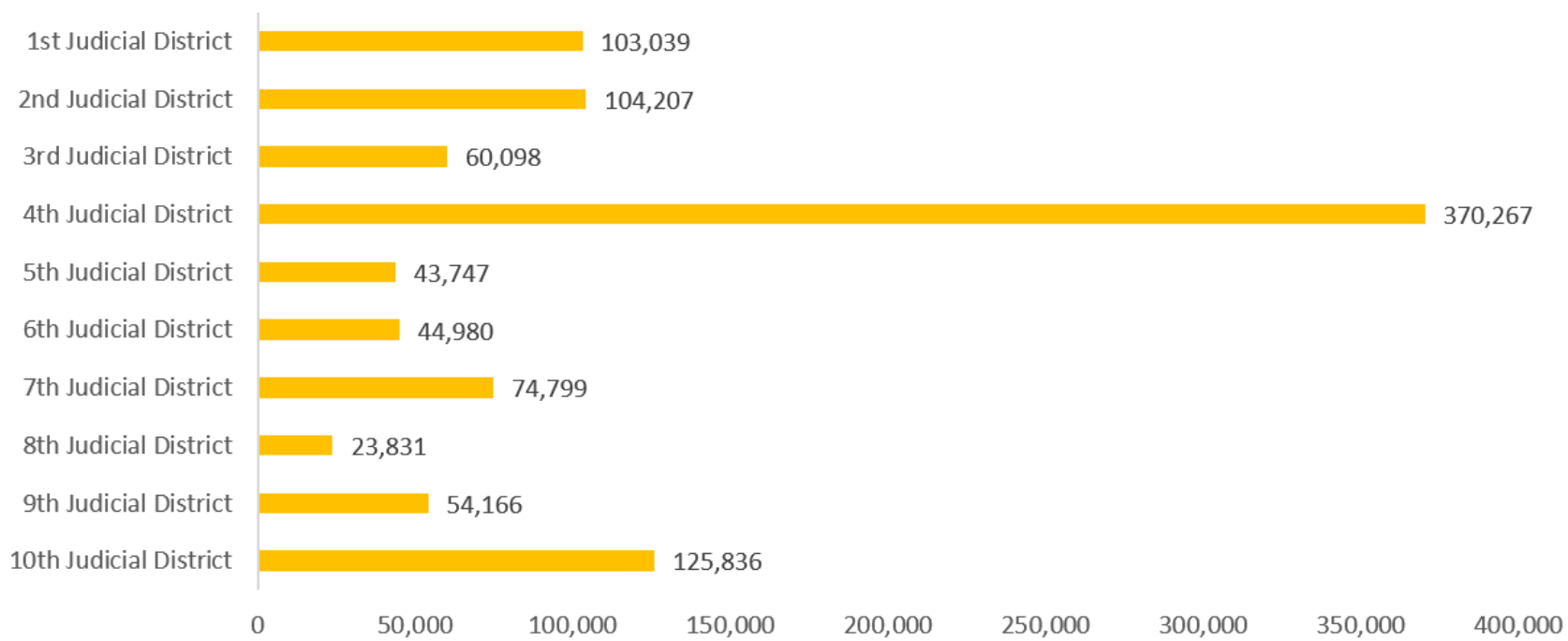


2024 Statewide Case Filings by Case Type

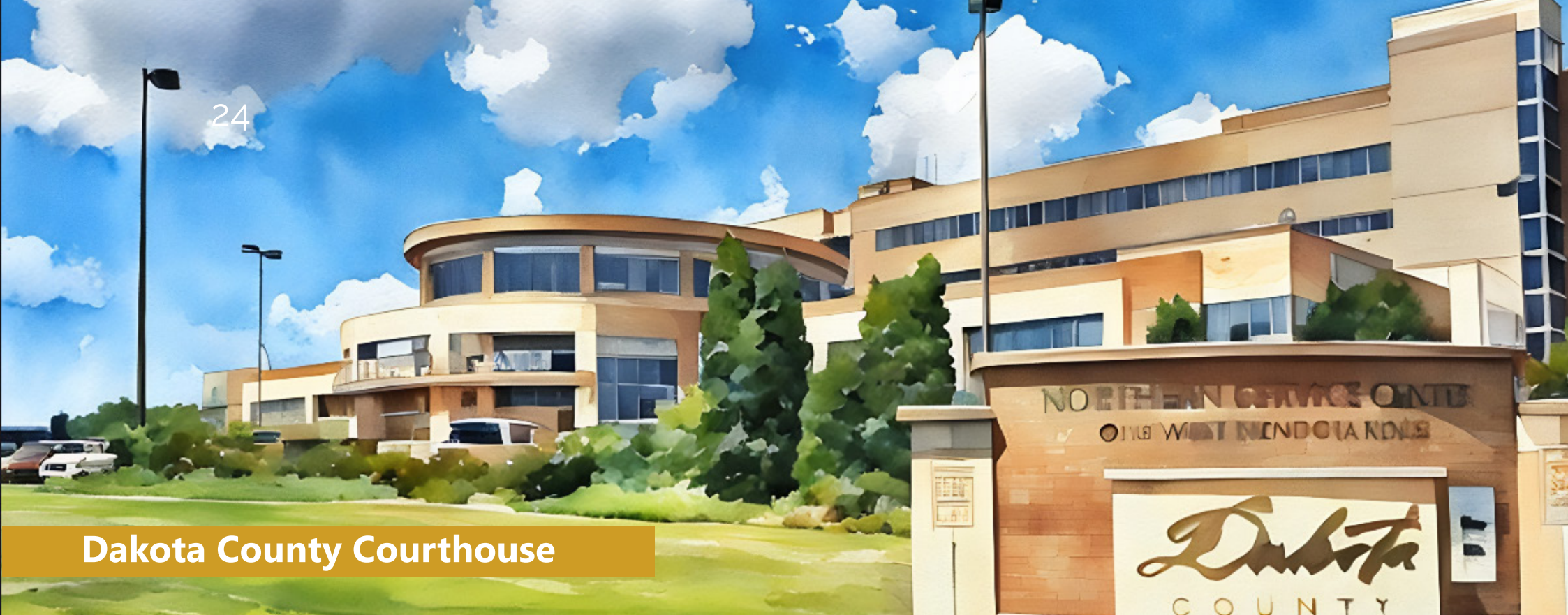


Judges throughout the state married couples at Minnesota County Fairs in summer 2024.

2024 Statewide Case Filings by Judicial District



The Sixth Judicial District hosted its 8th Annual Treatment Courts Art & Talent Show in May 2024. The event gives treatment court participants and staff an opportunity to show off their talents.



Dakota County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Caroline H. Lennon

Assistant Chief Judge:

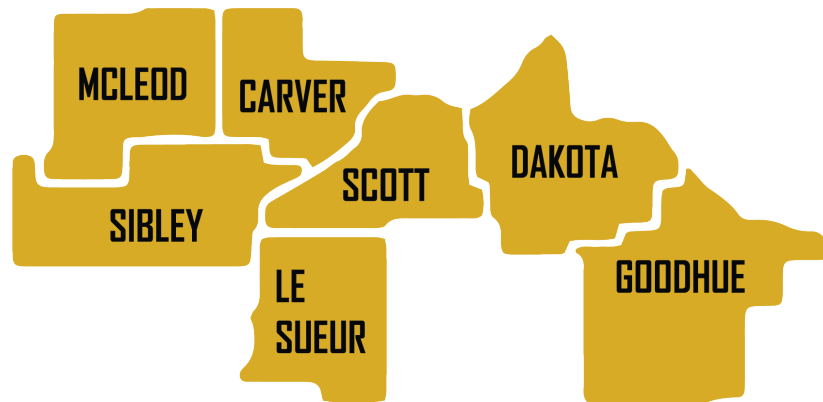
Christopher J. Lehmann

District Administrator:

Brian Jones

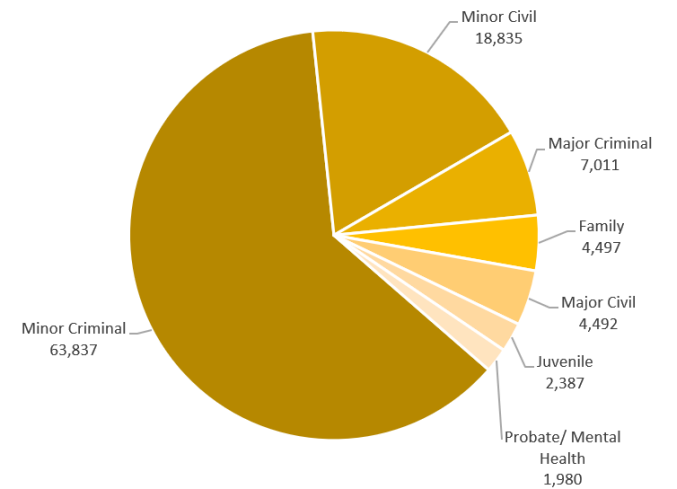
First Judicial District Administration

1620 S. Frontage Rd, Suite 200
Hastings, MN 55033



2024 First Judicial District Case Filings

2024 Total Filings: 103,039



1st District



First District judges married couples at the Dakota, Goodhue, and McLeod County Fairs in Summer 2024.

FIRST JUDICIAL INSTALLS KIOSKS TO PROVIDE LEGAL ACCESS TO THE PUBLIC

Free legal assistance is just a keystroke away for people who stop into any First Judicial District Courthouse.

These community-based legal kiosks give Minnesotans with technology or transportation barriers access to legal resources and civil legal aid, as well as the administrative forums and court systems in which their case is proceeding.

The kiosks were funded in part by the federal CARES Act to give communities access to civil justice by creating a statewide network of legal kiosks stationed in a variety of court, agency, non-profit, and other community locations.

The First District then partnered with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services to obtain an access-to-justice project grant, which completed the roll-

out of kiosks in all First District courthouses.

The legal kiosks not only give people access to attend remote hearings, they also provide legal information, self-help resources, and connections to local legal aid partners for intake and meeting.

In addition to a monitor and keyboard, the kiosks also include and printer and scanner so users can upload documents to the

court.

Legal kiosks are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. All kiosks are ADA accessible and have English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali interfaces.

More information, as well as a complete list of kiosk locations can be found on the Legal Kiosk Project: www.legalkiosk.org.



Ramsey County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Sara R. Grewing

Assistant Chief Judge:

Kelly L. Olmstead

District Administrator:

Heather Kendall

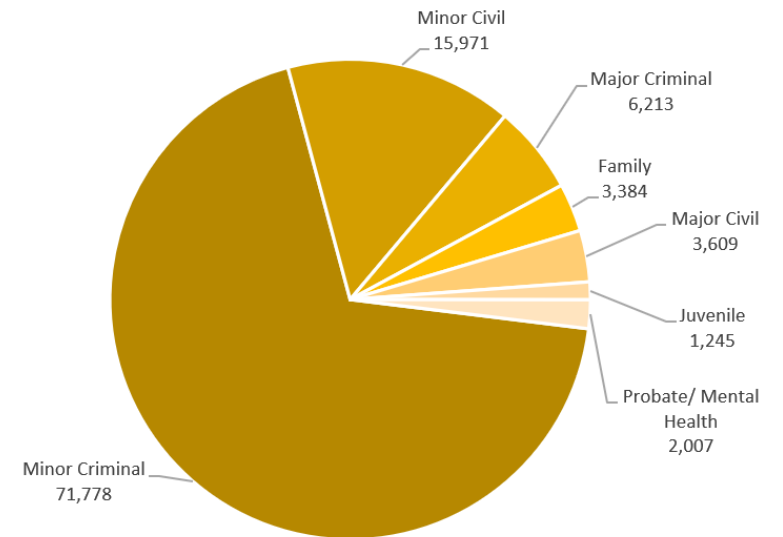
Second Judicial District Administration

15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, MN 55102



2024 Second Judicial District Case Filings

2024 Total Filings: 104,207



2nd District



The Second Judicial District observed the 10th Anniversary of its Veterans Treatment Court in February with a graduation ceremony and celebration at the Ramsey County Courthouse.

SECOND DISTRICT HOSTS WOMEN'S AND MEN'S GROUPS TO SUPPORT JUSTICE-IMPACTED PEOPLE

In an effort to make the justice system more responsive to the men, women, and families it serves, the judges of Second Judicial District created a weekly Women's Community Group and a Men's Community Group. The groups, which are supported by Ramsey County Corrections,

provide a safe space for justice-impacted women and men to talk about their experiences, as well as the issues and obstacles that challenge them and their families.

Participation in the groups is voluntary and the focus is to provide a supportive community for

participants facing difficulties related to criminal histories and family members involved in the criminal justice system, domestic relations, domestic violence and other victimization, chemical abuse and/or chemical dependency, mental, emotional, and physical health, parenting, em-

ployment, and the lack of safe and stable housing.

Both the Women's and the Men's Group have brought attention to the need for more resources to assist court-involved individuals in their return to their communities as law-abiding, contributing members.

FILLMORE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Filmore County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Joseph A. Bueltel

Assistant Chief Judge:

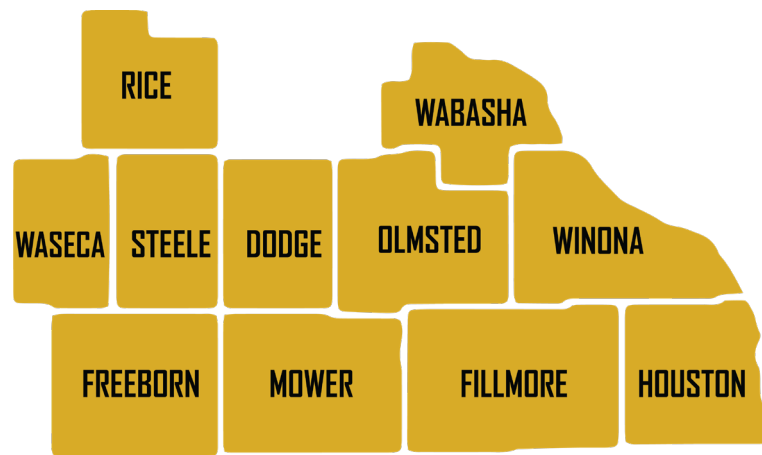
Christine A. Long

District Administrator:

Shelley Ellefson

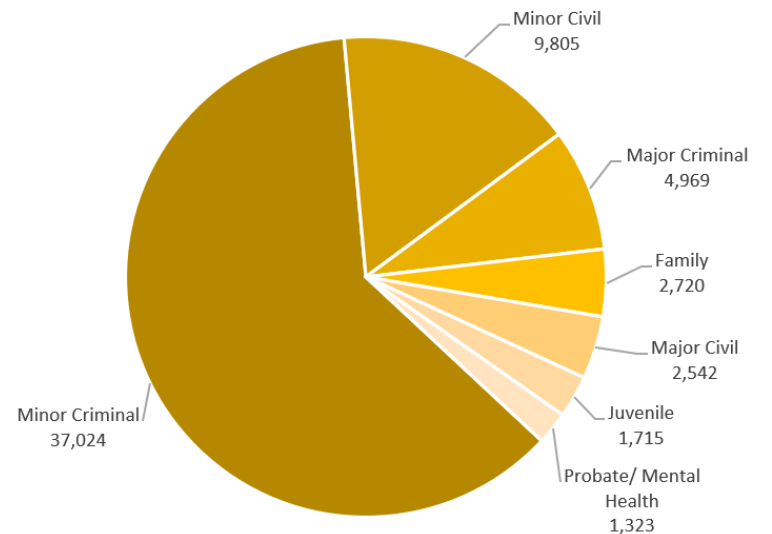
Third Judicial District Administration

1696 Greenview Dr. SW
Rochester, MN 55902



2024 Third Judicial District Case Filings

2024 Total Filings: 60,098



3rd District

DISTRICT WELCOMES THREE NEW JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND A COURT ADMINISTRATOR

The Third Judicial District welcomed four new faces in 2024. Judges Dwight Luhmann and Erin Lindhart Felten joined the bench in July, and Referee Tammy Shefelbine joined in September.

The new judges replace two longtime judges who retired in 2024: Mary Leahy retired in May after 18 years on the bench, and Judge Joseph Chase retired in July after serving nearly 25 years. During his tenure, Judge Chase had been named the American Board of Trial Advocates Minnesota Chapter Trial Judge of the Year in 2022.

The District also welcomed a new Court Administrator: Stacy Ashley joined the District as the new court administrator for Steele County in September.



Top: Judges Dwight Luhmann and Erin Lindhart Felten. Bottom: Referee Tammy Shefelbine and Court Administrator Stacy Ashley

A poster for the BEInG (Belonging Equity Inclusion Group) at the Minnesota Judicial Branch, Third Judicial District. The poster features the BEInG logo at the top left, which includes a circular emblem with various symbols and a camel illustration to the right. Below the logo is the text "BEInG BELONGING EQUITY INCLUSION GROUP". The central theme is "YOU BELONG HERE", displayed in a red octagon. Surrounding this central octagon are four other octagons, each representing a core value: "BELONGING" (yellow), "EQUITY" (purple), "INCLUSION" (green), and "RESPECTED" (light blue). Each octagon contains a list of bullet points: "Welcoming", "Accepting", and "Authentic" for Belonging; "Fairness", "Access", and "Opportunity" for Equity; "Respected", "Accepted", and "Supported" for Inclusion; and "Respected", "Accepted", and "Supported" for the light blue octagon. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner, with the text "Check out the BEInG SharePoint page for more information..." and the URL "https://tinyurl.com/mr2sfy3c". At the bottom of the poster is the logo for the Minnesota Judicial Branch, Third Judicial District.

EQUITY & INCLUSION CLARIFIED, EXPANDED

In 2024, the Third Judicial District created the poster above to hang in all district courthouses to provide a visible reminder of what belonging, equity, and inclusion mean to the Third District.

Members of BEInG also completed the Intercultural Development Inventory Assessment, and four staff members obtained the Intercultural Conflict Style Qualified Administrator certification, which the District plans to roll to all judges and staff in 2025.

Hennepin County Government Center
300 SOUTH 6TH STREET

Hennepin County Courthouse

Chief Judge:
Kerry Meyer

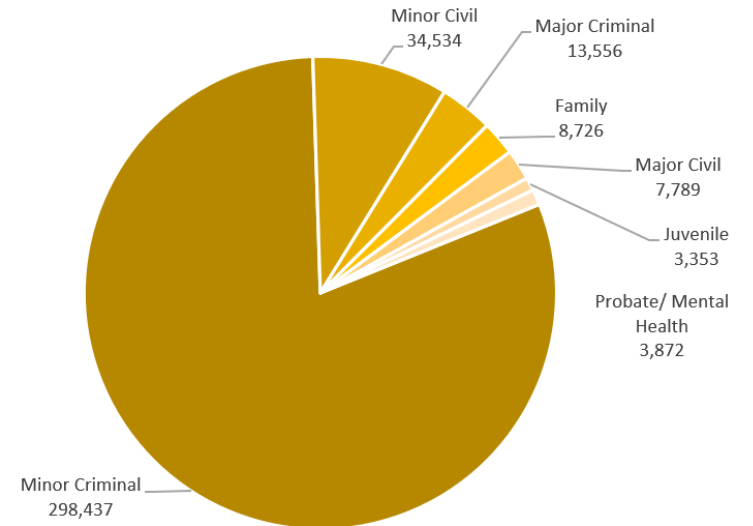
Assistant Chief Judge:
Mark J. Kappelhoff

District Administrator:
Sara Gonsalves

Fourth Judicial District Administration
300 South Sixth Street, C-1200
Minneapolis, MN 55487



2024 Fourth Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 370,267



4th District

FOURTH DISTRICT MOVES RESTRAINING ORDERS TO FAMILY COURT

To improve customer service for court customers, the Fourth Judicial District consolidated all petitions for no contact orders to Family Court. Whether the case is an Order for Protection, an Ex-

treme Risk Protection Order, or a Harassment Restraining Order, all petitions now go to the same court division, streamlining the process and removing confusion for court customers.

NINE NEW REFEREES HIRED FOR CONCILIATION COURT CASES

The Fourth District welcomed nine new Conciliation Court referees in 2024.

The referees improved the District's handling of these small claims cases, hearing them quickly and enhancing the expe-

rience for court customers.

The additional referees' hiring was timed to handle the rise in the number of Conciliation Court cases caused by the increased claims limit.

EQUAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE HOSTS LISTENING AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

The members of the Equal Justice Committee continued community outreach efforts, holding listening sessions and educational events throughout

the year. They also completed a study to determine whether there were racial disparities in sentencing departures for felony cases.



The Fourth Judicial District continued its popular Valentine's Day weddings in 2024, marrying couples every 15 minutes over the lunch hour.



Faribault County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Gregory Anderson

Assistant Chief Judge:

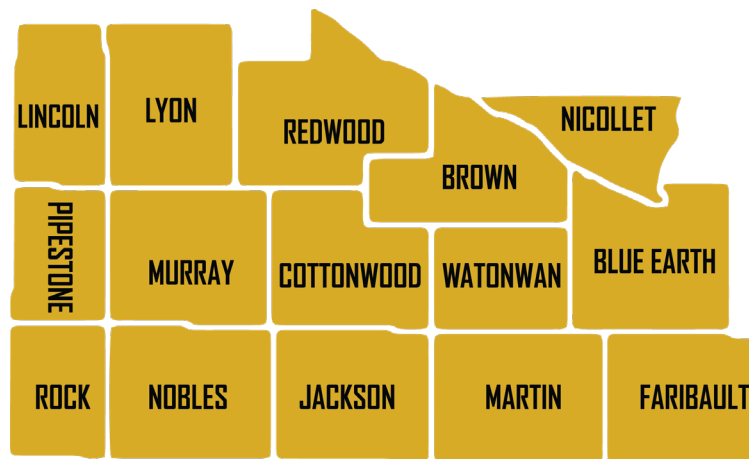
Darci J. Bentz

District Administrator:

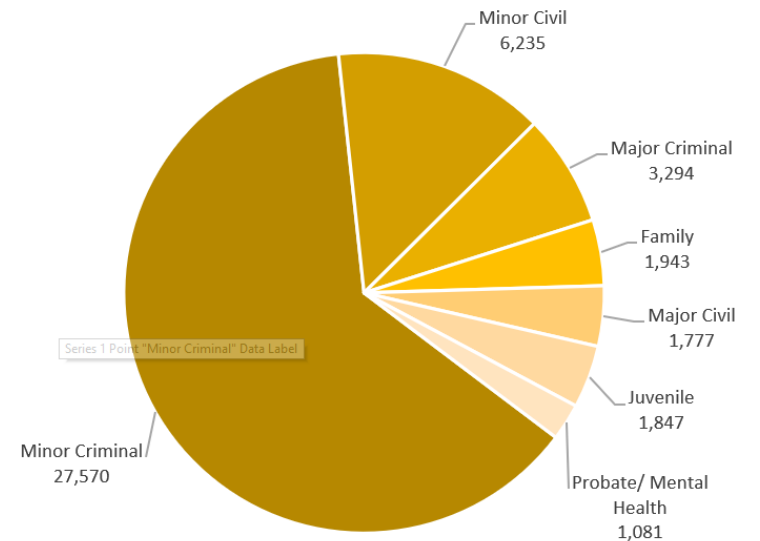
Michael Kelley

Fifth Judicial District Administration

1961 Premier Drive
Suite 402
Mankato, MN 56001



2024 Fifth Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 43,747





Patty Beck leads the Fifth Judicial District Wellness Workshop in Redwood Falls.

DISTRICT EMBRACES WORKPLACE WELLNESS

The Fifth Judicial District prioritized both diversity, equity, and inclusion and workplace wellness in 2024.

The district not only included DEI strategies and workplace wellness in its FY24-25 Operational Work Plan, its Wellness Committee, formed by the Fifth Judicial District Court Administrative Team, met monthly to discuss ways to promote wellness within the workplace.

To improve wellness, the committee created a virtual networking opportunity, a Fifth Judicial District cookbook, a weekly affirmations

email, and a list of team-building activities.

Judges and their teams participated in a wellness workshop in April and staff attended to a similar wellness workshop in May

The district's annual employee enrichment events focused almost exclusively on DEI in 2024, and district's Wellness Committee, Court Administrative Team, and Fifth Judicial District Equal Justice Committee continue to discuss ways to cultivate a workplace environment and a court community that prioritizes and supports diversity, equity, and inclusion.

DISTRICT CONSOLIDATES BOTH EVICTIONS AND CONCILIATION COURT CALENDARS

In January 2024, the Fifth Judicial District held its first consolidated evictions calendar. The district partnered with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services to offer a virtual housing

calendar that allows litigants to meet with an SMRLS attorney and discuss their case before their hearing. Thirteen of the district's 15 counties currently participate in this consolidated

weekly calendar.

Nearly half the counties within the District also are participating in consolidated conciliation court calendars. Senior judges hear these calendars remotely and re-

ceive support from the district's specialized Judgments and Conciliation Court Team.



Lake County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Leslie Beiers

Assistant Chief Judge:

Rachel C. Sullivan

District Administrator:

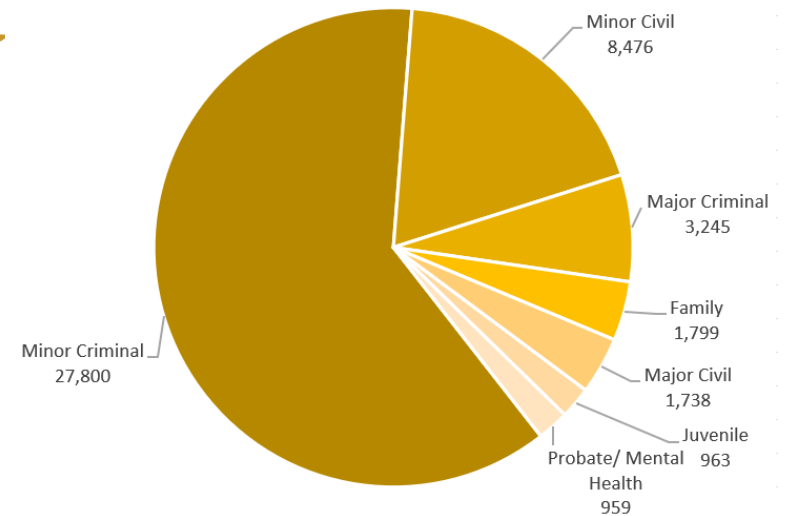
Sara Taylor

Sixth Judicial District Administration

100 N 5th Ave W
Suite 139
Duluth, MN 55802



2024 Sixth Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 44,980



6th District



CARLTON COUNTY OPENS NEW JUSTICE CENTER

Carlton County got a new justice center in 2024.

The new Justice Center houses probation, public defense, the County Attorney, the Sheriff's Department, and the jail within the same facility as the courts. This intentional design facilitates communication and coordination across the justice system,

while making it easier for people to access services, stay connected with legal representatives, and navigate the process more efficiently.

The Justice Center also includes one courtroom specifically designed to support treatment court and child protection cases involving the Indian Child Welfare

Act. The center of the courtroom features a custom-made round table meant to honor Native American traditions and beliefs while fostering equality, inclusion, and open dialogue: ideals that are central to both the healing work of treatment court and the cultural practices respected in ICWA proceedings.

DISTRICT CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH AT COMMUNITY EVENT



Fifth District Human Resources Manager Sara McDonald and Judges Jill Eichenwald, Theresa Neo and Shawn Pearson at a community Juneteenth celebration in 2024.

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COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

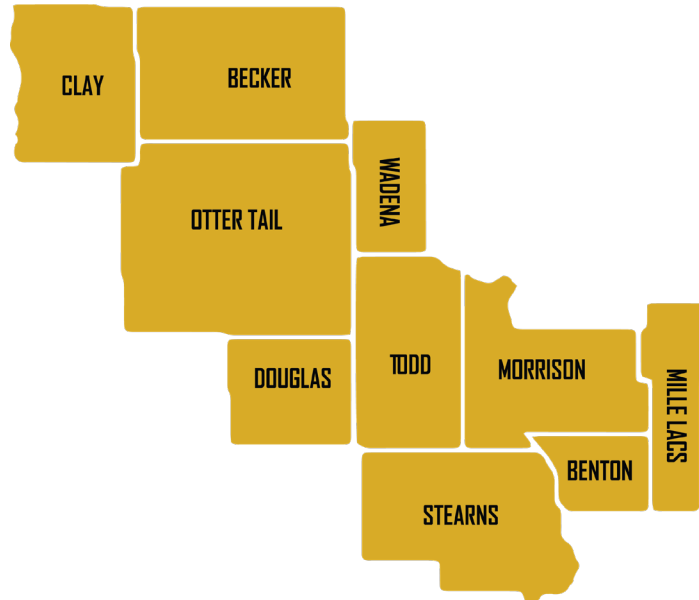
Cook County Courthouse

Chief Judge:
Michael D. Fritz

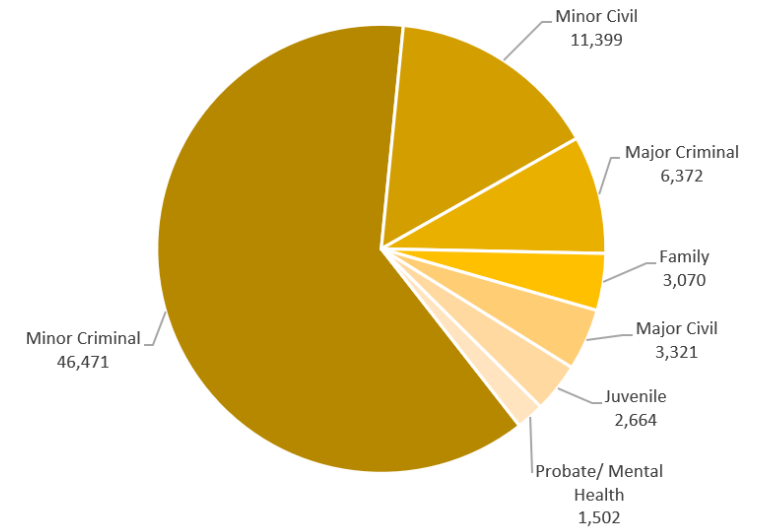
Assistant Chief Judge:
Shan C. Wang

District Administrator:
Debra Mueske

Seventh Judicial District Administration
725 Courthouse Square
Suite 406
St Cloud, MN 56302



2024 Seventh Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 74,799



7th District



Photos left to right: Yoke Sim Gunaratne, Rosie Gonzalez, Darci Asche, and Judge Johnathan Judd at the Pangea event in Moorhead; Chief Judge Michael Fritz speaking to children at Judge Ole Tvedten's investiture.

SEVENTH DISTRICT EDUCATES THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Seventh District judges and staff attended and participated in numerous cultural and community events throughout 2024 to educate the community about the judicial system. Events included:

- The Second Annual Moorhead Juneteenth Celebration at the Heritage Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead.
- Pangea – Cultivate our Cultures event hosted by the Historical and Cultural Society

of Clay County in November.

- A community discussion Changemaker Hub hosted by World Savvy in Fergus Falls in November. The purpose was to gather students, educators, and community leaders to discuss building inclusive, student-centered, and future-ready learning environments.
- EPIC (Exploring Potential Interests and Careers) Career Fair at St. Cloud State Techni-

cal and Community College in October to explore future participation in the event.

Judges and staff also interacted with the community by:

- Hosting high school students at various courthouses throughout the year to increase general knowledge of the court system, expose students to potential employment opportunities in the legal system, and provide an overview of local govern-

ment.

- Assisting students in registering for college and technical school through the "Future 100" program at St. Cloud Tech High School in October.
- Coordinating a tour of the Minnesota State Capitol and Minnesota Supreme Court with high school students and facilitating a discussion with Senator Aric Putnam.
- Visiting with students at Mille Lacs High School.



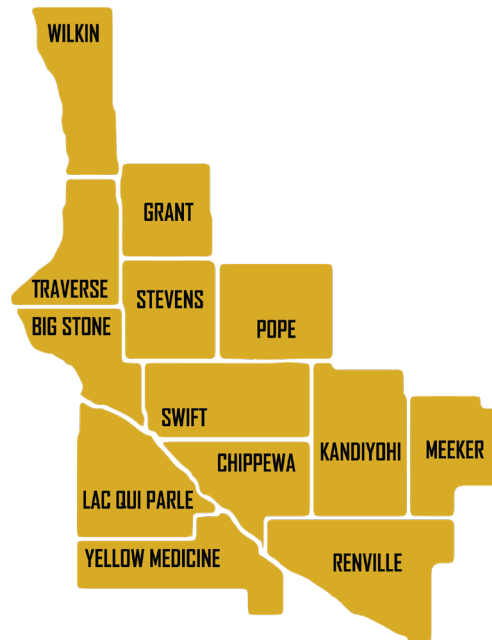
Chippewa County Courthouse

Chief Judge:
Stephanie Beckman

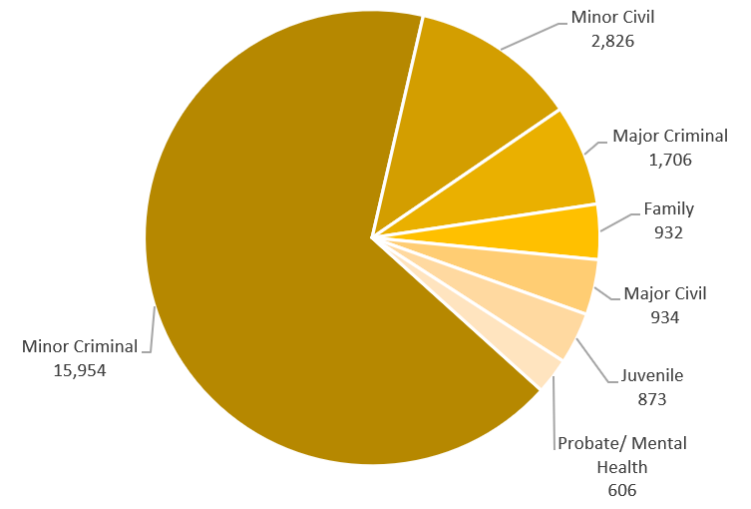
Assistant Chief Judge:
Rodney Hanson

District Administrator:
Debra Mueske

Eighth Judicial District Administration
505 SW Becker Avenue
Suite 107
Willmar MN 56201



2024 Eighth Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 23,831



8th District



Eighth District treatment court judges and treatment court coordinators at the all-treatment court picnic in August.

TREATMENT COURT PICNIC OFFERS FOOD & FUN

The Eighth District's treatment court program hosted an all-treatment court picnic at one of the park shelters in Willmar in August.

Treatment court participants and their families were invited along with treatment court judges, team members, and community representatives.

The event featured a barb-b-

que, games and minute-to-win-it challenges.

Treatment court team members staffed the barb-b-que, cooking up grilled hotdogs and hamburgers.

The event, which was well-attended, has become an annual event.

DISTRICT IMPLEMENTS AFTER-HOURS ON-CALL PROCEDURES

The Eighth District successfully implemented districtwide after hours on-call procedures in the fall of 2024 for all judges and law enforcement agencies.

To do this, the Chief Judge and court administrator held meetings with justice partners to adopt a districtwide protocol

for 48-hour holds and weekend signatures.

The district now has a dedicated on-call telephone line that automatically transfers to the on-call judge's cellular phone during their weekly rotation.



Judge Thomas Van Hon and Court Administrator Lindsay Listul volunteering at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair.

Cass County Courthouse

Chief Judge:

Jana Austad

Assistant Chief Judge:

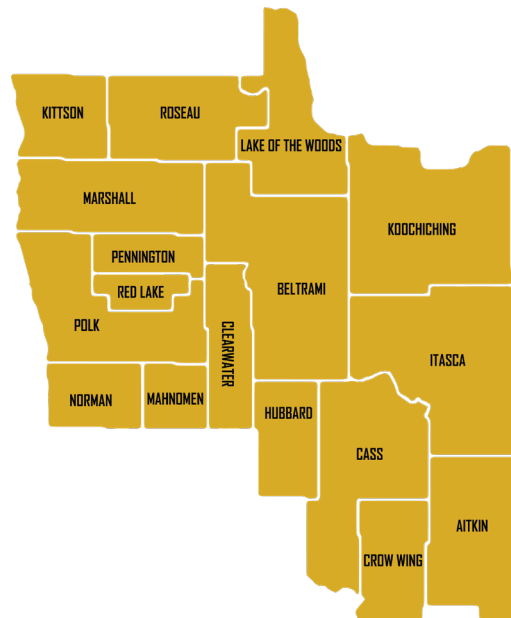
Anne Rasmusson

District Administrator:

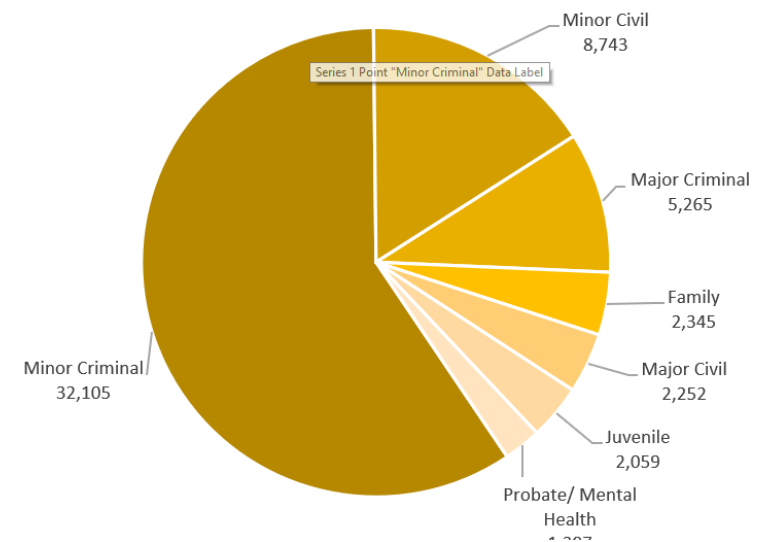
Robert Sommerville

Ninth Judicial District Administration

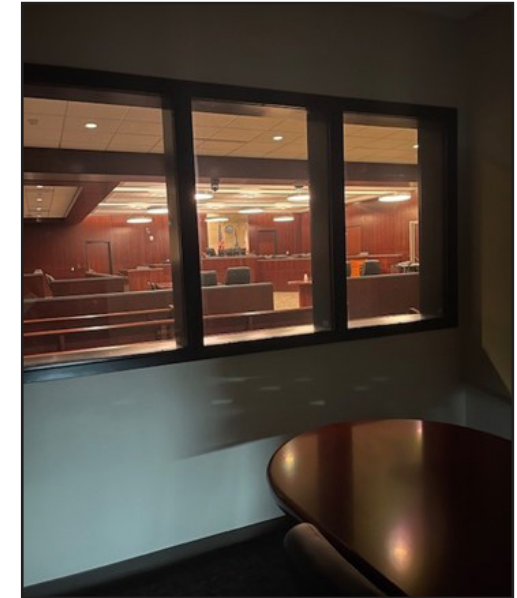
616 America Avenue NW
Suite 250
Bemidji, MN 56601



2024 Ninth Judicial District Case Filings 2024 Total Filings: 54,166



9th District



JUDGES AND COURT STAFF MOVE INTO NEW ITASCA COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

In July 2024, judges and court staff officially moved into the newly completed Itasca County Government Center, marking a significant upgrade in court operations.

The new facility features a single point of entry, enhanced safety and security measures, and state-of-the-art chambers and courtrooms.

The building houses three courtrooms, one of which is a large enough to comfortably seat 136 people. The size makes this courtroom able to accommodate the full special term calendar in the gallery simultaneously, while also serving as the primary arraignment room and trial location. It also includes dedicated spaces to ensure physical separation

between victims and defendants.

All of the buildings courtrooms have fully digital computer and audio/visual connections, allowing for flexible setups that support traditional, hybrid, and remote court appearances. This digital shift makes the system more adaptable, allowing cost-effective future upgrades

to ensure the court is prepared for technological advancements with minimal capital expense.

The Itasca County Government Center represents a major leap forward in creating a more secure, efficient, and technologically advanced courthouse for the community.



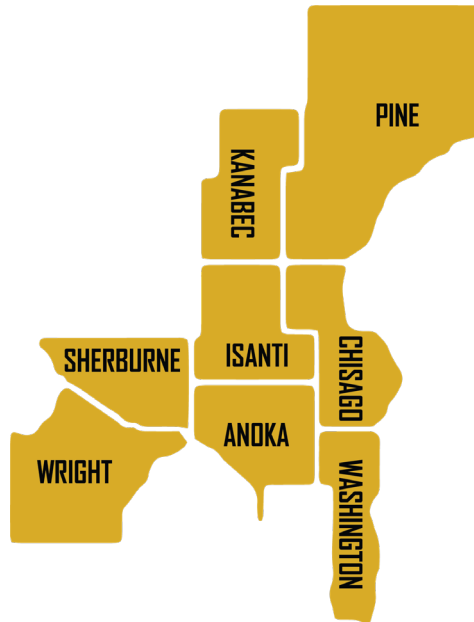
Anoka County Courthouse

Chief Judge:
Elizabeth Strand

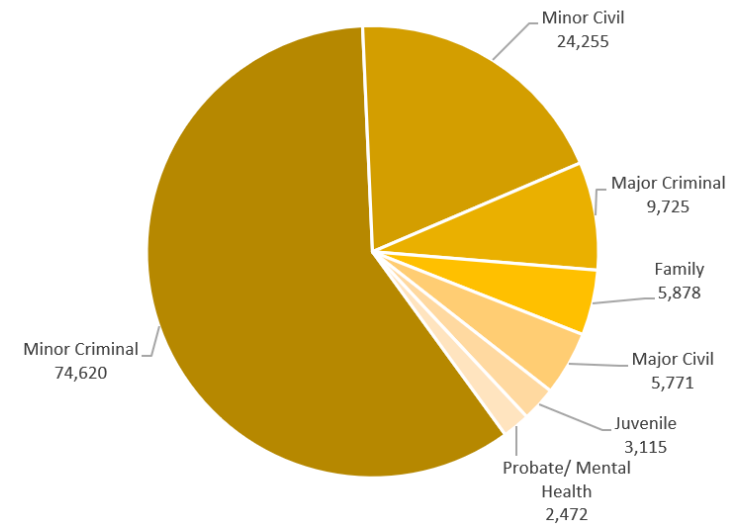
Assistant Chief Judge:
Sean Gibbs

District Administrator:
Sarah Lindahl-Pfieffer

Tenth Judicial District Administration
7553 Sunwood Drive
Suite 306
Ramsey, Minnesota 55303



2024 Tenth Judicial District Case Filings
2024 Total Filings: 125,836



DISTRICT UNVEILS TWO NEW PROGRAMS TO MEET GROWING NEEDS

This year the Tenth Judicial District experienced significant growth and change, reflecting its role as Minnesota's second-largest district court.

As filings continued to rise, a result of several of the Tenth District's counties being the fast-

est growing in Minnesota, the district implemented innovative solutions to meet increasing demands.

Among its accomplishments, the district launched two new programs to enhance court efficiency and accessibility.

- **The Per Diem Conciliation Court Referee Program** leverages the expertise of legal professionals to handle conciliation court matters, improving case resolution efficiency.
- **The Second Hearing Officer Program in Anoka County** focuses on resolving non-mandatory traffic matters without requiring a judge's involvement.

COURT OPERATIONS TRAINER DIVISION CELEBRATES 5TH ANNIVERSARY

In October, the Tenth Judicial District Court Operations Trainer Division celebrated its fifth anniversary, marking a milestone in its mission to enhance training and professional development for staff across all

eight counties. Established in 2019, the division has become a trusted resource for employees and leadership alike, playing a key role in onboarding and continuous education.

CENTRALIZED EXAMINER SCHEDULING SYSTEM FOR COMMITMENT CASES GOES LIVE

In spring 2024, the Tenth Judicial District implemented a centralized examiner scheduling system for commitment cases, streamlining a critical aspect of court operations.

This new initiative dedicated a single point of coordination to schedule and monitor com-

mitment exams across all eight counties within the district. By centralizing this process, the district alleviated administrative burdens on local courts, allowing them to focus on other priorities.

The program has been highly successful, receiving positive feedback from stake-

holders for its efficiency and effectiveness.

The centralized system not only has improved case management, it also has highlighted opportunities for future expansion: there is growing interest in extending the centralized scheduling structure to

include Rule 20 examinations, further enhancing the district's operational capabilities.

This initiative reflects the Tenth District's commitment to innovation, efficiency, and responsiveness in meeting the needs of its communities.

Demographic Data

In January 2016, the Lawyer Registration Office began collecting race/ethnicity information in addition to gender data from attorneys during the lawyer registration process. The following data was reported in 2024.

	ACTIVE - ALL							INACTIVE - ALL				
	TOTAL	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	1,132	955	442	287	175	47	4	177	62	62	39	11
Black/African American:	812	717	339	158	133	67	20	95	9	35	26	20
Hispanic/Latino:	509	452	242	110	63	32	5	57	9	24	14	9
Native American/Alaska:	136	124	34	34	33	18	5	12	1	4	4	3
White:	22,150	19,241	4,752	5,508	3,993	2,956	2,032	2,909	252	823	760	753
Multiple:	383	351	194	100	41	14	2	32	7	14	6	5
Prefer Not To Answer:	4,054	3,546	888	1,176	726	505	251	508	55	173	134	110
Null:	1,268	1,138	911	87	46	49	45	130	36	21	26	27
Totals:	30,444	26,524	7,802	7,460	5,210	3,688	2,364	3,920	431	1,156	1,009	938

	MALE - ACTIVE						MALE - INACTIVE					
	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	418	183	137	73	23	2	77	25	25	21	4	2
Black/African American:	357	151	77	76	40	13	42	5	15	9	10	3
Hispanic/Latino:	210	106	51	28	20	5	33	7	12	9	4	1
Native American/Alaska:	68	22	15	18	9	4	5	0	2	2	1	0
White:	10,946	2,408	2,822	2,123	1,914	1,679	1,376	120	346	320	376	214
Multiple:	164	91	43	21	7	2	18	4	6	5	3	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	1,654	364	513	338	276	163	213	24	77	44	44	24
Null:	170	48	34	23	29	36	58	15	9	8	13	13
Totals:	13,987	3,373	3,692	2,700	2,318	1,904	1,822	200	492	418	455	257

FEMALE - ACTIVE

	FEMALE - ACTIVE						FEMALE - INACTIVE					
	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	531	256	148	102	23	2	95	34	36	17	7	1
Black/African American:	358	188	80	56	27	7	53	4	20	17	10	2
Hispanic/Latino:	238	132	59	35	12	0	24	2	12	5	5	0
Native American/Alaska:	56	12	19	15	9	1	6	1	2	2	1	0
White:	8,246	2,318	2,664	1,869	1,042	353	1,529	132	474	440	376	107
Multiple:	183	102	54	20	7	0	13	3	7	1	2	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	913	275	318	194	102	24	151	18	43	45	38	7
Null:	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	10,528	3,283	3,344	2,292	1,222	387	1,871	194	594	527	439	117

GENDER NOT LISTED - ACTIVE

	GENDER NOT LISTED - ACTIVE						GENDER NOT LISTED - INACTIVE					
	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino:	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native American/Alaska:	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
White:	36	16	19	1	0	0	3	0	2	0	1	0
Multiple:	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	37	7	13	8	7	2	11	0	2	2	5	2
Null:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	78	26	34	9	7	2	16	0	5	2	7	2

Demographic Data

PREFER NOT TO ANSWER - ACTIVE

PREFER NOT TO ANSWER - INACTIVE

	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American:	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino:	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native American/Alaska:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White:	13	10	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Multiple:	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	942	242	332	186	120	62	133	13	51	43	23	3
Null:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	962	254	338	187	121	62	134	13	52	43	23	3

GENDER NULL - ACTIVE

GENDER NULL - INACTIVE

	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years	Total	Adm 0 to 10 Years	Adm 11 to 20 Years	Adm 21 to 30 Years	Adm 31 to 40 Years	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	4	3	1	0	0	0	5	3	1	1	0	0
Black/African American:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Native American/Alaska:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiple:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Null:	965	863	51	22	20	9	72	21	12	18	14	7
Totals:	969	866	52	22	20	9	77	24	13	19	14	7

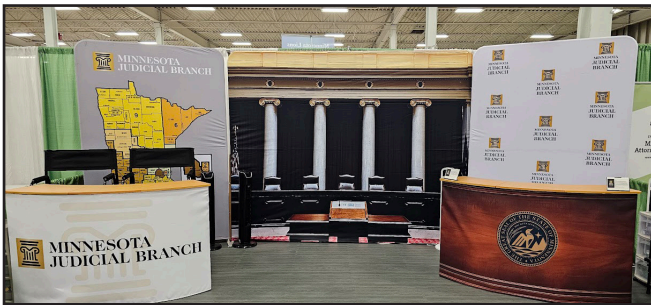
RETIRED

Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native American/ Alaskan	White	Multiple	Prefer Not to Answer	Null	Totals
8	18	4	3	1,785	7	214	2,981	5,020

2024 Highlights



Chief Justice Natalie Hudson sits for an interview with TPT's Almanac in January 2024.



Court staff setting up the Minnesota Judicial Branch booth at the 2024 Minnesota State Fair.



Visitors to the Minnesota Judicial Branch's State Fair booth dressed up as judges in the booth's selfie station.



May 2024 Bar Admission Ceremony



Court staff from seven international countries visited the Minnesota Judicial Center.



Minnesota Justice Day welcomed lawmakers to the historic Capitol Courtroom.

