

# In Profile: The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts – Annual Report 2017

## The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

### Statutory Authority

28 U.S.C. §§ 601-612. Congress established the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) in 1939 to provide administrative support to federal courts.

The director of the AO carries out statutory responsibilities and performs other duties under the supervision and direction of the principal policy-making body of the Judiciary, the Judicial Conference of the United States.

### Responsibilities

All responsibility for the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts is vested in the director, who is the chief administrative officer for the federal courts. Under his or her direction, the agency carries out the following functions:

- Implements the policies of the Judicial Conference of the United States and supports its network of 25 committees (including advisory committees) by providing staff to plan meetings, develop agendas, prepare reports, and provide substantive analytical support to the development of issues, projects, and recommendations;
- Supports judicial officers, including active and senior appellate and district court judges, bankruptcy judges, and magistrate judges;
- Advises court administrators regarding procedural and administrative matters;
- Provides program leadership and support for circuit executives, clerks of court, staff attorneys, probation and pretrial services officers, federal defender organizations, panel attorneys, circuit librarians, conference attorneys/circuit mediators, bankruptcy administrators, and other court employees;
- Provides centralized core administrative functions such as payroll, personnel, and accounting services;
- Administers the Judiciary's personnel systems and coordinates its fair employment practices program;

- Develops and executes the budget and provides guidance to courts for local budget execution;
- Defines resource requirements through forecasts of caseloads, work-measurement analyses, assessment of program changes, and reviews of individual court requirements;
- Provides legislative counsel and services to the Judiciary; acts as liaison with the legislative and executive branches;
- Prepares manuals and a variety of other print and online publications;
- Collects and analyzes detailed statistics on the workload of the courts;
- Monitors and reviews the performance of programs and use of resources;
- Conducts education and training programs on administrative responsibilities;
- Audits Judiciary financial operations and provides guidance on management oversight and stewardship issues;
- Handles public affairs for the Judiciary, responding to inquiries from the media and the public;
- Develops new ways for handling court business and provides assistance to court employees to help them implement programs and improve operations;
- Develops and supports automated systems and technologies used throughout the courts;
- Coordinates with the General Services Administration on the construction and management of the Judiciary's space and facilities; and
- Monitors the U.S. Marshals Service's implementation of the Judicial Facilities Security Program, including court security officers, and executes security policy for the Judiciary.

## The AO in Brief

### Office of the Director

**James C. Duff, Director, July 2006 – September 2011, January 2015 – present**

Serves as the chief executive.

### Office of the Deputy Director

**Lee Ann Bennett, Deputy Director**

Chief advisor to the director on day-to-day management, strategic and tactical planning, and operational matters. Ensures that activities of all agency elements are functioning in support of stated management goals.

## Department of Program Services

### **Mary Louise Mitterhoff, Associate Director**

Responsible for providing a wide array of programs, services, and support to federal judges, clerks of court, probation and pretrial services officers, federal public defenders, CJA panel attorneys, and their staffs. Develops and maintains computer applications, including case-management systems, to satisfy program requirements. Ensures that data, analysis, and reporting functions meet the needs of the Judiciary.

## Department of Administrative Services

### **James R. Baugher, Associate Director**

Responsible for the Judiciary's budget, accounting, and procurement functions; human resources functions; space and facilities programs, including courthouse design and technology coordination; and long-range facilities planning and court security. Develops and supports automated administrative systems and services for the AO and the Judiciary, including solutions and support for financial management, personnel and payroll processing, and data integration.

## Department of Technology Services

### **Joseph R. Peters Jr., Associate Director**

Responsible for the Judiciary's information technology systems support and deployment, infrastructure management, cloud technology and hosting, IT solutions, and security, as well as the AO technology office. Plans and coordinates national IT policy, standards, architecture, training, and security for the Judiciary.

## General Counsel

### **Sheryl L. Walter, General Counsel**

Provides legal counsel and services to the director and staff of the Administrative Office and to the Judicial Conference; responds to legal inquiries from judges and other court officials regarding court operations; represents the AO in bid protests and other administrative litigation; and coordinates and supports federal rules of practice and procedure. The Office of the General Counsel also supports the Judicial Conference committees involved with issues related to judicial ethics, including the filing of financial disclosure reports from judges and Judiciary employees, responding to inquiries from judges and judicial employees about the application and interpretation of the Codes of Conduct, and supporting administration of the judicial misconduct and disability process.

## Judicial Conference Secretariat

**Katherine Hord Simon, Judicial Conference Secretariat Officer**

Coordinates the agency's performance of the staff functions required by the Judicial Conference and its committees; maintains the official records of the Judicial Conference; responds to judges and other court personnel regarding Conference activities; and coordinates the advisory group process.

## Legislative Affairs

**Cordia A. Strom, Legislative Affairs Officer**

Provides legislative counsel and services to the Judiciary; maintains liaison with the legislative branch; manages the coordination of matters affecting the Judiciary with the states, legal entities, and other organizations; develops and produces judicial impact statements.

## Public Affairs

**David A. Sellers, Public Affairs Officer**

Carries out public information, community outreach, and communications programs for the federal Judiciary and manages media relations and web and video production services for the Administrative Office.