



JUDICIAL CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED STATES

Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary

Judicial Conference of the United States

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Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary

The federal judiciary is respected throughout the United States of America and the world for its excellence, for the independence of its judges, and for its delivery of equal justice under the law. Through this plan, the judiciary identifies a set of strategies that will enable it to continue as a model in providing fair and impartial justice.

This plan begins with expressions of the mission and core values of the federal judiciary. Although any plan is by nature aspirational, these are constants that this plan strives to preserve. The aim is to stimulate and promote beneficial change within the federal judiciary that helps fulfill, and is consistent with, the mission and core values.

Mission

The United States Courts are an independent, national judiciary providing fair and impartial justice within the jurisdiction conferred by the Constitution and Congress. As an equal branch of government, the federal judiciary preserves and enhances its core values as the courts meet changing national and local needs.

Core Values

Rule of Law: legal predictability, continuity, and coherence; reasoned decisions made through publicly visible processes and based faithfully on the law.

Equal Justice: fairness and impartiality in the administration of justice; accessibility of court processes; treatment of all with dignity and respect.

Judicial Independence: the ability to render justice without fear that decisions may threaten tenure, compensation, or security; sufficient structural autonomy for the judiciary as an equal branch of government in matters of internal governance and management.

An Exemplary Workplace: a workplace in which everyone is treated with dignity, civility, and respect; consisting of highly qualified and dedicated individuals; and in which diverse viewpoints and backgrounds are valued.

Accountability: stringent standards of conduct; self-enforcement of legal and ethical rules; responsible stewardship of public funds and property; effective and efficient use of resources.

Excellence: adherence to the highest jurisprudential and administrative standards; effective recruitment, development, and retention of highly competent judges and employees; commitment to innovative management and administration; availability of sufficient financial and other resources.

Service: commitment to the faithful discharge of official duties; allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States; dedication to meeting the needs of jurors, court users, and the public in a timely and effective manner.

The Plan in Brief

The Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary, updated in 2025, continues the judiciary’s tradition of meeting challenges and maximizing opportunities while preserving its core values. It takes into consideration various trends and priorities affecting the judiciary, in an effort to continue the judiciary’s ability to perform its mission effectively. In addition, this plan recognizes that the future may provide tremendous opportunities for improving the fair and impartial delivery of justice.

This plan anticipates a future in which the federal judiciary remains respected and admired for its accessibility, timeliness, and efficiency; attracts to judicial service the nation’s finest legal talent; is an employer of choice, providing an exemplary workplace for a group of highly qualified judges and employees; works effectively with the other branches of government; and enjoys the people’s trust and confidence.

This plan serves as an agenda outlining actions aimed at preserving the judiciary’s successes and, where appropriate, bringing about positive change. Although its stated goals and strategies do not include every important activity, project, initiative, or study that is underway or being considered, this plan focuses on priorities that affect the judiciary at large and on responding to those matters in ways that benefit the entire judicial branch and the public it serves.

This plan identifies five priorities for the judiciary, providing strategies and goals for meeting each priority. The priorities include providing fair and impartial justice; enhancing the public’s trust and confidence in, and understanding of, the federal courts, and the courts’ relationships with the other branches of government; efficiently and effectively managing resources; maintaining an exemplary workplace; and realizing technology’s value.

Strategic Priorities for the Federal Judiciary

The strategies and goals in this plan are organized around five priorities, which are not listed in order of importance. These are fundamental policy questions or challenges that are based on an assessment of key trends affecting the judiciary’s mission and core values:

- Priority 1: Providing Fair and Impartial Justice**
- Priority 2: Enhancing Public Trust and Strengthening Relationships with Other Branches of Government**
- Priority 3: Efficiently and Effectively Managing Public Resources**
- Priority 4: Maintaining an Exemplary Judiciary Workforce and Workplace**
- Priority 5: Realizing Technology’s Full Value and Managing Its Risks**

These priorities also consider the judiciary’s organizational culture. The strategies and goals developed to advance these priorities are designed to operate within the judiciary’s decentralized systems of governance and administration.

1. Providing Fair and Impartial Justice

The judiciary will continue to provide fair and impartial justice in an effective manner and meet new and increasing demands, while adhering to its core values.

Priority Description

Exemplary and independent judges; dedicated employees; conscientious jurors; well-reasoned, accessible, and well-researched rulings; time for deliberation; and attention to individual issues are among the hallmarks of federal court litigation. Equal justice requires fairness and impartiality in the delivery of justice and a commitment to non-discrimination, regardless of race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability status, or political affiliation.

Additionally, courts are open and accessible to anyone who initiates or is drawn into federal litigation, including litigants, lawyers, jurors, and witnesses. Scarce resources, changes in litigation and litigant expectations, and certain changes in the law may challenge the federal judiciary's effective and prompt delivery of justice. The federal courts must consider carefully whether they are continuing to meet the litigation needs of court users. In the criminal context, where most federal criminal defendants are eligible for the appointment of counsel, the judiciary must ensure that the needs of appointed counsel and the clients they represent are met.

This plan includes five strategies that focus on improving performance while ensuring that the judiciary continues to function under conditions that allow for the fair, impartial, and effective administration of justice:

- 1.1 Secure resources that are sufficient to enable the judiciary to accomplish its mission in a manner consistent with judiciary core values.
- 1.2 Continue the delivery of fair and impartial justice on a nationwide basis.
- 1.3 Ensure that court rules, processes, and procedures meet the needs of lawyers and litigants in the judicial process.
- 1.4 Ensure that the federal judiciary is open and accessible, on a non-discriminatory basis, to all those who participate in the judicial process.
- 1.5 Promote effective administration of the criminal defense function in the federal courts.

Strategies

1.1. Secure resources that are sufficient to enable the judiciary to accomplish its mission in a manner consistent with judiciary core values.

Background and Commentary

The judiciary faces an uncertain federal budget environment, with anticipated shortfalls in Congress's funding of judiciary requirements. Appropriations that do not meet the judiciary's carefully determined needs adversely affect the administration of justice. The regularity of continuing resolutions also presents significant challenges, creating uncertainty over the timing and amount of appropriations, and harming the ability to plan for and execute the judiciary's mission effectively and efficiently.

Further, the judiciary relies on resources that are within the budgets of executive branch agencies, particularly the U.S. Marshals Service and the General Services Administration. The judiciary must continue to work with these agencies to ensure that the judiciary's resource needs are met.

Another key challenge for the judiciary is to address critical longer-term resource needs. Many appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts have an insufficient number of authorized judgeships. While some temporary judgeships have been converted to permanent status in previous years, Congress has not passed comprehensive judgeship legislation since 1990.

Resources are also needed for jurors. Compensation for jurors is limited, and inadequate compensation creates a financial hardship for many jurors.

While the judiciary has made progress in securing needed space, including the construction of new courthouses and annexes, some court proceedings are still conducted in court facilities that are cramped, poorly configured, and lacking secure corridors separate from inmates appearing in court. As the judiciary's facilities continue to age, additional resources will be needed to provide proper maintenance and sustain courthouse functionality. The judiciary will need to continue apportioning resources based on priorities determined by the consistent application of policies across the courthouse portfolio. Additionally, to maximize space and limited resources, courts are encouraged to consider space optimization projects that would create more efficient workspaces that align with current business needs.

The ability to secure adequate resources is a necessary foundation for the vast majority of the judiciary's plans and strategies. For example, to ensure the well-qualified representation of criminal defendants (Goal 1.2.c), the defender services program requires funding sufficient to accomplish its mission. Additionally, to enhance the management of persons under supervision to reduce recidivism and improve public safety (Goal 1.2.d), probation and pretrial services offices require sufficient funding. Strategy 4.1 and its associated goals focus on the importance of attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining the competent employees that are required for the effective performance of the judiciary's mission and critical to supporting tomorrow's judges and meeting future workload. Also, a goal under Strategy 5.1 (Goal 5.1.b) urges the judiciary to continue to build and maintain robust and flexible technology systems and applications, requiring a sustained investment in technology.

Implementation Goals

- 1.1.a Secure needed circuit, district, bankruptcy, and magistrate judgeships.
- 1.1.b Ensure that judiciary proceedings are conducted in court facilities that are secure, accessible, efficient, and properly equipped.
- 1.1.c Secure adequate compensation for jurors.
- 1.1.d Secure adequate resources to provide the judiciary with the employees and resources necessary to meet workload demands.

1.2. Continue the delivery of fair and impartial justice on a nationwide basis.

Background and Commentary

Effective case management is essential to the delivery of justice, and most cases are handled in a manner that is both timely and deliberate. The judiciary monitors several aspects of civil case management and has several mechanisms to identify and assist stressed courts. These mechanisms include biannual reports of pending civil cases and motions required under the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990 to identify stressed courts and the categories of cases with the longest disposition times.

National coordination mechanisms include the work of the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, which is authorized to transfer certain civil actions pending in different districts to a single district for coordinated or consolidated pretrial proceedings. The work of chief judges in managing each court's caseload is critical to the timely handling of cases, and these local efforts must be supported at the circuit and national level. Circuit judicial councils have the authority to issue necessary and appropriate orders for the effective and expeditious administration of justice, and the Judicial Conference is responsible for approving changes in policy for the administration of federal courts. Cooperative efforts with state courts have also proven helpful, including the sharing of information about related cases that are pending simultaneously in state and federal courts.

Despite ongoing efforts, some pockets of case delays and backlogs persist in the courts. Some delays are due to external forces beyond the judiciary's control, cannot be avoided, and do not reflect on a court's case management practices. With this understanding, this plan calls for the courts, Judicial Conference committees, and circuit judicial councils to continue to undertake reasonable, concerted, and collaborative efforts to reduce the number and length of preventable case delays and backlogs.

The fair and impartial delivery of justice is also affected by high litigation costs. High costs make the federal courts less accessible. Litigation costs also have the potential to skew the mix of cases that come before the judiciary and may unduly pressure parties towards settlement. Rule 1 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure calls for the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action and proceeding, and Rule 2 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure calls for the elimination of unjustifiable expense and delay. This plan includes a goal to avoid unnecessary costs and delays in both civil and criminal cases.

This strategy also includes a goal to ensure that all persons entitled to representation under the Criminal Justice Act are provided well-qualified representation through either a federal defender or a panel attorney. Well-qualified representation requires sufficient resources to assure fair pay, training, and access to investigative, expert, and other necessary services.

In addition, this plan includes a goal to enhance the fair and effective management of all persons under supervision. Probation and pretrial services offices have led judiciary efforts to measure the quality of services to the courts and the community, including the use of evidence-based practices in the management of persons under supervision.

Other efforts to improve the fair and impartial delivery of justice must continue. For example, several significant initiatives to transform the judiciary's use of technology are underway, including the development and deployment of next-generation case management and financial administration systems. The work of the probation and pretrial services offices also has been enhanced using applications that integrate data from other agencies with that of probation and pretrial services to facilitate the analysis and comparison of supervision practices and outcomes among districts.

Implementation Goals

- 1.2.a Reduce delay through the dissemination and implementation of effective case management methods and the work of circuit judicial councils, chief judges, Judicial Conference committees, and other appropriate entities.
- 1.2.b Avoid unnecessary costs to litigants consistent with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.
- 1.2.c Ensure that all persons represented by panel attorneys and federal defender organizations are afforded well-qualified representation consistent with best practices for the representation of all criminal defendants.
- 1.2.d Continue the management of all persons under supervision to reduce recidivism and improve public safety.
- 1.2.e Ensure the solemnity of judicial proceedings.

1.3. Ensure that court rules, processes, and procedures meet the needs of lawyers and litigants in the judicial process.

Background and Commentary

The accessibility of court processes to lawyers and litigants is a component of the judiciary's core value of equal justice, but making courts readily accessible is difficult. Providing access is especially challenging when people look to the federal courts to address problems that cannot be solved within the federal courts' limited jurisdiction, when claims are not properly raised, or when judicial processes are not well understood.

To assist with public understanding, rules of practice and procedure are regularly reviewed and revised to reflect changes in law, to simplify and clarify procedures, to encourage random case assignment, and to enhance uniformity across districts.

Rules changes also have been made to help reduce cost and delay in the civil discovery process, to address the growing role of electronic discovery, and to take widespread advantage of technology in court proceedings. National mechanisms to consolidate and coordinate multidistrict litigation have been implemented to avoid duplication of discovery; prevent inconsistent pretrial rulings; and conserve the resources of the parties, their counsel, and the judiciary. In addition, many courts provide settlement conferences, mediation programs, and other forms of alternative dispute resolution to parties interested in resolving their claims prior to a judicial decision. Despite these and other efforts, some lawyers, litigants, and members of the public continue to find litigating in the federal courts challenging. Court operations and processes vary across districts and chambers, and pursuing federal litigation can be time consuming and expensive.

Implementation Goals

- 1.3.a Ensure that court rules, processes, and procedures are published or posted in an accessible manner.
- 1.3.b Adopt measures designed to provide flexibility in the handling of cases while reducing cost, delay, and other unnecessary burdens to litigants in the adjudication of disputes.

1.4. Ensure that the federal judiciary is open and accessible, on a non-discriminatory basis, to all those who participate in the judicial process.

Background and Commentary

As part of its commitment to the core value of equal justice, the federal judiciary seeks to assure that all who participate in federal court proceedings, including jurors, litigants, bankruptcy participants, witnesses, journalists, and observers, are treated with dignity and respect and understand the process. The judiciary's national website and the websites of individual courts provide the public with information about the courts themselves; court rules, procedures and forms; judicial orders and decisions; and schedules of court proceedings. Court dockets and pleadings are posted on the internet through a judiciary-operated public access system, which must be modernized to provide for more secure operation and better public access. Court forms commonly used by the public have been rewritten to make them clearer and simpler to use, and

court facilities are now designed to provide greater access to persons with disabilities. Some districts offer electronic tools to assist pro se filers in generating civil complaints and bankruptcy petitions. The Judicial Conference is working to enhance citizen participation in juries by improving the degree to which juries are representative of the communities in which they serve, reducing the burden of jury service, and improving juror utilization. In addition, the state courts are a valuable source of innovation and information, and the federal judiciary may benefit from the lessons learned by state courts.

Federal court processes are complex, however, and it is an ongoing challenge to ensure that participants have access to information about court processes and individual court cases, as well as court facilities. Many who come to the courts also have limited proficiency in English, and resources to provide interpretation and translation services are limited, particularly for civil litigants and bankruptcy participants. Because continued efforts are needed, this strategy has three goals to make courts more accessible for jurors, litigants, bankruptcy participants, witnesses, and others.

Implementation Goals

- 1.4.a Provide jurors, litigants, bankruptcy participants, witnesses, journalists, and observers with comprehensive, readily accessible information about court cases and the work of the courts.
- 1.4.b Improve the extent to which juries are representative of the communities in which they serve, reduce the hardships associated with jury service, and improve the experiences of citizens serving as grand and petit jurors.
- 1.4.c Develop best practices and strategies for handling claims of pro se litigants in civil and bankruptcy cases and ensuring access to the courts for pro se litigants.

1.5. Promote effective administration of the criminal defense function in the federal courts.

Background and Commentary

In the criminal context, access to fair and impartial justice is supported by appointing counsel to represent defendants who cannot afford to pay for their own counsel or other services necessary for their defense. Under the Criminal Justice Act (CJA), the judiciary oversees the provision of these defense services to eligible criminal defendants. The judiciary has completed a series of comprehensive studies to inform the development of national policies that support effective and conflict-free representation for CJA clients. To promote consistent implementation of Judicial Conference policies in districts throughout the country, this strategy includes a goal to encourage local adoption and implementation of those policies. Other goals support adequate resources and training, including training for judges who bear significant responsibilities under the CJA and must stay up to date with current needs and best practices in federal criminal defense representation.

Judges, when exercising their oversight role and acting as neutral arbiters in individual cases, must fairly and reasonably determine the resources available to defendants while respecting the professional independence of appointed counsel. Consistent with the Sixth Amendment,

public defense counsel must be free to exercise professional judgment to advocate within the bounds of the law and consistent with applicable ethics codes, solely for the interests of their client without undue influence or fear of reprisal. To ensure the effective operation of the adversarial system, the judiciary must strive to ensure that CJA practitioners can mount a skilled and vigorous defense of their clients, regardless of race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability status, or political affiliation, so that the rights of individual defendants are safeguarded and enforced.

At the same time, consistent with the recommendations of the Judicial Conference's Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Criminal Justice Act Program, the judiciary must continue to consider improvements to the national administration of the defender services program to ensure that governance structures provide accountability while preserving the professional independence of defense counsel. To that end, this strategy includes goals that reflect values similar to the core value of judicial independence. This strategy supports the judiciary's efforts to pursue improvements in the fair and impartial delivery of justice (Strategy 1.2) and promotes public trust and confidence in the justice system by ensuring fair trials and proceedings (Priority 2).

Implementation Goals

- 1.5.a Encourage districts to adopt and implement CJA plans based on the judiciary's model CJA plan to ensure compliance with relevant Judicial Conference policies.
- 1.5.b Ensure that CJA practitioners have the resources to provide effective and conflict-free representation.
- 1.5.c Provide training regarding best practices for criminal defense representation.
- 1.5.d Protect the integrity of the lawyer-client relationship and safeguard the ability of CJA counsel to exercise independent professional judgment to advocate for the undivided interests of their clients.
- 1.5.e Consider alternative governance and oversight structures for the federal public defense program as appropriate.

2. Enhancing Public Trust and Strengthening Relationships with Other Branches of Government

The judiciary, an independent and equal branch of government under the Constitution, will sustain effective relationships with Congress and the executive branch and promote public trust and confidence in the federal courts, while preserving appropriate autonomy in judiciary governance, management, and decision-making.

Priority Description

The judiciary is an independent branch of government with the solemn responsibility of safeguarding constitutional rights and liberties.

The ability of courts to fulfill their mission and perform their functions roots itself in the public's understanding of, and its trust and confidence in, the judiciary. In large part, the judiciary earns that trust and confidence by faithfully performing its duties; adhering to ethical standards; ensuring random case assignment; effectively carrying out internal oversight, review, and governance responsibilities; and maintaining accountability for any failure to observe scrupulous adherence to ethical standards. Transparency in efforts to hold judges and judiciary personnel accountable for any misconduct helps foster public trust and confidence. Public understanding of the judiciary can also be enhanced through civics education.

An effective relationship with Congress is critical to success in securing adequate resources. The judiciary must provide Congress timely and accurate information about issues affecting the administration of justice. The judiciary must also continue to communicate to Congress its comprehensive system of oversight and review, which ensures the integrity of financial information; provides comprehensive financial reporting; and builds upon its foundation of internal controls and methods to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.

The judiciary's relationship with the executive branch is also critical, particularly in areas where the executive branch has primary administrative or program responsibility, such as reporting on annual government-wide financial activity, judicial security, and facilities management.

Ongoing communication about Judicial Conference goals, policies, and positions may deepen the judiciary's overall relationships with Congress and the executive branch. By seeking opportunities to enhance communication among the three branches, the judiciary can strengthen its role as an equal branch of government while improving the administration of justice. At the same time, the judiciary must continue to preserve an appropriate degree of self-sufficiency and discretion in conducting its own affairs.

Public perceptions of the judiciary are often colored by misunderstandings about the institutional role of the federal courts and the limitations of their jurisdiction, as well as attitudes toward federal court decisions on matters of public interest and debate. Changes in social media and communication will continue to play a key role in how the judiciary is portrayed to and viewed by members of the public.

These changes provide the judicial branch an opportunity to communicate broadly with greater ease and at far less cost. However, they also present the challenge of ensuring that judiciary information is complete, accurate, and timely. This challenge is especially difficult because judges are constrained in their ability to participate in public discourse. This plan includes six strategies to enhance public trust in the judiciary and strengthen relations with the other branches of government:

- 2.1 Assure high standards of conduct and integrity for judges and employees.
- 2.2 Hold accountable any judges and judiciary personnel who engage in misconduct, and be transparent, in furtherance of statutory and other requirements and consistent with confidentiality and privacy requirements, about accountability for misconduct.
- 2.3 Continue to implement a comprehensive approach to enhancing relations between the judiciary and Congress.
- 2.4 Strengthen the judiciary's relations with the executive branch.
- 2.5 Improve the sharing and delivery of information about the judiciary.
- 2.6 Encourage involvement in civics education activities by judges and judiciary employees.

Strategies

2.1. Assure high standards of conduct and integrity for judges and employees.

Background and Commentary

Judges and judiciary employees are guided by codes of conduct, internal policies, and robust accountability mechanisms within the judiciary that work together to uphold standards relating to the conduct and management of public resources. These mechanisms include disciplinary action, formal complaint procedures for impacted employees to seek redress, dispute resolution processes, audits, program reviews of judiciary operations, internal control and information technology (IT) self-assessments, and workplace conduct oversight and response processes. The judiciary has adopted several measures, described in Priority 4 of this plan, to ensure an exemplary workplace in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect, and on a non-discriminatory basis.

Accountability mechanisms must continue to address critical risks, keep pace with changes in regulations and business practices, and respond to public and government interest through detailed and accessible information about the judiciary. The regular review and update of policies, along with efforts to ensure that they are accessible to judges and employees, contributes to judiciary compliance and controls. In addition, guidance on current uses of social media and other technologies can help to avoid the inappropriate conveyance of sensitive information.

This strategy emphasizes up-to-date policies, timely education, and relevant guidance about ethics, integrity, and accountability. The strategy also relies upon the effective performance of critical integrated internal controls; governance of judiciary financial information; audit,

investigation, and discipline functions; risk management practices; and self-assessment programs.

Implementation Goals

- 2.1.a Enhance education and training for judges and judiciary employees on ethical conduct, integrity, accountability, and workplace conduct.
- 2.1.b Deliver education and training to judges and judiciary employees on mechanisms that strengthen administrative accountability and oversight, including internal controls, audits, and investigations.

2.2. Hold accountable any judges and judiciary personnel who engage in misconduct, and be transparent, in furtherance of statutory and other requirements and consistent with confidentiality and privacy requirements, about accountability for misconduct.

Background and Commentary

The judiciary seeks to ensure accountability by openly receiving information about potential misconduct and following existing procedures to address misconduct. Credible allegations of misconduct will be examined, investigated, and subject to appropriate action in accordance with existing statutory, policy, and other procedures. Individuals who experience or witness possible misconduct should be able to seek redress or satisfy their obligation to take appropriate action by bringing these issues to the attention of an appropriate official without fear of retaliation or adverse consequences.

Transparency, to the extent permissible and possible, demonstrates the judiciary's fidelity to accountability for misconduct. Law and policy related to confidentiality and the legitimate privacy interests of victims, witnesses, and others may limit what information can be made public. The judiciary strives to make public information about misconduct procedures and related actions, where permissible and appropriate.

Implementation Goals

- 2.2.a Ensure avenues for seeking advice; obtaining assistance as to potential misconduct; obtaining redress, where appropriate; and filing a complaint are easily accessible.
- 2.2.b Ensure timely action is taken on credible allegations of misconduct according to established procedures, and when the evidence supports it, ensure action is taken with regard to misconduct.
- 2.2.c Ensure each circuit's website prominently displays actions taken under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act and Rules for Judicial Conduct and Judicial Disability Procedures, in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Rules, and summaries of other records or reports of workplace conduct issues, where permissible and appropriate.
- 2.2.d Consider conducting reviews to identify systemic issues, when appropriate.

2.3. Continue to implement a comprehensive approach to enhancing relations between the judiciary and Congress.

Background and Commentary

This strategy emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining relationships between judges and members of Congress, at the local level and in Washington. The intent is to enhance ongoing activities and to emphasize the importance of providing information to Congress about the role, responsibilities, duties, and needs of the branch. This type of interbranch communication is crucial in shaping a favorable future for the judiciary. Implementing other strategies in this plan can also help the judiciary to enhance its relationship with Congress. Goals relating to timeliness and accessibility directly affect members' constituents, and the ability to report measurable progress in meeting goals may also strengthen the judiciary's relationship with Congress. Congressional awareness of the judiciary's ongoing efforts to strengthen its financial oversight, reporting, and workplace conduct, building upon its existing foundation of internal controls and methods to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and misconduct, is critical to assure oversight bodies, as well as the public, that the judiciary has a robust program of oversight and effective controls in place.

Implementation Goals

- 2.3.a Maintain early identification of legislative issues to improve the judiciary's ability to respond and communicate with Congress on issues affecting the administration of justice.
- 2.3.b Implement effective approaches, including partnerships with legal, academic, and private sector organizations, to achieve the judiciary's public policy and educational goals.
- 2.3.c Encourage judges to engage with members of their local congressional delegation to foster mutual understanding and respect and to establish lines of communication between the two branches.

2.4. Strengthen the judiciary's relations with the executive branch.

Background and Commentary

The executive branch delivers critical services to the judiciary, including space, security, personnel and retirement services, and more. In addition, the executive branch develops and implements policies and procedures that affect the administration of justice. Department of Justice policies and practices have a substantial and direct impact on the administration of the defense function and the resource needs of the judiciary. Continued collaboration with the Department of Justice will be helpful, including on matters related to pretrial detention, discovery management in federal criminal cases, and the administration of the federal death penalty.

The executive branch is also a source of financial reporting requirements for government-wide financial activity. The judiciary's ongoing efforts to transform financial reporting, enhance the judiciary's internal controls programs, and strengthen the integrity of judiciary financial data

provide tangible assurance to judiciary officials, oversight bodies, taxpayers, and others for whom the judiciary holds money in trust. This strategy focuses on enhancing the ability of the judiciary to provide input and information to its executive branch partners.

Implementation Goals

- 2.4.a Foster communications and working relationships with the executive branch to facilitate greater consideration of policy changes and other solutions that will improve the administration of justice.
- 2.4.b Encourage judiciary stakeholders to work with the Department of Justice, U.S. Marshals Service, Bureau of Prisons, and others to ensure detained federal criminal defendants have meaningful and confidential access to counsel and to discovery material.

2.5. Improve the sharing and delivery of information about the judiciary.

Background and Commentary

Sources of news, analysis, and information about the federal judiciary continue to change, as do communication tools used by the public. These changes can present challenges to the accurate portrayal of the judiciary and the justice system. Enhanced communication between the federal and state judiciaries and the media is one way to help increase the accuracy of stories about the justice system and clarify public understanding of the courts. Since the media is a source of public information about the judiciary, helping reporters understand court processes is one way to improve the public's understanding of the justice system. Judges can undertake these efforts within the parameters of the Code of Conduct and while avoiding discussion of any specific cases.

Information about the operations of the federal judiciary is of increasing interest to the public, media, and Congress. Transparency regarding judicial branch governance enhances understanding of the judiciary's process and thereby improves public trust and confidence in the judiciary.

Direct communication can improve the public's understanding of the federal judiciary's role and functions. When formulating its own communications practices, the judiciary must keep pace with ongoing changes in how people access news and information.

The federal judiciary also serves as a resource for other countries pursuing judicial excellence, judicial independence, and the delivery of equal justice under the law. The judiciary should continue providing such assistance when appropriate, including working with the executive branch in its foreign assistance and public diplomacy initiatives.

Implementation Goals

- 2.5.a Implement a communications strategy that considers and incorporates the impact of changes in journalism and electronic communications and the ability of federal judges and employees to communicate directly with the public.

- 2.5.b Foster relationships between judges and journalists, consistent with the Code of Conduct and not specific to any case, to communicate the judiciary's efforts.
- 2.5.c Communicate with judges in other countries to share information about the federal judiciary and our system of justice and to support rule-of-law programs around the world.

2.6. Encourage involvement in civics education activities by judges and judiciary employees.

Background and Commentary

The federal judiciary relies on public respect, understanding, and acceptance. Judges and judiciary employees are uniquely situated to provide civics education to the public. A lack of civics knowledge can have an adverse effect on the branch. A civically informed public will also be better inoculated against attempts to undermine trust in the justice system.

Public outreach and civics education efforts by judges and judiciary employees occur inside courthouses, in the community, online and via remote technology or on court websites. These efforts may be facilitated through greater coordination and collaboration between courts and with civics education organizations. Resources to help judges and judiciary employees participate in educational outreach efforts are available from the Administrative Office, the Federal Judicial Center, and private court administration and judges' associations.

Implementation Goals

- 2.6.a Communicate and collaborate with organizations outside the judicial branch to improve the public's understanding of the role, structure, and functions of the federal judiciary, its accountability and oversight mechanisms, and its external financial reporting.
- 2.6.b Facilitate participation by judges and court employees in public outreach and civics education efforts, including programs held in courtrooms, in classrooms, and via remote technology, and development of in-courthouse or online educational resources and exhibits. Support collaboration and the sharing of best practices and ideas across courts and circuits to continue to be responsive to the need for public education and to benefit from locally developed ideas.
- 2.6.c Support education about the defense function and the critical role it plays in both ensuring fair trials and proceedings and maintaining public confidence in the justice system.

3. Efficiently and Effectively Managing Public Resources

The judiciary will continue to provide justice consistent with its core values while managing limited resources and programs in a manner that reflects workload variances and funding realities.

Priority Description

The judiciary obtains its appropriations from Congress on an annual basis and often does not obtain the full amount requested. The judiciary must continue to be a good steward of the money it receives and effectively allocate and manage these funds. The judiciary also should continue to pursue cost containment initiatives to help reduce current and future costs without compromising the mission of the judiciary, including effectively and efficiently using appropriated funds. Cost-containment efforts also help the judiciary demonstrate to Congress that it is an effective steward of public resources, and that its requests for additional resources are well justified (Strategy 1.1).

The judiciary relies upon effective decision-making processes governing the allocation and use of judges, employees, facilities, and funds to ensure the best use of limited resources. These processes must respond to a federal court workload that varies across districts and over time. Developing, evaluating, publicizing, and implementing best practices assists courts and other judiciary organizations in addressing workload changes. Local courts have many operational and program management responsibilities in the judiciary's decentralized governance structure, and the continued development of effective local practices must be encouraged. At the same time, the judiciary may also need to consider whether and to what extent certain practices should be adopted judiciary-wide. This plan includes two strategies to address this priority:

- 3.1 Allocate and manage resources more efficiently and effectively.
- 3.2 Allocate and manage resources to strengthen cybersecurity and the protection of judges, court employees, and the public at court facilities, and of judges and their families at other locations.

Strategies

3.1. Allocate and manage resources more efficiently and effectively.

Background and Commentary

The judiciary has worked to minimize judiciary costs, and has pursued several studies, initiatives, and reviews of judiciary policy. Cost containment remains a high priority, and the judiciary must challenge all court units to come together to seek common solutions to shared financial challenges. New initiatives to contain cost growth and make better use of resources are being implemented or are under consideration.

Court units throughout the judiciary have developed and implemented alternative approaches for carrying out their operational and administrative functions. These approaches have helped courts maintain the level and quality of services they deliver, and in many instances, have increased efficiencies and controlled costs associated with providing those services. Expansion

of flexible sharing arrangements holds promise for increasing efficiency and is responsive to the diversity of local court cultures and administrative models. These arrangements can be encouraged by creating informational resources to help courts identify sharing opportunities, providing incentives, removing barriers to sharing, fostering a culture of sharing across and between court units, and actively working to address identified areas of institutional mistrust that impact the sharing of resources.

This strategy includes four goals. The first two increase the flexibility of the judiciary in matching resources to workload. The intent is to enable available judges and court employees to assist heavily burdened courts on a temporary basis and to reduce the barriers to such assistance. Supporting these goals is a third goal to ensure that the judiciary utilizes its networks, systems, and space in a manner that supports efficient operations. A fourth goal speaks to the critical need to maintain effective court operations and anticipate alternative delivery of services when disaster strikes.

Implementation Goals

- 3.1.a Make more effective use of judges to relieve overburdened and congested courts, expand ways to provide both short- and long-term assistance to districts and circuits with demonstrated needs for additional resources, and ensure the effective utilization of magistrate judge resources.
- 3.1.b Analyze and facilitate the implementation of organizational changes and business practices that make effective use of limited administrative and operational employees, without negatively impacting outcomes or mission, including continuing to explore sharing services across court units, while maintaining the safety of the public, the judiciary, and our employees.
- 3.1.c Manage the judiciary's infrastructure in a manner that supports effective and efficient operations and provides a safe and secure environment.
- 3.1.d Plan for and respond to natural disasters, terrorist attacks, pandemics, and other physical threats in an effective manner.

3.2. Allocate and manage resources to strengthen cybersecurity and the protection of judges, court employees, and the public at court facilities, and of judges and their families at other locations.

Background and Commentary

Judges must be able to perform their duties in an environment that ensures their personal safety and that of their families. The judiciary works closely with the U.S. Marshals Service to assess and improve the protection provided to courts and individuals. Threats extend beyond the handling of criminal cases, as violent acts have often involved pro se litigants and other parties to civil cases.

While judiciary standards for court facilities provide separate hallways and other design features to protect judges, many older court facilities require judges, court personnel, and jurors

to use the same corridors, entrances, and exits as prisoners, criminal defendants, and others in custody.

Assuring safety in these facilities is particularly challenging. Protection for judges must also extend beyond court facilities and include commuting routes, travel destinations, and their homes. The judiciary has focused on raising awareness of security issues, assisting judges in taking steps to protect themselves while away from court facilities, and educating judges on how to minimize the availability of personal information on the internet. Similar security concerns apply to probation and pretrial services officers, who perform much of their work away from court facilities.

Assuring the integrity of electronic files and stored information is also essential to the security and independence of the judiciary.

The effective implementation of this strategy is linked to other efforts in this plan. Strategy 1.1 includes a goal to ensure that judiciary proceedings are conducted in secure facilities. In addition, Strategy 5.1 includes a goal to ensure that IT policies and practices provide effective security for court records and data, including confidential personal information.

Implementation Goals

- 3.2.a Improve the protection of judges, judiciary employees, and the public in all court facilities, as well as the protection of judges and judiciary employees at off-site judicial locations.
- 3.2.b Improve the protection of judges and their families at home and at non-judicial locations.
- 3.2.c Provide continued training to raise the awareness of judges and judiciary employees on a broad range of security topics.
- 3.2.d Improve the interior and exterior security of court facilities through the collaborative efforts of the judiciary, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Federal Protective Service, and the General Services Administration.
- 3.2.e Work with the U.S. Marshals Service and others to improve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of protective intelligence information concerning individual judges.
- 3.2.f Maintain the commitment to security training for probation and pretrial services officers.

4. Maintaining an Exemplary Judiciary Workforce and Workplace

The judiciary will continue to attract, develop, and retain a highly competent complement of judges, employees, and CJA attorneys, and ensure an exemplary workplace in which everyone is treated with dignity, civility, and respect.

Priority Description

To retain public trust and confidence and meet workload demands, the judiciary must be comprised of highly competent judges, employees, and CJA attorneys. To attract and retain the most capable people from all parts of society, the branch must maintain a workplace in which all are treated with dignity, civility, and respect and are valued for their contributions regardless of race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability status, or political affiliation.

The judiciary attracts highly qualified judges, employees, and CJA attorneys with meaningful work, job stability, and career development opportunities. Recruiting and retaining highly capable candidates not only requires fair and competitive compensation and benefit packages, but also the assurance of an exemplary workplace. To that end, the judiciary must abide by and enhance, where appropriate, its standards and procedures to assure proper workplace conduct, and must also develop new methods of performing work while addressing continued volatility in workloads.

- 4.1 Recruit, develop, and retain a talented and dedicated workforce from the diversity of the nation — with differing individual experiences, skills, knowledge, and backgrounds — while addressing the judiciary’s future workforce requirements.
- 4.2 Support a lifetime of service for federal judges.
- 4.3 Ensure an exemplary workplace in which all are treated with dignity, civility, and respect, which is free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and abusive conduct, and in which diverse viewpoints and backgrounds are valued.

Strategies

- 4.1. Recruit, develop, and retain a talented and dedicated workforce from the diversity of the nation — with differing individual experiences, skills, knowledge, and backgrounds — while addressing the judiciary’s future workforce requirements.**

Background and Commentary

Public trust and confidence are enhanced when the judiciary’s workforce is highly competent and dedicated to the cause of justice. The judiciary can and should strive to recruit and retain the best and the brightest from all backgrounds and life experiences. This includes bankruptcy judges, magistrate judges, federal defenders, CJA panel attorneys, probation and pretrial officers, and court reporters, all of whom occupy positions highly visible to the public. The

judiciary must continue to pursue initiatives that are designed to secure a broad pool of applicants for every position. In casting a broad net for applicants, the judiciary should reach out to individuals of all manner of backgrounds and perspectives, including those who have overcome hardships, challenges, and other disadvantages. In making hiring and promotion decisions, the judiciary should not discriminate based on race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability status, or political affiliation.

The judiciary must also continue to pursue initiatives to maintain its position as an employer of choice. To remain competitive with private and other public sector organizations, especially with hard-to-fill occupations and in geographic areas where employees have many other opportunities, the judiciary must maintain a strong program to attract, recruit, develop, and retain a highly qualified workforce. Through enhanced strategic workforce planning efforts, the judiciary will be positioned to recognize workforce gaps and identify recruitment, development, and retention strategies to ensure that the judiciary's future workforce has the needed skills, competencies, and talent to carry on the judiciary's mission.

Ongoing changes that the judiciary must address include shifting career and work-life expectations, meeting ever-advancing IT enhancements, and the unique challenges faced by IT services, probation and pretrial services, court reporters, and other groups in recruiting, retaining, and training. The judiciary must ensure the physical and mental well-being of all employees. Changes in how employees communicate and interact, and in how and where work is performed, are related to Strategy 3.1, as certain types of changes provide opportunities for the judiciary to reduce its space footprint and rental costs while creating a better and more efficient work environment. The judiciary must continue to invest in technology and explore changes to policy and procedures that allow for an effective mobile workforce. Further, the judiciary must focus on developing the skillsets of the current workforce and nimbly adapting to changes as they occur.

In addition, the judiciary must develop and engage in succession planning for all positions, including the next generation of executives. The management model in federal courts provides individual court executives with a high degree of decentralized authority over a wide range of administrative matters. The judiciary must maintain a meaningful leadership and executive development training program and create executive relocation programs to ensure a wide pool of qualified internal applicants, while also conducting outreach efforts to attain the most talented field of candidates, including from diverse backgrounds and life experiences that bring different perspectives.

Implementation Goals

- 4.1.a Maintain and expand outreach efforts and procedures to make individuals from all backgrounds and life experiences aware of employment opportunities in the judiciary, including as judicial officers.
- 4.1.b Continue to expand and modernize recruitment and outreach to cast a broad net for applicants, one that reaches out to individuals of all manner of backgrounds and perspectives, including those who have overcome hardships, challenges, and other disadvantages, without discriminating based on race, sex, age, ethnicity, religion,

national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, disability status, or political affiliation.

- 4.1.c Identify current and future workforce challenges and develop and evaluate human capital strategies to enhance the judiciary's standing as an employer of choice while enabling employees to reach their full potential.
- 4.1.d Deliver leadership, management, and human resources programs and services to help judges, executives, and supervisors develop, assess, and lead employees.
- 4.1.e Provide training, mentoring, and career advancement opportunities to all employees.
- 4.1.f Provide resources and develop health and wellness committees to examine and implement policy, practices, and programs that provide judiciary employees a safe, supportive, and healthy work environment.

4.2. Support a lifetime of service for federal judges.

Background and Commentary

It is critical that judges are supported throughout their careers, as new judges, active judges, chief judges, senior judges, judges recalled to service, and retired judges. Education, training, and orientation programs offered by the Federal Judicial Center and the Administrative Office continue to evolve and adapt. Training and education programs, and other services that enhance the well-being of judges, need to be accessible in a variety of formats, and on an as-needed basis.

Implementation Goals

- 4.2.a Strengthen policies that encourage senior Article III judges to continue handling cases so long as they are willing and able to do so. Judges who were appointed to fixed terms and are recalled to serve after retirement must be provided the support necessary to fully discharge their work-related duties.
- 4.2.b Seek the views of judges on practices that support their development, retention, and morale, and adapt education, training, and orientation programs to meet the needs of judges.
- 4.2.c Encourage circuits to develop circuit-wide health and wellness committees to promote health and wellness programs, policies, and practices that provide judges with a supportive environment for the maintenance or restoration of health and wellness in support of a lifetime of service for judges.

4.3. Ensure an exemplary workplace in which all are treated with dignity, civility, and respect, which is free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and abusive conduct, and in which diverse viewpoints and backgrounds are valued.

Background and Commentary

Public trust and confidence, as well as workforce morale and productivity, are enhanced when the judiciary provides an exemplary workplace for everyone. There are five keys to achieving an exemplary workplace: committed and engaged leadership; consistent and demonstrated accountability; strong and comprehensive policies; trusted and accessible complaint procedures; and regular interactive training. The judiciary must continue diligently to ensure that it provides an exemplary workplace for all its employees.

Implementation Goals

- 4.3.a Educate all judges and employees on standards of appropriate and inappropriate conduct, with continuing education on a regular basis, including the codes of conduct, Employment Dispute Resolution (EDR) Plans, and judicial conduct and disability procedures.
- 4.3.b Educate all judges and employees about the obligation to take appropriate action when they have reliable information about misconduct by a judge or wrongful conduct by non-judges, the available resources for guidance regarding reporting misconduct, and the mechanisms to report misconduct.
- 4.3.c Provide initial and continuing education for chief judges, executives, supervisors, and managers on listening, communication, building trust, effectively responding to both inappropriate workplace behavior and allegations of wrongful conduct, and fostering a respectful and high-performance workplace that welcomes a variety of viewpoints and backgrounds.
- 4.3.d Enhance accountability and effective redress, where appropriate, through universal adoption and conscientious application of the Model Employment Dispute Resolution Plan. Be transparent regarding judicial conduct and disability proceedings and other workplace conduct procedures in furtherance of and consistent with the law, related judiciary policy, and legitimate privacy interests.
- 4.3.e Maintain a national Office of Judicial Integrity to reinforce efforts at the circuit and local levels to ensure an exemplary workplace; ensure policies are developed and enforced consistently throughout the judiciary; and provide training, independent investigative assistance and related support, and advice to chief judges, unit judges, unit executives, and employees. Maintain a director of workplace relations in each circuit, to whom employees within the circuit can report wrongful conduct concerns, and who provides circuit-wide assistance to judges, managers, and employees on workplace conduct issues including training, conflict resolution, and workplace investigations. Ensure that all court EDR coordinators are properly trained and certified.
- 4.3.f Conduct periodic reviews to identify systemic issues related to workplace conduct at the national, circuit, and district levels, when appropriate, and evaluate whether guidance and procedures designed to foster an exemplary workplace are effective and whether additional action may be needed.

5. Realizing Technology's Full Value and Managing Its Risks

The judiciary will develop, operate, and secure cost-effective national and local systems and infrastructure that meet the needs of court users and the public for information, service, and access to the courts.

Priority Description

Implementing innovative technology applications in a responsible and secure manner adds significant value in meeting the judiciary's mission and helps the judiciary meet the changing needs of judges, judiciary employees, and the public. Technology enhances the productivity of the individual courts and facilitates more efficient work processes across the entire judiciary. For the public, technology improves access to courts, including information about cases, court facilities, and judicial processes. Due to the rapidly evolving and dynamically changing nature of technology, the judiciary must continue to focus on building, maintaining, modernizing, and better securing our IT systems in a timely manner. Reliance on judiciary systems and access to judiciary data by judicial organizations, litigants, and the public will only continue to increase in future years. The security of IT systems must be enhanced, and a requisite level of confidentiality and privacy must be assured, while adversaries mature and evolve their intrusion techniques at a rapid pace. This confidentiality is essential to preserving judicial integrity and independence, protecting the fairness of proceedings, upholding public trust, and safeguarding national security.

Responsibility for delivering major national IT systems, which are critical to the support of judiciary business operations, is shared by several Administrative Office departments and Judicial Conference committees. In addition, local courts have substantial responsibilities for the management and operation of local and national systems, including in appropriate circumstances the ability to customize national applications to meet local needs. The judiciary's approach to developing, managing, and operating national IT systems and applications provides substantial flexibility but also poses challenges for coordination, prioritization, and leadership. A key challenge is to balance the economies of scale that may be achieved through operating as an enterprise with the creative solutions that may result from allowing and fostering a distributed model of IT development and administration.

CJA practitioners need access to emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) applications, to improve legal research and writing, as well as access to litigation support software to help attorneys keep pace with the proliferation of case-related discovery. Training and support on the ethical, effective, and secure use of those technologies also remain critical.

The successful implementation of these strategic priorities, especially in the area of IT modernization and enhanced cybersecurity, requires substantial resources. Securing those resources and then efficiently managing IT-related investment is itself a top priority, as reflected in Priority 3 of this plan.

Strategy

5.1. Realize the full potential of technology to identify and meet the needs of judiciary users and the public for information, service, and access to the courts.

Background and Commentary

The judiciary uses advanced and evolving IT infrastructure and services. Case management systems are being modernized, while other systems are being updated and refined. Services for the public and other stakeholders are being enhanced, and systems have been strengthened to provide reliable service during growing usage and dependence. Collaboration and idea sharing among local courts, and between courts and the Administrative Office, foster continued innovation in the application of technology. In addition, technology allows for exponentially more data to be collected, stored, and managed, leading to increased effectiveness in supporting evidence-based decision making.

The effective use of advanced and intelligent applications and systems will provide critical support for judges and other court users. This plan includes a goal of supporting the continued modernization of the judiciary's technology infrastructure, while encouraging a judiciary-wide perspective for the development of enterprise systems and applications. These efforts all further the judiciary's commitment to the security of judiciary-related records and information. The plan also aligns with the Judiciary IT Modernization and Cybersecurity Strategy, developed in 2022, as a multi-year strategy for modernizing and better securing the judiciary's systems, networks, and data.

The effective use of technology is critical to furthering strategic components of this plan, particularly those essential to judiciary efforts to contain costs, and to effectively allocate and manage resources (Strategy 3.1). Technology also supports improvements in the delivery of justice (Strategy 1.2); the accessibility of the judiciary for litigants and the public (Strategies 1.3, 1.4, and 2.5); judiciary accountability mechanisms (Strategies 2.1, 2.2, and 4.3); efforts to strengthen judicial security (Strategy 3.2); and the delivery of training (Strategies 1.5, 2.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3). In addition, the judiciary must be capable of defending against the growing threat of cyberattacks from domestic and foreign actors, including individual and state-backed threats, and ensuring the resiliency and integrity of judiciary IT systems.

An effective technology program is also dependent upon the successful implementation of other strategies in this plan. Our IT modernization and cybersecurity initiatives depend heavily upon securing adequate resources (Strategy 1.1). In a rapidly changing field requiring the support of highly trained people, it is critical that the judiciary succeed in recruiting, developing, and retaining highly competent employees (Strategy 4.1).

Implementation Goals

- 5.1.a Ensure that court and national systems are covered by the continuous diagnostics and mitigation program, which delivers cybersecurity tools, integration services, and dashboards to help improve the judiciary's security posture.

- 5.1.b Continue to build, maintain, and enhance robust and flexible technology systems and applications that anticipate and respond to the judiciary's requirements for efficient communications, record-keeping, electronic case filing, public access, case management, and administrative support. Modernize the judiciary IT infrastructure and systems to ensure continuous system up time for the judiciary's enterprise systems and public-facing systems.
- 5.1.c Ensure that judiciary IT staff have the necessary skillsets in relevant, cutting-edge technologies through ongoing education programs.
- 5.1.d Establish an AI governance framework to guide responsible adoption of AI and to manage risks and challenges presented by these new and evolving technologies. New AI applications are emerging at a very fast pace, offering substantial opportunities to enhance judiciary operations. AI also presents new challenges and risks that require careful attention. Courts around the United States, and indeed the world, are exploring uses of AI to enhance judicial performance and fairness, and may provide valuable information and experience.
- 5.1.e Establish a formal Judiciary Innovation Program that encourages active participation in the innovation of IT systems and applications across the judiciary by all members of the judiciary community. The program will focus on facilitating a process to identify innovative ideas and concepts, and through a collaborative process involving both the Administrative Office and court representatives, mature those innovations into contributions to the national IT applications portfolio.

Strategic Planning Approach for the Judicial Conference of the United States and its Committees

Committees of the Judicial Conference are responsible for long-range and strategic planning within their respective subject areas, with the nature and extent of planning activity varying by committee based on its jurisdiction.

The Executive Committee is responsible for facilitating and coordinating planning activities across the committees. Under the guidance of a designated planning coordinator, the Executive Committee hosts long-range planning meetings of committee chairs and asks committees to consider planning issues that cut across committee lines.

At its September 2010 session, the Judicial Conference approved several enhancements to the judiciary planning process:

Coordination: The Executive Committee chair may designate for a two-year renewable term an active or senior judge, who will report to that Committee, to serve as the judiciary planning coordinator. The planning coordinator facilitates and coordinates the strategic planning efforts of the Judicial Conference and its committees.

Prioritization: With suggestions from Judicial Conference committees and others, and the input of the judiciary planning coordinator, the Executive Committee identifies priorities, strategies, or goals to focus on every two years.

Integration: The committees of the Judicial Conference integrate the Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary into committee planning and policy activities, including through the development and implementation of committee strategic initiatives — projects, studies, or other efforts that have the potential to make significant contributions to the accomplishment of a strategy or goal in the plan.

Assessment of Progress: For every goal in the plan, mechanisms to measure or assess the judiciary's progress are developed.

Substantive changes to the Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary require the approval of the Conference, but the Executive Committee has the authority, as needed, to approve technical and non-controversial changes to the plan. A review of the plan takes place every five years. (JCUS-SEP 10, p. 6)

Once approved by the Judicial Conference, updated or revised editions of the Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary supersede previous long-range and strategic plans as planning instruments to guide future policy-making and administrative actions within the scope of Conference authority. However, the approval of an updated or revised strategic plan should not necessarily be interpreted as the rescission of the individual policies articulated in the recommendations and implementation strategies of the December 1995 *Long Range Plan for the Federal Courts*.

Acknowledgements

On the recommendation of its Executive Committee, the 2025 edition of the Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary was approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States on September 16, 2025. This edition was prepared following an assessment of the implementation of the 2020 Strategic Plan for the Federal Judiciary, an analysis of priorities and trends likely to affect the federal judiciary, and the consideration of updates and revisions proposed by Judicial Conference committees. An Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Group prepared drafts of the revised plan for review by Judicial Conference committees and consideration by the Executive Committee, which facilitates and coordinates strategic planning for the Conference and its committees.

Chairs, Committees of the Judicial Conference of the United States September 2025

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