



MINNESOTA JUDICIAL BRANCH

Committee for Equality and Justice Update May 2016

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:

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 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.

2015-16 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. Collaborated with State Court Administrator's Office on recommendations to ensure that interpreter complaint information is more accessible to limited English proficient court users.
 - b. Encouraged collection of self-reported race data by presenting reports at judicial district Equal Justice Committee, Court Administration and Bench meetings.
2. **Recommended diversity, inclusion and implicit bias education programs and courses for judges and judicial branch employees.**
 - a. Created a list of diversity and inclusion educational programs available to Judicial Branch employees and judges and distribute to courts via Equal Justice Committee members.
 - 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 Elder Abuse, Language Access Basic Training, Americans with Disabilities Act, Immigrant Youth and Why Diversity Matters.
3. **Collaborated 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. Equal Justice Committees in each judicial district will host one [Community Dialogue](#) or data/information sharing event by June 2017.

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

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

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