



Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee  
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# Presentation Topics

1. Minnesota Competency Attainment Board Overview
2. MNCAB Status February 2025
3. MNCAB Status February 2026
4. Continued Growth Overview
  - Forensic Navigator Program
  - Certified Competency Attainment Programs and Curriculum
  - 2026 Policy Requests
5. Defendant Stories

# Minnesota Competency Attainment Board

## An Independent Board within the Judicial Branch

### Mission

To guide the development of a competency attainment system by identifying best practices, establishing program standards, and implementing forensic navigator services.

### Vision

To promote wellness, safety, and justice in Minnesota by building pathways for competency attainment through collaboration, accountability, and innovation.

## Other Judicial Branch Organizations

Supreme Court & State Court Administration

Board of Public Defense

Minnesota Guardian ad Litem Board

State Board of Civil Legal Aid

# Duties and Responsibilities

The board shall create and administer a statewide, independent competency attainment system that:

- Certifies competency attainment programs and
- Uses forensic navigators to promote prevention and diversion of people with mental illnesses and cognitive impairments from entering the legal system, support defendants in the competency process, and assist courts and partners in coordinating competency attainment services.

# MNCAB Status a Year Ago

Soft launch phase focused on building the program; hire 10 forensic navigators (one per judicial district) and provide services statewide. As reported in February 2025:

- **Building the Program:** Established basic business/operational functions from acquiring internet access to establishing baseline policies and procedures.
- **Hiring:** 20 forensic navigators, 4 supervisors, and 8 operational/administrative staff
- **Statewide Services:** Assigned in 640 cases, assisting 350 defendants, in 61 counties.
- **Competency Attainment Programs:** 8 certified programs

# MNCAB Status Today

Transitioned from soft launch phase to continued growth. As of February 2026:

- **Build the Program:** Continue to establish business/operational functions; additional policies & procedures, new office space, independent financial processing, establish evidence-based salary and compensation structure.
- **Hiring:** 42 forensic navigators, 5 supervisors, 10 operational/administrative staff.
- **Statewide Services:** Assigned in 2,292 cases, assisting 942 defendants, in 80 counties.
- **Competency Attainment Programs:** 13 certified programs, including 1 jail-based program.

# Hiring Summary

Q1: Jan – Mar 2025	Q2: Apr – June 2025	Q3: July – Sept 2025	Q4: Oct – Dec 2025	Q1: Jan – Mar 2026
4 Forensic Navigators	5 Forensic Navigators	No hiring activity during this period	11 Forensic Navigators	3 Forensic Navigators
1 Finance Specialist	1 Forensic Navigator Manager			2 Forensic Navigator Supervisors
1 HR Coordinator	3 Forensic Navigator Supervisors			1 Forensic Navigator Program Specialist

## Upcoming in Q2: Apr – June 2026

- Forensic Navigator Position posted 02/17/2026
- Goal to hire around 15-20 additional forensic navigators
- Expected start dates late April – May 2026

# Forensic Navigator Program

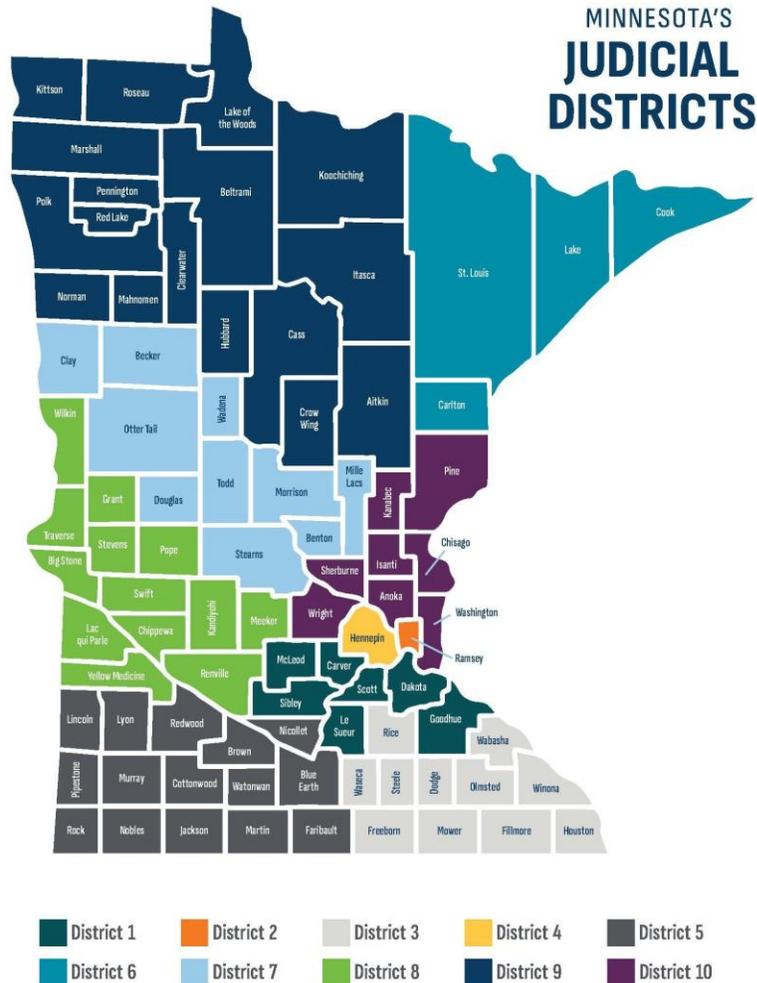
## Common Forensic Navigator Services:

- Write and file bridge plans
- Help defendants participate in court-ordered examinations and attend court hearings
- Coordinate service referrals and timely placement in programs
- Provide competency education
- Report to the court and parties on defendant's progress toward competency

## Forensic Navigators Do Not:

- Conduct searches, seize property or person, issue penalties
- Transport defendants
- Duplicate services available through other providers
- Provide legal advice

# Forensic Navigator Program



Number of forensic navigators residing in each judicial district.

- 2 forensic navigators reside in WI so they are included in the count for the nearest judicial district.

First: 7	Sixth: 3
Second: 3	Seventh: 2
Third: 3	Eighth: 3
Fourth: 3	Ninth: 5
Fifth: 1	Tenth: 12

Most forensic navigators are assigned cases across district lines to maximize statewide coverage.

# Forensic Navigator Program

## 2026 Data: 04/01/2024 - 12/31/2025

Orders Received	Assignments
9,273 cases	2,292 cases
4,528 defendants	942 defendants
84 counties	80 counties

## 2025 Data: as of 12/31/2024

Orders Received	Assignments
2,945 cases	637 cases
1,599 defendants	355 defendants
68 counties	57 counties



# Forensic Navigator Program

## Orders by Court

- Total number of competency exams ordered in 2025 as reported by SCAO

## Orders Received by MNCAB

- Total number of orders appointing forensic navigators received in 2025

Judicial District	Orders by Court	Orders Received by MNCAB
First	1,438	705
Second	1,845	1,138
Third	806	618
Fourth	3,322	1,629
Fifth	350	228
Sixth	500	299
Seventh	943	573
Eighth	139	92
Ninth	891	357
Tenth	1,369	692
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,603</b>	<b>6,331</b>

# Forensic Navigator Program

## Assignment Coverage by Judicial District

- Percentage of cases in which a forensic navigator was or is currently assigned as of 12/31/2025
- Individual defendants may be duplicated if they had a case in more than one county

Judicial District	Case Coverage	Defendant Coverage
First	38%	35%
Second	31%	20%
Third	31%	32%
Fourth	36%	27%
Fifth	26%	29%
Sixth	39%	37%
Seventh	44%	39%
Eighth	54%	60%
Ninth	47%	44%
Tenth	40%	33%

# Competency Attainment Programs

## Twin Cities Metro

- Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC)
- Hennepin County Behavioral Health Center (BHC)
- Quinlan Home
- SpringPath Mental Health Services – 5 IRTS locations
- Stillwater Residence
- RADIUS Health

## Greater Minnesota

- North Homes Children and Family Services, Grand Rapids
- NorthStar Community Services, Cloquet
- Stearns County Jail, St. Cloud

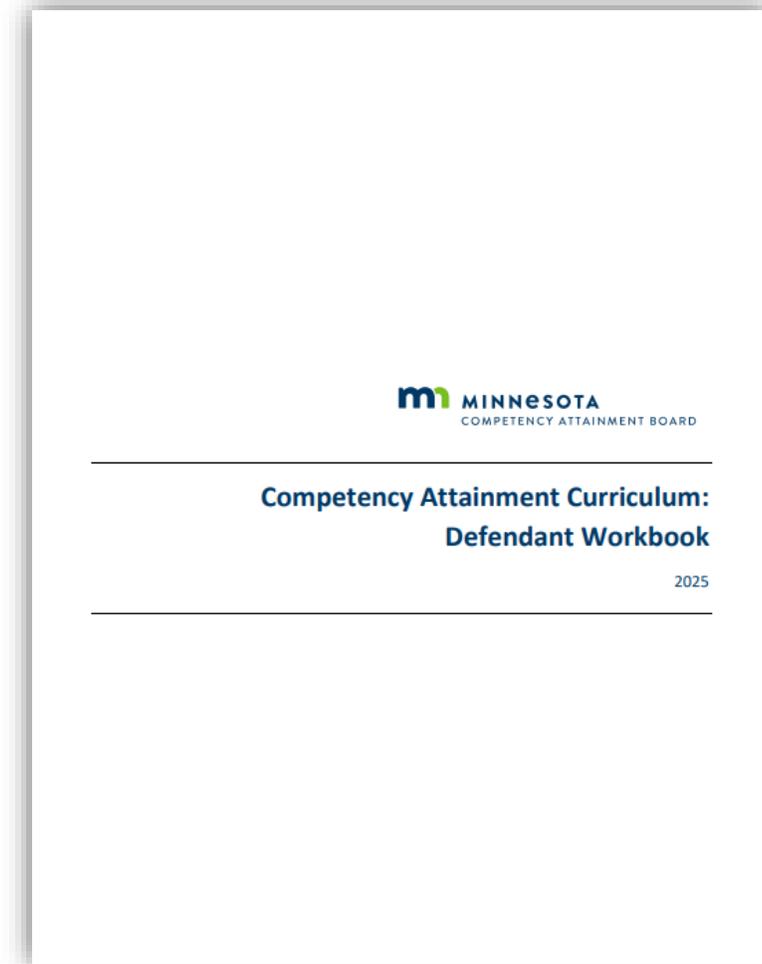
Details about each certified program are available on MNCAB's website, [Certified Competency Attainment Programs](#).

# Competency Attainment Services (Curriculum)

- First Curriculum Workbook published by the Board in September 2024
- 2025 Revisions:
  - Revised workbook to reflect plain language principles, lower grade level accessibility, and fill in gaps.
  - Subject matter expert review by Certification Advisory Committee members and Board member.
- 2026 Continued Revisions:
  - Additional SME review with county attorneys, public defenders, current certified programs, and judges.
  - Additional resources such as handouts, activities, instructor guide, and instructor training course (train the trainer).

# Competency Attainment Services

- Over 50 of the defendants forensic navigators have worked with have participated in programming at one of the certified competency attainment programs.
- Forensic navigators have delivered competency attainment education to 20 defendants.



# 2026 Policy Requests

Topic	Current Law	Proposed Changes
Board Membership	Residency based upon judicial district; requires 3 members from outside metro judicial districts	Change to county-based residency; define metro counties using the Met Council definition; balance broad representation with ability to fill board appointments.
Forensic Navigator Services	Must provide or contract for enough services in each judicial district	Require assignments within resources; remove judicial district requirements so resources can be provided statewide as needed; eliminate contract navigators to maintain professional services
Administrative Authority over Internal Agency Records	Subject to the judicial branch access rules, which are written specifically for the courts	Provides board authority to adopted policies and procedures over internal records, including public access.
Bargaining Authority	Unclear authority; defaults to judicial branch, but budget authority is vested with MNCAB board	Creates parallel bargaining authority provisions to align MNCAB's budget authority with ability to negotiate and approve a contract with newly represented unit.

# Defendant Stories

MNCAB has seen tremendous progress in our understanding of how forensic navigator services fit into the criminal and behavioral health justice system in Minnesota over the last year.

Expressions of gratitude for forensic navigators' work and assistance have been received from defendants, family members, attorney partners, and the court. The value forensic navigators bring to the system is growing along with the growth of the agency.

An accompanying handout includes some specific stories illustrating how forensic navigators have been a positive impact for defendants and the court system.

