



Ohio Judicial Conference

Policy Statement

POLICY STATEMENT ON JUDICIAL ALLOTMENT & COURT CONSOLIDATION

Prepared by

Ohio Judicial Conference Court Administration
Committee

Approved by

Ohio Judicial Conference Executive Committee

March 14, 2014; re-affirmed September 18, 2024

What is the Ohio Judicial Conference?

The Ohio Judicial Conference is dedicated to serving all Ohio judges. The Judicial Conference is the voice of the judiciary & a primary resource to ensure the fair, unbiased, open & effective administration of justice.

What is a Policy Statement?

A Policy Statement describes as objectively and accurately as possible the position of the Ohio Judicial Conference. Typically policy statements are developed by a standing committee of the Ohio Judicial Conference and presented to the full Executive Committee for their consideration. All policy statements are approved by the full Executive Committee of the Ohio Judicial Conference. The Ohio Judicial Conference prepares these statements to clarify and explain the position the Judicial Conference has taken with regard to a particular issue that the Judicial Conference has determined relevant to the administration of justice.

What is the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee establishes Judicial Conference policy and adopts resolutions that express judicial consensus.

In addition to the Judicial Conference Officers and Executive Director, the Executive Committee is composed of the co-chairs of the standing committees of the Judicial Conference; the presiding officers and presiding officers elect of Ohio's judicial associations; and the Administrative Director of the Supreme Court of Ohio.

Ohio Judicial Conference

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Ohio courts are committed to public access to justice. The Ohio Judicial Conference believes Ohio judges have a constitutional responsibility and duty to protect the administration of justice. They must ensure that budgetary, structural, or other changes to Ohio courts do not have a negative impact on the capacity of judges to operate and maintain the courts and provide access to justice to the citizens of the state of Ohio.

The Ohio Judicial Conference has adopted the following policy as guidance to local courts when considering structural changes to an Ohio court.

In multi-judge courts, when judgeships will be vacant due to a judicial retirement, death, or other cause, the courts should undertake a process of assessing the continued need for the judgeship. No judgeship should be automatically filled until the court studies whether the judgeship is justified according to prevailing caseload, workload, and other factors affecting the reasonable and necessary operation and maintenance of the court.

All courts should periodically evaluate the operation of their courts, including the addition or reduction of judgeships.

The creation, elimination, or consolidation of judicial positions should first be studied and evaluated pursuant to procedures and policies established and employed by the Supreme Court of Ohio. Bills that seek to create or eliminate judicial positions or changes in court territory have historically followed this evaluative process, and the Judicial Conference disfavors efforts to change the organization of courts and judgeships without this study and recommendation by the Supreme Court.

All courts are encouraged to adopt efficient and effective practices and to implement cost-saving measures. Any innovations should be carefully considered and consequences weighed so as to avoid any unnecessary or

unanticipated impact on the courts. Of primary significance is that transitions should minimize any disruption in court services and to the administration of justice for the public, attorneys, litigants, jurors, witnesses, or others who use Ohio's courts.

The Ohio Judicial Conference believes that the judiciary is an independent branch of government and that all decisions to restructure Ohio courts should be a primary decision of the courts in collaboration with the local funding authorities, the legislative and executive branches of government, as well as members of the local bar and legal community. The fair administration of justice should always be the primary consideration and attempts to achieve cost savings at the expense of the administration of justice should be resisted.