

E-SJI NEWS

SJI Awards FY 2013 Third Quarter Grants

Follow SJI on Facebook and Twitter

For the latest information on projects, grant application deadlines, and updates. Connect with us on both forums by visiting our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.



The SJI Board of Directors met at the Supreme Court of Connecticut on June 24, 2013, to consider grant applications for the 3rd quarter of FY 2013.

A total of 13 grants were awarded during this meeting. One Project Grant was awarded to the Supreme Court of Ohio to for a statewide initiative that will provide a forum for domestic relations judges and their



justice system partners to assess protocols, examine resources, and share promising practices.

A total of nine (9) Technical Assistance (TA) Grants were awarded, including grants to: the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to test and evaluate approaches used in three states to adjudicate domestic relations cases in order to develop a triage system for these case types; the Missouri Office of the State Courts Administrator for a forms and self-represented litigant website six-language translation project; Okanogan County, Washington, to assess the performance of the Office of the Clerk; the National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) to develop a training program for judicial officers on human trafficking and increase outreach on this critical topic area; the Henderson Municipal Court in Nevada to conduct an operational review and recommend best practices to improve court administration; the Eugene Municipal Court in Oregon to assess caseflow management; the Oregon Judicial Department for a pilot project designed to improve language access in Oregon's courts; the Idaho Supreme

Court and Judicial Council for a statewide judicial performance evaluation; and, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts to develop and implement a statewide caseload data evaluation for adult and juvenile probation and pretrial services caseloads.

Three (3) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were also awarded including grants to: the National Judicial College (NJC) to develop an advanced skills curriculum for state appellate judges; the Connecticut Judicial Branch to implement a training program for court staff and judges that better identifies and serves individuals with hidden disabilities; and, the Superior Court of Fresno County, California, to deliver a situational leadership training program to 50 current and future court leaders.

The deadline for FY 2013 4th quarter grant applications is Thursday, August 1, 2013. Consultation with SJI staff prior to, and during the preparation of, grant applications is strongly encouraged.

In this Issue

FY 2013 3rd Quarter Grant Awards	1
Improving Collections	2
Self-Represented Litigation and the State Courts	3

Recent Technical Assistance Grants Address the Complexities of Collections

SJI Project, Technical Assistance (TA), and Curriculum Adaptation and Training (CAT) Grant programs directly address the issues most commonly faced by state courts throughout the United States.

Frequently, TA grant applications identify growing areas of concern for numerous jurisdictions. These grants often require expert assistance outside the court. One of these critical areas is increasing collections, especially in recent years as court budgets have been significantly reduced. Both the South Dakota Unified Judicial System (SJI-11-T-160) and the Kansas Supreme Court (SJI-12-T-074) recently completed statewide assessments of collections operations.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has been involved in technical assistance to courts in the area of collections since the early 1990s. The NCSC currently maintains an online [resource guide](#) that addresses key issues faced by state courts in collecting fines and costs assessed against civil litigants and criminal defendants. The following is a brief outline of what courts should expect when they initiate evaluations of their effectiveness in this area, as well as the key indicators that necessitate a collections review.

Jurisdictions in need of assistance typically exhibit deficiencies in one or more of the following areas:

- current collections performance is unknown;
- lack of adequate statutory authority;
- inadequate policies or guidance;
- lack of leadership for collections;
- inconsistent enforcement; and/or,
- lack of goals or standards.

The state courts focus on improving collections for a variety of reasons. Usually, there are one or more drivers or events that prompt



these jurisdictions to seek assistance. The most common include:

Legislative mandate or request – State and local policy makers often press courts to account for overdue receivables. In some instances this has been in the form of requests for information, and in others cases have been prompted by legislative requirements imposed on the courts for reporting and accountability.

Leadership – Interest in collections by influential judicial leadership, either individuals or committees, can be the motivating factor for making collections a high priority.

Fiscal stress – Probably one of the most common drivers in recent years is the search for additional revenues to offset budget cuts to courts and other government agencies that receive court revenues.

Public relations – Negative attention focused on the judiciary, such as unsatisfied restitution for victims, may prompt action.

Focus on performance – Interest in improving collections is sometimes embraced as part of a larger effort to develop and apply performance measures.

In 2008, the NCSC assessed collections efforts, programs, and techniques across the U.S.. This effort resulted in the second edition of [Current Practices in Collecting Fines and Fees in State Courts](#). Most recently, the NCSC has focused on developing a systemic view of collections that resulted in the devel-

opment of a collections framework to guide assessments. The framework contextualizes key success factors and conditions for collections. There are four layers in the framework that describe business requirements for the collections function. They include the following:

Policy and Governance

Whether at the local or state level, successful systems require leadership, statutory and/or court rule authority, and goals and standards.

Practice and Operations

The actual activities that are performed as part of the business process of collections occur primarily in two phases: assessment and enforcement. Best practices in each of these areas have been well-documented and have been the focus of major efforts in the past. In addition, courts need reliable financial controls and systems for evaluation and measurement linked to performance standards and goals.

Information

Courts need reliable information to manage individual cases as well as provide information for analysis and performance measurement. Good information systems depend on the adequacy of information systems and record keeping infrastructure.

Infrastructure

There are a number of physical elements required to support collections, including reliable record systems, easy access to court information, facilities that promote easy compliance, and technology infrastructure.

The framework provides not only a high level view of the critical elements of collections programs, but allows the courts to “drill down” into the details to identify specific needs and deficiencies.

To review additional readings on collections and the reports from SJI grantees, please visit the [NCSC Library eCollection](#).

Update on Strategic Initiatives Grants Addressing Self-Represented Litigation and the State Courts

In FY 2012, SJI awarded 6 Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIGs) totaling \$275,158 addressing one of SJI's [Priority Investment Areas](#): Self-Represented Litigation and the State Courts. SIG grants were made to the: 1) Judicial Council of California to train bilingual JusticeCorps volunteers to provide enhanced services for self-represented litigants (SRLs); 2) Indiana Administrative Office of the Courts to train volunteer college and law students to serve statewide pro se clinic clients; 3) the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to develop a standard set of definitions and counting rules for cases involving one or more SRLs; 4) the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) and the NCSC to develop formal case triage protocols for assistance to SRLs; 5) the SRLN to facilitate state court reimbursement under Title IV-D, and promote awareness of this resource; and 6) the South



Carolina Access to Justice Commission for delivery of legal information to SRLs in underserved areas of South Carolina.

The Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) has, through its Court Interpreter Program, made significant strides towards developing and implementing a statewide training program that will allow 40 bilingual Justice Corps members to learn how to direct SRLs to self-help resources. In addition to an in-person training curriculum being finalized, the AOC

will deploy an online training module this month.

The NCSC and SRLN continue to assist the state courts in updating court websites and downloadable materials that can be easily accessed by SRLs. The NCSC is also developing a set of standardized definitions and counting rules for pro se cases. This report and accompanying resources is expected to be available in early January 2014.

SJI will continue to provide updates on these projects.

SJI Board of Directors

Chairman

James R. Hannah
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Arkansas
Little Rock, AR

Vice Chairman

Daniel J. Becker
State Court Administrator
Utah AOC
Salt Lake City, UT

Secretary

Gayle A. Nachtigal
Judge
Washington County Circuit Court
Hillsboro, OR

Treasurer

Hernan D. Vera
President & CEO
Public Counsel Law Center
Los Angeles, CA

Chase T. Rogers
Chief Justice

Supreme Court of Connecticut
Hartford, CT

Jonathan Lippman
Chief Judge of the State of New York
New York Court of Appeals
New York, NY

David V. Brewer
Justice
Oregon Supreme Court
Salem, OR

Wilfredo Martinez
County Judge
9th Judicial Circuit of Florida
Orlando, FL

Marsha J. Rabiteau
Executive Director
Legal Policy Strategies Group
Bloomfield, CT

John B. Nalbandian
Partner

Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP
Cincinnati, OH

Isabel Framer
President
Language Access Consultants, LLC
Copley, OH

Jonathan D. Mattiello
Executive Director

The State Justice Institute is a federally-funded, non-profit corporation established by federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in the state courts.

