



## Judiciary Benefits

Administrative Office staff develop benefits programs for judges and Judiciary employees; administer personnel, payroll, retirement, and insurance programs; and explain new benefits or changes to existing programs. Over the past two years the Judiciary has introduced a number of highly successful supplemental employee benefits. Such options as medical spending reimbursement accounts, long-term care insurance, and public transportation subsidies are among the Judiciary's efforts to attract and retain a high-quality workforce.



### Flexible Benefits .....

Flexible benefits give judges and Judiciary employees the ability to pay for certain health-care and dependent-care expenses on a pre-tax basis. The second annual open enrollment for flexible benefits was held early in fiscal year 2001. Employee participation increased to 27 percent of the workforce during the second year.

Judges and Judiciary employees increased their take home pay by \$22.3 million in 2001.

Also, beginning January 1, 2002, the maximum election amount for health care reimbursement accounts was increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 per year. Director Mecham offered the

### Long-Term Care Insurance .....

A second open season for purchasing long-term care insurance was held in spring 2001. The participation rate for this program is nearly 16 percent of the total Judiciary population, a rate considerably higher than the industry average for employer-sponsored long-term care programs. A unique feature of the Judiciary's program is that it guarantees coverage for current judges and judicial employees.

### Commuter Benefits .....

The Administrative Office introduced commuter benefits to the Judiciary in early 2001. Now judges and employees can pay for certain commuter mass transit and parking costs on a pre-tax basis up to \$65 a month for transit services and \$175 for parking.

### Professional Liability Insurance .....

Last year, the amount that judges can be reimbursed for purchasing professional liability insurance was set at one-half the premium cost, regardless of the amount. Previously reimbursement had been limited to one-half of the annual policy cost or \$150 per year, whichever was less. In March 2001, the cap of \$150 was lifted for other groups of court officials as well.

### Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance .....

In 1999, the Office of Personnel Management determined that a restructuring of the group life insurance premium rate schedule was necessary because of a new law that vastly expanded the number of federal employees eligible to continue coverage after retirement. If OPM's proposed new rate schedule had gone into effect, Article III judges 65 years of age or older would have been required to pay substantially more for the same life insurance benefits they had in effect on April 30, 1999.

The Administrative Office mobilized every available resource to fight OPM's action, and OPM agreed to hold in abeyance for at least two years (until April 24, 2001) the planned FEGLI rate increases for judges. OPM stated that it would continue to hold the rate increase in abeyance until at least the end of calendar year 2001.

The Administrative Office was successful in getting legislation passed that will allow the Director, in accordance with Judicial Conference policy, to pay on

behalf of all active and senior judges aged 65 or older who are enrolled in FEGLI “the full amount of any increases in the cost of the judges’ insurance imposed after April 24, 1999.”

## Information Technology

In 2001, Administrative Office information technology initiatives significantly improved the Judiciary’s ability to collect, process, analyze, and share information.

Agency staff made available to courts blanket purchasing agreements and other competitive contracts for courts to acquire computers and related equipment software. The contracts can be used by all courts and offer streamlined options for buying automation equipment.

### Case Management/Electronic

#### Case Files (CM/ECF) .....

The Case Management/Electronic Case Files system, which permits courts to receive electronic documents and to maintain electronic case files, is bringing improved public access to federal court records while helping reduce costs for litigants and courts. As documents are filed electronically, they are provided simultaneously to attorneys of record and unrepresented parties, through the PACER system, and they can download or print and file them however they choose.

By the end of fiscal year 2001, 67 courts had begun implementing CM/ECF, a joint effort of the courts and the Administrative Office. More than 10,000 attorneys had filed documents electronically, and more than 500,000 cases involving more than two million documents are in CM/ECF systems, saving valuable court resources and providing a dramatically improved level of public access to court records.

#### New E-mail System .....

Administrative Office and court representatives collaborated with contractors to implement Lotus Domino/Notes, the Judiciary’s new e-mail system. By the end of the fiscal year 2001, the D.C. Circuit, Court of Federal Claims, Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, Second Circuit, Third Circuit, Fourth Circuit, and the Administrative Office all had migrated successfully to the new system. Implementation will be complete Judiciary-wide in spring 2002.

Lotus Domino/Notes is acknowledged as the leading client server e-mail and groupware product. It is stable and offers many add-on features. It also protects the Judiciary’s investment in earlier systems by allowing for integration with those systems.

To ease the transition to the new system, the Administrative Office e-mail migration team developed a J-Net site for systems managers, court unit managers, and end users.

### Courtroom Technology .....

In fiscal year 2001, equipment, wiring, and training needed for installation of video evidence presentation systems, video-conferencing systems, and electronic means for taking the record were provided for more than 100 courthouses. Also, chief judges now have the authority to procure such equipment, as well as design and installation services to retrofit existing courtrooms.

These efforts are being facilitated by the oversight of a courthouse/courtroom technology council at the Administrative Office to ensure coordination by the space and facilities program of all projects involving courtroom technology and telephone installations, wiring and cabling installations for data networks, and installations of the Federal Judicial Television Network satellite services.

The Administrative Office is developing an online computer-based training program on procurement of courtroom technologies and design and installation of audiovisual systems.

#### Courtroom Technology Conference

A three-day conference held in June at the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building brought together representatives from the courts, the Federal Judicial Center, the Administrative Office, and courtroom technology design and installation firms. The conference focused on service, costs, and consistency in the delivery of services to the courts. An immediate benefit was improved communications among contractors and Judiciary staff.

### Computer Security Enhancement .....

Administrative Office staff began developing a comprehensive plan for improving computer security throughout the Judiciary. While under development, efforts will continue to aggressively