Federal Judicial Administration

Executive Branch

Participates in legislative process, transmits appropriations requests, appoints new Article III judges with Senate approval, provides buildings and security, represented on Judicial Conference rules committees.

Congress

Appropriates funds, enacts legislation on court organization and jurisdiction, determines number of federal judges, Senate approval required for appointment of new Article III judges, reviews procedural rule amendments.

Judicial Branch

Supreme Court

Approves amendments to the Federal Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Chief Justice of the United States

Committees of the Judicial Conference

Members: Judges, practicing lawyers, and legal scholars appointed by the Chief Justice, and ex officio government officials.

Functions: New matters referred to and studied by committee with established jurisdiction over subject matter; make policy recommendations to the Conference and, for those committees involved in the rulemaking process, exercise statutory responsibilities.

Judicial Conference of the United States

Members: Chief Justice (chair); the chief judge and one district judge from each of the twelve regional circuits; chief judge, Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit; chief judge, Court of International Trade.

Functions: Sets national administrative policy for the federal judiciary; approves annual budget requests for submission to Congress; administers judicial branch's appropriations; prescribes procedural rules for, and acts on referrals and certifications from, circuit judicial councils regarding judicial discipline; recommends changes in rules of procedure to the Supreme Court for submission to Congress; other statutory functions.

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

The Chief Justice appoints the director and deputy director after consultation with the Judicial Conference.

Functions: Under the supervision of the Judicial Conference, provides a wide variety of program management, legal, financial, information technology, and administrative support services to the federal courts, including services to meet the needs of federal judges and their staffs; provides staff support and other assistance and advice to the Judicial Conference and its committees, and assists Judicial Conference to coordinate with Congress and Executive branch on legislation on behalf of judiciary; carries out other functions mandated by statute and Judicial Conference policy. Performs other duties assigned by the Supreme Court or the Judicial Conference.

U.S. Sentencing Commission

Federal Judicial Center

Board: Chief Justice (chair); Administrative Office director; seven judges elected by the Judicial Conference. Board appoints Center director and deputy director.

Functions: Provides education and training for judges and nonjudicial court personnel; conducts research on federal judicial processes, court management, and other issues for the Judicial Conference and its committees and for the courts; develops programs relating to the history of the judicial branch; provides information about judicial improvement to judges and others from foreign countries.

Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation

Chief Judges of the Circuits

Judicial Councils of the Circuits

Members: Chief circuit judge (chair); active or senior circuit and active or senior district judges in equal numbers; council size determined by majority vote of all Article III judges of the circuit in regular active service.

Functions: (1) Make necessary orders for administration of justice within the circuit, and may institute contempt proceedings if a judge or employee within the circuit fails to comply with the statutory duty to carry out council orders; (2) recommend to Judicial Conference changes in the number of Article III judgeships, and in the number and location of bankruptcy and magistrate judges; (3) consider complaints of judicial misconduct or disability under 28 U.S.C. §§ 351–364 if referred by the chief circuit judge; (4) review and approve district court plans and local court rules; (5) establish a bankruptcy appellate panel service, approve chambers and courtroom space, and other responsibilities assigned by Congress (statute) and the Judicial Conference.

Judicial Conferences of the Circuits

Members: Chief circuit judge (normally chair, but not mandatory); all circuit, district, magistrate, and bankruptcy judges of the circuit, in active service, are invited, but attendance is not mandatory.

Functions (vary between circuits): Optional circuit-wide meetings, called no more than once a year by the chief circuit judge, about various topics related to improving the administration of justice within the circuit. Each court of appeals must adopt local rules to provide for representation and active participation at the conference by members of the circuit's bar.

Chief Judges, Circuit Courts of Appeals

Circuit Courts of Appeals

Most administrative decisions made collegially by a circuit court's appellate judges in regular active service.

Court Committees/Liaison Judges

Appointed by chief circuit judge to address specific subject areas or supervise court units. Examples: committee to screen/interview applicants for bankruptcy judges and administrators, and federal public defenders; advisory committee for court's local rules; information technology committee; court security committee.

Support Staff

To assist with management of the court, court appoints a clerk of court, librarian, senior staff attorney, and chief circuit mediator (chief conference attorney).

Chief Judges, District Courts

District Courts

Most administrative decisions made collegially by a district court's district judges in regular active service and senior judges who perform 50% of work of active judges.

Magistrate Judges

Judicial officers appointed by the district court to perform judicial duties as assigned. Judicial Conference determines number of magistrate judge positions for each district. Not a separate governance unit.

Court Committees/Liaison Judges

Appointed by chief district judge to address specific subject areas or supervise court units. Examples: information technology committee; court security committee.

Support Staff

To assist with management of the court, court appoints a clerk of court, chief probation officer, probation officers, chief pretrial services officer, court reporters.

Circuit Executives

Functions (vary by circuit): Appointed by the circuit's judicial council to carry out such duties, under the supervision of the chief judge of the circuit, as the circuit council may delegate, including but not limited to: serving the judicial council as its agent in dealing with courts of the circuit and as its staff by preparing agendas for and serving as secretary in judicial council meetings; administering personnel system and budget of the court of appeals of the circuit; collecting statistics and preparing reports relating to administration of the courts within the circuit.

Chief Judges, Bankruptcy Courts

Bankruptcy Courts

Most administrative decisions made collegially by a bankruptcy court's bankruptcy judges in regular active service. Separate governance unit, but still unit of district court.

Court Committees/Liaison Judges

Appointed by chief bankruptcy judge to address specific subject areas or supervise court units. Examples: liaison member on district's information technology and court security committees; liaison with office of U.S. trustee.

Support Staff

To assist with management of the court, court appoints a clerk of court.