

mn.gov/tax-court

AT A GLANCE

- Nine full-time staff: three judges (two appointed within the past year), three administrative staff, and three law clerks (the court will be hiring two in the next few weeks).
- Approximately 3,200 cases were filed annually during the past five years (2015 through 2020). Ninety-eight percent were appeals from property tax assessments; the remainder were appeals from orders of the Commissioner of Revenue.
- A property tax appeal is filed with the district court administrator in the county in which the property is located, then transferred to the tax court; an appeal from an order of the Commissioner of Revenue is filed directly with the Tax Court.
- FY 2020 base allotment of \$1,807,000.
- The Tax Court’s Courtroom recently acquired audio, video, and communication equipment to eliminate the use of physical documents, ensure social distancing for all in-person attendees, and allow for remoted appearances, thereby increasing both safety and accessibility for taxpayers.
- When prudent, judges will resume travel throughout Minnesota to hear cases where taxpayers reside.
- The Court files written findings of fact, conclusions of law, and an explanatory memorandum in each case within three months of submission; final orders are appealable to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

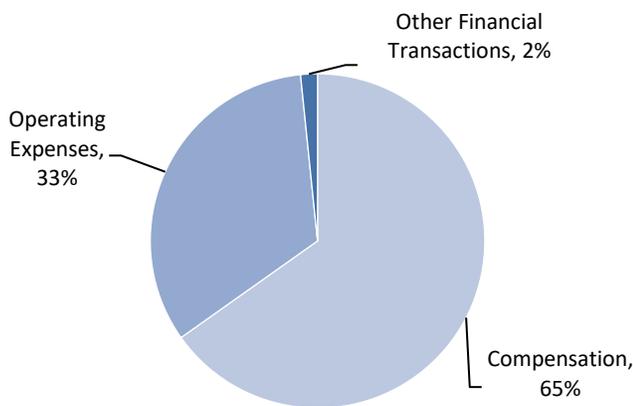
PURPOSE

The Minnesota Tax Court is a specialized trial court in the executive branch with statewide jurisdiction. By statute, it is “the sole, exclusive, and final authority for the hearing and determination of all questions of law and fact arising under the tax laws of the state” (Minnesota Statutes section 271.01, subdivision 5).

The Tax Court resolves disputes between property owners and counties concerning the correct value and classification of real property and adjudicates taxpayer appeals from orders of the Minnesota Commissioner of Revenue. The Court’s three judges strive to ensure that the Court is managed according to best practices by working closely with the Department of Administration’s Small Agency Resource Team (SmART) and with MN.IT.

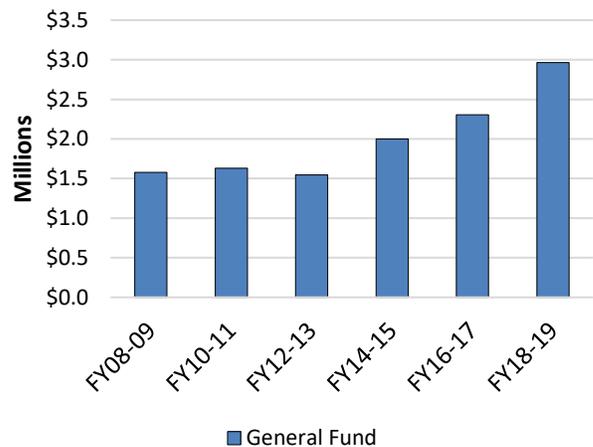
BUDGET

**Spending by Category
FY 2019 Actual**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)

Historical Spending



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

The Minnesota Tax Court generates approximately \$900,000 annually in non-dedicated revenue from filing fees, which are deposited into the General Fund. All funding for Tax Court operations, in turn, comes from a General Fund appropriation.

STRATEGIES

The Tax Court is a specialized trial court. Tax Court actions are governed by the Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure and of Evidence, and proceed in largely the same manner as civil actions filed in the Minnesota District Courts. Like other trial courts, the Tax Court resolves discovery and trial-management disputes, decides dispositive and non-dispositive motions, and conducts bench trials (jury trials are not available in Tax Court). The Tax Court files written findings of fact, conclusions of law, and an explanatory memorandum in each case submitted for decision. If dissatisfied with a Tax Court decision, a litigant may appeal directly to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Harness Available Resources: To ensure the Court is managed according to best practices, we work closely with the Department of Administration's Small Agency Resource Team (SmART) and with MN.IT. SmART assists the Court with human resources and budgeting. The Court's budget now includes line-items for statutorily mandated services such as judicial travel to conduct hearings, the purchase of transcripts for indigent taxpayers, and interpreters for court proceedings. MN.IT assists the Court in maintaining its existing infrastructure and in helping to guarantee that the Court's technology will meet its future needs.

Upgraded Courtroom: The Tax Court's courtroom was recently fitted with audio, video, and communication equipment to eliminate the use of physical documents, ensure social distancing for all in-person attendees, and allow for remoted appearances. Our goal is a safe, modern, and accessible courtroom for all taxpayers.

Active Case Management: Filings in the Tax Court increased from approximately 1,200 in calendar year 2000 to almost 6,000 in 2010. Filings for the last five years (2015 through 2020) have averaged approximately 3,200 cases per year. In addition, to facilitate settlements in Commissioner of Revenue and particularly in property tax cases (in which counties would otherwise have to request special funds to pay for an outside mediator), the judges of the Court all received training in civil mediation. This enables parties to mediate appropriate cases (at no cost to the parties) in hopes of resolving them short of trial. Finally, the court has implemented streamlined procedures that reduce the time (and cost to the parties) of trying cases that cannot otherwise be resolved.

RESULTS

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>8/25/15</i>	<i>8/15/16</i>	<i>8/15/18</i>	<i>8/15/20</i>
Quantity	Open/Pending Cases	7,740	4,003	3,080	3,804

As used here, "Open and Pending Cases" refers to matters that have been entered into the Tax Court's electronic case-management system, but have not yet been settled or tried.

The Minnesota Tax Court is authorized by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 271 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=271>).

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