

**Agency Purpose**

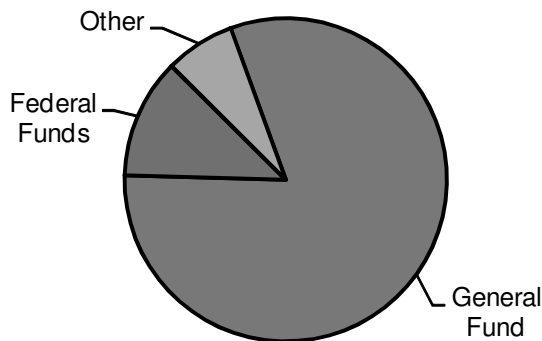
Minnesota’s Supreme Court is the state’s court of last resort, serving as the final guardian of the Minnesota Constitution and interpreting/applying the United States Constitution. The court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law, and making recommendations for improvement of the judicial system.

- The mission of the judicial branch is to provide justice through a system that assures equal access for the fair, competent, and timely resolution of cases and controversies.
- The judicial branch vision is that 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.

**At a Glance**

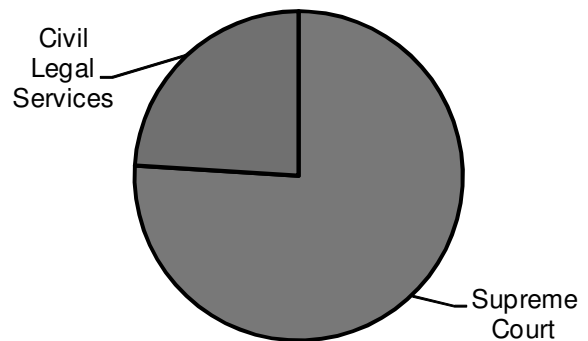
- Supreme Court reviews more than 800 cases a year.
- The judicial branch operates in a constantly changing environment.
  - Laws, case types, and legal sanctions change annually.
  - Caseload volume is determined by other branches and levels of government, and by private citizens and business entities bringing disputes for resolution.
- The Minnesota Judicial Branch contains a judicial system of 289 judges, 19 Court of Appeals judges, and seven Supreme Court Justices.
- The judiciary completed a massive transformation, moving from a county-funded to state-funded system. As of FY 2006 all ten judicial districts are state funded.
- Redesign of core court technology is underway.
  - The branch fully implemented in 2008 its new Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) technology application.
- The Minnesota Courts regularly review their effectiveness by monitoring
  - case filing trends;
  - case clearance rates; and
  - elapsed case time from filing to disposition.

**Est. FY 2010-11 Expenditures by Fund**



Source: Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS) as of 08/26/10<sup>1</sup>

**Est. FY 2010-11 Expenditures by Program**



Source: Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS) as of 08/26/10<sup>1</sup>

## Strategies

The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in remedial cases as prescribed by law, appellate jurisdiction over all cases, and supervisory jurisdiction over all courts in the state. The Supreme Court's supervisory jurisdiction includes the authority to prescribe, amend, and modify the rules of practice in all courts; the rules governing the examination and admission of attorneys to the state bar; and the rules governing judicial and attorney professional conduct.

The Chief Justice serves as chair for the Minnesota Judicial Council and is responsible for supervising the administrative operations of the state court system, including the financial affairs of the court system and the assignment of judges to serve in courts needing assistance.

The Supreme Court conducts its administrative functions in support of the following three strategic priority areas:

- **Access to Justice** – Ensuring the justice system is open, affordable, effective, and accountable to the people it serves.
- **Administering Justice for More Effective Results** – Working across branches of government and with other stakeholders to improve outcomes for and the delivery of services for children, families, and alcohol and other drug (AOD) addicted offenders who come into our courts.
- **Public Trust Accountability and Impartiality** – Through education, outreach to diverse communities, and a commitment to system-wide customer service and accountability, improving citizens' understanding of and confidence in the Third Branch of government.

To further the three goals contained in the branch's strategic plan – Access to Justice; Administering Justice for More Effective Results; and Public Trust Accountability and Impartiality – the strategic plan outlines future priorities. Each of these specific priorities addresses challenges facing the court system by targeting judicial branch resources in a focused manner on achievable and measurable strategies. Implementation of these priorities will take place over the life of the strategic plan with specific performance measures to evaluate their success.

Below is a link to the FY 2010-11 Judicial Branch Strategic Plan:

[http://www.mncourts.gov/Documents/0/Public/Judicial\\_Council/FY10-11\\_Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.mncourts.gov/Documents/0/Public/Judicial_Council/FY10-11_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

## Operations

The adjudicative and supervisory functions of the Supreme Court have an impact on all Minnesota citizens.

### Adjudicative Operations

In reviewing more than 800 cases each year, justices are assisted in their work by law clerks and the Supreme Court Commissioner's Office.

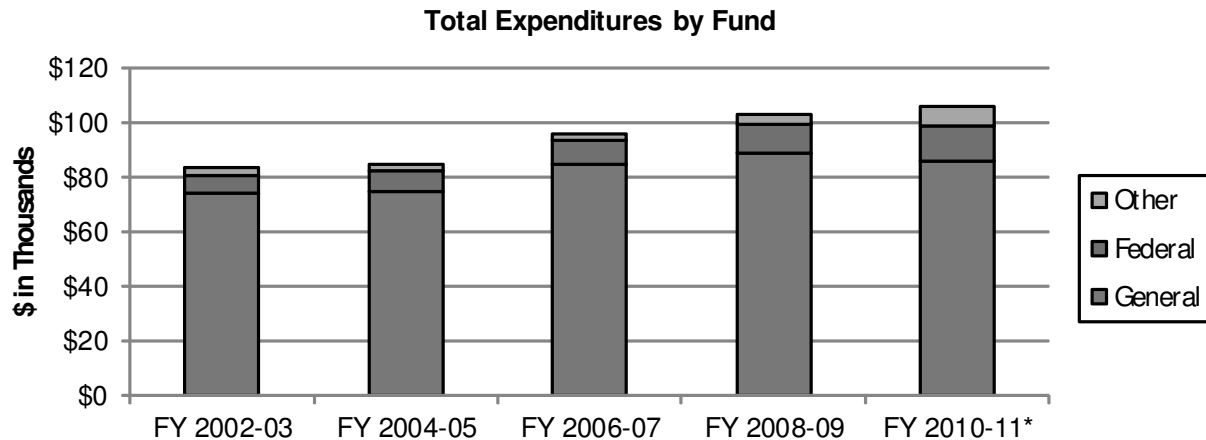
### Supervisory Operations

In the Chief Justice's role as chair of The Minnesota Judicial Council and general supervisory role over the courts, she is assisted by the State Court Administrator's Office, which provides the administrative infrastructure for the judicial branch.

Working at the direction of the Judicial Council, the state court administrator is responsible for providing judicial branch finance, human resources, technology, training, communications, research/evaluation, caseload management, and cross-district judicial assignment services.

## Budget Trends

Of the funding for the Supreme Court, 81% is from General Fund direct appropriations. Federal grants represent 12% of the funding for the court. The balance of the funding is from special revenue funds and other grants and gifts, representing 7% of the courts funding.



\* FY 2010-11 is estimated, not actual. Source data for the previous chart is the Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS) as of 8/26/10. The FY2010-11 General Fund projections include \$190K in MNCIS Access expenditures funded by fees collected for running MNCIS reports<sup>1</sup>.

- Prior to FY 2011 IOLTA funding and expenditures were accounted for outside of MAPS (the state accounting system). For FY 2011 and subsequent years a policy change required IOLTA funding and expenditures to be accounted for in MAPS. IOLTA revenue is dependent on interest rates, which have been de minimis for the past two plus years and are not expected to rise in the near future. This will cause IOLTA revenue and expenditures to be significantly reduced in future years.
- Civil Legal Services dedicated revenue increased in the FY 2010/11 biennium due to a temporary 50% fee increase which expires June 30, 2011. (The attorney registration fee was increased from \$50 to \$75 to support Civil Legal Services.)

Significant external factors impacting agency operations include: Economic downturn/recession; inadequate and increasingly unstable funding base.

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<sup>1</sup> FY 2011 data in the “Other” category includes one-time accounting shifts for both the Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and Civil Legal Services Dedicated programs.