

**Agency Purpose**

Minnesota Tax Court is a specialized trial court in the executive branch, with statewide jurisdiction. It was specifically established by the Minnesota Legislature to hear and determine all matters arising out of Minnesota’s tax laws (Minn. Stat. ch 271).

The court’s mission is to provide timely and equitable disposition of appeals from orders issued by the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue, and petitions from local property tax valuation, classification, equalization, and/or exemption issues. The judges have expertise in the tax laws. Although the Tax Court is located in the Minnesota Judicial Center, the judges travel throughout Minnesota to conduct trials where taxpayers are located.

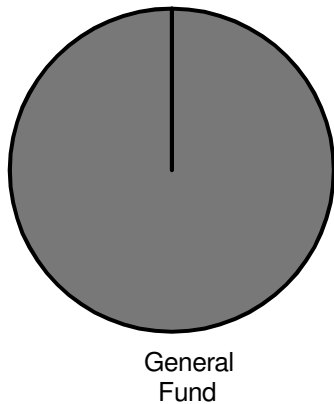
**At a Glance**

- Six full-time staff: three judges, three administrative staff
- Annual budget of approximately \$790,000
- A written decision is issued, distributed and published on all Regular Division cases.
- Most appeals are scheduled for a first trial setting within a year of filing.

Affecting court operations, are:

- changes in state property, sales and use, income and other tax laws
- local real estate market changes
- national and state economic changes
- changes in data practice laws

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



*Source: Consolidated Fund Statement.*

**Strategies**

The Tax Court docket, schedules and resolves all tax cases filed. The Court provides the following services during the process of resolving and adjudicating tax disputes:

- Accepts filings and notifies parties;
- Schedules and conducts hearings (including trials, motions, continuances, and other pre-trial and post-trial hearings);
- Tracks status of case movement; providing information as needed;
- Provides information on decisions and other general information about the court, including information for taxpayers to represent themselves (pro se) in court; and
- Maintains correct and current records, as statutorily required.

The Tax Court also:

- Develops a consistent and uniform body of tax case law;
- Acts as a model for other states and other tax courts through presentations, speeches, and conferences; and
- Coordinates with and educates district courts on managing tax petitions.

The Court resolves complex procedural and substantive issues. A single case may involve multi-year filings for multi-county property owners, which may encompass substantive issues regarding classification, class action status, and jurisdictional matters. The Court also resolves statutory, legal, and factual issues regarding Commissioner of Revenue cases (including business/non-business, unitary business, capital equipment and non-domiciliary resident issues).

**Operations**

The Tax Court continues to take proactive steps to improve the appeals and litigation process by educating and informing taxpayers and surveying court constituents. The court now provides two resources for Pro Se (self-represented) litigants: *“Presenting Property Tax Appeals to the Minnesota Tax Court”* and *“Presenting Commissioner of Revenue Appeals to the Minnesota Tax Court.”* These handbooks were designed to help taxpayers understand the process of property tax appeals and Commissioner of Revenue appeals, along with their rights and responsibilities. Both of these resources are available on the Tax Court web site, as well as at the Tax Court and District Court offices. Courts from other states use these handbooks as a model.

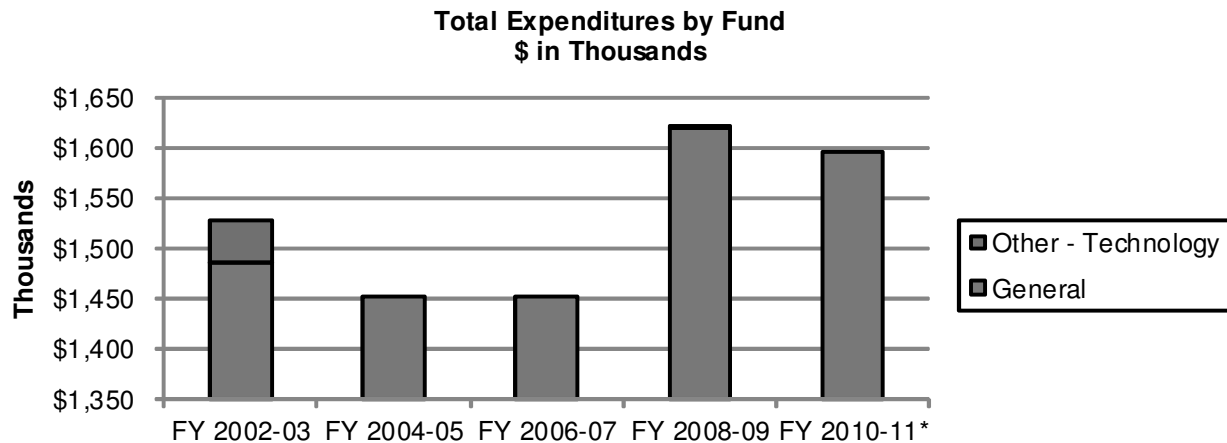
**Key Measures**

- Minnesota Tax Court issues decisions in all cases within three months of final submission to the court.
- Minnesota Tax Court provides information and searchable text decisions on its web site.
- Minnesota Tax Court produces and distributes procedural handbooks for self-represented (pro se) litigants.

**Budget Trends**

All funding for Tax Court operations comes from a General Fund appropriation. In the FY 2010-2011 biennium, the appropriation was approximately \$790,000. The Tax Court budget is approximately 75 percent compensation, 20 percent rent and 5 percent operating expenditures.

Minnesota Tax Court generates approximately \$50,000 annually in non-dedicated revenue from filing fees on appeals to an order from the Commissioner of Revenue. Depending on caseload fluctuations an additional \$1 to \$2 million in non-dedicated revenue is generated each biennium by property tax filings. Current fees are \$310 for a regular division matter and \$150 for a small claims matter. These fees are collected in District Court, which is where property tax petitions are filed.



\* FY 2010-11 is estimated, not actual. Source data for the previous chart is the Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS) as of 9/01/10.

An outside trend that significantly influences the Tax Court is the down turn in the economy which has led to a decline in the local real estate market, resulting in an increase in foreclosures and adjusted property tax assessments. Due to this, the tax court has seen record increases in filings resulting in a significant increase in Tax Court’s caseload and disposition of cases. With the increase in filings the Tax Court has also experienced a significant increase with litigants who represent themselves (pro se).

**Contact**

Contact Tax Court by mail:

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Visit the Tax Court web site: <http://www.taxcourt.state.mn.us>

Call the Court: (651) 296-2806  
Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.