

# Judicial Conference of Ohio

- Current staffing and service levels to be maintained
- Moneys earmarked for State Council of Uniform State Laws

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## OVERVIEW

### Duties and Responsibilities

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.

The Conference consists of all 721 active judges in Ohio, as well as six judicial associations. The general charge and supervision of the administration of the Conference's affairs rests with judges who serve on the Executive Committee, which is comprised of approximately 50 members.

The Conference has 11 staff members, including the executive director who is appointed by the officers of the Executive Committee. Conference staff provide administrative and research support for more than 20 permanent and *ad hoc* committees that involve over 200 judges. While judges serving on committees receive no compensation for services rendered to the Conference, judges may receive reimbursement for reasonable and necessary expenses.

### Agency In Brief

The following table selectively summarizes Conference appropriations and staffing information.

Agency In Brief					
Number of Employees*	Total Appropriations-All Funds		GRF Appropriations		Appropriation Bill(s)
	2008	2009	2008	2009	
11	\$1,335,710	\$1,365,281	\$985,710	\$1,015,281	Am. Sub. H.B. 119

\*Employee count obtained from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) payroll reports as of June 15, 2007.

The cost of the Conference's day-to-day business is covered by a single GRF line item 018-321, Operating Expenses, while the expenses associated with supporting the work of its *ad hoc* and permanent committees and conducting various conferences, workshops, and special projects are covered by its lone non-GRF line item 018-601, Ohio Jury Instructions.

### State Council of Uniform State Laws

The Conference is obligated to pay the expenses associated with the State Council of Uniform State Laws, which consists of four commissioners appointed by the Governor, and collects and digests data concerning the prevailing law in the United States and other countries, upon such subjects where uniformity is important. The Conference essentially acts as a pass-through funding conduit for the

Council. According to the Conference, the earmark is primarily used for membership fees and travel reimbursements for Ohio's delegation in relation to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL).

Contained in the enacted budget is a temporary law provision earmarking GRF funds of up to \$71,000 in FY 2008 and up to \$73,000 FY 2009 for this purpose. The Conference has informed LSC fiscal staff that, based on recent communications from NCCUSL, the earmarked amounts are shy of what will actually be needed by around \$5,000 in each fiscal year.

## ANALYSIS OF THE ENACTED BUDGET

For budget purposes, as detailed below, the Judicial Conference of Ohio is considered a single program series agency and its activities are not subdivided into separate programs.

### Single Program Series

### Education and Information

**Purpose:** To 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

The following table shows the two line items that are used to fund the Conference's Education and Information activities, as well as the enacted funding levels.

Fund	ALI	Title	FY 2008	FY 2009
<b>General Revenue Fund</b>				
GRF	018-321	Operating Expenses	\$985,710	\$1,015,281
<b>General Revenue Fund Subtotal</b>			<b>\$985,710</b>	<b>\$1,015,281</b>
<b>General Services Fund</b>				
403	018-601	Ohio Jury Instructions	\$350,000	\$350,000
<b>General Services Fund Subtotal</b>			<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
<b>Total Funding: Education &amp; Information</b>			<b>\$1,335,710</b>	<b>\$1,365,281</b>

**Program Description:** The Judicial Conference of Ohio was established by Am. Sub. H.B. 205 of the 105th General Assembly. The Conference was created to promote fair and effective administration of justice, and as an avenue for judges to exchange experiences and suggestions relative to the operation of the state's judicial system. These goals are accomplished by educating and informing judges through conferences, videos, mentoring programs, and numerous publications related to the state of the judiciary in Ohio.

**Funding Source:** (1) GRF, and (2) annual membership dues, conference registration fees, royalties, and other miscellaneous sources, including various one-time grants

**Implication of the Budget:** Under the enacted budget, the Conference received an amount of funding that should be sufficient to maintain current service levels and cover the payroll costs associated with 11 full-time permanent staff positions. The Conference also requested additional GRF moneys for the purpose of hiring three new full-time staff; the amounts necessary to cover the associated payroll costs, however, were not appropriated, which means that the hiring of any new staff appears unlikely at this time. As previously noted, the annual GRF amounts earmarked for the expenses of the State Council of Uniform State Laws appear to be less than what the Conference will need to cover its obligations in each fiscal year by around \$5,000.

**FY 2008 - 2009 Final Appropriation Amounts**

**All Fund Group**

<i>Line Item Detail by Agency</i>			<i>FY 2005:</i>	<i>FY 2006:</i>	<i>FY 2007 Adj. Appropriations:</i>	<i>FY 2008 Appropriations:</i>	<i>% Change 2007 to 2008:</i>	<i>FY 2009 Appropriations:</i>	<i>% Change 2008 to 2009:</i>
<b>Report For: Main Operating Appropriations Bill</b>			<b>Version: Enacted</b>						
<b>JCO Judicial Conference of Ohio</b>									
GRF	018-321	Operating Expenses	\$ 956,998	\$ 956,949	\$ 957,000	\$ 985,710	3.00%	\$ 1,015,281	3.00%
<b>General Revenue Fund Total</b>			<b>\$ 956,998</b>	<b>\$ 956,949</b>	<b>\$ 957,000</b>	<b>\$ 985,710</b>	<b>3.00%</b>	<b>\$ 1,015,281</b>	<b>3.00%</b>
403	018-601	Ohio Jury Instructions	\$ 224,672	\$ 248,271	\$ 225,000	\$ 350,000	55.56%	\$ 350,000	0.00%
<b>General Services Fund Group Total</b>			<b>\$ 224,672</b>	<b>\$ 248,271</b>	<b>\$ 225,000</b>	<b>\$ 350,000</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>\$ 350,000</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Judicial Conference of Ohio Total</b>			<b>\$ 1,181,670</b>	<b>\$ 1,205,220</b>	<b>\$ 1,182,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,335,710</b>	<b>13.00%</b>	<b>\$ 1,365,281</b>	<b>2.21%</b>