Minnesota's justice price tag climbed past $1 billion

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Enforcing laws and providing correctional services cost Minnesota nearly $800 million of the total justice bill in 1991. This represented 21 percent, or $114 million, more than the 1985 level.

Two of the three justice system

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components — law enforcement and corrections — together accounted for 75 percent of the state's total justice spending in 1991. The bill for courts, the third component, was almost $272 million, bringing the system's total to more than $1 billion. Since spending for courts is not broken down neatly between civil and criminal cases, an exact accounting of the cost of criminal cases cannot be made. It is known that criminal cases make up about a third of judges' workload and all of the public defenders'.

While justice spending rose 25 percent, the number of reported offenses climbed a parallel 26 percent over the seven-year period. The size of the population most likely to be arrested — 10-to-24 year olds — fell between 1985 and 1991. However, the arrest rate for serious crime among people of this age group actually accelerated.

Between 1985 and 1991, more crime was reported and more money was spent for a larger system to enforce laws and process offenders. This trend is likely to accelerate, because the 10- to 24-year-old population is expected to grow 8 percent between 1991 and 2001.

Key trends in justice spending between 1985 and 1991 were:

- Seventy-two percent of justice spending occurred at the local level in 1991.
- Spending for law enforcement increased by $88 million since 1985 — the largest dollar gain among system components.
- Among the three justice system components over the seven years, spending for courts grew the fastest by 38 percent.
- The number of probation cases exploded by 41,622 or 103 percent in seven years, while jail and prison populations went up nearly 50 percent.

This *Line Item*, part of an eight-month study on government spending, is devoted to justice spending trends in Minnesota. Criminal justice statistics were used for the years 1985 and 1991 to correspond with available spending data. The spending data used in this report includes direct expenditures and capital costs, such as for buildings and new equipment, but not transfers between levels of government. Payment transfers, such as grants, are counted at the level where they are finally spent to avoid double counting. Figures are adjusted for inflation.

In this report, *courts* is used to refer to the judicial, prosecution and public defense activities of the third component of the justice system.

Counties shouldered largest share of spending burden

Local governments — counties, cities and townships — carried 72 percent of the financial burden for justice in Minnesota in 1991. Counties spent about one-fourth of their total budgets on the justice system, while municipalities spent 7 percent and the state, 2 percent. Townships and other small units of government had a tiny piece of all justice expenditures.

Each level of government picked up different shares of the costs for the three components of the justice system — law enforcement, corrections and courts.

Municipalities spent more than other units of government on law enforcement. Counties picked up most of the spending for courts and slightly less than half for corrections. The state carried the rest

Justice Spending by Jurisdictions in 1991 (in millions of dollars)

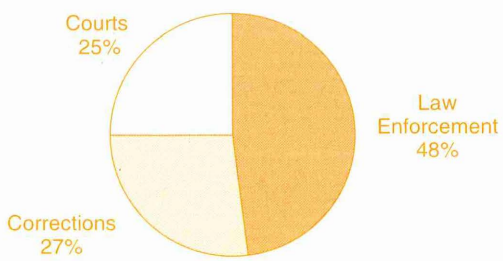
	State	County	Municipal	Total
Law Enforcement	$60.7	$147.3	$306.6	$514.6
Courts	$84.9	$167.9	$18.9	$271.7
Corrections	$152.9	$130.8	$0.3	$284.0
Total	$298.5	$446.0	$325.8	$1,070.3

The state paid the biggest share of corrections costs but the smallest proportion of all justice spending. County spending was spread fairly evenly throughout the justice system, while municipalities spent more for law enforcement than the state and counties combined.

Note: Courts spending includes the costs of both civil and criminal cases.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total Justice Spending by Component in 1991



Law enforcement's share of justice spending decreased slightly from 50 percent in 1985. Corrections stayed the same, while courts increased slightly between 1985 and 1991.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

of the corrections expenditures between 1985 and 1991.

Although total spending went up 25 percent between 1985 and 1991, the share of the public dollar devoted to the justice system by each level of government stayed essentially the same.

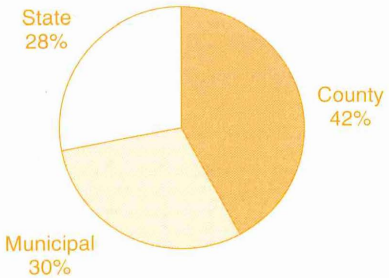
The share each level of government spent for the three justice components also remained stable during this time, even as some responsibilities were added and others shifted. Changes included the state assuming the costs for all public defense in Hennepin and Ramsey counties and for felony and gross misdemeanor cases statewide. Also, the counties took on the supervision of more offenders.

Justice funds come from many sources

Funds for justice activities come from a variety of sources, including aids from the state to local governments, property taxes and grants from the federal government. The state distributes funds raised through income and sales taxes to local governments, which use these aids at their discretion for a range of activities, such as law enforcement. Such intergovernmental transfers provided 34 percent of city and 47 percent of county revenues in 1991.

Local governments also get supplemental funds from the state that are earmarked for certain corrections activities. Local revenues generated from property taxes support police departments, sheriff's offices, county attorneys and probation supervision, among other governmental services.

Total Justice Spending by Jurisdiction in 1991



In 1985, the state's share was about 26 percent, the counties' was about 41 percent, and municipalities picked up the remaining 32 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Spending increased at all levels of government

All three levels of government boosted their spending on the justice system. The state's rate of spending grew the fastest, but counties registered the greatest dollar increases.

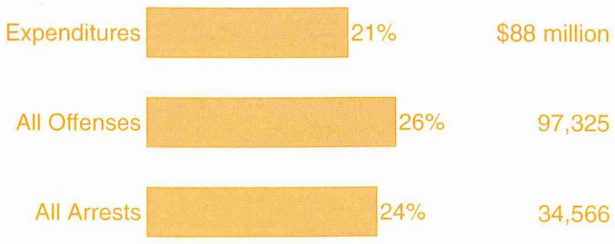
Spending for all three components rose, with law enforcement going up by 21 percent and corrections by 23 percent from 1985 to 1991. Courts had the fastest growth, realizing a 38 percent increase.

Law enforcement consumed more than half a billion dollars

Total law enforcement spending by state and local governments reached a little more than half a billion dollars in 1991. Almost all of the $88 million increase from 1985's total was ultimately spent by cities and counties.

Some of the additional dollars boosted law enforcement staff by 21 percent, or an additional 1,599 employees. About two-thirds of these new workers were civilians who handle administrative tasks, and one-third were sworn peace officers. In 1991, 71 percent of all law enforcement employees were sworn officers.

Law Enforcement Growth Percent and Actual Change — 1985 to 1991



Law enforcement expenditures grew 21 percent, an $88 million increase over seven years. Municipal spending accounted for slightly more than half the increase, while the state share was slightly more than one-tenth of the total.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Information Systems Management

While cities provide most law enforcement services, such as police patrols, and temporary lock-ups for arrestees, sheriffs patrol rural areas that do not have city services. Sheriffs also operate county jails and provide court security. Some small towns contract with their county sheriff's department for police services.

The state's law enforcement role encompasses the highway patrol and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, with its crime laboratory, information systems and investigators.

Law enforcement is the entry point into the justice system. Crimes are reported to and investigated by law enforcement officers, who arrest and refer offenders to the courts. The courts then send offenders into the corrections system.

Large increases in the number of offenses and arrests can strain the rest of the system by adding to court caseloads and draining the capacity of corrections options.

More than half of the 473,087 crimes reported in 1991 were for less serious offenses, such as fraud, driving under the influence, petty larceny and minor assaults. Arrests followed a similar pattern to reported crime, with lesser offenses making up about three-quarters of all arrests.

Each arrest for the most serious offenses often consumes a disproportionately large amount of resources compared to an arrest for less serious crimes. Serious violent offenses, as defined by the FBI, include murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson make up the serious property crimes. Serious offenses tend to take longer to process and offenders spend more time incarcerated. Arrests for serious offenses numbered 41,547 in 1991, marking a 21 percent gain of 7,255 since 1985. They represented about one-quarter of the 178,801 arrests made in 1991.

Courts spending growth reflected enforcement efforts

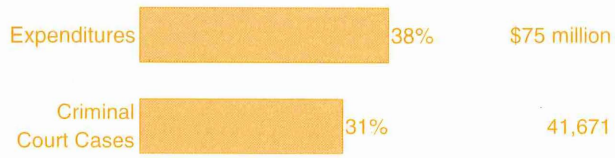
Sharp increases in law enforcement fueled spending for the courts component of the justice system. Although spending for adult criminal cases alone cannot be accurately determined, 36 percent of all judges' time was spent on these cases in 1985 and 38 percent in 1991.

Among the levels of government, counties had the largest hike in spending for courts — almost $43 million between 1985 and 1991. This county increase occurred even though the state began in 1989 to assume some courts costs, such as those for public defenders, law clerks and district court administration. The takeover of these costs was intended to provide equal justice to all areas of Minnesota. This contributed to the state having the fastest growth in courts spending during the seven years. Local aid was reduced equal to these assumed costs.

County expenses for courts also grew by 29 percent from 1985 to 1989, due in part to policy changes regarding drunk driving, narcotics enforcement and domestic abuse. After the state takeover, county spending for courts increased only 4 percent.

The number of criminal court cases expanded 31 percent between 1985 and 1991. Making up the bulk of this increase were 30,186 nontraffic misdemeanor cases, such as simple assault and shoplifting. Gross misdemeanors, which are more serious than misdemeanors and include such offenses as fraud and repeat drunk driving, grew

Courts Growth
Percent and Actual Change — 1985 to 1991

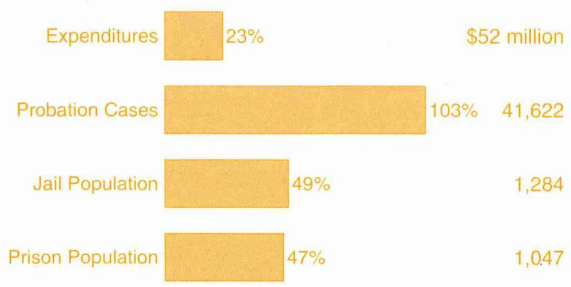


Court spending increased 38 percent, an additional $75 million between 1985 and 1991. County spending accounted for about two-fifths of the increase in spending for courts, with the rest split nearly evenly between the state and municipalities.

Note: Criminal court cases represent all felonies, gross misdemeanors and nontraffic misdemeanors. Juvenile cases are not considered criminal.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Minnesota Supreme Court, Research and Planning Office

Corrections Growth
Percent and Actual Change — 1985 to 1991



Between 1985 and 1991, corrections spending grew 23 percent or $52 million.

Note: Adult and juvenile probation cases represent the change in the number of cases on December 31, 1985 and 1991. Figures were calculated using average Minnesota daily adult and juvenile jail populations and average yearly adult prison population.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Minnesota Department of Corrections

65 percent, an additional 7,416 cases. Felonies, the most serious, increased 33 percent, by another 4,069 cases.

Increases also occurred in noncriminal cases. For example, the number of juvenile delinquency cases grew 38 percent and protection orders jumped 67 percent.

More law enforcement and tougher sentences drove corrections spending up

More law enforcement and tougher sentences were among the forces driving corrections spending. Spending for the entire corrections system swelled by about 23 percent between 1985 and 1991. The total corrections bill in 1991, including the state prison system, local jails and probation, reached almost $284 million.

Among government levels, the state felt the greatest budget strains from corrections as its spending increased by nearly one-third over seven years. Local corrections spending jumped 14 percent.

Total probation workloads, state and local, reflected these corrections gains with a more than doubling of the population during the seven years, for a total of almost 82,000 cases at the end of 1991. The average jail population also shot up 49 percent to 3,910 people a day; the adult prison population escalated 47 percent to a yearly average of 3,258 inmates in 1991.

Probation services in 1991, including community service, were among the least expensive sentencing options, costing in some counties between two and eight dollars a day. By comparison, the daily cost for jails and workhouses was roughly $56, while prison costs averaged $66.

Minnesota's national rankings on justice spending and crime at about same level

Based on its national rankings, Minnesota's justice spending is at about the same level as its rate of serious crimes. In 1991, Minnesota ranked 21st among all states in total justice spending and 25th in the number of serious crimes reported.

By calculating total justice spending on the basis of population size, Minnesota ranked 31st in spending for each citizen. The national median — the point where half the states are above and half below — for per capita spending on justice was $255.

The state, counties and municipalities together spent $241 for each citizen on justice activities in 1991, up 18 percent from 1985. The rise in per capita expenditures during the seven-year period reflects the growth both in total population and spending for different components of the system.

State-by-State Justice Spending Per Capita in 1991

	Law Enforcement	Rank	Courts	Rank	Corrections	Rank	Total Spending	Rank
MINNESOTA	116	26	61	19	64	38	241	31
Alaska	214	1	187	1	236	1	637	1
California	189	3	106	3	163	4	458	3
Iowa	95	35	55	24	52	47	202	38
North Dakota	68	45	46	32	36	49	150	48
South Dakota	81	49	35	45	55	45	171	46
Texas	112	27	45	34	94	24	251	27
Washington	119	25	58	22	99	21	277	22
Wisconsin	140	13	57	23	87	26	284	19
West Virginia	54	50	36	50	35	50	125	50

Thirty states spent more per capita than Minnesota for the total justice system in 1991. In spending on the components, Minnesota was 26th in police, 19th in courts and 38th in corrections.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Is a crisis looming on the horizon?

The rise in justice spending will continue and may even accelerate in coming years, in part because of recent policy changes. The full impact of increasing the statutory maximum sentences in 1989, for example, is yet to be felt. Recommended sentences were doubled for the most serious crimes. Offenders sentenced to prison after 1989 will no longer get out as quickly, and pressures related to capacity and staffing for prison facilities, the most expensive sentencing option, will continue to mount.

Additional pressures will result from the passage of the 1994 state omnibus crime bill, but their nature and extent have yet to be determined. For example, with offenders staying in prison longer, what will happen to their health care costs as they get older?

Legislation also passed in 1994 extended court supervision of juvenile delinquents to age 21 and mandated legal representation or consultation for juvenile offenders, of whom fewer than half have had counsel in the past. Both changes are certain to affect expenditures.

Prevention efforts have expanded in the past few years. The 1992 Anti-Violence Act established and funded several crime and violence prevention efforts ranging from home visits to families at risk of child abuse and neglect to youth employment initiatives. The ultimate intent of prevention efforts is to deter people from crime and reduce the personal and financial losses associated with crime.

The cost implications of the projected 8 percent rise in the 10- to 24-year-old population by the year 2001 are unknown but ominous, since this is the group that has had the highest rate of arrest for serious crimes. The political response to public perceptions and fear of crime also will foster changes and costs that cannot be predicted.

Technical notes

Data on expenditures come from the U.S. Census Bureau's *Governmental Finances* series. Figures are adjusted for inflation in 1993 dollars. Fiscal year information, such as fiscal year 1990-91, is referred to by the ending year; in this case, 1991. The 1985 to 1991 time frame was used because data was available for all levels of government.

Reported criminal offenses, arrest data and law enforcement employment come from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Information Systems Management. Corrections data is from Minnesota Department of Corrections, court data is from the Minnesota Supreme Court, and population estimates are based on data from the State Demographer at Minnesota Planning.

Line Item is a series of brief publications highlighting key facts and findings from Minnesota Planning's in-progress study of government spending. The study will examine past local and state government spending and revenues, identify major driving forces and forecast what is expected to happen in the next five to 10 years.

Line Item reports will be issued periodically during the course of the study, and a final report will be released in December 1994.

Upon request, *Line Item* will be made available in an alternate format, such as Braille, large print or audio tape. For TDD, contact Minnesota Relay Service at (612) 297-5353 or (800) 627-3529 and ask for Minnesota Planning.

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