

Annual Report



**MINNESOTA
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

2023



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Chief Justice Investiture Ceremony

From the Chief Justice

5

I feel very fortunate to have assumed the position of Chief Justice at a time of great stability and opportunity in our court system. Of course, much of the credit for that goes to my predecessor, Chief Justice Lori Gildea, who led our judiciary through 13 transformative years.

This is an exciting time of innovation and evolution in our courts, as we continue to leverage the experiences we gained during the COVID-19 pandemic to modernize and improve how we serve the people of Minnesota.

The most notable example of that is our decision to embrace the long-term use of remote court hearings. While this transition was borne out of necessity during the pandemic, it quickly became clear the people we serve appreciated the ease and convenience of online court appearances.

In the year ahead, we will be working to refine and improve how we use remote hearing technology, and pave a more permanent strategy for using both in-person and online hearings to deliver efficient and effective justice for the people of Minnesota.

Innovating and evolving our courts to better meet the needs of Minnesotans is one of the key ways we sustain and build the public's trust and confidence in our judiciary. So, too, is ensuring that all Minnesotans – especially those in racial and ethnic minorities – trust our courts to provide fair and equal access to justice.

As the first person of color to serve as Minnesota's Chief Justice, I am committed to building on the great work underway to break down barriers to our courts. Through our statewide Committee for Equality and Justice, we are working across our justice system to engage Minnesotans—especially communities of color—about the work of the Judicial Branch. Our goal is to consistently gather input and feedback on how the people we serve view and interact with the courts, and to identify and address disparities and inequities in our justice system.

Being appointed Chief Justice is the honor of a lifetime, and I am humbled and awed to have the opportunity to serve in this capacity. Working alongside the esteemed judges and talented court staff who manage our statewide court system, I am committed to ensuring Minnesota continues to have the most innovative, well-managed, and responsive court system in the country.



Chief Justice Natalie Hudson

“As the first person of color to serve as Minnesota’s Chief Justice, I am committed to...break down barriers to our courts.”

State Court Administrator



State Court Administrator
Jeff Shorba

The Minnesota Judicial Branch has enjoyed another successful year.

This success was due, in no small part, to the major and historic investment the Legislature made to our court system during the 2023 Session. This funding has helped us improve courtroom technology, drive down our pandemic backlog, and meet several other pressing priorities across our organization.

Our success in tackling the pandemic

backlog is important to note: At the end of 2021, we had nearly 14,000 major criminal cases in our pandemic backlog. At the end of 2023—thanks to our aggressive backlog reduction strategy, a tremendous amount of work in our district courts, and funding from the Legislature to make it all happen—the backlog stands at fewer than 939 cases, which is a 93% reduction.

As well, we have made considerable progress in the oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative. This initiative is, without question, one of the single biggest and most impactful efforts we've ever undertaken as an organization. Over the past four years, we have undergone a massive transformation in the way we hear and resolve cases in our district courts, put in place new statewide policies to help guide the transition, leveraged new technologies to support remote and hybrid hearings, and created a statewide Steering Committee to monitor, evaluate, and gather feedback on this monumental transition.

The work we have done through the one-

CourtMN Hearings Initiative is immeasurably important not only for our justice system, but also for the people of Minnesota. It tells court users, loudly and clearly, they no longer need to come to us to seek justice for many types of cases. Instead, we will bring justice to them.

We are at an important moment of reckoning as a court system. Our customers want us to move forward, not backward; they want court operations and the court experience to be more consistent and convenient across county and district lines. Through the oneCourtMN Hearings Initiative, we are making that happen.

I could not be more proud of what we have accomplished emerging from the pandemic, and the progress we've made in 2023. We are the most innovative and forward-thinking court system in the country, and I look forward to continuing to step into the future and embracing a new wave of innovations and technologies to deliver the best possible system of justice to the people of Minnesota.

“We are at an important moment of reckoning as a court system: our customers want us to move forward.”



Presentation Overview

- Where we have been
- Where we are today
- Where we are headed
- The role of SCAO



Capitol
Ridge

The Courts

MISSION

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

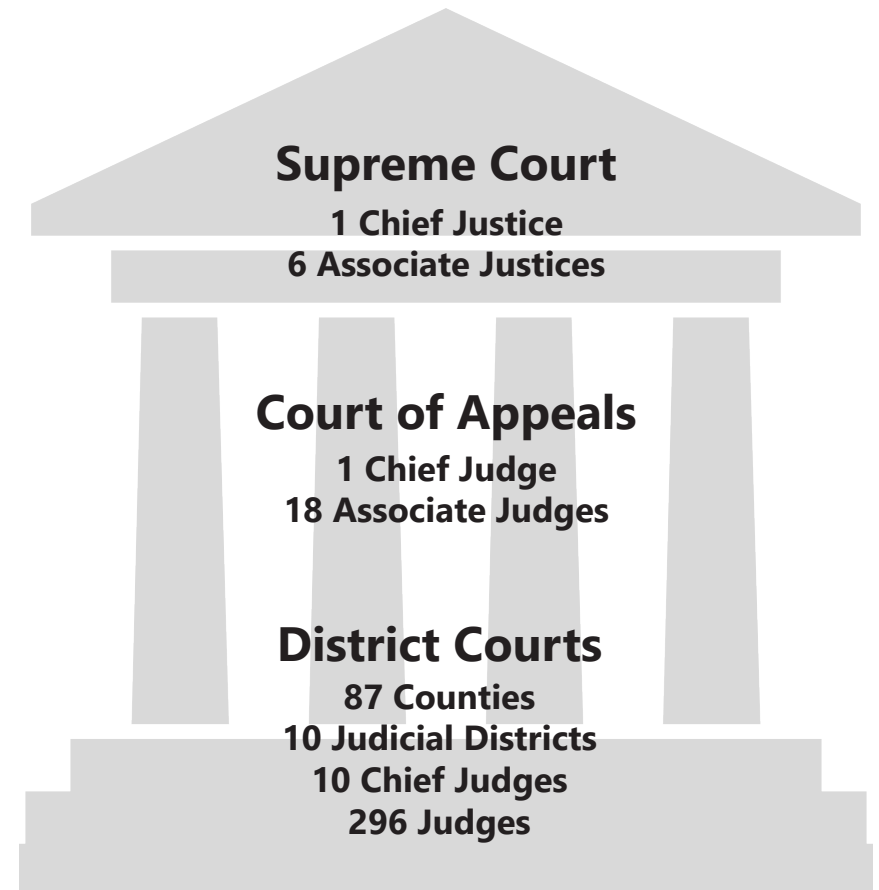
Minnesota has three court levels:

- 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.

2023 At a Glance

JANUARY

The Sikh Society of Minnesota welcomed judges from the 4th District.



MAY

Longtime 5th District Child Support Magistrate Jan Craig Nelson retired. Nelson worked in public service for 42 years, serving as County Attorney, Public Defender, Administrative Law Judge, and as a Child Support Magistrate.



APRIL

6th District Human Resources Coordinator Colette Stadin and Court Operations Associate Stephanie Bustamante attended the Iron Range Job Fair.



MAY

The Minnesota Supreme Court held Traveling Oral Arguments at Richfield High School.





JUNE

7th District Judge Jonathan Judd and Court Managers Trisha Mernitz and Kathy Ouren represent the Minnesota Judicial Branch at the Pelican Rapids Friendship Festival.



JUNE

Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie Gildea announced she would step down after 13 years at the helm of the Court.

JUNE

6th District judges Jill Eichenwald and Shawn Pearson staff a booth at the Duluth Juneteenth Celebration.



JULY

In an acknowledgement of Tribal sovereignty, the Dakota County Judicial Center in Hastings held a flag ceremony to welcome flags from the White Earth Nation and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.



2023 At a Glance

AUGUST

*7th District
Deputy Administrator
Marcia Setrum,
Court Administrator Kim
Peterson, and Judge
Shan Wang
in the Minnesota
Judicial Branch's booth
at the State Fair.*



AUGUST

*Clay County court administrators, supervisors, and staff
held a traveling town hall.*



AUGUST

*Gov. Tim Walz appoints
Justice Natalie Hudson
to serve as the next Chief
Justice of the Minnesota
Supreme Court, and Karl
Procaccini to serve as an
Associate Justice.*

SEPTEMBER

*The 6th District installed
acoustic privacy pods in
the Virginia Courthouse to
allow litigants to attend
remote hearings in a
secure, private space.*



OCTOBER

Judge Kerry Meyer became Chief Judge of the 4th Judicial District.



NOVEMBER

Justice Natalie Hudson takes the oath of office as the first Black Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice, and Karl Procaccini is sworn in as the first Muslim Supreme Court Associate Justice.



OCTOBER

Stearns County celebrates the elimination of the 7th Judicial District's major criminal backlog.



OCTOBER

The Minnesota Supreme Court hears oral arguments in front of students at Montevideo High School.

Awards & Honors



Katie Bloch, Multi-County Court Administrator for Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Swift counties received the "Champion of Change" award from the Minnesota Association of Court Management. The award recognizes leaders and champions of change in the Minnesota court system.



Judge Tanya Bransford received the 2023 National Bar Association's Thurgood Marshall Award. The award, named in honor of Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American to sit on the United States Supreme Court, is given for extraordinary commitment and personal contribution to the advancement of civil rights and for being a role model for members of the bench and bar.

The Minnesota District Judges Association presented Judge Edward Wahl with its President's Award for his work as the chair of the MDJAA Civil Jury Instruction Guides Committee.



Lindsay Listul, Multi-County Court Administrator for Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Renville, and Yellow Medicine Counties, received the Early Career Excellence Award from the Minnesota Association for Court Management.





The Minnesota Association for Court Management named Jonathan Harms, manager of the Fourth District's Hearing Office, Violations Bureau and Criminal eFiling Unit, its 2023 Coach/Mentor of the Year.



The International Association of Prosecutors presented Judge Matthew Frank and Judge Jean Burdorf (not pictured) with a Special Achievement Award in London, England. Both judges were part of the prosecution team in the murder of George Floyd.

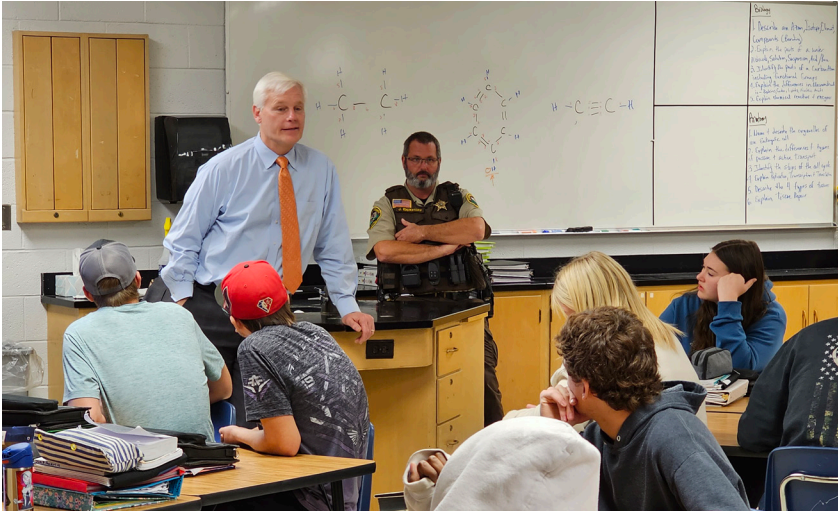
The Academy of Certified Trial Lawyers of Minnesota named Judge Mark Vandelist its 2023 Distinguished Jurist. This is the organization's highest honor, given to a retired judge who performed at the highest level of jurisprudence.



The Minnesota Association for Court Management presented Fifth District Court Administrator Kelly Iverson with its Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated leadership improving the administration of justice and the delivery of public service through the application of modern court management techniques.



Supreme Court



Left to right: Justice Paul Thissen and Justice Barry Anderson speak with students; Chief Justice Natalie Hudson with Mora High School students and teacher, October 2023

TRAVELING ORAL ARGUMENTS

The Minnesota Supreme Court continued its Traveling Oral Arguments program in 2023, bringing real cases to Minnesota high schools so that students can see justice in action.

In May, the Court heard *Cruz-Guzman vs. State of Minnesota* before an audience of more than 500 students at Richfield High School. After oral arguments, the Court answered ques-

tions from students and then ate lunch with their student chaperones. Justices then visited classrooms for one-on-one education sessions.

In October, the Court traveled to Montevideo to hear arguments in *Minnesota v. Hames Trifiletti* at Montevideo High School. The evening before the event, the Court held a community dinner at the Montevideo Armory Training

and Community Center, where some 100 people gathered for an informal meal and conversation. After oral arguments the next day, the school's Family and Consumer Sciences class treated the justices to a student-prepared lunch.

"The Supreme Court Traveling Oral Arguments program not only gives young people an up-close-and-personal look at

our judicial system, it also allows them to ask us questions about it," said Chief Justice Natalie Hudson. "The students aren't the only ones who enjoy this—we love meeting with them and helping them learn about Minnesota's judicial system."

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

Associate Justice
 Barry Anderson
Appointed 2004
Elected 2018

Associate Justice
 Margaret Chutich
Appointed 2016
Elected 2018

Associate Justice
 Anne McKeig
Appointed 2016
Elected 2018

Associate Justice
 Paul Thissen
Appointed 2018
Elected 2020

Associate Justice
 Gordon Moore
Appointed 2020
Elected 2022

Associate Justice
 Karl Procaccini
Appointed 2024



Supreme Court Traveling Oral Arguments, Richfield High School, May 2023

2023 SUPREME COURT CASE INFORMATION

Direct Appeals & Original Actions

Workers' Compensation.....	9
Tax Court.....	8
Professional Regulation.....	33
First Degree Murder.....	17
Writs/Miscellaneous.....	16
Total Direct Appeals/ Original Actions.....	83

Petitions for Further/ Accelerated Review (PFR/PAR)

Filed (PFR/PAR)	560
Review Denied.....	479
Granted Further/Accelerated.....	77
Other (Remand/Dismiss).....	4

Opinions/Disposition Orders

Affirmed.....	47
Affirmed in Part.....	10
Reverse/Remand	22
Other (Discipline, dismiss, other disposition).....	63

Total = 142

Court of Appeals



Expanding Public Access to Oral Arguments

In 2023, the Minnesota Court of Appeals significantly expanded public access to oral argument hearings by implementing live-streaming of all oral arguments, including appellate oral arguments being heard outside of the Minnesota Judicial Center in other areas of our state. The Court also expanded its traveling

oral arguments program: in addition to traveling to district court locations around the state and each of the local law schools, the Court of Appeals also now hears oral arguments at high school locations twice a year. This past year, oral arguments were held at Waseca High School and St. Paul's Central High School.

40th Anniversary Celebration

November 2023 marked the 40th anniversary of the Court of Appeals. The anniversary was commemorated with a symposium and several other events held around the state. Four decades

after the court was established, it continues to work conscientiously to earn the public's trust and provide timely, fair, well-reasoned decisions in each case it hears.



2023 Court of Appeals Case Information

	Cases Filed	Dispositions
General Civil	445	409
Criminal	766	694
Administrative Rule	3	4
Economic Security	46	59
Writs - Certiorari	64	56
Habeas/Certified Questions	7	3
Commitment	27	28
Family	238	213
Juvenile Delinquency	21	21
Juvenile Protection	75	72
Implied Consent	19	11
Discretionary Review/Writs	77	90
Probate	32	34
Unlawful Detainer/Eviction	68	65
Total	1898	1759



The Court of Appeals welcomed two new judges in 2023, Judges Keala C. Ede (top) and Jon Schmidt (bottom), following the retirement of Judges Denise Reilly and Lucinda Jesson.

Clerk of Appellate Courts



Clerk of Appellate Courts staff, December 2023.

Digital Resource Guide

In 2023, the Clerk's Office focused on increasing access to appellate court forms and information for self-represented litigants. Clerk's office staff designed a digital resource guide that was made available to litigants via email,

increased the number of forms available on our website, and created resource binders that are available to people who visit the office's front counter.

Commitment Appeals Backlog Reduced

The Clerk of the Appellate Court's Office administers commitment appeals panels, which are three-judge panels that conduct hearings when a civilly committed patient petitions for release from a state security hospital or requests a less restrictive place-

ment. In 2023, a task force led by District Court Judge Jay Quam and comprised of attorneys, appellate and district court staff, and forensic examiners significantly reduced the 182-case backlog.



Bar Association Admissions Ceremony, December 2023.

State Law Library

Attorneys Added to Probate Self-Help Clinic

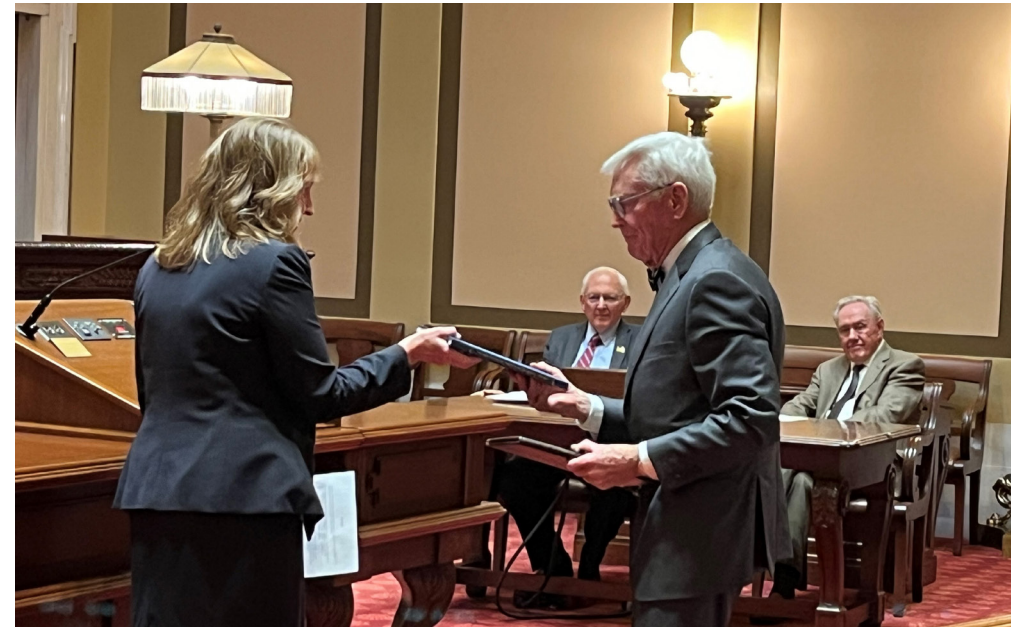
The Probate Self-Help Clinic that the State Law Library and Minnesota State Bar Association Probate, Trusts and Estates Section started in October 2022 has been so popular that two attorneys were added in 2023. The Clinic now has three attorneys available to help litigants during a total of 18 appointments per month. The

Clinic is regularly filled to capacity and assisted nearly 100 people in 2023. The clinic got its start after State Law Library librarians identified a need for brief legal advice for simple probate process questions, which are not handled by legal aid or other civil law clinics. The Clinic is available by phone to people statewide.

New Online Tool Tracks Court Rules

The State Law Library created a new online research tool in 2023 to access previous versions of Court Rules. Tracking how and when court rules have changed over time is a fairly common research request for the Library. Requests come from courts and other attorney researchers. Prior to the creation of this new tool, older Court Rules were only avail-

able in paper; as well, anyone researching a historical rule had to come to the State Law Library or contact the Library to scan older versions. This new tool provides access to court rules going back to 1980. Older rules will be scanned and included over time, and each year the previous year's rules will be added so the archive continues to grow.



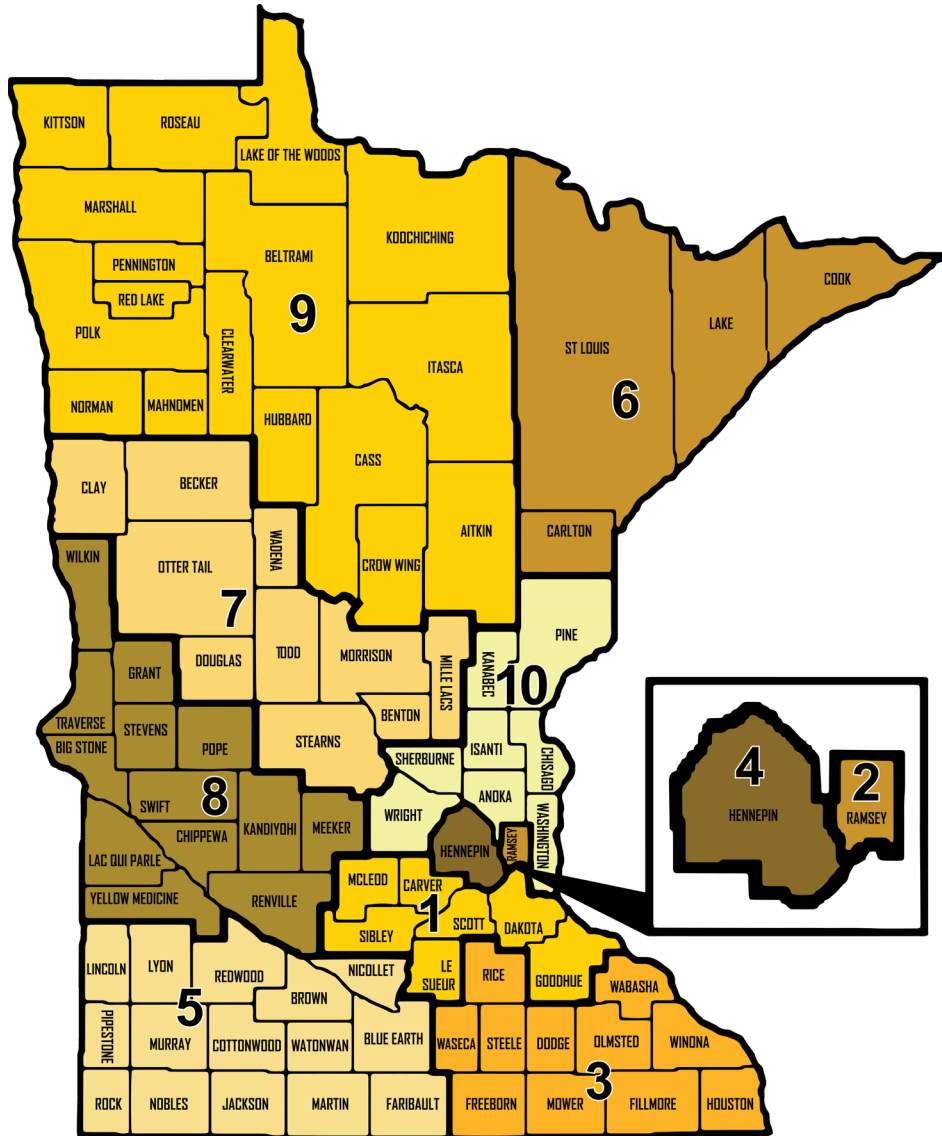
Associate Justice Edward C. Stringer receives a copy of the Minnesota Justices Services book dedicated to his career.

18th Career Book Completed

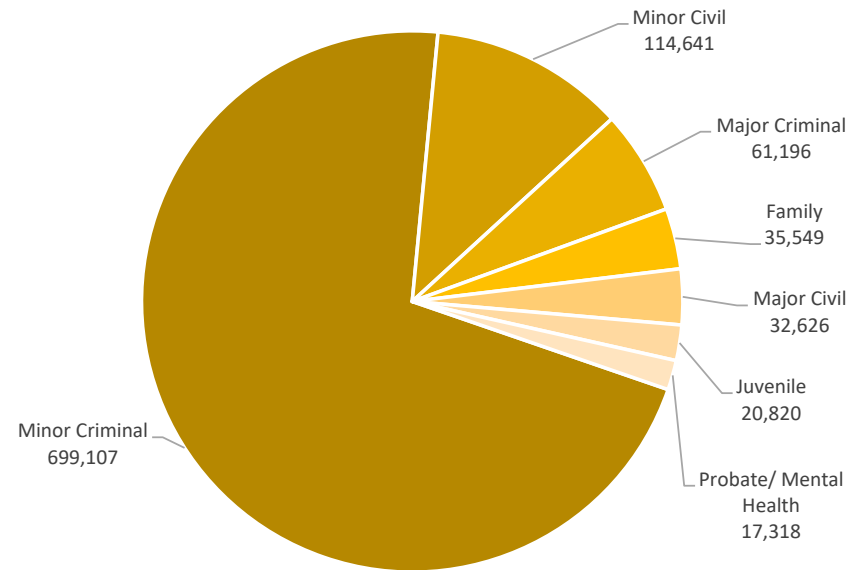
The State Law Library completed the career book of Associate Justice Edward C. Stringer in 2023. This career book is the 18th Minnesota Justices Services volume compiled by the Law Library. The series provides histories of

the Court's justices and the work they performed. Justice Stringer's book includes biographical information, articles, news clippings, opinions, photos, and other documents related to his career.

District Courts

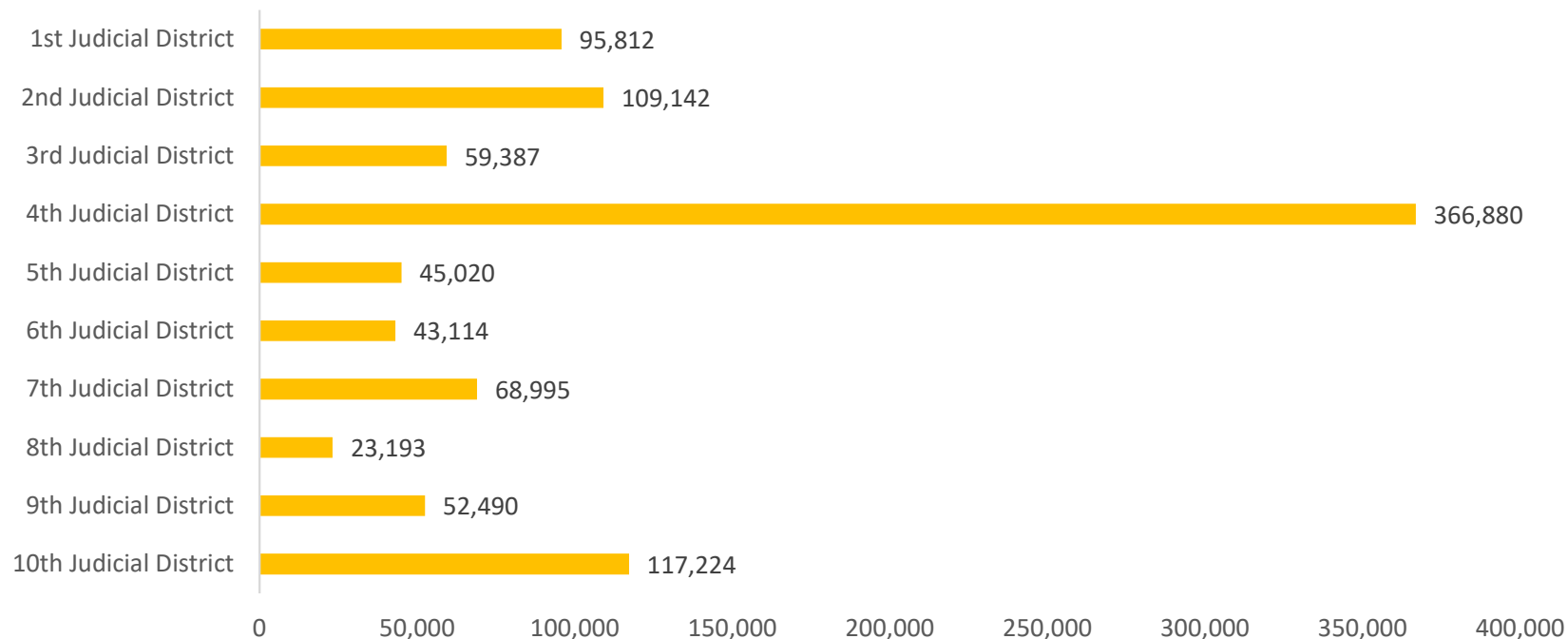


2023 Statewide Case Filings by Case Type



The Third District formed a Belonging, Equity and Inclusion Group (BEInG) employee committee in 2023. This Group provides monthly Culture Corner updates on the District Share-Point page, facilitates quarterly lunchtime BEInG talks on diversity, equity and inclusion issues, and hosts a BEInG book club.

2023 Statewide Case Filings by Judicial District



In July, the Minnesota Lawyer Magazine awarded the Second Judicial District Housing Court Administrative Team the 2023 Unsung Hero Award. This award recognizes the efforts of those that work behind the scenes to make the court operate efficiently. The award highlighted two distinct efforts the District undertook in 2023: the formation of a clinic to ensure legal aid, financial assistance, and mediation services for litigants, and the District's work addressing the increase in filings as the state emerged from the eviction moratorium and off-ramp legislation.





Dakota County Courthouse

1st District

Chief Judge:

Caroline H. Lennon

Assistant Chief Judge:

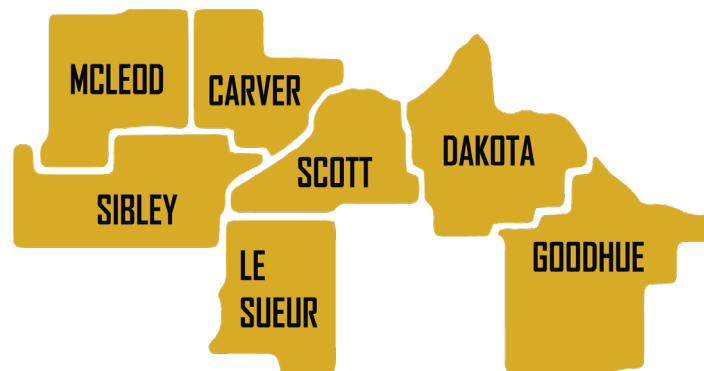
Vicki Vial Taylor

District Administrator:

Brian Jones

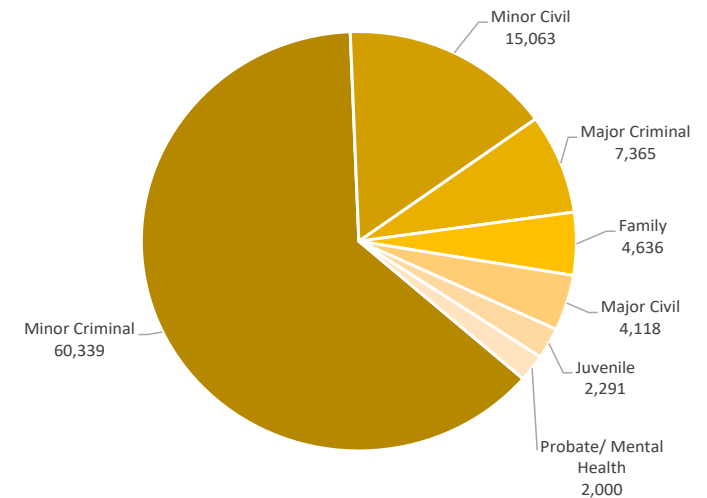
First Judicial District Administration

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



2023 First Judicial District Case Filings

2023 Total Filings: 95,812



FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT RECEIVES 2023 STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR TEAM AWARD

The judges and the staff of the First Judicial District received the 2023 State Court Administrator Team Award for their efforts to become the first district to eliminate the entirety of their Major Criminal case pandemic backlog, as well as their ongoing work to help the Judicial Branch meet its statewide backlog reduction goals.

The District employed a com-

prehensive strategy to tackle its backlog, including setting aggressive Major Criminal calendars, leveraging their central assignment system to move judges around to avoid canceling or rescheduling hearings, and collaborating extensively with local justice partners. District Administration would send weekly emails to judges and court administrators containing a status report on

their backlog progress, and court administration would email judges on a regular basis highlighting cases that were beyond their timing objectives.

"This is a such a great example of how collaboration and teamwork can help us achieve even the toughest of goals," State Court Administrator Jeff Shorba said when presenting the award.

At the time the Minnesota Ju-

dicial Council set the backlog reduction goal in November 2021, the First District had a backlog of more than 1,300 cases. Just one year later, that backlog was completely eliminated, and the First Judicial District became the first district in the state to reach its backlog goal.

Ramsey County Courthouse



2nd District

Chief Judge:

Leonardo Castro

Assistant Chief Judge:

Sara R. Grewing

District Administrator:

Heather Kendall

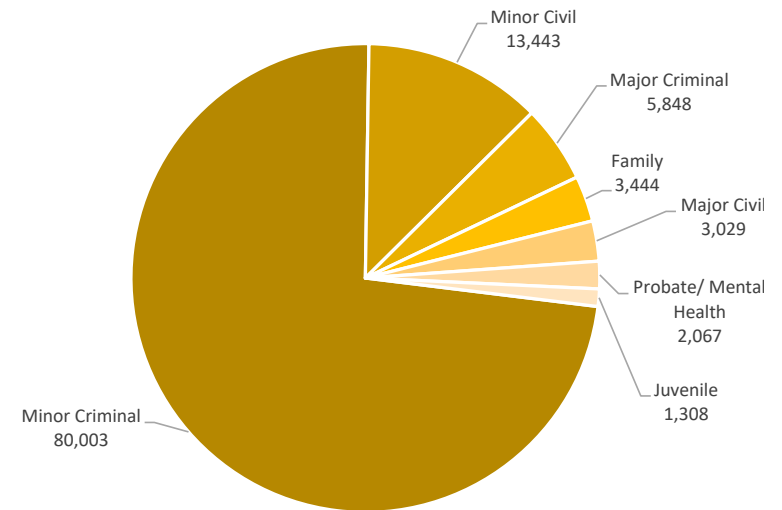
Second Judicial District Administration

15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, MN 55102



2023 Second Judicial District Case Filings

2023 Total Filings: 109,142



SECOND DISTRICT IMPROVES COURT PROCESSES RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH

With mental illness on the rise, the Second Judicial District has worked very hard to improve court processes related to mental health. In partnership with Ramsey County, the Second District set a goal in 2023 to identify treatment needs as quickly as possible to ensure the amount of time incompetent and mental-

ly ill defendants spend in jail be minimized and, more importantly, to ensure those with mental illness receive the necessary care and services as soon as possible.

To accomplish this goal, the Second District worked with Ramsey County Human Services to create a Care Coordinator position, which is staffed by an

experienced mental health case manager. Every criminal case in which a competency evaluation is ordered is referred to the Care Coordinator, who gathers information, conducts a needs assessment, meets with the defendant, helps coordinate in-custody treatment, proposes an appropriate community case plan and,

for out-of-custody individuals, connects the defendant to community treatment and support services.



Rice County Courthouse

3rd District

Chief Judge:

Joseph A. Bueltel

Assistant Chief Judge:

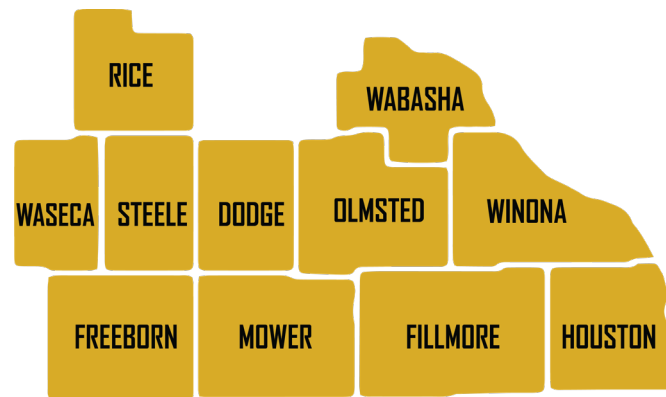
Christine A. Long

District Administrator:

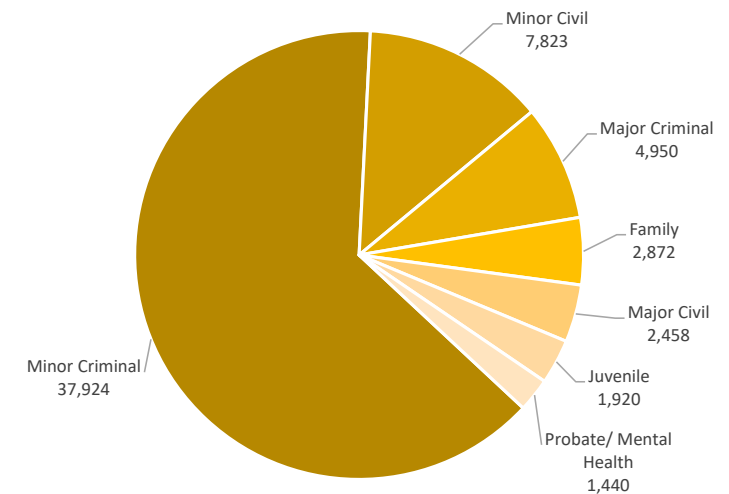
Shelley Ellefson

Third Judicial District Administration

1696 Greenview Dr. SW
Rochester, MN 55902



2023 Third Judicial District Case Filings
2023 Total Filings: 59,387



THIRD DISTRICT ENGAGED IN JURY SUMMONS PILOT PROGRAM

On July 1, 2023, the last of the eleven counties in the Third Judicial District began participating in the District's jury summons pilot. Counties started implementing this pilot at different times due to the staggered start dates of their jury terms. The pilot program provides jury summons and questionnaires in Span-

ish, Somali, Hmong and Karen, which are the four most common non-English languages spoken in the District. Jurors may find translated forms online, obtain a printed form at a Third District courthouse, or they may request that a translated form be mailed to them. The District will share data from the pilot with the Judicial Council in 2024.

DISTRICT CONTINUES NINE-COUNTY EVICTION CALENDAR

During the pandemic the Third Judicial District partnered with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services to create a nine-county eviction clinic and calendar. Pandemic backlog funding was used to retain senior judges and a senior referee to hear these calendars. Third District judges voted to retain

the calendar post-pandemic and have two judges assigned to hear these nine-county calendars.

Landlords and tenants benefit from the assistance of SMRLS to more amicably and timely resolve housing court issues. The consolidated calendar also offers greater efficiency and consistency for the court, as well.



Hennepin County Courthouse

Hennepin County Government Center
300 South 6th Street

4th District

Chief Judge:

Kerry Meyer

Assistant Chief Judge:

Mark J. Kappelhoff

District Administrator:

Sara Gonsalves

Fourth Judicial District Administration

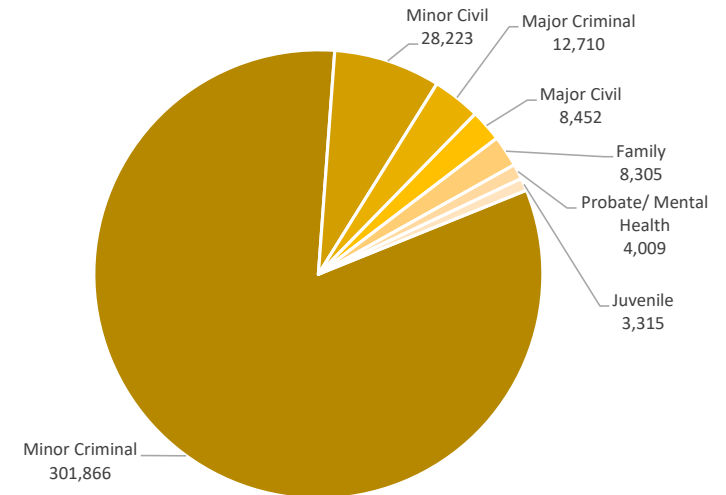
Hennepin County Government Center

300 South Sixth Street, C-1200
Minneapolis, MN 55487



2023 Fourth Judicial District Case Filings

2023 Total Filings: 366,880



FOURTH DISTRICT IMPROVES JUVENILE COURT PROCESS

The Fourth Judicial District's Juvenile Court, in collaboration with the juvenile justice stakeholders and community members in 2023 implemented new procedures, policies, and programs to specifically address youth experiencing mental health challenges or being charged with auto theft-related offenses. The new procedures, policies, and

programs include:

- » All youth charged with Fleeing a Police Officer in a Motor Vehicle will be detained at the Juvenile Detention Center and must appear before a judge within 36 hours.
- » All youth charged with Carjacking are assigned to a single judge to prioritize these cases, which will allow for more intensive supervision and focus on

the youth.

- » New Auto Theft Expedited Court Process: Expedites the processing of all cases involving youth charged with auto theft.
- » New Pre-Trial Services Program: Operated by juvenile probation and designed to intervene earlier with youth charged with auto theft or other delinquen-

cy offenses by offering youth additional services, treatment, and programming immediately after being arrested and while their case is pending.

- » New Juvenile Behavioral Mental Health Navigator Program: Provides additional services and assistance for young people with mental health challenges and their families as they navigate the mental health system.



Cottonwood County Courthouse

5th District

Chief Judge:

Gregory Anderson

Assistant Chief Judge:

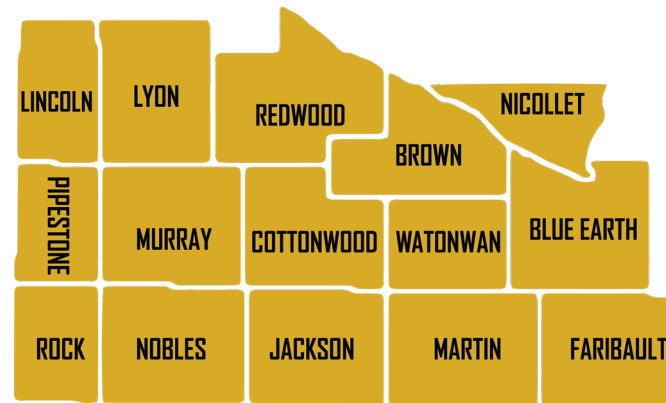
Darci J. Bentz

District Administrator:

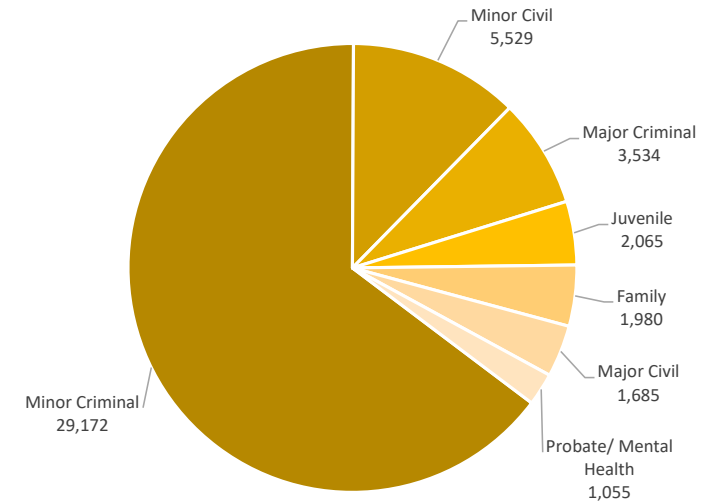
Michael Kelley

Fifth Judicial District Administration

1961 Premier Drive
Suite 402
Mankato, MN 56001



2023 Fifth Judicial District Case Filings
2023 Total Filings: 45,020



FIFTH DISTRICT MAKES DATA QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

The Fifth Judicial District recently placed an emphasis on the overall integrity and quality of the data in court administration case work. In late 2022, the District merged supervision of its Business Practices Unit and Document Acceptance Team under a single Court Administrative Manager in an effort to

align both teams in identifying trends and opportunities for improvements in data quality. In January 2023, the Court Administrative Manager began hosting monthly data quality sessions for all court administration staff to showcase news items, case processing updates, and key points in data quality monitoring. The

Court Administrative Manager also reviews several data quality reports and contacts court administration leaders and staff when cases need attention. This outreach has raised awareness and accuracy in processing court administration case work. Court administration leaders and teams have prioritized data quality and

report reviews, leading to significant performance improvements. The District has increased accuracy in several areas, leading the state in many reports and dashboards. These improvements create a more reliable court record, which positively impacts public trust and accountability.



Lake County Courthouse

6th District

Chief Judge:
Leslie Beiers

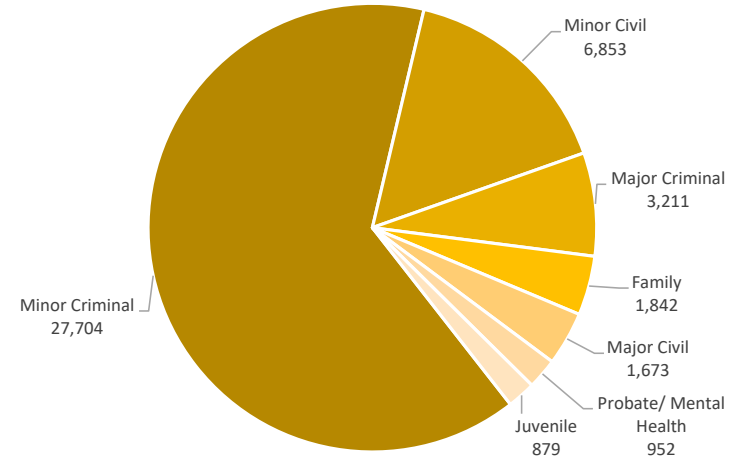
Assistant Chief Judge:
Rachel C. Sullivan

District Administrator:
Sara Taylor

**Sixth Judicial District
Administration**
St Louis County Courthouse
100 N 5th Ave W, Ste 139
Duluth, MN 55802



2023 Sixth Judicial District Case Filings
2023 Total Filings: 43,114



SIXTH DISTRICT INTRODUCES ACOUSTIC PRIVACY PODS FOR REMOTE HEARINGS

The Sixth District continues to adapt to remote hearings and to explore the best options to provide access to hearings for those who do not have the technological capabilities or devices to appear without the court's support. Though the District has had remote hearing access points for most of the past three years, in

2023 it installed acoustic privacy pods to provide a better remote court experience for court users. These new pods provide a private location for participants to attend remote hearings with stable technology and connection. Not only has this solution created a better access point for court users, it also has proved to be

more efficient for staff who support these users. The project was a collaboration with county partners, furniture vendors, and internal information technology staff.



Mille Lacs County Courthouse

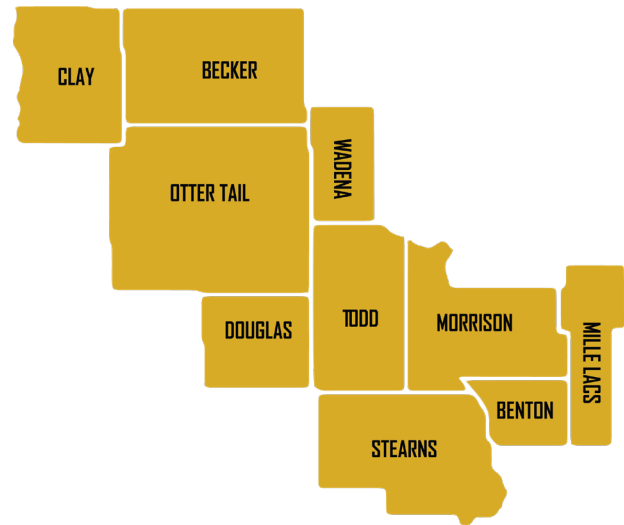
7th District

Chief Judge:
Michael D. Fritz

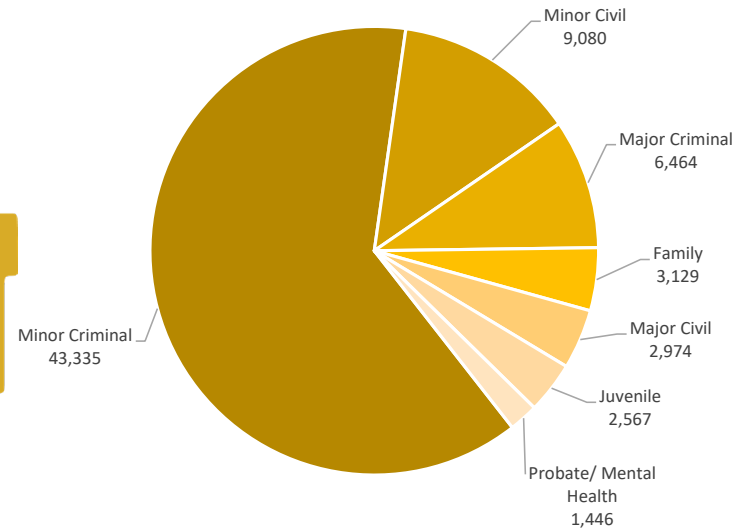
Assistant Chief Judge:
Shan C. Wang

District Administrator:
Debra Mueske

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



2023 Seventh Judicial District Case Filings
2023 Total Filings: 68,995



SEVENTH DISTRICT CLEARS CRIMINAL BACKLOG

One of the Seventh District's largest accomplishments in 2023 was collaborating with its justice partners and clearing its major criminal backlog through the district's SWEEP (Seventh Working Effectively and Efficiently Post Pandemic) action plan. Counties worked with their judges, staff, and justice partners to create a local plan that addressed their

specific needs. The Seventh District participated in the statewide case resolution event in Spring 2023 and became the third district in the state to clear its backlog in May 2023. The Seventh District celebrated this accomplishment and extended its appreciation to its justice partners by establishing a Districtwide appreciation day on October 3.

REGIONAL HOUSING COURT PROJECT

In September 2023, the Seventh District also embarked on a regionalized housing court project between Stearns and Wadena counties. Judge Doug Clark hears all initial housing court cases remotely for both counties, and legal service attorneys also participate to help facilitate settlement and provide legal advice to individuals who qualify for services.

This specialized court increased access to justice and provided representation to individuals who may otherwise have been unrepresented by an attorney.



Renville County Courthouse

8th District

Chief Judge:

Stephanie Beckman

Assistant Chief Judge:

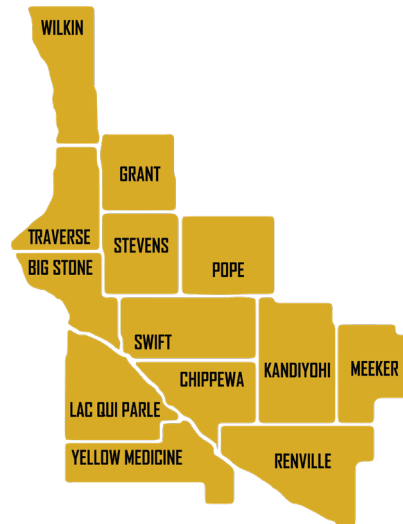
Rodney Hanson

District Administrator:

Debra Mueske

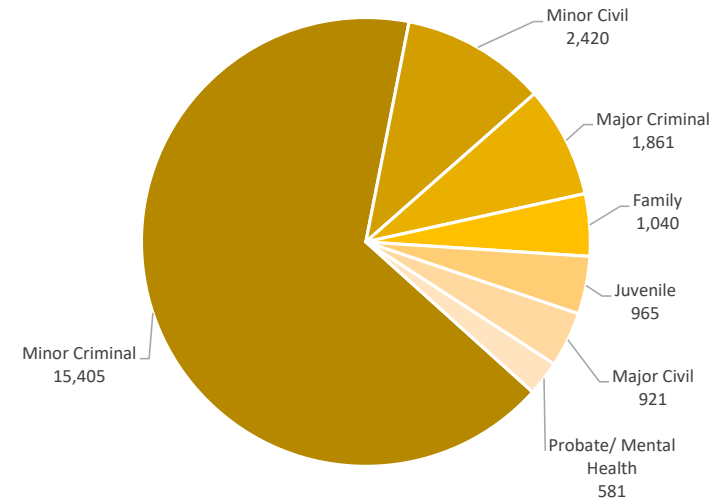
Eighth Judicial District Administration

505 SW Becker Avenue
Suite 107
Willmar MN 56201



2023 Eighth Judicial District Case Filings

2023 Total Filings: 23,193



EIGHTH DISTRICT CLEARS CRIMINAL BACKLOG

One of the Eighth District's largest accomplishments in 2023 was clearing its major criminal backlog. For several weeks in late 2022 and early 2023, the Eighth District was the slowest district in clearing its backlog. Through various effective methods, the district cleared its backlog in May 2023 and ended up being the second district in the state to

clear its backlog. On September 25, 2023, the Eighth District hosted a Districtwide event to show appreciation to its criminal justice partners for their collaboration and cooperation in making this happen.

DISTRICTWIDE HOUSING COURT PILOT

The Eighth District also partnered with legal services to implement and refine a Districtwide housing court in 2023. One judge presides over all housing court matters in the District and legal aid attorneys are present at initial hearings to provide legal advice and represent individuals who qualify for services. This specialized court increased access to

justice and provided representation to individuals who may have otherwise been self-represented litigants. The District experienced increased settlement rates and fewer people evicted during the pilot, which may be attributed to the presence of attorneys at the hearings to facilitate negotiations between landlords and tenants.



Cass County Courthouse

9th District

Chief Judge:

Jana Austad

Assistant Chief Judge:

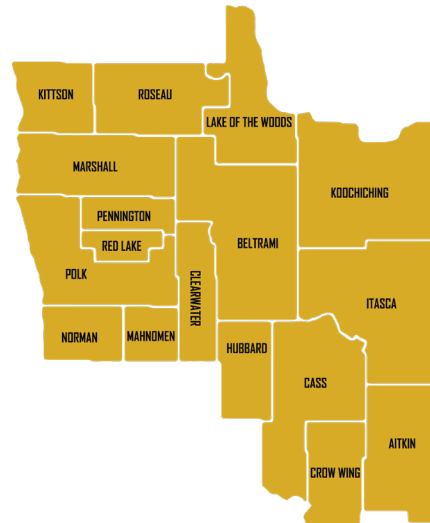
Anne Rasmusson

District Administrator:

Robert Sommerville

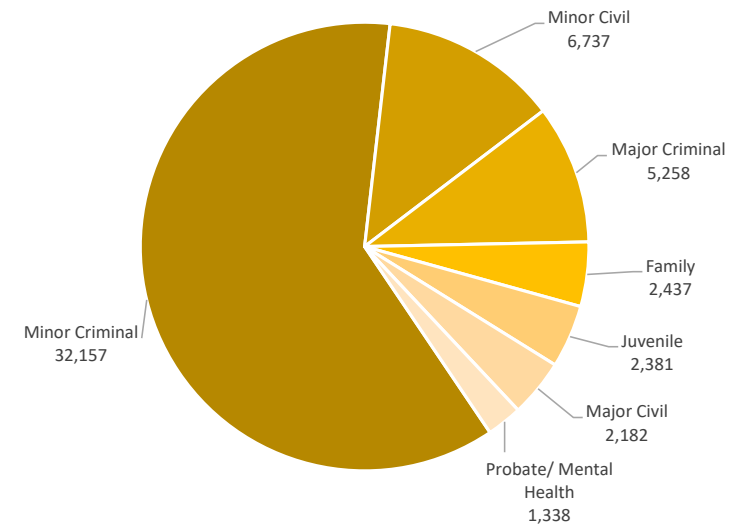
Ninth Judicial District Administration

616 America Avenue NW
Suite 250
Bemidji, MN 56601



2023 Ninth Judicial District Case Filings

2023 Total Filings: 52,490



NINTH DISTRICT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS STRENGTHEN FAMILY SAFETY

During 2023 the Ninth Judicial District continued to expand operations of its Domestic Violence Court Program by further developing the Beltrami County Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange (SVSE) Center. Safe exchange provides support during the transfer of a child by and between custodial and non-custodial parents. Supervised vis-

itation provides time to safely interact in the presence of facilitators who monitor the visit. The District recently secured a sub-recipient partnership to oversee the day-to-day operations of the center, with the goal of offering services to families by early 2024. Additionally, the Center will be a place of hope and healing for those experiencing fami-

ly violence by supporting strong bonds between child and parent, providing structure and predictability for the child, and assisting in connecting families with additional needed services. Due to the dangerous and complex nature of intimate-partner violence crimes, and the traumatic and life-long effects for children living in homes with violence and

addiction, it is crucial to continue coordination and inter-agency project partnerships such as the implementation of the SVSE Center. The Ninth Judicial District Domestic Violence Court Team is honored to be a part of this Program since 2012 and excited to continue this important service to our families.



Kanabec County Courthouse

10th District

Chief Judge:

Stoney Hiljus

Assistant Chief Judge:

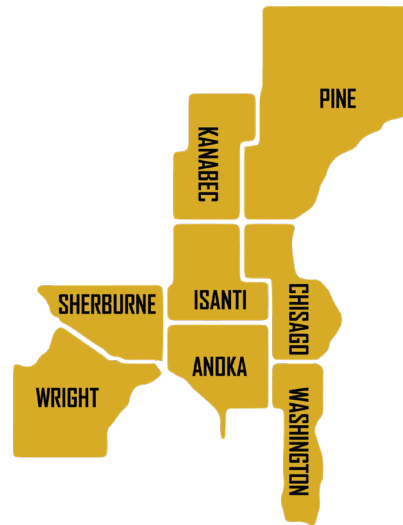
Elizabeth Strand

District Administrator:

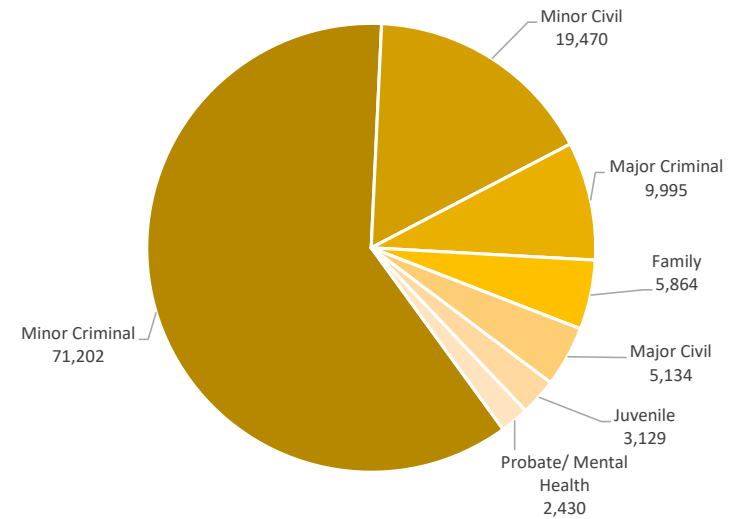
Sarah Lindahl-Pfeiffer

Tenth Judicial District Administration

7553 Sunwood Drive, Suite 306
Ramsey, Minnesota 55303



2023 Tenth Judicial District Case Filings
2023 Total Filings: 117,224



TENTH DISTRICT SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANT SERVICES CONTINUE TO GROW AND EXPAND

The Tenth Judicial District Litigant Services Team operates the District’s Self-Help Center and Early Neutral Evaluation Program. The Team uses a hybrid model to assist self-represented litigants both remotely and in person at Self-Help Center locations. Since January 2023, the Team has helped 14,555 self-rep-

resented litigants. Currently, the Team is centralizing the individual county committees into one Districtwide Early Neutral Evaluation Program to create a more efficient and accessible program to share information, maintain uniform forms, and update rosters. Throughout the year the Team creates and maintains the

Districtwide forms, provides legal research to court administration, regularly hosts Continuing Legal Education events for law clerks, and attends community outreach events for low-income individuals connecting with non-profit and social service agencies in the greater Minnesota areas. “Not only has this service assist-

ed Kanabec County court customers,” said Heather Mickelson, Kanabec County court administrator, “it has also allowed staff to form relationships with the Self-Help Center staff and feel comfortable going to them with questions.”

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 2023.

	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	Adm 41+ Years
Asian/Pacific Islander:	1,070	904	422	282	162	33	5	166	54	65	38	6	3
Black/African American:	767	671	305	154	128	67	17	96	12	35	27	17	5
Hispanic/Latino:	459	406	212	97	63	30	4	53	8	25	12	7	1
Native American/Alaska:	137	125	37	36	32	16	4	12	1	5	4	2	0
White:	22,139	19,251	4,954	5,381	3,973	2,949	1,994	2,888	276	840	777	718	277
Multiple:	390	352	194	101	39	15	3	38	10	16	7	5	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	4,045	3,531	935	1,140	725	500	231	514	66	170	135	105	38
Null:	1,202	1,073	788	121	73	53	38	129	28	26	22	38	15
Totals:	30,209	26,313	7,847	7,312	5,195	3,663	2,296	3,896	455	1,182	1,022	898	339

	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:	395	174	131	68	19	3	73	22	30	18	2	1
Black/African American:	348	137	79	79	41	12	37	5	13	10	7	2
Hispanic/Latino:	191	94	46	26	21	4	26	4	11	8	2	1
Native American/Alaska:	68	23	17	15	9	4	5	0	2	2	1	0
White:	11,033	2,527	2,729	2,179	1,930	1,668	1,357	138	345	324	364	186
Multiple:	163	88	46	18	8	3	21	4	9	5	3	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	1,500	359	429	298	266	148	186	26	60	41	37	22
Null:	216	63	56	32	36	29	57	10	11	8	20	8
Totals:	13,914	3,465	3,533	2,715	2,330	1,871	1,762	209	481	416	436	220

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:	501	243	148	94	14	2	88	28	34	20	4	2
Black/African American:	322	168	74	49	26	5	59	7	22	17	10	3
Hispanic/Latino:	212	115	51	37	9	0	27	4	14	4	5	0
Native American/Alaska:	57	14	19	17	7	0	7	1	3	2	1	0
White:	8,165	2,398	2,631	1,794	1,017	325	1,529	138	493	453	354	91
Multiple:	186	104	54	21	7	0	16	5	7	2	2	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	830	266	287	171	88	18	136	20	44	36	31	5
Null:	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	10,277	3,309	3,267	2,183	1,168	350	1,862	203	617	534	407	101

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
White:	36	18	17	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Multiple:	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	31	5	11	7	6	2	10	0	3	3	3	1
Null:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	71	26	29	7	7	2	12	1	4	3	3	1

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:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black/African American:	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino:	1	1	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:	16	10	4	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Multiple:	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prefer Not To Answer:	1,170	305	413	249	140	63	182	20	63	55	34	10
Null:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals:	1,190	317	419	249	141	64	183	20	64	55	34	10

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:	7	5	2	0	0	0	5	4	1	0	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:	1	1	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:	853	724	62	41	17	9	72	18	15	14	18	7
Totals:	861	730	64	41	17	9	77	22	16	14	18	7

RETIRED

Asian/Pacific Islander	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino:	Native American/Alaska	White	Multiple	Prefer Not To Answer	Null	TOTALS
6	17	4	3	1,671	7	200	2,827	4,735

2023 Highlights



After 13 years at the helm of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Lorie Gildea stepped down at the beginning of September. This photo captured her last Supreme Court meeting as Chief.



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

In May, members of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals served lunch to clients at Catholic Charities Dorothy Day Place in St. Paul.



Hennepin, Ramsey, and St. Louis counties opened up their courtrooms on Valentine's Day to marry couples for free.

