

# E-SJI News

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## SJI BOARD APPROVES GRANTS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER

The SJI Board of Directors met in New Orleans, Louisiana, on April 18, 2008, to review applications for the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2008. Four Project Grants, two Partner Grants, five Technical Assistance (TA) Grants, and three Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were approved; for a total of \$829,541.

Included in the awarded Project Grants this quarter are projects to support the Maryland Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office (MACRO) to provide court ADR programs in Maryland with a web-based data collection and analysis system, and the Texas Office of Court Administration to test pre-trial strategies for the mentally ill offender. Five TA applications were approved by the Board, including support to the Vermont Supreme Court to strengthen their court interpreter program, a statewide civil legal needs assessment in Nevada, and a performance evaluation of the Sherburne County, Minnesota, Chemical Dependency Jail Treatment Program. Two CAT Grants were approved that will support the New York Unified Court System in their efforts to improve case management in New York City's Family Courts, and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) jury trial management efforts.

The Board also approved a Partner Grant with the Open Society Institute, which is described in a separate article in this month's E-SJI News. Staff is currently working to finalize another Partner Grant, and more information will be provided in next month's edition of E-SJI News.

As of the second quarter of FY 2008, SJI has awarded five Project Grants totaling \$431,879; three Partner Grants totaling \$607,000; ten TA Grants totaling \$269,598; and four CAT Grants totaling \$67,894; for a grand total of \$1,376,371. Total match as of the second quarter of FY 2008 is \$1,422,981. SJI has also awarded 62 Scholarships totaling \$90,230 so far this fiscal year.

The Board and Staff would like to thank the Louisiana Supreme Court for hosting the second quarter Board meeting; in particular, Chief Justice Pascal Calogero, Judicial Administrator Dr. Hugh Collins, Valerie Willard, Bridget Daniels, and Robert Gunn. During their stay in New Orleans, the Board visited the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina, and was briefed by Supreme Court staff on the storm's impact and their recovery efforts. The Board was truly impressed by the Supreme Court's ability to overcome these difficult challenges.

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# SJI PARTNERS WITH THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS IN THE STATE COURTS

SJI has recently finalized a \$354,000 Partner Grant with the Open Society Institute (OSI) for the second phase of the *National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts*. This effort builds on a previous Partner Grant with OSI (Phase I) to mobilize the expertise, experience, and commitment of state court judges and officers across the country to address both the perception and reality of racial and ethnic fairness. Phase I, with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) leading the project, resulted in a national compilation of promising programs to achieve racial and ethnic fairness in five key areas: 1) diverse judicial workforces; 2) fair and unbiased behaviors in the courthouse; 3) system-wide improvements to reduce disparities in specific types of cases; 4) availability of services to improve access for limited English-proficient persons; and 5) diverse juries.

Phase II will focus on *implicit bias* – an issue that potentially affects decisions and activities related to each of the five areas but especially those related to fair and unbiased behaviors in the courthouse. NCSC will work with three jurisdictions to develop and deliver information on implicit bias to judges and court staff. Lessons learned from each jurisdiction's efforts to address this issue will be made available to all state courts, and NCSC will provide technical assistance on this topic.

## LEGAL MOMENTUM LAUNCHES NEW COURSE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AS A HIDDEN ASPECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Legal Momentum, with support from a SJI grant, has launched a free web-based course, *Intimate Partner Sexual Assault: Adjudicating This Hidden Aspect of Domestic Violence* (SJI-04-N-170). The course provides current research from law, medicine, and the social sciences on the implications for the courts of the severe impact of intimate partner assault. Also included is how the law itself often undermines victim safety, how to create a court environment in which victims feel safe disclosing, which risk assessment instruments include intimate partner sexual assault as a factor, and how to assess the capability of batter intervention and sex offender treatment program to address intimate partner sexual assault and more.

This course was researched and written by the National Judicial Education Program, a project of Legal Momentum in cooperation with the National Association of Women Judges. The University of New Mexico School of Law was also involved in the project. The course consists of twelve modules, self-tests and answers, reflection questions, civil and criminal case scenarios, questions, and commentary. To register for the free web course, please visit: [www.njep-ipsacourse.org](http://www.njep-ipsacourse.org).

# BOARD APPROVES NEW APPROACHES TO ADDRESS IMMIGRATION ISSUES IN THE STATE COURTS

Last month's E-SJI News included an article on the March 27-28, 2008, roundtable discussion on the issues state courts are facing as a direct result of immigration. The roundtable participants identified many concerns, including a large increase in the need for court interpreters, concerns for equal access to justice for all, and determining how state and federal laws impact both legal and illegal immigrants. The group also identified key methods for SJI to provide assistance through the Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program. A report on the group's activities, including their key recommendations, was presented to the Board of Directors for their final decisions during the April 18, 2008, Board meeting:

## **Strategic Priorities for Addressing the Impact of Immigration in the State Courts**

Combined, four **Strategic Priorities** should guide a comprehensive strategy for the state courts to address the impact of immigration:

1. Increase understanding and awareness about the impacts of immigration in the state courts;
2. Develop and test state and local approaches for assessing and addressing the impact of immigration in the state courts;
3. Enhance state and local court capacity to improve court services affected by immigration; and
4. Build effective national, state, and local partnerships for addressing the impact of immigration in the state courts.

## **The Role of SJI in Assisting State Courts with Immigration Issues**

SJI, through the SIG program, will assist the state courts in addressing the four Strategic Priorities by focusing on three **Program Areas**:

### **1. SJI will build national level partnerships for addressing the impact of immigration in the state courts by:**

- identifying the key federal, state and local level public and private organizations who need to participate in examining and addressing the impacts of immigration on the state courts;
- facilitating problem-solving efforts using federal, state, and local partnerships; and
- coordinating all aspects of a national strategic initiative.

### **2. SJI will support and coordinate state and local efforts to understand and address the impact of immigration in the state courts by supporting:**

- the development of assessment, planning, and improvement approaches that can be used to address the impacts of immigration in courts across the nation;
- pilot projects to test, implement, and refine improvement approaches; and
- technical assistance efforts targeting potentially unique state and local needs.

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The State Justice Institute is a private, nonprofit corporation established by Federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in state courts, and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common issues faced by all courts. SJI is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.



*(Board Approves New Approaches to Address Immigration Issues in the State Courts continued from page 4)*

### **3. SJI will coordinate the development of the knowledge base, forums, and resources for understanding and addressing the impact of immigration on the state courts by supporting:**

- preparation of materials documenting the scope and impacts of immigration in the state courts;
- development of bench books addressing the intersection of international, federal, and state law;
- judicial education programs addressing the intersection of international, federal, and state law;
- efforts to inventory best practices for addressing immigration issues in courts; and
- development of performance indicators that measure the impact of immigration in the state courts.

The Board unanimously approved the roundtable's recommendations. Staff is now working to finalize specific grants in response to these Program Areas, and will provide updates in future editions of the E-SJI News and other forums.

## NEXT GRANT & SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications for all grants and scholarships must be received by SJI on **August 1, 2008**, to be considered for the fourth quarter of FY 2008. Please be advised this is not a mail date, but the date the application must be physically received by SJI. Notification of awards for scholarships will be completed by the end of August. New grant awards will be made by the end of September.

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