

MONTANA JUDICIAL INSTITUTE



OCTOBER 15-17, 2025
MISSOULA, MONTANA

For additional information on the Montana Judicial Institute, please view our promotional video at www.mtd.uscourt.gov/montana-judicial-institute.

MONTANA JUDICIAL INSTITUTE

In October of 2025, the United States District Court for the District of Montana will hold the ninth Montana Judicial Institute in Missoula. The goal of the Institute is to heighten public understanding of the Judiciary. The Institute provides an in-depth education program for high school teachers from throughout the district. The fundamental premise of the three-day seminar is to expand teachers' knowledge of the judiciary and its role in our system of government and societal organization as a whole.

The Institute's faculty will consist of judges, professors, the clerk of the U.S. District Court, and leading Montana attorneys. The curriculum of instruction will include:

- The Rule of Law
- Anatomy of a Criminal Case
- The Jury System
- Anatomy of a Civil Case
- Tribal Jurisdiction
- Federal & State Appellate Courts
- The Bankruptcy System

This continuing education course for high school educators is open to a limited number of participants whose travel, lodging, and meal expenses will be covered. With a faculty of around twenty, the student-faculty ratio is approximately 1:1.3, extremely conducive to a rewarding educational experience. Participants will receive licensure renewal units and will be eligible for one graduate credit through the University of Montana.

Logistics & Planning

COMMITTEE PLANNING: Committee members include U.S. District Court judges, 9th Circuit lawyer representatives for the district, and the clerk of court.

VENUE PLANNING:

- Lodging arrangements have been made at a hotel near the courthouse in downtown Missoula.
- A number of the Institute's sessions will be held at the Russell Smith Federal Courthouse.

COSTS/PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENT: All expenses will be paid for the teacher participants from federal court attorney admission funds.

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Sample Agenda Topics

DAY ONE:

Welcome & Lunch

Federal Judicial System Introduction

The Rule of Law: History & Structure

Anatomy of a Civil Case

Dinner Speaker

DAY TWO:

Anatomy of a Civil Case

Anatomy of a Criminal Case

Observation of Court Hearings

The Experience of a Criminal Federal Defendant

Keynote Dinner

DAY THREE:

The Bankruptcy System

Tribal Jurisdiction

Questions & Discussion Panel

Along with the instruction received, teachers will be provided with a binder of materials that relate to the presentations, can assist in planning classroom lessons, and provide a wealth of knowledge about the third branch of government.

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Participant Comments

*Following the Institute, participants were asked to complete an evaluation.
The comments below are from the evaluations that were returned.*

ARRANGEMENTS & OVERALL LOGISTICS

“I was extremely impressed with how smooth everything was conducted.”

“This was extremely well organized and presented. The access we had to such committed, well-rounded, and intelligent people was much appreciated. I look forward to using many of the ideas and concepts throughout my social studies classes.”

CONTENT OF THE MATERIAL PRESENTED

“This was my first year attending and I had no idea what to expect. I was thoroughly impressed and engaged!”

COURSE CONTENT/TOPICS CHOSEN/TIME ALLOTMENT

“I was really impressed by the accessibility to all of the speakers. I did not expect all of the judges, lawyers, etc. to be around to chat/answer questions for three days. First rate, Montana Judicial Institute.”

VISIT TO THE COURTHOUSE

“The courthouse trip was essential to the educational experience. It is one of the most impactful parts of the Institute.”

“I was not expecting to get to experience real court. This was one of the highlights of the experience. Getting to have personal conversations with the judges and learning how they think through matters was interesting”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

“Very beneficial, I have already shared these experiences with my students.”

“This was a great experience, enjoyed talking to the judges, and lawyers, very personable people, something you do not see very often.”

“I'd like to thank all of the people who put on the Institute. Their hard work and passion for the Institute was very evident. It was a positive experience full of takeaways to bring into the classroom. Also the openness of all the lawyers and judges was incredible. They stayed with us for all the events and opened themselves up to questions. What a great experience!”

