



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Committee for Equality and Justice Update June 2015

Background

In June 2010, the Minnesota Judicial Council authorized the formation of the Committee for Equality and Justice (CEJ). 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:

1. Ensuring equal access to the courts and a fair and impartial courtroom;
2. Providing fair treatment of court users and employees;
3. Recommending education programs and course materials for judges and Judicial Branch employees;
4. Continuing to implement and monitor the recommendations of the [Minnesota Task Force on Gender Fairness](#) in the Courts;
5. Continuing to implement and monitor the recommendations of the [Race Bias Task Force](#);
6. Promoting diversity in the appointments to Judicial Branch committees and boards to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
7. Promoting diversity in the selection and retention of court employees to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch;
8. Promoting diversity in the selection of judges to reflect the population served by the Judicial Branch; and
9. Promoting a high level of trust and public confidence in the judicial system.

The CEJ 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 CEJ will be brought to the Judicial Council.

2015 CEJ Updates

1. Reconfigured committee membership to include a representative from each district Equal Justice Committee (EJC) to ensure perspectives from around the state.
2. Judicial Council member became co-chair to allow for a closer connection with Judicial Council, the governing body of the Minnesota Judicial Branch.
3. Reporting to Judicial Council on a fiscal year calendar to allow CEJ to develop a 2015 CEJ strategic plan under the new membership structure and form new subcommittees to address strategic goals and initiatives.

2014-15 CEJ Highlights

1. Worked with State Court Administrator's Office Research and Evaluation to analyze race and gender data of court users for EJs to develop.
2. Promoted district training opportunities (LGBT, Domestic Violence, Disability, ICWA, Implicit Bias, others).
3. Advised State Court Administration on the FY14-15 Judicial Branch Strategic Plan goal of studying evidence based tool(s) for use in making pretrial release decisions statewide.
4. Advised State Court Administration on the FY14-15 Judicial Branch Strategic Plan goal of supporting the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).
5. Worked with SCAO Court Information Office to update and reissue Community Dialogue Toolkit for Equal Justice Committees.
6. Drafted and mailed over 300 Implicit Bias Bench Guides to judicial officers statewide.

For more information on the Committee for Equality and Justice, please visit:
<https://www.mncourts.gov/cej> or contact CEJ Co-Coordinator:

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