



OKLAHOMA
Council on
Judicial Complaints

Council on Judicial Complaints

FY 2026 Budget Hearing Presentation

Submitted by: Taylor Henderson, Executive Director

Taylor Henderson

Executive Director



The **Council on Judicial Complaints** is the investigatory arm of a three-tiered disciplinary system designed to address judicial misconduct. The Council investigates allegations made against all state judicial officers. Judicial misconduct includes specific violations set forth in the Oklahoma Constitution such as oppression and corruption, violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct, and other state law.

If the Council determines a judge has committed misconduct requisite of removal from office, it may send its Findings and Recommendations to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice, Attorney General, Governor, Oklahoma House of Representatives, or Oklahoma Bar Association Board of Governors. Upon receipt, the entity to which the Council directed its Findings may, in its discretion, file a Petition with the Oklahoma Court on the Judiciary seeking the judge's **removal from office**. If the Council determines a judge has committed misconduct but discipline less than removal is appropriate, the Council may send its Findings and Recommendations to the Chief Justice of the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The Chief Justice may impose **public or private discipline**. The Council is also empowered to issue **letters of warning or caution** to a judicial officer following an investigation. Unless a Petition is filed with the Court on the Judiciary, the Council's investigation is confidential and afforded the same protections as information presented to the multi county grand jury.

Council on Judicial Complaints



Chairman
Rick Rose, Esq.



Member
Zack Taylor



Vice Chairwoman
Angela Ailles-
Bahm, Esq.



Founded in 1974, the Council was originally a subdivision of the Supreme Court; however, in 1999 the Council became an executive branch agency. Today, the Council on Judicial Complaints is comprised of 3 divisions for budgeting purposes: 1) General Operations, to include both judicial misconduct investigations and financial administration; 2) Judicial Education; and 3) IT.

The Council is comprised of 3 members appointed by the Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tempore, and the Oklahoma Bar Association to five-year terms. The Agency employs three full time employees and utilizes 74 O.S. 20i contracts through the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General for additional legal representation, as needed.

Agency Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision: To better the administration of justice in this state by preserving the principles of justice.

Mission: To efficiently and impartially investigate complaints regarding the conduct of persons holding judicial positions and to determine if such complaints should be the subject of an action before the Court on the Judiciary, the Oklahoma Supreme Court, or should be dismissed.

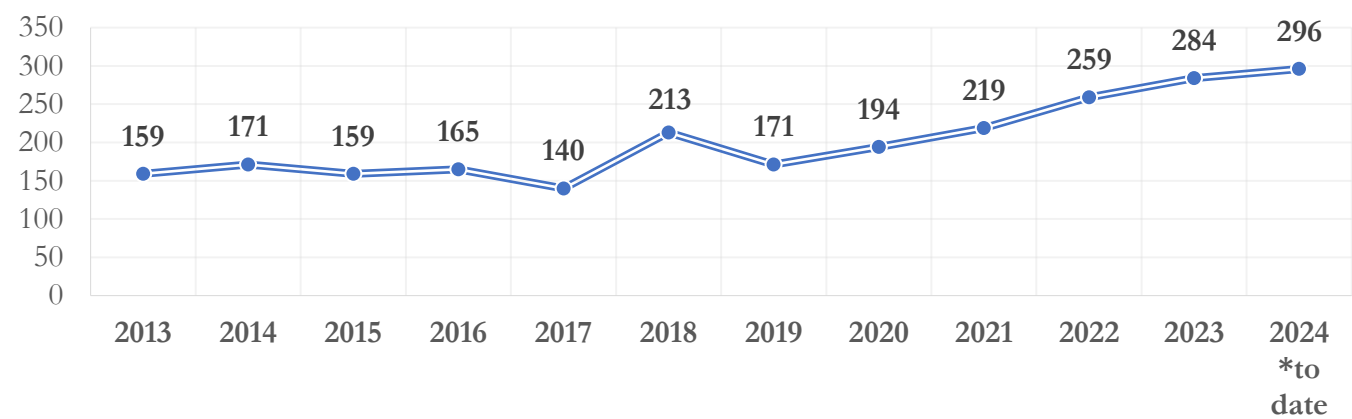
Core Values: impartiality, public confidence, and integrity.



Agency Goals and Key Performance Metrics

Goal		Metric	FY 24 Target*	FY 24 Actuals	FY 25 Target	FY 29 Target
1	Fairly and efficiently investigate complaints of judicial misconduct	Percentage of complaints issued a disposition within 90 days of receipt of the complaint	93%	67%	90%	90%
2	Facilitate a more educated and informed judiciary	Number of judicial officers reached	300	350	150	150

●=Number of Complaints Filed Since 2013



Note: Include the FY 2024 target metrics from the Strategic Plan submitted in 2022.

Accomplishments

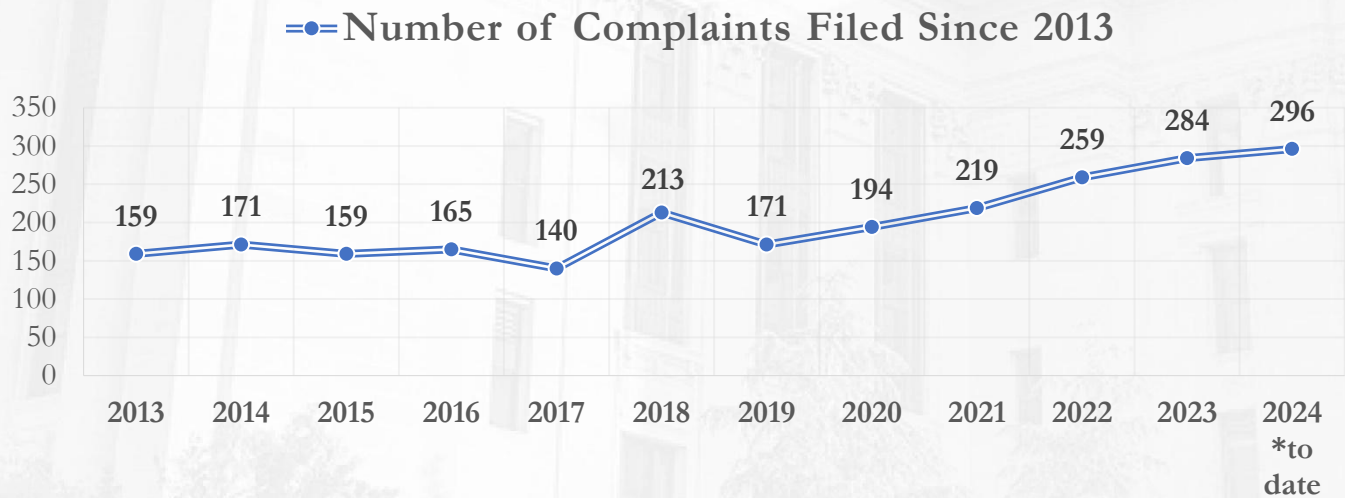
Top accomplishments for FY 2024 – FY 2025

- 1) Successfully investigated and submitted to the Council for consideration a record number of complaints filed with the agency despite decreased resources
- 2) Restructured General Counsel position to address increase in number of investigations and were able to quickly resume normal disposition numbers
- 3) Partnered with the Oklahoma Supreme Court to amend the Supreme Court's Rules Governing Complaints on Judicial Misconduct to allow the Council to issue letters of caution or warning for instances of misconduct in which formal discipline is not warranted



Analysis of Agency Challenges

	Challenge	Current Actions (Briefly describe how the agency is currently addressing the challenge.)	Planned Actions (Briefly describe how the agency plans to address the challenge going forward.)
	Increased # of Complaints	Hired full-time general counsel to investigate complaints and advise the agency	Continually re-evaluating all agency processes to identify efficiencies



Savings & Efficiencies (Current or Planned)

Savings or Efficiency Name	Brief description of how savings were achieved	Savings in Unit of Measurement	FY 2024 (Actual \$ Savings)	FY 2025 (Projected \$ Savings)	FY 2026 (Projected \$ Savings)
<i>In-House Legal Counsel</i>	<i>Transitioned from outside legal counsel to in-house General Counsel due to increased demand/number of complaints filed with the agency</i>	<i>\$160/hr</i>	<i>\$n/a</i>	<i>\$300,000</i>	<i>\$300,000</i>

Note: When reporting savings and efficiencies, agencies should include savings associated with statewide initiatives related to fleet reduction, use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cell phones. Examples of units of measurement include square footage, headcount (employees or contractors), overtime hours reduced, processing time in hours, days, etc. For example, “42 minutes per transaction,” “20,000 square feet in office space,” or “580 overtime hours reduced in the first year.”



Projects for FY 2025

- 1) Amend agency's administrative rules and propose new legislation in an effort to create a consistent framework between Agency rules, statute, and Supreme Court Rules.
- 2) Publish and distribute handbooks and guides for practice and procedures within the judicial disciplinary process.



Projects for FY 2026

- 1) Amend agency's administrative rules and propose new legislation in an effort to create a consistent framework between Agency rules, statute, and Supreme Court Rules.
- 2) Publish and distribute handbooks and guides for practice and procedures within the judicial disciplinary process.
- 3) Focus judicial education efforts on education specifically geared toward the judicial disciplinary process and those engaged in the judicial disciplinary process.

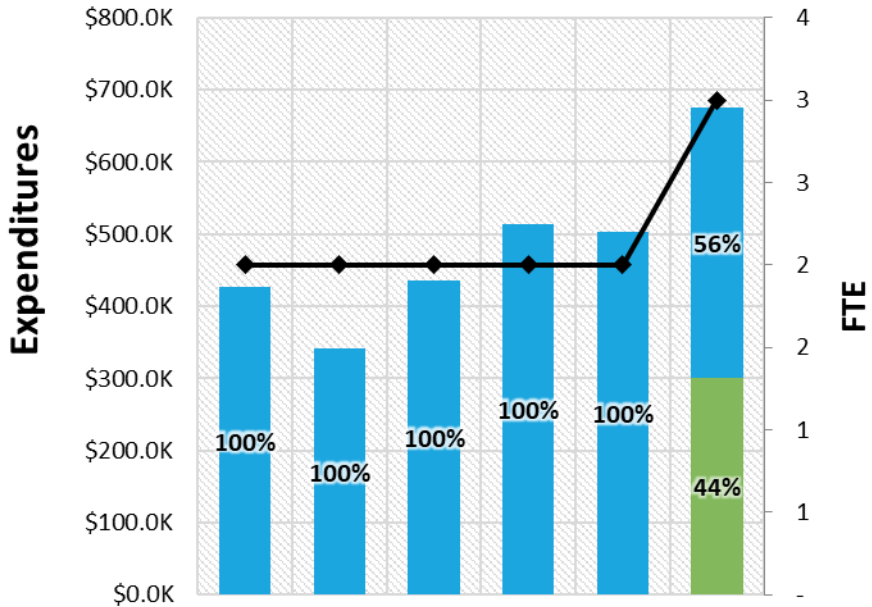


Total Historic Actual Expenditures (FY 2020-2024) and Current year Budget (FY 2025)

Explanation of Changes and Trends

Since 2018, the number of complaints received by the agency has doubled and continues to increase year over year. This has caused the agency’s operating expenses to increase accordingly. Historically, the agency employed contract legal counsel to perform investigations but beginning in FY23, this arrangement became untenable due to the number and scope of the investigations combined with an hourly legal fee. As a result, beginning in FY25, the agency transitioned to using a full time General Counsel for legal services and conducting its investigations. Simultaneously, the legislature began supplementing the agency’s fee structure by appropriating \$300,000 in addition to the approximately \$375,000/year the agency receives from district court civil filing fees.

Historic Total Actual Expenditures and Current Year Budget



	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025 YTD Budget
Appropriated						\$300.0K
Revolving	\$426.4K	\$341.1K	\$436.2K	\$514.3K	\$503.8K	\$375.1K
Federal						
Total	\$426.4K	\$341.1K	\$436.2K	\$514.3K	\$503.8K	\$675.1K
FTE	2	2	2	2	2	3



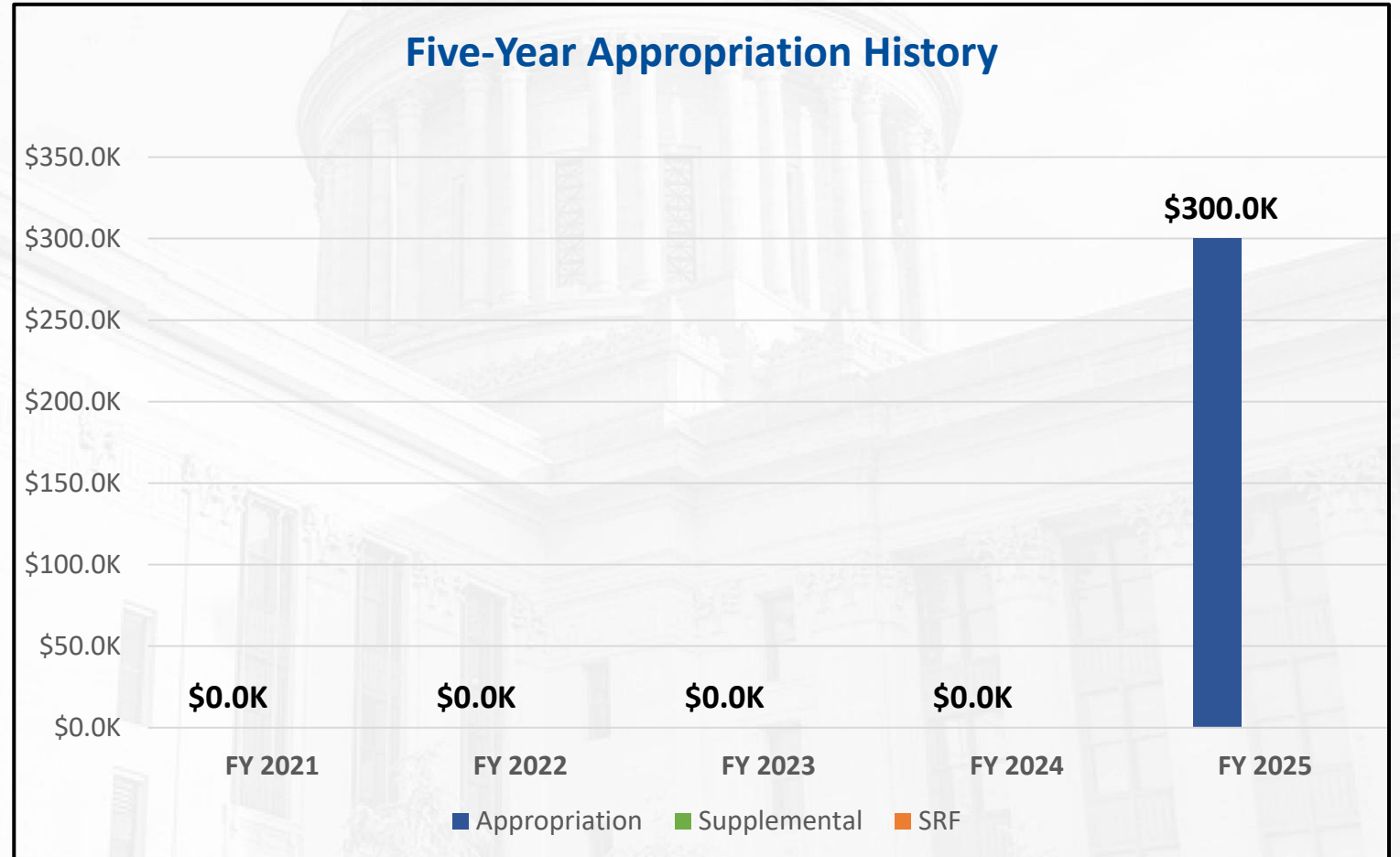
FY 2025 Budgeted Full Time Equivalents (FTE)



	FY 2025 Budgeted FTE
Total FTE	3
Supervisor FTE	1
Supervisors to Total FTE Ratio (%)	.333%
Current Budgeted but Unfilled FTE	0

Appropriation History

Fiscal Year	Legislated Appropriation (\$) <i>(Includes supplementals and SRF/ARPA if applicable.)</i>
FY 2021	\$0
FY 2022	\$0
FY 2023	\$0
FY 2024	\$0
FY 2025	\$300,000



Financial Resource Analysis

Carryover	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Total appropriated carryover amount expended (\$)	\$n/a – non appropriated	\$n/a – non appropriated	\$n/a – non appropriated	\$n/a – non appropriated

Historical Cash Balances	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Year End Revolving Fund Cash Balances <i>(All Revolving Funds)</i>	\$779,884	\$740,867	\$621,844	\$514,519

Revolving Class Fund # <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Revolving Class Fund Name <i>(Unrestricted only)</i>	Current cash balance (\$)	Projected FY 2025 year-end cash balance (\$)
20000	COJC Revolving Fund	\$538,151	\$560,000
	Total Unrestricted Revolving Fund Cash balance:	\$538,151	\$560,000



Unrestricted funds are those that are not limited by state or federal law, rule, regulation, other legally binding method, or donor restriction.

FY 2023 – 2024 Appropriation Change Review

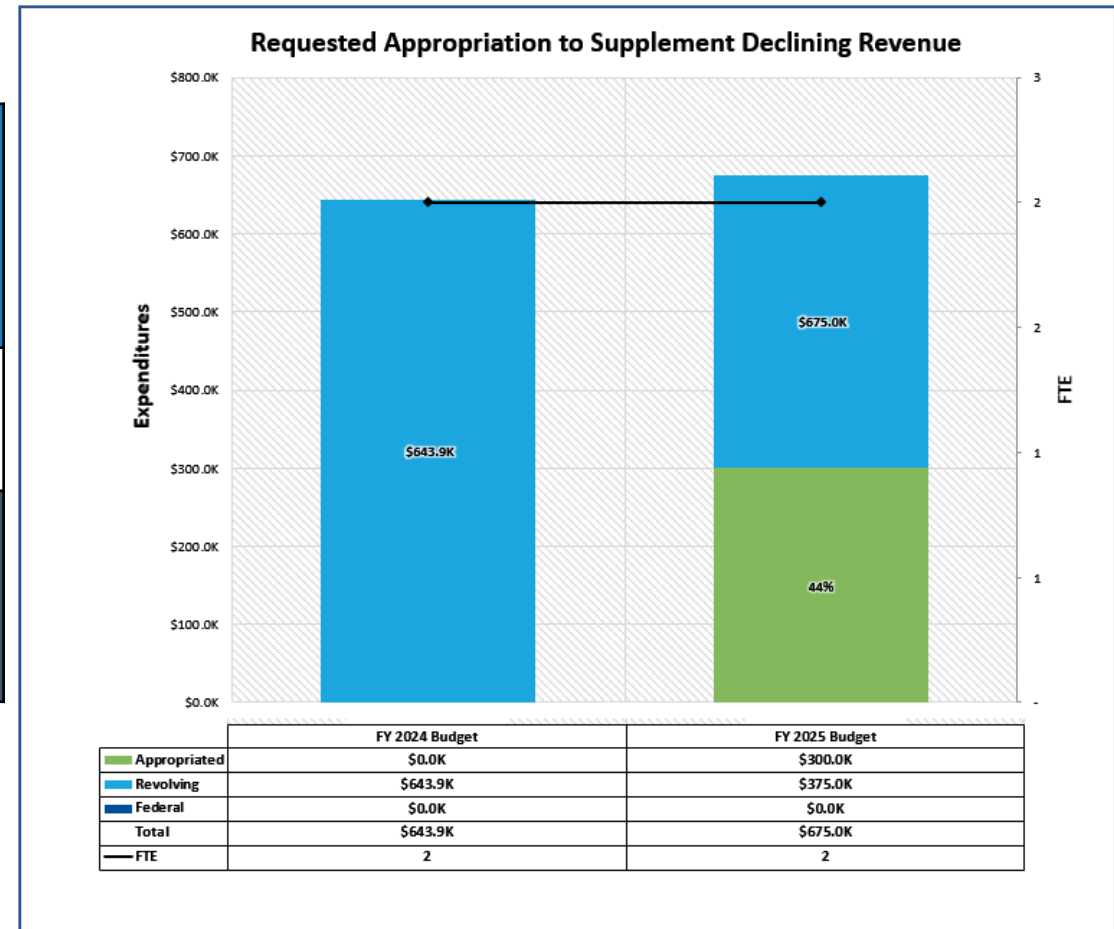
<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount FY 2023</i>	<i>Amount FY 2024</i>	<i>Total amount received FY 2023 - 24</i>	<i>Total amount expended by 11/1/2024</i>	<i>Included in FY 2025 approp? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If not expended fully, please explain.</i>
n/a – did not receive appropriations until FY2025	\$	\$	\$	\$		
Totals	\$	\$	\$	\$		



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

FY 2025 Appropriation Change Review

<i>Purpose of appropriation increase or decrease</i>	<i>Amount of increase or decrease (\$)</i>	<i>Does this need to be included in your FY 2026 appropriation? (Yes/No)</i>	<i>If yes, included in appropriation for same purpose? (Yes/No)</i>
Supplement non-appropriated fee structure	\$300,000	Yes	Yes
Total adjustment	\$300,000		



**Do not include SRF / ARPA appropriation increases.*

Budget & Supplemental Incremental Request Summary

Request Name		FY 2026 Incremental Appropriation Request Amount (\$) <i>{or FY 2025 for Supplementals}</i>	Type of Request: Recurring, One-time, or Supplemental
1	Increased Investigation Costs – general operating expenses	\$25,000	Recurring
2	Employee Pay Structure – bring all employees to midpoint salary range	\$40,000	Recurring
3	Judicial Education – training for the members of the Court on the Judiciary	\$50,000	Recurring



(1) Incremental Budget Request

Increased Investigation Costs – general operating expenses	
Recurring	\$ 25,000
<p>As required by statute, the Council on Judicial Complaints investigates each and every complaint it receives. Since 2018, the number of complaints received by the agency have doubled. Accordingly, operating expenses associated with additional investigations have increased. These operating costs include postage, court reporter fees and transcripts, in-state travel, witness fees, board member compensation due to increased number of meetings, and office supplies. The requested increase of \$25,000 would be utilized for these purposes. Based on complaints received to date for 2024, an additional 20% increase is anticipated for FY26.</p>	



(2) Incremental Budget Request

Employee Pay Structure	
Recurring	\$ 40,000
<p>The Council on Judicial Complaints seeks to increase employee pay to the midpoint or above midpoint rate identified by the OMES compensation study. It is a specific priority of the 3 Member Council that the current employees of the agency are properly compensated and incentivized to continue their employment at the agency.</p>	



(3) Incremental Budget Request

Judicial Education – training for members of the Court on the Judiciary

Recurring

\$50,000

By a vote of the people in 1967, the Oklahoma Constitution was amended to create the Oklahoma Court on the Judiciary which is the adjudicative body charged with determining a judicial officer's fitness to remain on the bench. The Court on the Judiciary is comprised of 10 members on the Trial Division panel and 10 members on the Appellate Division panel. When the Court on the Judiciary was first created, the Members of the Court received training relative to their specialized duties. For at least the past thirty years, however, the members of the Court on the Judiciary have not received any specialized training for this purpose. Per 20 O.S. 1651.1, the Council on Judicial Complaints is authorized to provide funding for the attendance and participation of judicial officers in judicial education programs. In light of the fact that the jurisdiction of the Court on the Judiciary is being invoked more frequently, the Council on Judicial Complaints seeks a \$50,000 appropriation for the Members of the Court and associated staff to attend the National Center for State Courts National College on Judicial Ethics in Fall 2025 and every other year thereafter.





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