

Administrative Office of the United States Courts

- Director and Deputy Director are appointed by the Chief Justice after consulting the Judicial Conference
- Principal functions:
 - staff support for the Judicial Conference and its committees
 - legislative representation and liaison to other agencies
 - administrative and management support to the courts (*e.g.*, long range planning, legal services, budget, personnel, program management, automation, supplies, space and facilities)
 - statistics and public information

Chief Justice of the United States

- Presides over the Judicial Conference and the Federal Judicial Center Board
- Appoints all members of Judicial Conference committees
- Appoints Director and Deputy Director of the Administrative Office in consultation with the Judicial Conference

Judicial Conference of the United States

- Members: Chief Justice (chair); chief circuit judge from each circuit; one district judge from each of the 12 regional circuits, elected by all Article III judges in the circuit at the annual circuit judicial conference; chief judge of the Court of International Trade
- Meetings: Required to meet annually but actually assembles twice each year, in March and September
- Functions: Serves as the central policy-making body for the federal court system; surveys business of the courts and suggests improvements in the administration of justice; approves appropriations requests for submission to Congress; recommends changes in federal rules of procedure and evidence; supervises the Administrative Office; establishes court fees; performs numerous other statutory duties

Federal Judicial Center

- Board consists of the Chief Justice (chair); two active circuit judges, three active district judges, and one active bankruptcy judge elected by the Judicial Conference; and the Director of the Administrative Office
- Director and Deputy Director are appointed by the Board
- Principal functions:
 - educational programs for judges and court employees
 - research and planning support to the courts and the Judicial Conference

Committees of the Judicial Conference

- The Executive Committee:
 - acts for the Conference in emergencies and between sessions
 - sets Conference agenda
 - resolves differences among other Conference committees
 - approves the federal courts' spending plan for each fiscal year
 - coordinates judicial branch relations with Congress and the executive branch
- 19 other standing committees and 1 ad hoc committee—each with a defined subject area
- Members appointed by the Chief Justice, generally for 3-year terms with a 6-year maximum term of service on any committee; most committees consist solely of judges, but some include academics, practicing attorneys, and state judges
- Meet twice each year (the Executive Committee and some other committees meet more frequently)
- Administrative Office performs secretariat and general staff support functions; upon request, the Federal Judicial Center may provide research, advice, and educational support

Court of Appeals

- The chief judge—who has precedence over other judges in the court and presides at any session he or she attends—is the circuit judge most senior in commission with at least one year of service but less than 65 years of age at the time of becoming chief judge. A judge may serve as chief circuit judge for no more than 7 years or until he or she attains the age of 70, whichever occurs first.
- Though not statutorily mandated, the chief circuit judge is generally considered responsible for the effective and efficient administration of the court of appeals in compliance with statutes, Judicial Conference and circuit judicial council policies, and regulations issued by the Administrative Office with Conference approval.
- The court of appeals (*i.e.*, the body of all circuit judges in regular active service) appoints bankruptcy judges as judicial officers of the district court. The court also appoints the clerk of court, court crier, and circuit librarian, and it approves appointments of the court’s staff attorneys, deputy clerks, and other court employees (other than chambers staff). The court adopts its own local rules of practice and procedure.

Circuit Judicial Council

- Members: Chief judge of the court of appeals for the circuit (chair); equal number of active circuit and district judges of the circuit (precise numbers, terms, and mode of selection determined by vote of all active Article III judges of the circuit); and, in some circuits, senior judges, bankruptcy judges, and/or magistrate judges as non-voting observers
- Meetings: Required to meet at least twice a year but often does so more often
- Functions: Makes “necessary and appropriate orders for the effective and expeditious administration of justice” within the circuit (all judges and employees in the circuit are required by statute to give effect to council orders); considers complaints of judicial misconduct and disability if referred by the chief circuit judge; reviews and may abrogate district court rules; appoints the circuit executive (who is secretary to the council); authorizes law clerk and other chambers personnel; approves chambers and courtroom space; performs numerous other duties as prescribed by statute or Judicial Conference policy

District Court

- The chief judge—who has precedence over other judges in the court and presides at any session he or she attends—is the district judge most senior in commission with at least one year of service but less than 65 years of age at the time of becoming chief judge. A judge may serve as chief district judge for no more than 7 years or until he or she attains the age of 70, whichever occurs first.
- The chief district judge is responsible for enforcing court rules governing the division of business among the judges, and he or she is authorized to divide business and assign cases to the extent not provided in the court rules. Though not statutorily mandated, the chief judge is generally considered responsible for the effective and efficient administration of the district court in compliance with statutes, Judicial Conference and circuit judicial council policies, and regulations issued by the Administrative Office with Conference approval.
- The district court (*i.e.*, the body of all district judges in regular active service) appoints magistrate judges as judicial officers of the court and designates the chief bankruptcy judge (where there is one). The court also appoints the clerk of court, court crier, and court reporters, and it approves the appointments of deputy clerks, clerical assistants, and other court employees (other than chambers staff). The court adopts its own local rules of practice and procedure.

Bankruptcy Court

- The bankruptcy court is a unit of the district court. Judges of the bankruptcy court are appointed by the court of appeals and the chief bankruptcy judge (in districts with more than one bankruptcy judge) is designated by the district court.
- The chief bankruptcy judge (where there is one) is statutorily responsible for enforcing the rules of the district court and the bankruptcy court and seeing that bankruptcy court business is handled effectively and expeditiously.
- The bankruptcy court (*i.e.*, the bankruptcy judges in regular active service) appoints the clerk of the bankruptcy court and approves the appointment of deputy clerks.

Federal Court Governance—Regional and Local Institutions (except special courts)

The Judicial Conference of the United States has approved the recommendations and implementation strategies in this *Long Range Plan* to guide future administrative action and policy development by the Conference and other judicial branch authorities. All other text in this *Plan*, including commentary on individual recommendations and strategies, explains and supplements the approved items but does not necessarily reflect the views of the Conference.