

ABOUT THE FEDERAL JUDICIAL CENTER

The Federal Judicial Center is the education and research agency for the U.S. federal courts. It was created by Congress in 1967 and operates under the guidance of a board chaired by the Chief Justice of the United States. The Center provides education and training for U.S. federal judges and court staff (orientation programs as well as continuing education) and conducts empirical studies and exploratory research into different aspects of judicial administration.

The Center also serves as a resource to foreign judiciaries and seeks information from those in other countries to help it better serve the U.S. judicial branch. The International Judicial Relations Office was created in 1992 and coordinates the Center's outreach to judges, lawyers, academics, and government officials of other nations. The funds the U.S. Congress provides the Center are not available to meet the costs of conducting its international programs. Financial support for this work comes from outside sources.

Judicial Conference Committee on International Judicial Relations

The Judicial Conference of the United States established the Committee on International Judicial Relations in 1993 to respond to the growing number of requests for judicial assistance in newly emerging democracies and developing countries. Committee members include federal first instance and appellate judges with experience in international judicial development. The Center serves in an advisory capacity to the Committee.



Federal Judicial Center

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International
Judicial
Relations

Federal Judicial Center
assistance to other nations
to improve the
administration
of justice

BRIEFINGS

Each year the Center provides informational briefings for delegations of judges, attorneys, court officials, and scholars from different countries when they visit Washington, D.C. These briefings provide an introduction to the legal and judicial systems of the United States and information about the Center's educational and research activities. Briefings may address specific topics, including the jury system, judicial independence, alternative dispute resolution, case management, court administration, and judicial ethics. Center publications and materials are often distributed during these sessions. Recent visitors included judges and legal professionals from China, Greece, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

SEMINARS

The Center collaborates with other organizations to develop seminars for judges and court officials around the world. These programs are funded by U.S. government agencies working in the area of international rule of law (primarily USAID, the Departments of Justice, State, and Commerce) as well as nongovernmental and international organizations, such as the American Bar Association and World Bank.

For example, in the early 1990s, the State Department provided funding and logistical support for a Center program on the U.S. legal system attended by judges and officials from the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. More recently, the Center developed programs for judges and judicial educators from Algeria, Argentina, Nigeria, and Uzbekistan.

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

At the invitation of foreign judiciaries and development organizations, Center staff members have visited foreign courts and judicial training centers to undertake needs assessments, provide technical assistance, or participate in conferences. This work is done on a limited basis and only in so far as it does not interfere with the staff member's primary responsibilities to the federal courts. Center staff have participated in judicial education programs in Armenia, Georgia, and the Philippines; international conferences in Brazil and France, and benchbook development projects in Serbia and Ukraine.

VISITING FOREIGN JUDICIAL FELLOWS PROGRAM

Each year the Center hosts a small number of independently funded judges, court personnel, attorneys, and scholars from other nations who spend two weeks to three months at the Center conducting research in an area related to judicial administration. The Center provides fellows with an office, computer access, and assistance with their research and arranges meetings with U.S. judges, court officials, Center staff, and others in the D.C. community with relevant expertise. When appropriate, fellows are also invited to observe Center programs.

Those selected as Fellows must have fluency in written and spoken English, a specific research proposal related to some aspect of judicial practice, a funding source, and the ability to arrange for their own visa (if needed), transportation to the United States, and accommodations in the Washington, D.C., area. Additional information about the Visiting Judicial Fellows Program can be obtained from the International Judicial Relations Office.

REFERRALS

The Center assists other public agencies and private organizations in efforts to identify federal judges and judiciary staff who have expertise appropriate to a specific international rule of law project. In responding to these requests, the Center often works in collaboration with the Judicial Conference Committee on International Judicial Relations and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

MORE INFORMATION

Inquiries about Federal Judicial Center assistance to other nations should be addressed to

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