

## Introduction

The Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) are the voice of state courts on issues of common concern to state judiciaries. To fulfill this role, the Conferences sponsor educational programs, develop policy papers, and advocate common positions that ensure the continued integrity and independence of state judicial processes, preserve the financial health of the third branch of state government, and promote sound management policies and practices for court administration.

# About the . . . Conference of Chief Justices



The Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) was founded in 1949 to provide an opportunity for the highest judicial officers of the states to meet and discuss matters of importance in improving the administration of justice, rules and methods of procedure, and the organization and operation of state courts and judicial systems, and to make recommendations and bring about improvements on such matters.

Membership in the Conference of Chief Justices consists of the highest judicial officers of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories of American Samoa, Guam and the Virgin Islands. The Conference of Chief Justices is governed by a Board of Directors and has several standing,

temporary and special committees to assist the Conference in meeting its objectives. In 1983, the Board of Directors voted to adopt a non-profit corporate form of organization.

Through resolutions, committees, and special task forces, CCJ has addressed such issues as legislation affecting federalism, including mass torts, class actions, and the Trade legislation; violence against women; development of problem-solving courts; privacy and access to court records; self-represented litigation; the handling of child abuse and neglect cases; victims' rights; and DNA and competence of counsel.

## **Mission Statement**

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (the Conference) has engaged in an introspective process, the purpose of which was to define its role in the administration of justice in the United States, its commonwealths and territories;

WHEREAS, members of the Conference have reached a consensus concerning the role of the Conference and desire to adopt a statement formally describing the Conference's mission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the mission of the Conference of Chief Justices is to improve the administration of justice in the states, commonwealths and territories of the United States. The Conference accomplishes this mission by the effective mobilization of the collective resources of the highest judicial officers of the states, commonwealths and territories to:

- develop, exchange, and disseminate information and knowledge of value to state judicial systems;
- educate, train and develop leaders to become effective managers of state judicial systems;
- promote the vitality, independence and effectiveness of state judicial systems;
- develop and advance policies in support of common interests and shared values of state judicial systems; and
- support adequate funding and resources for the operations of the state courts.

Adopted by the Conference of Chief Justices on February 23, 1995.

## **Organization**

CCJ meets twice a year. An annual meeting is held jointly with COSCA in late July or early August. The midyear meeting is held separately from COSCA in late January or early February. The meetings are organized to serve four major functions: to provide education to the members; to examine policy issues confronting the state judiciaries; to conduct the business of the conference; and to provide opportunities for networking among the members.

There are four officers of the Conference, elected at the Annual Meeting, who serve for a one year term. The members of the Board of Directors are also elected for a fixed term of office at the Annual Meeting. The business and policy activities of CCJ are carried out through its several committees. The names and missions of the committees change from time to time as new issues arise and old ones decline in importance. Membership on these committees is by appointment of the President but the interests of the members are actively solicited. Many of the committees are jointly organized with COSCA, reflecting the close partnership between the two conferences in leading the state judiciaries.

Work on the committees is carried out during the Annual and Midyear meetings, and by conference call in the interim. The policy positions of the CCJ are expressed in the form of resolutions and policy papers that are formally adopted at the business meetings on the recommendation of the committees or individual members.