



# MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

## Committee for Equality and Justice Update May 2017

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### **Background**

In June 2010, the Minnesota Judicial Council authorized the formation of the Committee for Equality and Justice. The Committee was established to advance the Judicial Branch's efforts to eliminate from court operations bias that is based on race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and any other status protected by law. The Committee is charged with:

### **Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ) Mission:**

To work collaboratively across the Judicial Branch to advance efforts to eliminate bias from court operations, promote equal access to the court, and inspire a high level of trust and public confidence in the Minnesota Judicial Branch.

### **To accomplish this mission, the Committee is charged with:**

1. Recommending diversity and inclusion education programs and course materials for judges and Judicial Branch employees;
2. Promoting diversity and inclusion in the Judicial Branch employment and in appointments to Judicial Branch committees and boards to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
3. Making recommendations for improvement in court processes, procedures and policies as they relate to race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, and any other status protected by law; and
4. Assisting district Equal Justice Committees in their work at the local level, and providing assistance in outreach efforts to the communities they serve.

The Committee for Equality and Justice began meeting in January 2011 and has spent this time identifying issues and developing subcommittees to accomplish its charge. Most of the Committee's efforts have focused on gathering information on existing data, educational offerings, demographics, policies and procedures relating to diversity and on making recommendations for improvement as applicable. The recommendations resulting from the Committee for Equality and Justice are brought forth to the Judicial Council.

## 2016-17 Committee for Equality and Justice Highlights

1. **Captured and reviewed judicial branch race-related and other relevant bias-related data and made recommendations for improvement in court processes, procedures and policies.**
  - a. Completed an Interpreter User Survey of court users who have interacted with a court interpreter and made recommendations to State Court Administration for improvements.
  - b. Made race data presentations at Bench meetings, Court Administrator meetings and Equal Justice Committee meetings in each of the 10 Judicial Districts.
  - c. Encouraged collection of self-reported race data and developed resources to assist court staff and judicial officers in increasing data collection rates.
2. **Recommended diversity, inclusion and implicit bias education programs and courses for judges and judicial branch employees.**
  - a. Created a database list of faculty and educational programs related to diversity and inclusion available to Judicial Branch employees and judges.
  - b. Provided diversity and inclusion educational offerings to employees and judges at court education days, judicial education events and via Cultural Perspectives webinars on topics such as the Impact of Culture in the Minnesota Courts, Court Users Who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind, Language Access Basic Training, Americans with Disabilities Act and Why Diversity Matters.
  - c. MJB diversity and inclusion course offerings for 2016 are listed in the [2016 Minnesota Judicial Branch Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report](#).
3. **Collaborate with District Equal Justice Committees by partnering on Community Dialogues and information sharing events to focus on various topics such as (race, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, limited English proficiency and any other status protected by law)**
  - a. Coordinated with Equal Justice Committees statewide to examine data on local disparities and engaged in a dialogue about implications from the race data.
  - b. Worked with the Minnesota Judicial Branch Equal Justice Committees statewide to host one [Community Dialogue](#) or data/information sharing event per biennium in each judicial district.

For more information on the Committee for Equality and Justice, please visit:

<http://mncourts.gov/MinnesotaJudicialCouncil/CEJ.aspx>

or contact CEJ staff:

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