



OVERVIEW OF ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICE/DUTIES

The Minnesota Constitution established the Office of Attorney General (“AGO”) to serve as the State’s Chief Legal Officer. The AGO’s duties arise from the Minnesota Constitution, state statutes and the common (court-made) law. The AGO helps ensure that the laws the Legislature enacts are upheld. The AGO provides legal representation to over 100 State agencies, boards, and commissions. The AGO also protects the public by bringing lawsuits on behalf of Minnesota residents as chief enforcer of the State’s consumer protection, antitrust, and charities laws. The AGO provides assistance to rural county attorneys in criminal justice matters. The AGO serves as a member of the State Executive Council, the Pardon Board, Land Exchange Board, and the Board of Investment.

The AGO is organized into several divisions that specialize in particular practice areas.¹

- **Employment, Torts, and Public Utilities Commission.** This Division defends the duly enacted laws of the State of Minnesota; represents the State in employment and tort claims brought against the State; and provides legal representation to the Public Utilities Commission (“PUC”).
- **Tax Litigation.** The Tax Litigation Division provides legal representation to the Minnesota Department of Revenue (“DOR”) in the Minnesota Tax Court and at the Minnesota Supreme Court, as well as the State and federal district courts and federal bankruptcy courts. The Division handles all tax types, including multimillion-dollar corporate franchise-tax claims, a high volume of complex sales-and use-tax cases, and complex utility valuation cases. The Division also provides legal representation and assistance to DOR and other state agencies filing claims in bankruptcy court. Lawyers in the Division also review and respond to dozens of foreclosure proceedings, quiet title actions, and other cases involving State interests
- **Health and Teacher Licensing.** This Division represents Minnesota’s health-related licensing boards, the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board, the Health Professionals Services Program, and the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board in litigation and administrative actions related to their licensure and regulatory oversight of healthcare providers and educators. The Division also investigates complaints received by the boards alleging licensee misconduct and provides legal advice to the boards.
- **Environmental & Natural Resources.** This division provides legal representation to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Quality Board, Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Board of Animal Health. The attorneys represent the agencies and boards in enforcement actions and defend these bodies when parties bring suits challenging the programs or actions. This division also handles most of the State’s real estate transactions.



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Since FY 2022, the Division has housed a growing team of lawyers that assist state agencies by representing them in transactional matters. Since FY 2024, In FY 2024, the ENR division also became the primary division advising on cannabis-related matters with the consolidation of the regulatory authority of several state agencies into the Office of Cannabis Management.

- **Education.** The Education Division provides legal representation to the State's complex and varied educational system, handling most student- and some faculty- and staff-related matters for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities ("Minnesota State") system of 37 separate colleges and universities. In addition to providing legal representation to the numerous Minnesota State campuses, the Division also provides legal representation to the Minnesota Department of Education, the Office of Higher Education, the Perpich Center for Arts Education, the State Academies and the three public pension boards.
- **Commerce, Elections, and Trades Division.** This Division primarily provides legal representation to the Department of Commerce, the Secretary of State, the Department of Labor and Industry ("DLI"), and many other boards, agencies, councils, and commissions. The Division appears in state and federal district and appellate courts and in administrative proceedings.
- **State Agencies.** This division provides legal representation to the Departments of Corrections, Employment and Economic Development, Health, Human Rights, Labor and Industry, Veteran Affairs, the Client Security Board, and the Bureau of Mediation Services. The Corrections work ranges from defense of civil rights claims, many from inmates, to habeas corpus appeals to state and federal courts. The Department of Health representation involves the very broad areas of regulation responsibilities, many of which result in litigation and administrative enforcement actions. The Human Rights Department's work arises from legal representation following the Department's probable cause determination that illegal discriminatory conduct has occurred. The Department of Labor and Industry representation typically leads to enforcement of workplace safety requirements.
- **Transportation.** The Transportation Division provides legal representation to its primary client, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). A large part of the Division's work involves eminent domain litigation. In addition, Division attorneys provide legal advice to MnDOT, other state agencies, and the National Guard, when they are involved in construction projects and provide legal representation to those entities when contractors, subcontractors, or third parties sue the state on construction-related matters. The Division also protects taxpayers by filing claims on behalf of MnDOT and other state agencies against entities that make false claims, perform defective work, fail to pay employees legally mandated wages, or otherwise fail to comply with contractual requirements.
- **Criminal.** The Criminal Division provides prosecutorial assistance to county attorneys and local law enforcement agencies with the prosecution of serious crimes. The Division



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assists counties in the prosecution of serious crimes in trial courts throughout Minnesota under Minnesota Statutes section 8.01. Division attorneys also provide assistance in civil commitment proceedings involving dangerous sex offenders, upon request of the county attorney.

- **Criminal Appellate.** The Criminal Appellate Division was previously part of the Office's Criminal Division. It became its own division due to the growth provided by the Legislature to the Attorney General's Office support of county attorneys in the 2023 legislative session. The Criminal Appellate Division provides assistance to county attorneys in felony appeals. The cases handled in FY 2024 involved, among other crimes, murder, sexual assault, drug distribution and manufacturing, child sexual abuse, arson, and distribution of child pornography.
- **Post-Conviction Justice Division.** This Division was created to carry out two important initiatives to seek justice for persons who have been convicted of crimes in the past. First, the Division's Conviction Review Unit ("CRU") seeks to identify cases in which a wrongful conviction may have occurred. Second, the Division also seeks to mitigate the collateral consequences of past criminal convictions for persons who have served their sentences and rehabilitated themselves through the Attorney General's Office Statewide Expungement Program ("SWEP").
- **Medicaid Fraud.** This Division is a federally certified Medicaid Fraud Control Unit ("MFCU") that investigates and prosecutes health care providers who commit fraud in the delivery of services in the Medical Assistance ("Medicaid") program. Upon referral from a Minnesota county attorney, the Division also has authority to investigate and prosecute abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation cases that occur in certain Medicaid-funded facilities, or against certain Medicaid recipients.
- **Public Safety.** The Public Safety Division ("Division") provides legal services to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety ("DPS") and its various divisions, including the Driver and Vehicle Services Division, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement Division, and the Fire Marshal.
- **Consumer Action.** This Division serves two primary functions. First, it answers calls, correspondence, and on-line complaints from people, businesses, and other organizations who contact the consumer assistance division. Second, this Division helps Minnesota residents informally mediate and resolve thousands of complaints with businesses and other organizations each year.
- **Human Services.** The Human Services Division provides litigation services and legal counsel to the Minnesota Department of Human Services ("DHS"), the State's largest agency. Division attorneys provide legal services to DHS in the four broad areas of Health Care, Children and Family Services, Mental Health, and Licensing. The division will also represent the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and the Department of Direct Care and Treatment as those agencies begin operating.



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- **Consumer Protection.** The Consumer Protection Division enforces Minnesota's laws prohibiting consumer fraud, deceptive trade practices, false advertising, and other unlawful practices in business, commerce, or trade.
- **Wage Theft.** The Minnesota Attorney General's Office Wage Theft Unit was created in June 2019. The Wage Theft Unit's goal is to protect and advance the economic rights of all Minnesotans by investigating and litigating cases involving unlawful patterns and practices affecting economic rights, and other persistent issues that cause workers in Minnesota not to receive the wages they have earned.
- **Antitrust.** The Antitrust Division supports healthy competition and fair markets by enforcing state and federal antitrust laws. An increase in staff in 2023 turned the Antitrust team into a Division within the Consumer Protection Section.
- **Charities.** The Charities Division serves a number of functions. First, it maintains a public registry of charities, charitable trusts, and professional fundraisers that operate in the State. Second, it oversees and regulates charities, charitable trusts, and nonprofits active in Minnesota. Third, it enforces state charitable solicitation, charitable trust, and nonprofit laws. The Division's enforcement authority is civil, not criminal.
- **Civil Rights.** Launched in 2023, The Civil Rights Division works to protect tenants, home-purchasers, and other consumers in the marketplace that are targeted— or disproportionately harmed—by discrimination and fraud on the basis of race, religion, age, and other protected statuses.
- **Residential Utilities.** The Residential Utilities Division represents the interests of residential and small business utility consumers in the complex and changing electric, natural gas, and telecommunications industries, particularly with regard to utility rates, reliability of service, and service-quality issues. .
- **eDiscovery & Litigation Support.** This is a specialized team dedicated to streamlining and optimizing the legal process through expert handling of eDiscovery, legal research, and records management. This Division plays a pivotal role in supporting legal teams by providing crucial services and using technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of litigation.

In FY 2024, the Office provided over 225,000 hours of service to state agencies, boards, and political subdivisions.