

- No new hires
- IT upgrade put on hold

Judicial Conference of Ohio

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ROLE

The Judicial Conference of Ohio is a statutory entity within the judicial branch of state government created to continually study and recommend changes in the procedures and practices of Ohio's court system in an effort to promote a fair and effective administration of justice. This mission is accomplished primarily through the sponsorship of activities and projects, as well as the distribution of materials that allow information, experiences, and ideas to be shared with and among judges.

The conference consists of all the judges of the Supreme Court of Ohio, the courts of appeals, the courts of common pleas, the municipal courts, and the county courts. The membership of the conference currently consists of approximately 709 active and 150 retired judges. In addition, the Supreme Court of Ohio, the courts of appeals, the Ohio Common Pleas Judges Association, the Ohio Association of Probate Court Judges, the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, and the Association of Municipal-County Judges of Ohio are members of the conference. Members are required to pay annual dues and, although they receive no compensation for services rendered to the conference, may receive reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses.

The general charge and supervision of the administration of the conference's affairs rests with the executive committee and its chair. The executive committee is comprised of 40 judges, including representatives of all six judicial associations. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio serves as the honorary chairman of the conference. Currently, the conference has 12 full-time staff, including the executive director who is appointed by the six officers of the executive committee, including the Chief Justice.

Agency In Brief					
Number of Employees	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill(s)
	2002	2003	2002	2003	
12	\$1.3 million	\$1.3 million	\$1.1 million	\$1.1 million	Am. Sub. H.B. 94

OVERVIEW


The cost of administering the conference's daily business is borne by a single GRF line item (018-321, Operating Expenses), while the expenses associated with supporting the work of its 19 permanent

committees and conducting various conferences, workshops, and special projects are covered by its lone non-GRF line item (018-601, Ohio Jury Instructions).

The conference is currently staffed by 12 full-time employees and had planned to add one new full-time staff person in FY 2002 to perform various desktop publishing tasks. The total annual cost of that new support staff person, including salary and fringe benefits, was estimated at \$43,000. As the level of GRF support appropriated in the FY 2002-2003 biennial budget is less than the conference requested by roughly 7 percent, this additional staff person will not be hired. Additionally, the conference had budgeted for annual compensation increases of no more than 3 percent. In FY 2002 at least, staff will be awarded increases in their annual compensation as planned; however, they will be delayed by approximately six months as a cost saving measure.

Aside from these personnel issues, the conference is planning to move into the Ohio Courts Building from its current location in a private office building, possibly as early as FY 2004. Until such a move is made, the conference will continue to lease its current office space under the assumption that the cost of the commercial office space lease will increase by no more than 3 percent in each of the next two fiscal years.

The conference had planned as part of their FY 2002-2003 biennial budget to replace some of its office equipment in preparation for their eventual move. Of particular importance, in the conference's view, was the replacement of their personal computers due to the need to be compatible with technology used by the Supreme Court of Ohio, a technology upgrade that was expected to cost approximately \$40,000. Given the constraints created by the conference's FY 2002-2003 biennial budget, it appears unlikely that any such technology upgrades will be made, at least in the foreseeable future.

More broadly, the conference will continue to consult with courts around the state to assist them in developing more advanced and uniform information technology systems that will better enable judges to interact electronically. The various courts around the state are very dissimilar in terms of the levels of technology used in practice. 

FY 2002 - 2003 Final Appropriation Amounts

All Fund Groups

Line Item Detail by Agency			FY 1999:	FY 2000:	FY 2001:	FY 2002 Appropriations:	% Change 2001 to 2002:	FY 2003 Appropriations:	% Change 2002 to 2003:
Report For: Main Operating Appropriations Bill			Version: Enacted						
JCO Judicial Conference of Ohio									
GRF	018-321	Operating Expenses	\$ 593,942	\$ 993,580	\$1,063,940	\$ 1,093,586	2.79%	\$ 1,124,207	2.80%
GRF	018-502	Court Security Subsidy	\$ 2,633,422	\$ 7,966,983		\$ 0	N/A	\$ 0	N/A
General Revenue Fund Total			\$ 3,227,364	\$ 8,960,563	\$ 1,063,940	\$ 1,093,586	2.79%	\$ 1,124,207	2.80%
403	018-601	Ohio Jury Instructions	\$ 128,216	\$ 161,385	\$187,621	\$ 200,000	6.60%	\$ 200,000	0.00%
General Services Fund Group Total			\$ 128,216	\$ 161,385	\$ 187,621	\$ 200,000	6.60%	\$ 200,000	0.00%
Judicial Conference of Ohio Total			\$ 3,355,580	\$ 9,121,948	\$ 1,251,561	\$ 1,293,586	3.36%	\$ 1,324,207	2.37%