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HOUSING CALENDAR CONSOLIDATION PROJECT EVALUATION

Final Report

**Research and Planning
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Introduction

Upon recommendation of the Governor's Commission on Affordable Housing for the 1990's, the legislature in 1989 authorized the establishment of a pilot housing calendar consolidation project in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.¹ This legislation was a recognition of the importance of developing a strategy for maintaining the condition of the existing housing stock in order to preserve the quality of local neighborhoods and communities. The state court administrator was directed to appoint an advisory committee to conduct an evaluation of the project. An advisory committee was formed consisting of representatives from landlord and tenant constituencies, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, along with court administrators and judicial officers from Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

The stated objective of the three year project was to consolidate, in Hennepin and Ramsey county, the hearing and determination of civil and criminal matters relating to residential rental housing. The housing calendar project, by virtue of having a referee appointed exclusively to hear housing-related cases, would improve the consistency and efficiency of adjudicating landlord-tenant disputes.

The project was established to process cases filed in Minneapolis and St. Paul downtown courthouses. Suburban court locations were not included in the project. In addition to one referee, the project in each county is staffed by a court reporter and a court clerk. All of the uncontested unlawful detainer cases filed in downtown Minneapolis continue to be heard by a hearing officer. Part-time conciliation court referees hear housing-related conciliation matters downtown, as they did prior to the establishment of the project. A part-time law clerk assists the referee in Hennepin county in doing legal research.

The remainder of this summary contains a brief description of the research methodology used, a summary of the key findings of the evaluation, and the advisory committee's conclusions and recommendation for continuing the housing calendar consolidation projects. A more detailed report of the evaluation methodology and findings is available to interested individuals upon request.

Research Methodology

An extensive data collection effort was undertaken to compare processing of cases prior to establishment of the housing calendar project with case processing since establishment of the project. For criminal cases, samples of 100 cases that met the residential rental criterion for each time period for each county were selected. Data were collected on a total of about 300 criminal cases, including information on court processing, sentences, the number and severity of violations, and whether or not owner compliance was obtained. Sources of data included court information systems, inspection department files,

¹ *Laws of Minnesota for 1989*, Ch. 328, Art. 2, Sec. 17.

and city attorney files.

For civil cases, data were obtained from the State Judicial Information System and other records maintained at the courthouses.

A mail survey of persons knowledgeable about the housing calendar projects was also completed. The sample of 165 individuals included housing inspectors, city attorneys, representatives of tenant and landlord groups, and representatives of neighborhood groups. Respondents were asked to compare consistency, efficiency and quality of decision-making before and after establishment of the housing calendars.

Additional information was obtained through in-depth interviews with sources very close to the project, including representatives of landlord and tenant constituencies, city attorneys, judges, housing calendar referees, court administrators, and inspections department administrators.

Key Findings

Criminal Cases

A violation of a housing, fire, zoning, or building code is a criminal offense. Sanctions imposed for these violations may include fines, jail, or both. Violations of the housing and fire codes at residential rental properties have been placed on the housing calendar in Hennepin county, while Ramsey county has consolidated code violations at both rental properties and owner-occupied residences on the housing calendar.

Finding #1

Code violation cases are handled more quickly.

The housing calendar consolidation project has significantly reduced the time required to process code violation cases in both Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

Prior to the implementation of the housing calendar project, an average of 142 days was required to dispose of code violation cases. The average number of days from filing to disposition declined by 50% in Hennepin county and 82% in Ramsey county once the project was implemented.

Ninety-eight percent of survey respondents who were familiar with criminal case processing indicated that cases are processed more quickly and efficiently compared to the former system of judicial rotation.

Finding #2

Landlord compliance with orders to repair code violations has improved.

Owners of residential rental properties charged with code violations since the pilot project began are more likely to bring their properties into compliance than were owners prior to establishment of the housing calendar.

Empirical data comparing compliance rates revealed an improvement in compliance as a result of the housing calendar project; more than 65% of the cases were in full compliance 6 months after the date the criminal complaint was filed with the court.

According to 86% of the survey respondents, including a large number of code enforcement officers, the probability of owner compliance following the issuance of repair orders by the court increased since the project began. An equal percentage of the respondents also observed an increase in the speed of owner compliance with court orders to correct violations since the implementation of the housing calendar project.

Finding #3

Behavior of landlords notorious for continual code violations has been addressed.

According to 94% of the survey respondents, the housing calendar project is more effective in deterring landlords with a history of code violations from allowing their properties to fall into disrepair than the former rotating assignment system.

Violations of the housing code were given more serious consideration during the project. Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that the sentences imposed since the implementation of the pilot project are more effective in reducing the incidence of future violations, compared to the sentences imposed under the former system of judicial rotation.

The City Attorney's Office and the Department of Inspections in the city of Minneapolis have coordinated their efforts to bring rental properties into compliance with the housing maintenance codes. The Repeat Offender Code Compliance Initiative (ROCCI) is targeted at the owners of multiple properties with the worst records of housing code violations. The decision to establish the ROCCI program was a direct consequence of more consistent decisions and the knowledge of the housing calendar referee.

Finding #4

System-wide improvements in the housing code enforcement process resulted from the housing calendar consolidation project.

According to 96% of the survey respondents, court decisions are more consistent

since the consolidation project was implemented. The improvement in consistency has had an impact on code enforcement departments. Inspectors are more uniformly applying the standards specified in the housing codes. Code violators are more consistently prosecuted aggressively.

Key informants described how the consolidation pilot project has improved the effectiveness of citation issuance. Inspection departments and prosecuting attorneys have renewed confidence that their efforts to obtain compliance with the housing codes will be supported by the court.

Prior to the project's implementation in Ramsey county, code violation cases were prosecuted by any one of the assistant city attorneys. The particular city attorney prosecuting the case may not have been familiar with the facts of the case and the record of code violations at the property. Coincidental with the establishment of the housing calendar, code violation cases were assigned to one prosecuting attorney. This change has led to a greater degree of coordination and effective communication between the inspection departments and the city attorney's office.

Civil Cases

Unlawful detainer cases comprise a substantial majority of the civil cases under the project's jurisdiction. An unlawful detainer action is filed by a landlord for non-payment of rent or for other lease violations. If the landlord prevails in an unlawful detainer hearing the court will order the tenant to move out, but the landlord must sue in conciliation court to obtain a judgment for unpaid rent. The legislation contained a provision for combining proceedings involving the same parties, e.g., where a landlord is also seeking to collect rent due, a conciliation court action must also be pursued.

Two other types of civil cases, tenant remedy² and rent escrow³, are initiated by tenants when their dwelling is in violation of housing, health, or fire codes. A tenant remedy action is a complaint by, or on behalf of, a tenant requesting a court hearing on violations of housing, health or building maintenance codes. In a rent escrow action, a tenant may deposit the rent payment with the court until the court makes a determination of whether the property is in violation of the codes. If the property is found to be in violation, the court can order the landlord to repair the violations or appoint an administrator, and can provide rent abatement relief to the tenant. Appropriate rent payments are disbursed by the court to the landlord.

Finding #5

Decisions in unlawful detainer cases are more consistent.

² M.S. § 566.18.

³ M.S. § 566.34.

The permanent assignment of a judicial officer to hear housing-related disputes has increased the level of consistency in case processing.

Of the survey respondents familiar with civil case processing, 83% considered the decisions of the housing calendar referees to be more consistent than the decisions issued by the judges who heard these cases in the past. Prior to the implementation of the housing calendar project, as many as 19 judges in Ramsey county and more than 40 judges in Hennepin county heard unlawful detainer cases.

Key informants experienced with the housing calendar in both Hennepin and Ramsey county agreed that one of the major impacts has been increased consistency in the application of the law. Consequently, the process has become fairer and more predictable.

Finding #6

Participants have improved access to the court and are better able to take advantage of their rights.

The service provided by the judicial system is more attentive and responsive to the concerns of the community in general.

- When asked to compare the housing calendar project to the previous system of judicial rotation in terms of the court's accessibility to respond to the needs of the rental housing community, 90% of the survey respondents reported that accessibility to the decision-maker had improved.
- New unified rules of practice, governing the procedures in both Hennepin and Ramsey counties, were drafted by a joint advisory committee. The process is easier to follow because the same rules apply regardless of where the action is filed.
- Public safety has increased as a result of the housing calendar referee facilitating prompt action by the city of Minneapolis to repair or remove hazardous buildings.

Since cases have been consolidated on a housing calendar, tenants have an improved forum for invoking the court's code enforcement powers to improve rental housing conditions in the following ways:

- The number of unlawful detainer cases where tenants alleged a habitability defense increased substantially since implementation of the housing calendar project.
- More than three-quarters of the survey respondents (77%) reported that it was easier for tenants to raise issues of habitability or code violations under the housing calendar consolidation project.

- Emergency tenant remedy actions are heard without delay. Tenants seeking the restoration of their utility services following a shut-off no longer must wait until a judge is available.
- The project provided a forum for the new rent escrow law which made it easier for tenants to initiate legal actions against landlords who neglect to maintain their properties. In Hennepin county 56 rent escrow cases were filed during a 12 month period since the project was implemented; 20 cases were filed in Ramsey county.

Landlords have benefitted from a more efficient process.

- More than two-thirds (71%) of the landlords and landlord representatives who had experience with the former rotation system responded in the survey that the consolidation project was more efficient.
- In Ramsey county 699 unlawful detainer and conciliation hearings were consolidated over a 12 month period. Landlords likely obtain a quicker decision on the conciliation issue when hearings are consolidated, and are required to appear in court fewer times.

Overall

Finding #7

Satisfaction levels are high among all constituencies.

Satisfaction with the consolidation pilot project is high among code enforcement officers and administrators, attorney and non-attorney representatives for landlords and tenants, and court personnel, as well as judicial officers.

Sources in the housing community who stated an opinion emphatically expressed their support of the housing calendar project; 96% of survey respondents indicated that they are satisfied with the project.

Finding #8

The housing calendar referees and staff are recognized as hard-working and dedicated.

Interviews with sources inside and outside of the court system praised the housing calendar referees and court staff highly for their dedication and willingness to work under demanding conditions.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Conclusions

There exists a need for continuing to monitor the effectiveness of all code enforcement procedures.

The evaluation findings clearly indicate that significant improvements have been made as a result of the consolidation project. Both counties have established monitoring procedures for code enforcement efforts. Continuing oversight and monitoring of the effectiveness of enforcement procedures will help maintain the high standards of performance achieved through the pilot project.

The success of the housing calendar pilot project has identified areas where the innovative approaches could be expanded to further improve the effectiveness of housing code enforcement in the state.

The housing calendar consolidation project has been implemented in Minneapolis and St. Paul only. Housing-related cases in suburban courts in the two counties, as well as in other counties, continue to be calendared and heard by judges on rotating assignments. Calls for expansion of the housing calendar to other jurisdictions have been made.

Expansion, however, would require additional resources. The project has been constrained in Minneapolis in fulfilling the legislative objective of consolidating all rental housing-related cases by a shortage of resources. While full consolidation has occurred in St. Paul, there are not sufficient resources for expansion to the suburbs. Pressures for the expansion of housing calendars will likely increase, as problems associated with an aging housing stock become more prevalent in other areas of the state.

One way of improving the processing of housing-related cases across the state would be to distribute copies of the written procedures and forms, developed during the project, as models for use by urban communities statewide. In addition, training sessions could be provided to judges on use of these materials as well as use of innovative programs, such as mediation of housing issues, developed in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The application of alternative methods of dispute resolution in housing-related cases may also help temper increasing workloads in the courts.

Recommendation

The housing calendar consolidation projects should be continued in Hennepin and Ramsey counties.

Support for the continuation of the projects is nearly unanimous; 92% of the survey respondents favor the project's continuation.

A judicial officer who specializes in housing law is very important for achieving consistency in decision making according to 89% of the survey respondents. An equally high percentage - 88% - indicated that specialization was very important to ensure the proper application of the law.

The evidence cited above in the Key Findings section has demonstrated that compliance with orders to correct violations has improved, and that many other positive effects have resulted from the project.

List of Evaluation Advisory Committee Members

Joe Gockowski	Administrator, Second Judicial District
Katherine Hadley	Attorney, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
Donna E. Hanbery	Attorney, Minnesota Multi-Housing Association
Wesley Iijima	Referee, Fourth Judicial District
Gerald Kaluzney	Attorney, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services
Larry McDonough	Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis
Jack Muller	Administrator, Fourth Judicial District
Ann Norton	Referee, Second Judicial District
Mitchell Rothman	Deputy City Attorney, Minneapolis
Steve Schachtman	Representative, Minnesota Multi-Housing Association
Hon. Stephen Swanson	Judge, Fourth Judicial District
Staff:	
Wayne Kobbervig	Director, Research and Statistics State Court Administrator's Office
Sarah Allen	Research Analyst State Court Administrator's Office

Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Housing Court Pilot Project Evaluation

This survey is designed to assist in evaluating the housing court. Your comments are important and will contribute to determining the future of the housing court. If you wish to comment on the clarity of any questions or qualify any of your answers, please feel free to use the space provided at the end of each section. Responses to the questions will be summarized and presented as part of a report to the Minnesota State Legislature.

Your responses will be held in strict confidence. Your name does not and will never appear on the questionnaire; the questionnaire contains an ID number which will enable the research staff to follow-up on unreturned questionnaires. The findings will be presented in summary form only; your name and position will not be associated with any of the results.

When completed, please return the questionnaire as soon as possible in the enclosed envelope or to:

Research & Planning
State Court Administration
25 Constitution Ave., Suite 120
St. Paul, MN 55155

The results of this survey will be available upon request. Requests for copies of the results as well as your questions or comments regarding the questionnaire or the pilot project, should be directed to Sarah Allen at the above address or at (612) 297-7588.

Part A - Experience

Please circle the number of one response for each question.

1. How familiar are you with the operation of the housing court in . . .

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| a. Hennepin County | b. Ramsey County |
| 1 VERY FAMILIAR | 1 VERY FAMILIAR |
| 2 SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR | 2 SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR |
| 3 TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR | 3 TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR |

2. In approximately how many cases have you personally appeared in court in Hennepin or Ramsey county? Include only cases involving residential rental properties.

	<u>First six months of 1991</u>	<u>Calendar Year 1990</u>	<u>Calendar Year 1989</u>
Criminal	_____	_____	_____
Unlawful Detainer	_____	_____	_____
Rent Escrow	_____	_____	_____
Tenants Remedy	_____	_____	_____
Conciliation	_____	_____	_____

a. If you have not appeared in court, but have been associated with residential rental cases before or since the establishment of the housing court, please indicate the nature and extent of your knowledge of the court's operations both prior to and since February, 1990 when the housing court began hearing cases.

3. **_____**
Your responses to the remaining questions must reference the housing court in either Hennepin or Ramsey county. Please indicate your choice by checking the corresponding box.

HENNEPIN

RAMSEY

If you are familiar with the housing court in both counties and can answer the questions for each county, please photocopy the questionnaire and complete one for each county.

Part B - Civil Cases

4. Have you appeared in, or been associated with⁴, any civil proceedings, i.e. unlawful detainer, rent escrow, tenants remedy, or conciliation, in housing court?

- 1 NO
2 YES

If NO, it is not necessary to complete this section of the questionnaire.
Please skip to the questions in Part C beginning on page 15.

- a. If YES, in what capacity were you associated with cases pertaining to landlord-tenant disputes? Circle all that apply.

- 1 HOUSING INSPECTOR
2 HOUSING SUPERVISOR/ADMINISTRATOR
3 CITY ATTORNEY
4 ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR LANDLORDS
5 NON-ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR LANDLORDS
6 ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR TENANTS
7 NON-ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR TENANTS
8 LANDLORD
9 OTHER (please specify) _____

- b. Approximately how many cases were you associated with during the first six months of 1991 and in each of the calendar years, 1990 and 1989?

During the first 6 months of 1991: _____

In calendar year 1990: _____

In calendar year 1989: _____

- c. If your appearances in housing court in civil cases have increased or decreased since 1989, what accounts for this change?

5. Compared to the former system of rotating judges, is the housing court more efficient or less efficient in processing civil cases?

- 1 MUCH MORE EFFICIENT
2 SOMEWHAT MORE EFFICIENT
3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS EFFICIENT
4 SOMEWHAT LESS EFFICIENT
5 MUCH LESS EFFICIENT
6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

⁴ "Associated with" refers to cases in which you were a litigant, an attorney or other representative, a witness, gave legal or other advice, testified, or investigated.

6. Compared to the former system, is the housing court more consistent or less consistent in terms of its procedures?

- 1 MUCH MORE CONSISTENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE CONSISTENT
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS CONSISTENT
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS CONSISTENT
- 5 MUCH LESS CONSISTENT
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

7. Compared to the former system, is the housing court more consistent or less consistent in terms of its decisions?

- 1 MUCH MORE CONSISTENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE CONSISTENT
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS CONSISTENT
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS CONSISTENT
- 5 MUCH LESS CONSISTENT
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

If your responses refer to the housing court in Hennepin County, skip to Question #9.

8. Consolidation of unlawful detainer and conciliation matters was proposed to reduce the number of court appearances. Has consolidation reduced the number of times you appear in court?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

a. If YES, how many consolidated hearings have you appeared in over the past 12 months?

9. In your opinion, how does the housing court compare to the system of rotating judges in terms of its fairness to landlords and tenants in resolving their disputes?

- 1 MUCH FAIRER
- 2 SOMEWHAT FAIRER
- 3 EQUALLY FAIR
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS FAIR
- 5 MUCH LESS FAIR
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

10. Compared to the former system of rotating judges, is the housing court referee more accessible to respond to the needs of the rental housing community?

- 1 YES, MUCH MORE ACCESSIBLE
- 2 YES, SOMEWHAT MORE ACCESSIBLE
- 3 NO, NEITHER MORE NOR LESS ACCESSIBLE
- 4 NO, LESS ACCESSIBLE
- 5 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

11. In your experience, are habitability or repair defenses raised more frequently or less frequently since the housing court's establishment?

a. When the defendant is not represented by an attorney?

- 1 MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE FREQUENTLY
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS FREQUENTLY
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS FREQUENTLY
- 5 MUCH LESS FREQUENTLY
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

b. When the defendant has attorney representation?

- 1 MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE FREQUENTLY
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS FREQUENTLY
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS FREQUENTLY
- 5 MUCH LESS FREQUENTLY
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

c. If you have noticed a change in the frequency, what factors do you think might account for the change?

12. Tenants may use habitability or repair defenses and rent withholding as strategies to force landlords to comply with housing code requirements. Various factors may inhibit tenants from raising these affirmative defenses. Has it become any easier for tenants to pursue these strategies in housing court?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

a. If YES, what changes have made it easier?

13. Please use the space provided below to further clarify your responses or make any additional comments regarding the processing of civil cases by the housing court.

Part C - Criminal Cases

14. Have you appeared in, or been associated with⁵, any criminal cases in housing court?

- 1 NO
2 YES

If NO, unless you are a housing inspector or supervisor/administrator, it is not necessary to complete this section of the questionnaire. Please skip to the questions in Part D beginning on page 20.

a. If YES, in what capacity have you been associated with cases pertaining to residential rental properties? Circle all that apply.

- 1 HOUSING INSPECTOR
2 HOUSING SUPERVISOR/ADMINISTRATOR
3 CITY ATTORNEY
4 ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR LANDLORDS
5 NON-ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR LANDLORDS
6 ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR TENANTS
7 NON-ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE FOR TENANTS
8 LANDLORD
9 OTHER (please specify) _____

b. How many cases were you associated with during the first 6 months of 1991, and in each of the calendar years, 1990 and 1989?

During the first six months of 1991: _____

In calendar year 1990: _____

In calendar year 1989: _____

c. If your appearances in housing court in criminal cases have increased or decreased since 1989, what accounts for this change?

15. Compared to the former system of rotating judges, is the housing court more efficient or less efficient in processing criminal cases?

- 1 MUCH MORE EFFICIENT
2 SOMEWHAT MORE EFFICIENT
3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS EFFICIENT
4 SOMEWHAT LESS EFFICIENT
5 MUCH LESS EFFICIENT
6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

⁵ "Associated with" refers to cases in which you were a litigant, an attorney or other representative, a witness, gave legal or other advice, testified, or investigated.

16. Compared to the former system, is the housing court more consistent or less consistent in terms of its procedures?

- 1 MUCH MORE CONSISTENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE CONSISTENT
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS CONSISTENT
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS CONSISTENT
- 5 MUCH LESS CONSISTENT
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

17. Compared to the former system, is the housing court more consistent or less consistent in terms of its decisions?

- 1 MUCH MORE CONSISTENT
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE CONSISTENT
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS CONSISTENT
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS CONSISTENT
- 5 MUCH LESS CONSISTENT
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

18. As a result of the establishment of the housing court, has the probability of residential rental property owner compliance following the issuance of written orders, citations, or court orders changed? Please circle the number that comes closest to your experience or observation.

<u>Probability of Compliance with:</u>	GREATLY INCREASED	SOMEWHAT INCREASED	NO CHANGE	SOMEWHAT DECREASED	GREATLY DECREASED	DON'T KNOW
Written Orders	1	2	3	4	5	9
Citations	1	2	3	4	5	9
Court Orders	1	2	3	4	5	9

19. Has the time between the issuance of written orders by housing inspectors and residential rental property owner compliance with the orders been reduced as a result of the housing court?

- 1 YES, REDUCED GREATLY
- 2 YES, REDUCED SOMEWHAT
- 3 NO, REMAINED THE SAME
- 4 NO, INCREASED SOMEWHAT
- 5 NO, INCREASED GREATLY
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

20. Has the time between the issuance of citations by housing inspectors and residential rental property owner abatement of the violations been reduced as a result of the housing court?
- 1 YES, REDUCED GREATLY
 - 2 YES, REDUCED SOMEWHAT
 - 3 NO, REMAINED THE SAME
 - 4 NO, INCREASED SOMEWHAT
 - 5 NO, INCREASED GREATLY
 - 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT
21. Has the time between the court's ruling and residential rental property owner compliance with the orders been reduced as a result of the housing court?
- 1 YES, REDUCED GREATLY
 - 2 YES, REDUCED SOMEWHAT
 - 3 NO, REMAINED THE SAME
 - 4 NO, INCREASED SOMEWHAT
 - 5 NO, INCREASED GREATLY
 - 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT
22. In comparison to the former system of rotating judges, are the sentences imposed by the housing court more in proportion or less in proportion to the seriousness of the offense?
- 1 SENTENCES ARE MORE PROPORTIONAL
 - 2 NO CHANGE IN PROPORTIONALITY
 - 3 SENTENCES ARE LESS PROPORTIONAL
 - 4 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT
- a. In what way are the sentences more in proportion or less in proportion?
-
-
23. Are the sentences imposed by the housing court more effective or less effective than the previous system in providing an incentive for owners to reduce the incidence of violations, or to correct violations at their properties, so as to avoid being charged in housing court?
- 1 MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE
 - 2 SOMEWHAT MORE EFFECTIVE
 - 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS EFFECTIVE
 - 4 SOMEWHAT LESS EFFECTIVE
 - 5 MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE
 - 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

If your responses refer to the housing court in Hennepin county, skip to Question #25.

24. At the same time that the housing court was established in St. Paul, responsibility for prosecuting all code violation cases was assigned to one city attorney. To what extent, if any, has this measure affected the enforcement of the housing codes?
- 1 LARGE POSITIVE IMPACT
 - 2 SMALL POSITIVE IMPACT
 - 3 NO IMPACT
 - 4 SMALL NEGATIVE IMPACT
 - 5 LARGE NEGATIVE IMPACT
 - 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

If your responses refer to the housing court in Ramsey county, skip to Question #26

25. Prior to the establishment of the housing court in Hennepin County, pleas to petty misdemeanors were not heard by the court. Now, all defendants appear before the court. Do you think that this change has improved the enforcement of the housing codes?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

a. Why or why not?

26. In your opinion, how effective is the housing court compared to the former judge rotation system in encouraging landlords with a history of code violations to keep their properties maintained so as to avoid the occurrence of violations and citations in the future?

- 1 MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE EFFECTIVE
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS EFFECTIVE
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS EFFECTIVE
- 5 MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

27. In your opinion, how effective is the housing court compared to the former system of rotating judges in encouraging owners of more than one rental unit to keep all their units maintained so as to avoid the occurrence of violations and citations in the future?

- 1 MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE
- 2 SOMEWHAT MORE EFFECTIVE
- 3 NEITHER MORE NOR LESS EFFECTIVE
- 4 SOMEWHAT LESS EFFECTIVE
- 5 MUCH LESS EFFECTIVE
- 6 UNABLE TO MAKE A JUDGMENT

If you are not a housing inspector, housing supervisor/administrator, or city attorney, skip to Question #29.

28. Since the implementation of the housing court, has there been a change in your department's operations in terms of enforcement of the housing code for residential rental properties?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DON'T KNOW

a. If YES, what was the change?

b. If YES, did the housing court contribute to the change? How?

29. Please use the space provided below to clarify your responses or make any additional comments on the processing of criminal cases in housing court.

Part D - General

30. Generally, how satisfied are you with the housing court?

- 1 VERY SATISFIED
- 2 SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
- 3 SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED
- 4 VERY UNSATISFIED
- 5 HAVE NOT FORMED AN OPINION

31. The housing court, in contrast to the system of rotating judges, features the permanent assignment of a judicial officer (i.e. judge, referee) to rental housing related cases. In your opinion, how important is this feature in ensuring each of the following?

	VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	UNIMPORTANT	DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION
Proper Application of the Relevant Law	1	2	3	9
Consistency in Procedures	1	2	3	9
Consistency in Decisions	1	2	3	9

32. Do you think that the housing court should be continued?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 HAVE NOT FORMED AN OPINION

a. Why or why not?

33. What changes would you recommend to improve the operations of the housing court?

34. Please use the space provided below to make any additional comments regarding the housing court.

Your contribution to this effort is very much appreciated. Please return the questionnaire in the pre-addressed envelope provided. Thank you.