

MyMNConservator (MMC)
Minnesota Judicial Branch Conservator Account Auditing Program

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Program Summary

Minnesota Judicial Branch has taken an aggressive approach to protecting the assets of vulnerable persons under court jurisdiction. With the assistance of a State Justice Institute grant, the statewide Conservator Account Audit program has developed a robust online application for conservators to file detailed inventory and annual accountings. The application has the look and feel of many financial applications and contains both textual and on line video help to assist conservators. The application provides benefits to conservators, court staff and judges. The design provides features such as easy data entry and highly visible asset balances that assist conservators in managing assets, in addition to reporting to the court. Integrations with the court case management system provide efficiencies for court staff and auditors for the management of timely account filing and for the review and audit of assets under court jurisdiction. A further benefit to court staff reviewing the accountings and auditors conducting audits is the red flag logic. The application provides system analysis of each accounting as it is filed to determine potential issues based on preprogramed logic producing efficiencies for audits and account reviews. The system further provides a means for the auditors to submit their audit report addressing issues to the court for approval or hearing. The application is available for implementation in other courts interested in increasing their oversight.

Existing Process and Specific Problem

The amount of money lost through exploitation of elders is staggering and growing. A 2011 MetLife Study¹ estimated the national annual financial loss at \$2.9 billion dollars-- an increase of 12% over their findings in 2008. A more current study in 2015 by True Link² estimates the loss at \$36.48 billion dollars. With more than twelve times an increase from the Met life study, there is no question these losses are increasing at an alarming rate. While this exploitation can occur in many forms such as neglect, mismanagement, fraud, swindle and theft; when the loss is occasioned by the very conservators, guardians, or fiduciaries the court has appointed to protect the assets of the vulnerable person, it leaves a bold black mark on the court's performance – often under banner headlines reading, “A License to Steal?” or “Money Disappears Under Court's Watch”. The losses erode the public confidence and trust placed in the courts. When the court appoints someone to protect the assets and manage the estate of a protected person who is unable to handle those financial issues and decisions themselves, the court has a special responsibility to ensure the assets are being handled appropriately. Sadly, this oversight responsibility is oftentimes not met. With court budgets being cut and public safety being a priority, “probate” case types tend to receive lower priority and attention throughout the nation. Moreover, courts don't always have the staff –or staff with the necessary expertise--for the specialized monitoring and auditing of financial accounts required to discover losses or inappropriate expenditures. The work can be tedious, difficult, and time consuming. Fortunately new approaches are being developed to help courts with these tasks. While states may define terms differently and use the terms guardianship and conservatorship interchangeably, in Minnesota conservatorship is used to describe the court appointment of someone to handle the financial matters of a vulnerable person.

In response to losses that occurred in its court, the Ramsey County Probate Court in Minnesota developed an online conservator accounting system called CAMPER (Conservator Account Monitoring Preparation and Electronic Reporting). The design captured all transactions made by a conservator and provided a spreadsheet to make sense of the shoebox full of receipts that often accompanied an annual financial report. It saved conservator and staff time by doing the mathematical calculations as well as allowing ready access to expense and receipt details. Time spent organizing or checking the arithmetic of the account, would instead be devoted to looking at the transactions themselves and whether they were appropriate to meet the needs of the protected persons.

¹ MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders (2011) MetLife Mature Market Institute, Roberto, K. A., Teaster, P.B., National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (2011, June) *The MetLife Study of Elder Financial Abuse Crimes of Occasion, Desperation, and Predation Against America's Elders* (p. 2)

Retrieved from: <https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/mmi/publications/studies/2011/mmi-elder-financial-abuse.pdf>

² True Link Report on Elder Financial Abuse 2015, Orlov, Laurie, True Link data science team.

Retrieved from : <https://www.truelinkfinancial.com/research>

As part of a judicial branch transformational study, CAMPER was identified and recommended as a statewide solution to improve conservatorship oversight and reduce administrative costs. It was already apparent that notwithstanding the fact that statewide rules and forms existed in Minnesota, there was a lack of consistent statewide court practices. There were also varying levels of training being done by court staff for conservators and varying comfort levels by court staff when examining accounts. While court staff in some counties actually verified receipts and required entry into specific categories, others were simply running adding machine tapes to be certain the amounts matched. Any discovered losses by a conservator were generally handled on a county by county basis and there was no communication to other counties using the same conservator. Some counties allowed conservators to request account waivers for amounts under \$3,000 or even under \$10,000, while others allowed waiving of the hearing on the account if there were no apparent issues. It was painfully evident that informal practices and frequent use of reporting waivers had obscured the lack of understanding on the part of many conservators about their responsibilities.

The Minnesota Judicial Council determined that the use of the CAMPER system should be implemented statewide. Implementation work, along with software upgrades needed to allow for multi-county use, and statewide support and monitoring was funded. In August 2010, the Minnesota Judicial Council mandated use of this electronic system for all conservators appointed on or after that date and for any accounts filed after January 1, 2011. This ambitious rollout schedule underscored how anxious Minnesota was to improve its monitoring of cases.

The announcement was met with a variety of emotions. For conservators already using the CAMPER system, it was “it’s about time.” They very much appreciated the ability to file in all 87 counties using the same software program. For those conservators with limited computer skills, it was a frightening proposition that matters “so dear” would require their use of a computer. As part of the statewide rollout, Minnesota added one element that Ramsey County had not allowed – and that was the option to designate an agent to complete and file the accounts online. Some conservators were already using bookkeepers, accountants, or lawyers, and they could be designated to enter transactions and file reports on their behalf. Training and support was offered through presentations to conservator groups, video materials as well as a telephone help desk line were provided; and slowly the use of CAMPER on a statewide basis took hold.

The critical first step to improve oversight in Minnesota was the statewide roll out of CAMPER. The initial plan did not consider an enhancement of the existing application. However, it was understood that the application would require improvement and specialized staff to ensure that auditing would be done.

It was understood while having an automated system to do the mathematical calculations provided some relief to court staff, there was still a piece missing with respect to the level of auditing needed for these accounts. Specialized auditing skills and management, plus statewide coordination were needed. In September 2011, the Judicial Council authorized the State Court Administrator to implement and operate the Conservator Account Auditing Program (CAAP). This centralized account auditing center was created and funded to monitor and audit financial activities of conservators to safeguard the assets of protected persons through professional, impartial compliance audits. The Court recruited an Auditing Manager from the Department of Revenue – someone who not only had auditing experience, but someone who also had a Masters in Public Administration and a law enforcement background. CAAP Manager Cate Boyko was hired to build the auditing component for the new program from the ground up.

Part of the challenge was to scale the resources that had been allotted with the amount of work that needed to be done. The decision was made to focus the resources where they would have the greatest impact. First priority was to audit every initial inventory of assets and the first annual account with an asset balance greater than \$3,000. This would accomplish two things: first, the expectation would be created so the new conservator would better appreciate how the accounts had to be filed and documented. It also reinforced the training that had been provided to the conservator. If the conservator could complete the first audit to the new auditing standards, the conservator would know what was expected for future accountings. Accounts less than \$3000 are still examined by local court staff and should they feel the need for more assistance, they may refer that case to the CAAP unit. Second, the court wanted to make sure there was a complete audit before the account was approved by a judge. In Minnesota, accounts must be submitted every year, but a hearing to formally allow those accounts only needs to be held every five years. A best practice to set cases for a hearing every four years was established and provided that before such hearing to allow, a CAAP auditor would complete a final review. It was determined that local court staff would continue to monitor and review annual accounts between hearings for any red flags. Third, the new unit was to be a resource to local courts so that whenever court staff discovered any issue during their review, they could refer the account to CAAP for a full audit or contact the unit to seek their input and guidance. Fourth, one of the deficiencies of the pre-CAAP system was the lack of coordination and review of conservators who may be operating in many jurisdictions. If a problem is discovered with a conservator having multiple accounts under his or her care, an audit can now be initiated to sample the status of other accounts in various other locations to make sure that there is no pattern of inappropriate transactions in other files.

TARGET GROUP

There are four primary groups affected by MyMNConservator (MMC):

- 1) Incapacitated persons who are unable to manage their own assets (“Protected Persons”)
- 2) Persons who are appointed by the court to manage the protected person’s finances (“Conservators”)

3) Court personnel who monitor the activities of the conservators.

4) Judges that adjudicate the accountings filed in the court.

The persons who are most vulnerable, and whose interests must be protected, are the incapacitated persons. They often are either persons with disabilities, or elderly persons who cannot manage their own finances. These persons need the protection of a conservator and they also need assurance the conservators appointed to manage their finances do not misappropriate the assets. The use of a comprehensive, automated system strengthens the protection of these persons against abuse, fraud, and theft.

Conservators need to be able to submit timely and accurate financial reports that meet the court's standards for detail and consistency. The conservators benefit from the on-line process of completing accounts through the ability to not only file a standardized report but usage of a system that can assist with managing the conservatorship assets.

In many courts in Minnesota, court personnel from administrative staff to judges are responsible for all case types. Court personnel need tools for simplistic but increased oversight of conservators. Judges need easy to understand reports when addressing conservatorship accountings in hearings. Auditors need tools for efficient account analysis. MMC provides these benefits for the court.

Alternatives and Selected Solution

Once the audit program was underway, the focus turned to the application. CAMPER provided the first step in the move to online account filing system but it was very basic and simply replicated a paper process. While easy for court staff to use according to survey results, it didn't provide any significant improvements from the prior paper process. Some issues were with the system itself, such as the need for additional reporting capabilities, functionality, and security. Others concentrated on leveraging the technology and reengineering the paper processes in earnest. The statewide CAMPER software was an interim solution and only part of the end goal. The options were; 1) do nothing and leave CAMPER, 2) go back to paper, 3) explore options available in existing software, 4) explore options being used by other states, 5) enhance the CAMPER application, or 6) create a new, more robust application.

Because CAMPER was becoming outdated, (designed in 2005) it was also becoming more difficult to maintain. The features were minimal and security of data was at risk. Therefore doing nothing was not an option. Considering moving backwards to a paper format was contrary to the movement of Minnesota courts to digital records and e-filing. Research nationwide found that CAMPER was the only online application being used and there was no off the shelf software available as a replacement. The conclusion was to pursue enhancement of CAMPER or start from scratch. The evaluation of CAMPER

found that because of the programming language and the design, enhancement would be difficult, expensive and the end result would be an antiquated product. Therefore, the decision was made to create a new, robust application.

Work Team

The work team for the MMC project began with the steering team from the statewide CAMPER project. Michael Moriarty, the State Court Administration Designee as Director of CAAP was the Project Sponsor and Grant Manager. As a member of the Judicial Council, Mr. Moriarty was instrumental in implementation of CAMPER as a statewide system. Mr. Moriarty had the final overall responsibility for this project. Dean Buker, State Court Deputy IT Director and Lead Technical Coordinator, provided technological administration for in-kind services through the state, liaison with the vendor, and was responsible for vendor contract and technology deliverables. Cate Boyko, CAAP Program Manager and Project Manager, had the responsibility for management of this project. Her focus was on the design of the system, as well as the completion of tasks and deliverables. Wes Simonsen, State Court Administration provided project management during phase II of the project. Sherilyn Hubert, Information Technology Specialist, served as the primary liaison for court administration and focused on the court processes with the case management system and integrations, and data quality issues. LaVonn Nordeen, CAAP Administrative Assistant, was the subject matter expert as the help desk respondent; answering questions from and providing coaching and training to conservators and court users.

In addition to the above team, the project utilized the Conservator Business Rules committee, which is made up of statewide subject matter experts (SMEs) who worked as the advisory committee in the transition of CAMPER to a statewide system. The Conservator Business Rules Committee, comprised of: Joel Olson- 2nd District Probate Court Manager and Referee, Referee Dean Maus- 4th District Probate Referee, Darla Busian- Senior Court Clerk, Steve Bittick- Probate Court Manager, Judy Isaacson- Court Administrator, Peggy Zdon- Court Operations Supervisor, Anita Hupfer- Business Analyst provided consultation on the refinement of business processes and the development of statewide best practices during the application design and development.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch did not have the in-house resources to build the application. However, MJB resources were involved in the project to develop the integration logic and web services. Linda Emeott's team of Tim Bucholz and LeeAnn Iverson were essential in the development of the logic and programming for integration between MMC and the case management system. Tina Nguyen was the sole court developer on the project and is the court developer responsible for system maintenance. The CAAP audit staff provided advice on the development of the audit portion of the application. A multitude of conservators, both professional and non-professional provided advice as subject matter experts as consultants on the application development and application testing.

Project Details

With the assistance of a grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI), a vendor was hired to conduct a three day envisioning session. During the envisioning session SME's from Minnesota courts, National Center for State Courts and professional and non-professional conservators met to discuss what the desired ultimate accounting system could provide. With the assistance of a facilitator, the dreams for the new system were documented. The documentation described the desired system attributes for each system user role;

Administrator: responsible for managing security in the system, managing lookup values, managing cases from MNCIS, managing conservator and protected person records, and tracking the conservator history per case. An administrator also acts as the front-line support for the conservator users, and will manage help information for the system. Administrators can run reports and analytics on the data to help identify patterns, both over time and within a set of data, and pinpoint red flags in accounts.

Administrators may run reports in the system to view on screen, to print out and show others, and to export to other tools such as Excel for manipulation.

Auditor: reviews cases on a scheduled basis and by exception. The auditor needs to understand which cases warrant audit, track audit activities and communication with the conservator, and manage audit results for reporting.

Professional Conservator Administrator: Professionals that are assigned as conservators will need to allow individuals within their organization full access to their case portfolio for reporting and management, as well as the ability to manage system access for others within their organization.

Conservator: uses the system to log details about their protected person's finances. The conservator may only have a single case, needs the interface to be simple, and needs access to help when using the application.

Court Staff: Cases originate with court staff in MNCIS and through integrations are passed into MMC. The staff will review MNCIS event reports to ensure timely submission of case reports. The court staff review and process the annual accounts in MMC through the court user queue.

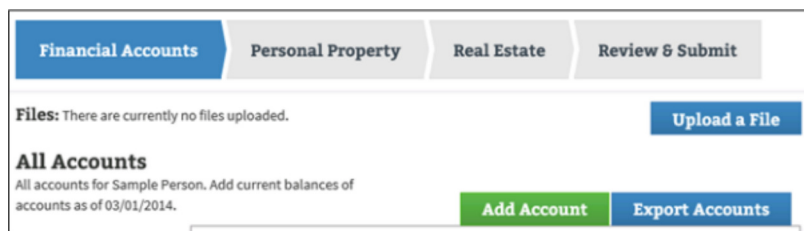
System: Can add or remove users to and from the application

The envisioning document helped formulate the Request for Proposal, which was put out for bid in November 2012. A vendor was chosen through the RFP process and the development of the new system began in January 2013. The vendor provided development and project management; and the Minnesota Judicial Branch work team described above provided project management, business analysis, testing, and integration development. Analysis of CAMPER, review of the issues identified in CAMPER, and the requirements documents created from envisioning formed the ground work for the creation of MyMNConservator (MMC).

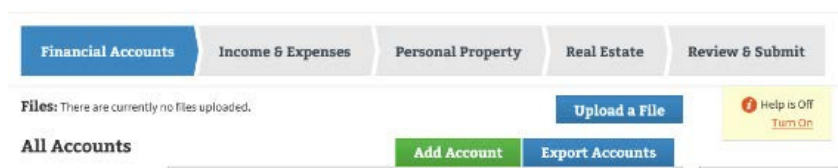
The Conservator

The philosophy for the design of MMC was to keep it simple for the conservator. It was important that the look and feel of the application be similar to other online financial applications. Both professional and lay conservators were involved and consulted during both the design and testing phases. Changes to the application were made as a result of feedback from conservators.

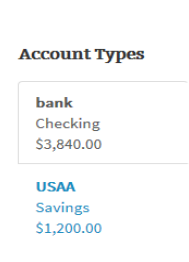
The conservator creates their own log in and password and connects to their case using case specific information. The application provides data entry similar to other web based financial applications. Once conservators enter assets in the inventory, the assets transfer from the inventory to the annual account and to each annual account year after year until discharged. The assets are divided into three categories; financial assets, person property and real estate, each easily accessible on a separate tab:



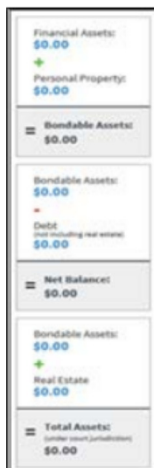
The annual account screen differentiates from the inventory by providing an additional tab for the entry of individual transactions on the income and expense tab. The conservator enters all income and expense transactions each year in MMC. MMC has a predetermined list of income and expense categories. If the conservator checks the income box for a transaction, they will only see the income categories, and vice versa with expenses.



Financial account balances for each account are maintained on the left side of the annual account screen and update as transactions are added. This feature benefits the conservator by providing a tool to ensure that the current balance of MMC is matching their financial statement as they add their transactions:



As entries are made into each category, totals change on the right hand side of the application providing further information that can assist conservators in managing the assets of their protected person:



Financial Assets: \$0.00	
Personal Property: \$0.00	
Bondable Assets: \$0.00	
Bondable Assets: \$0.00	
Debt: (not including real estate) \$0.00	
Net Balance: \$0.00	
Bondable Assets: \$0.00	
Real Estate: \$0.00	
Total Assets: (under court jurisdiction) \$0.00	

In both the inventory and the annual account, the tabs can be selected randomly and do not have to be worked in any specific order. At any time the conservator can view a copy of the report that will be submitted to the court. All conservators must first complete an inventory in the system and submit the inventory for access to the annual account screen. Once they complete the annual account, the system provides the next annual account for the conservator to make entries for the next accounting period. If a conservator submits an inventory or annual account and the court determines they need to make a change, a system administrator can place the inventory or annual account into amendment status for the conservator. This puts the submitted accounting into edit mode and the conservator can make any required changes and resubmit to the court.

When the conservator submits the inventory and the annual account, they have to respond to a series of questions before their final submission. Those questions were created based on statutory requirements for Minnesota. When an account is submitted by the conservator in MMC it is electronically filed in the court case management system.

Another benefit of MMC is the feature that enables the conservator to upload their financial transaction. If the conservator manages assets using a software package, they can upload their transactions into MMC rather than add them one by one. The system provides a .csv template and instructions for this process. Many professional conservators use this feature to transfer their transactions from their own chosen financial software into MMC.

Also, within the application the user can obtain assistance through textual or video help. Short video tutorials walk the conservator step by step through the process related to the page in the application they

are working. Textual help provides specific directions that pertain to the page showing in the application. The template and instructions are available within the application.

MMC is not just an application to report annual accountings to the court. Conservators can use the application as a financial management tool to reconcile the assets under their control.

Professional Conservator

Professional conservators in Minnesota are defined as a conservator having three or more non-relative cases and can be an individual, agency or company. For professional conservators, if the court uses the same party record for each case, once the professional conservator has connected to their party record, they will receive all assigned cases on their dashboard. Professional conservators have the ability to assign their cases within their profile to employees they have added to the system. A professional conservator can assign multiple employees to a case. Each employee has a unique log in to the system. Each professional has at least one administrator that manages their system profile.

Court Staff

MMC is a much more robust and intuitive application with integrations into the court's current case management system to avoid duplication and manual entry of information. (In Minnesota the case management system is Tyler Odyssey and referred to hereafter as MNCIS) For court staff, this is the key benefit of MMC. Actions in MMC trigger actions in MNCIS and actions in MNCIS trigger actions in MMC. Documents are electronically filed from MMC into MNCIS. Events are completed and new events set out with the filing of accounts. These actions, prior to MMC were added manually by court staff. Address updates in one system update the address record in the other system for both the conservator and the protected person. The automation from integrations between the two systems reduces work for court staff. Time previously spent adding entries are now available to review the content of the filed annual accountings.

The logic of MMC determines if an account is due for a CAAP audit (1st year and every 4 years thereafter) or needs a court examination. System logic sends the annual account to the appropriate work queue. Court staff process the cases in their queue by completing an examination of the accounting and comparing balances with financial statements that the conservator uploads into MMC.

One of the greatest benefits of MMC is the red flag logic that assists in the court review and audit process. There are 27 red flags that have been programmed into the application. When the accounting is filed, the system logic reviews the accounting in its entirety and by line item for these logic flags. (see

Appendix 1). The current red flags are based on information from the National Center for State Courts; the ICM Fellows Paper PROTECTING THE ASSETS OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE IN MINNESOTA and CAAP audit experience.

The court queue shows the number of flags identified in an annual accounting:

View	Protected Person	Report No.	Case Number	Period End Date	Report Type	Flags
	53, Frosty	4	02-PR-14-53	11/16/2017	Annual Report	6
	53, Frosty	3	02-PR-14-53	11/16/2016	Annual Report	7
	53, Frosty	7	02-PR-14-53	11/16/2020	Annual Report	15
	53, Frosty	6	02-PR-14-53	11/16/2019	Annual Report	5

Once court staff opens the account from the court queue they can review the flags. There are two types of flags in the system. Top level flags are determined by the logic reviewing the entire account.

TOP-LEVEL FLAGS
Unprotected Assets
Number of Accounts
Prior Year Income Change
Prior Year Expense Change
Prior Year Income and Expense Change
Bank And Other Fees

Line Item flags can be viewed by hovering over the flag to determine the issue being identified:

November 20, 2013	Dale Nepp barn painting	(\$2,325.00)	Miscellaneous Expense	<div> 2 flags: Large Expense New Substantial Expense </div>
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As empirical data is gathered in MMC, the data in conjunction with audit results will be analyzed to refine the red flags. As other jurisdictions begin to use MMC their data can be included in the analysis helping to further refine the red flags. Analysis will help to identify trends, exceptions and anomalies. The benefit is twofold: 1) jurisdictions using MMC source code will benefit from the refined red flags to increase efficiencies in oversight and 2) jurisdictions using paper or other filing methods for accounts will have the benefit of the refined red flags when looking for potential fraud or theft. Once court staff has reviewed the balances and the red flags, and any other items on the account, they complete their court examination document. This files directly into MNCIS. If they determine the account needs to be audited, a click of a

button puts the account into the audit queue and triggers integrations to add an event in MNCIS for the audit. When an auditor assigns the case from the audit queue, another event and a flag are placed on the case in MNCIS.

Judiciary

Inventory and Annual Account Reports are available for judicial review in MNCIS. The reports clearly indicate conservator fees, property disposed of, if the assets are bonded and total assets under court jurisdiction. The detail of the account by category is on the report preceded by spending summary by category. Whether the account report is read in the electronic format or printed, it is easy to follow and contains all information reported by the conservator. Each annual account will also have either a court examination document or an audit report. Those documents will identify if there are any issues of concern in need of judicial review.

CAAP Auditor

CAAP auditors assign their work from the audit queue and complete their audit log and audit report in MMC. The audit letter is sent from MMC and the audit activity is tracked in the audit log. The account can be exported to a spreadsheet for easier analysis and auditing. Conservators can upload their supporting documentation prior to submitting their accounting. This documentation remains in MMC and is available to court staff reviewing the accounting or to an auditor conducting an audit. Once the auditor completes the audit report, it files into MNCIS and attaches to an event. Court staff runs reports on those events to determine when to hold hearings on the case. Completion of the audit report removes the account report from the queue and places it into a completed status. The export feature for audit staff has reduced audit time from an average of 10.13 hours to 7.97 hours per case.

System Administrator / User Support

For a system administrator the application has features that allow for management and troubleshooting of issues for cases in the system. If a conservator submits multiple accountings or muddles their accounting beyond repair, a system administrator can delete accountings and recreate new accountings. Other functions of a system administrator include: placing accounts into amendment status, change dates and account report numbers, add and remove conservators, and remove or change system access. The administration tools provide the benefit to both court staff and conservator as the administrator can manipulate the system to provide what is needed to remedy just about any situation. The development of these tech tools address concerns we initially had to assist public users of a court application. The tool provides a simple, immediate resolution without involving development and database management time and effort.

Reports

The system provides SQL Server Reporting Service reports on the data in the system. Reports can be run on a statewide, district and county level. Some reports available include: assets under court jurisdiction, number of cases, number of conservators, system user rights, and audit production.

Evaluation

MMC was placed into production on April 17, 2014 and has been in production for one year. The project vendor costs for the development of MMC was \$335,450. Of this cost, \$95,750 was paid through a State Justice Institute grant.

The project had four main objectives. The following provides the evaluation of how MMC met those objectives.

<u>Objective 1:</u> Improve system functionality and security while implementing case management best practices to improve data quality and provide the reports necessary for effective case auditing to reduce instances and amount of total losses	
Goal 1.1	Improve system functionality: <u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize system issues already identified• Define business requirements for system enhancements <p>This task to be completed by the Project Team Conservator Business Team and the Integration Sub-Committee. The business requirements were defined and implemented. The integration points between MNCIS and MMC were developed, tested and function in the production environment.</p>
Goal 1.2	Improve security of online system and data stored on CAAP's servers <u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Provide secure storage of financial data</i>• <i>Provide secure storage of private data</i>• <i>Migrate application to secured web site</i> <p>This task was completed by the vendor and State Court IT Department. The application has a secure URL. All financial account numbers are completely masked when passed into MNCIS. Within MMC all but the last four digits of account numbers are masked upon entry into the system. The application has an SSL certificate making it a secure web site.</p>
Goal 1.3	Implement case management best practices <u>Tasks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Identify inconsistent and problematic practices</i>• <i>Map and document new Court Administration Processes (CAPs)</i> <p>Brainstorming sessions were held with the CAAP Business Rules Team to document inconsistencies and problems throughout the State. The team continues to meet and discuss inconsistencies in court practice. Changes have been made in the court processes to enable case identification for audit and standardize practices. More statewide forms have been created and approved to help implement these standardize practices in all 87 counties.</p> <p>CAAP staff has conducted training at conferences and online to court administration, court</p>

	<p>staff and Judges on the changes that have and will occur as best practices are implemented. This continues to be an ongoing practice.</p> <p>The CAP's continues to be updated as new forms and processes are implemented. The changes to processes to accommodate the integration between the case management system and MMC are documented and published.</p>
Goal 1.4	<p>Improve system reporting capabilities for system administrators and auditors</p> <p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify, design and develop reports</i> • <i>Identify report attributes (income/expense categories, approved balances, etc.) that should be present for auditing purposes</i> • <i>Determine parameters for auditing account information to efficiently identify cases of loss</i> <p>The application provides for the system requirements identified through envisioning unless it was further determined that an alternative requirement is better or the requirement has changed. Account information entry is simplified. System logic will flag account reports for pre-identified 'red flag' conditions. Programming routes account reports to court staff or audit queue depending on the value of the estate and the annual account year that is being filed. Account reports are systematically filed in the case management system when submitted by conservators. Audit reports and court examinations reports are also systematically filed in the case management system.</p> <p>Administrative reports were developed using SSRS</p>
Goal 1.5	<p>Collect baseline data for performance measurement and program evaluation</p> <p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Obtain statistics from county with timing study calculation</i> • <i>Obtain timing study calculation after implementation of new system</i> <p>A time study of conservator account processing by court staff has been conducted in four districts. That data will be preserved and used to compare to the same time study that will be conducted post implementation of MMC. Because of the newness of the application the time study will be conducted after the system has been live for one year to give users the opportunity to get used to the new system. Court staff no longer need to print and file the inventory and annual accounts submitted by conservators. The system adds and completes reminder events and determines if the accounting is scheduled for audit. It is anticipated that these features will save a great deal of time for court staff.</p>
<p><u>Objective 2:</u> Increase Conservator accountability through ability to track case handling across multiple jurisdictions, identify patterned mishandling of cases, resolve issues and prevent future losses.</p>	

Goal 2.1	<p>Develop a consistent method for identifying and documenting cases of loss</p> <p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determine a way to systematically identify cases where loss has occurred, such as adding a new case event.</i> • <i>Develop a statewide report that consolidates loss information by conservator</i> • <i>Develop reports to allow comparing individual accounts over time for fluctuations of spending and income, comparing like-sized accounts in relationship to one another, comparing spending patterns, searching for anomalies.</i> <p>Auditors classify the results of their audits in the system. Cases of loss will be indicated with a unique event code. If the court makes a determination that there is a loss to the protected person's account that information will be passed to MMC through integration and be compared in a report to the audits identified with losses.</p> <p>Sequel Service Reporting will be used to create reports that can analyze the account information. This information will be used to tweak the red flag logic in the system. The red flag logic highlights fluctuations in income and expenses from year to year.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Improve system intuition, functionality, forms and reporting to facilitate conservator data entry and case management time.</p>	
Goal 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve data entry process for conservators 2. Build in features to provide tools for conservators to monitor and manage their accounts 3. Enhance ability to generate and file reports with court electronically <p><u>Tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Improve ability to import data or forms from accounting programs and on-line bank information</i> • <i>Meet with conservators to determine desired functions</i> • <i>Integrate with e-filing module</i> <p>The needs of the conservators have been identified and included in the design of MMC. This system includes a template for conservators to use to import data into MMC in .csv format. Video and text help exist throughout the system pertaining to the task that the conservator is currently working and help conservators navigate the application. Conservators were involved in the testing of the system. The system has consistent format and feel so it is easy to become familiar with how it works. The design is similar to other financial applications.</p> <p>The State Court Administration (SCAO) Integration team and the Project management team have determined the areas of integration between MMC and the case management system. The SCAO Integration team and the Vendor have developed web services to integrate the two systems and pass information back and forth.</p> <p>When the conservator submits their inventory or annual account it is directly filed in the case management system. The filing of the account or inventory updates reminders that are in the case management system and adds future reminders for the next annual account due. The conservator and court user manuals and the help videos have been developed and are being used by MMC users.</p>

Objective 4: *Leverage conservator data entry to minimize manual duplicate entry into court's case management system by providing for electronic filing, workflow re-engineering and integration with current case.*

Goal 4.1

Reduce amount of duplicative entry

Task

- *Identify system integration points and document process*

The Integration sub-committee and the Business Rules Team and project management established points of integration.

MMC was an ambitious, although under budget, undertaking. Minnesota has successfully delivered a robust application that is meeting the needs of the targeted groups: Court staff, judges, conservators and protected persons. It is notable that MMC has mandated the use of an online application by members of the public. It should be noted in Minnesota most conservators, even if represented initially, do not maintain legal representation after appointment. Most electronic filing systems do not plan for self-represented litigants or provide a tool for them to use. Most online systems make self-represented use optional. This project provides a significant system for the self-represented conservator to use. Change is difficult but Conservators are adjusting to the new system. The benefits will become clearer when Conservators work on their second annual accounting in MMC and see how the information on assets previously entered has populated to their next accounting cycle. For court staff, the change has been an adjustment, but training and time have shown that there are benefits to reap from MMC. The integrations with MNCIS have reduced manual management of cases. The court queue for account review has changed how court staff does this work, in some cases it has reduced time and in others, where they were not conducting reviews, it has increased time. The red flags provide some benefit for court staff review and this will improve substantially as the red flags are refined. As data accumulates in MMC and the audit results and data are analyzed, we will have the opportunity to refine the flags to provide efficiencies in both review and audit.³

Because of MMC, Minnesota courts have begun initiating centralization of the account review process (between audit years) across the state. Two districts have already centralized this process with two other districts starting the conversation and generating enough interest to initiate a statewide workgroup to look at implementing full centralization of the conservator account examination process that occurs in between audit years. The move to a more centralized approach will provide greater consistency in conservatorship oversight statewide.

³ The National Center for State Courts is currently looking at a project that will analyze MMC data to help to refine the red flags in MMC.

Transfer or Replication Characteristics

Numerous jurisdictions⁴ have shown interest in obtaining the MMC source code. Presentations have been conducted with other states and countries to demonstrate the application. Minnesota Judicial Branch Legal department has created a sharing agreement to provide the source code to other states. The source code of this system can be implemented independently, integrated with a similar case management system or with a different case management system. There are multiple options for use in other jurisdictions. A workshop for interested parties coinciding with the Court Technology Conference in September 2015 in Minneapolis will provide opportunity for discussion, demonstration and learning the technical requirements of the application.

Additional Process Analysis

Monitoring of assets of vulnerable persons is a struggle for courts world wide. A presentation of the Minnesota experience at the 3rd World Congress brought interest from countries around the world. MJB's aggressive approach in recognizing the problem, applying resources and moving forward with a solution demonstrates the importance of building trust and confidence in our court system with the citizens of Minnesota. The idea of improving the courts ability to protect assets of the vulnerable is intriguing to all courts. MMC is a tool that provides benefits to conservators, court personal and, above all, increases oversight of assets for the benefit of protected persons.

⁴ Palm Beach County, Florida, Washington, Colorado, Idaho, Michigan, Arizona, Indiana, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Netherlands and Finland.

Appendix 1

(Confidential for courts only)

If you see this flag...	Top level or line item	It means...	What to consider...
Large estate	Top level	The financial assets are greater than \$500,000	An informational flag, that the financial assets make this a large account, not personal property or real estate.
Unprotected assets	Top level	The assets of the account are \$100,000 or greater, and there is no bond on the bond tab in MNCIS	You should check the box on the court exam letter indicating that Judicial review is required for the Bond status if you see this flag.
Gifts given	line item	Total Gifts exceed \$1,000 without court order	The conservator has indicated that these gifts were given without a court order. Court approval is required for gifts as per MN Statute 524.5-411. The application will only flag if the total exceeds \$1,000 however, if gifts are present on the accounting the court should review it and determine if it needs to be addressed.
Any loans	line item	there are loan(s) greater than or equal to \$10,000	Were the loans in existence prior to the conservatorship or are they new? Was there court approval? Should there have been or should there be court approval?
Any debt	line item	There is debt greater than or equal to \$1,000	Were the debt in existence prior to the conservatorship or are they new? Was there court approval? Should there have been or should there be court approval?
Loan or Debt increase	Top level	There is an increase in a loan or debt of \$100 or more	Did the conservator seek court approval for the loan or the debt? Should there have been or should there be court approval?
Excessive Charitable Contributions	line item	Charitable contributions exceed \$1000	Did the conservator seek court approval for the charitable contributions? Should there have been or should there be court approval?
Misc. transaction percentage	line item	Misc. expenses exceed 10% of total expenses	Inquire with the conservator to determine what expenses are being put into this category. Determine if this is an expenditure that the court should address. Suggest other categories that may be more appropriate.
Missing income transaction	Top level	This account has income from Social security or VA and there are less than 12 payments reported for the accounting period.	Use the Category View to filter by SSA or VA. Once you have filtered, see if the missing payments are missing at the beginning, middle or end of the accounting period. If beginning, is it on the previous accounting? If middle, are other payments larger (lumped together), if not inquire with conservator If end, does it make sense that they would appear on the next account.
Missing expense transaction	Top level	If there is a mortgage in the accounting but no property insurance or property tax payment this flag appears	Determine if there should be property taxes and insurance to accompany the real estate the mortgage is tied to. If there is real estate and not property insurance the court may want to address the issue of no insurance on the real estate.
Round transaction numbers	Top level	All of the transactions end with 0 or 5.	Determine if the conservator is entering accurate data by reviewing bank statements that they have submitted.

Unexpected expense transaction	Top Level	If the category Care Facility exists this flag will appear if any of the following categories are used:Utilities-GarbageUtilities-Gas and ElectricUtilities-Water And SewerHousehold-Laundry And Dry CleaningHousehold-Maintenance And RepairsHousehold-Other Household	Is there any reason why the protected person would have this expense? Do they own real estate that is being maintained until it is sold.
Prior year expense change	Top level	Expenses are greater than 25% of prior year expense	If this is the first accounting filed in MMC but not a first annual account, this flag will appear because the system is looking at the prior year and sees "0" amounts because there is no prior accounting in MMC. If there is a previous account in MMC and this flag appears, you will want to look at why the expenses increased by 25%. You should compare the prior year's expenses and see what is different and does that difference make sense.
Prior year income change	Top level	Income is greater than 25% of prior year income	If this is the first accounting filed in MMC but not a first annual account, this flag will appear because the system is looking at the prior year and sees "0" amounts because there is no prior accounting in MMC. If there is a previous account in MMC and this flag appears, you will want to look at why the income increased by 25%. You should compare the prior year's income and see what is different, is it possible that this income has been previously omitted or does it make sense that it is now being reported?
Prior year income and expense change	Top level	Compares net accounting balance from prior year. If difference is greater than 20% of prior year this flag will show.	If this is the first accounting filed in MMC but not a first annual account, this flag will appear because the system is looking at the prior year and sees "0" amounts because there is no prior accounting in MMC. If there is a previous account in MMC and this flag appears, you will want to look at why the combined income and expenses increased by 20%. You should compare the prior year's income and expenses to see what is different, and determine if it makes sense that it is changed?
Number of accounts	Top level	if the total account balance is less than \$500000 and there are 5 or more financial accounts If the total account balance is greater than \$500000 and there are 7 or more financial accounts.	If there are a number of accounts is the conservator managing the assets efficiently? If there are multiple investment accounts it is probably ok but if there are multiple checking accounts is that necessary?
Late charges	line item	There are more than 10 instances of the category Fees-late	Is the conservator managing the assets if they are incurring late fees? What other fees and charges are there?
Bank and other fees	line item	Bank fees exceed 2% of total assets	Is the conservator appropriately managing the assets if they are incurring this amount of bank fees?
Disposed personal property	line item	disposed of personal property w/o court order	Was this a disposal that the conservator should have sought court approval? Should the conservator appear in court to address if this was appropriate and for the benefit of the protected person?

Large transaction	line item	If an expense exceeds \$5,000 EXCEPT if the expense is in one of these categories: Mortgage Rent Care Facility Medical- Ambulance and Transportation Medical-Dental Medical- Doctor And Hospital Medical- Prescriptions Medical-Equipment Transfer to Trust Transfer To Transfer From	Was this an expense that the conservator should have sought court approval? Should the conservator appear in court to address if this expense was appropriate and for the benefit of the protected person?
Cash transaction	line item	payment type is cash	If the conservator chose the payment type of "CASH" instead of the other options of Check, Debit or ATM. Is the conservator really using cash or did they just use that category. It is recommended that they pay bills etc. with check or debt for a paper trail. The cash transactions may be for personal needs of the protected person. If that is the case, are the circumstances of the protected person such that these cash transactions make sense?
Transfers between accounts	line item	There are more than 24 transfers in this accounting cycle. OR There are more than 6 transfers in the last month of the account period. OR There are more than 10% of the assets being transferred between accounts.	The transfer between accounts in MMC is done in one step (both to and from) and if one is deleted the other will be deleted, if one is edited the other will be edited so: matching to and from transfers is not an issue. The consideration here is whether or not the transfers make sense. If there are multiple transfers at the end of the accounting period is the conservator trying to make up for inappropriate spending or were there more bills due at the end of the accounting period.
Substandard living arrangements	Top level	There are less than 5 expenses reported in the annual account.	Did the conservator combine expenses into lump sums? If so, you should contact the conservator to amend the accounting to include all transactions. You will need to submit a service desk ticket to request an amendment. Be sure to include file number and which annual account. If there are truly only 5 expenses, why are there only 5, is the protected person's needs being taken care of? Is there a trust?
Disposed personal property with financial loss	line item	Property was disposed of for less than the value recorded in the accounting.	Was this a disposal that the conservator should have sought court approval? Should the conservator appear in court to address if this was appropriate and for the benefit of the protected person?
New substantial expense	line item	The conservator is using an expense category that was not used in a prior annual accounting and has NOT checked the Court Ordered Expense.	What is the new expense? Is it reasonable? You may want to look at the personal well-being report to see if it makes sense based on the protected person's situation?
Conservator fees	line item	Conservator fees exceed 2% of account assets if the conservator is a non-professional and Conservator fees exceed 3% of account assets if the conservator is a professional.	Are the fees reasonable: It is appropriate to request an itemized invoice from the conservator regarding their fees.
late account	Top level	Account filed 30 days or more after due date	Is there a reason the conservator is late filing? Are they frequently late?