

E-SJI News

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BOARD APPROVES GRANTS FOR 1st QUARTER

On December 10, 2010, the Board of Directors met to consider grant applications submitted for the 1st quarter of FY 2011. Two (2) Project Grants, nine (9) Technical Assistance (TA) Grants, and four (4) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were approved, for a total of \$1,171,950.

SJI is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) (P.L. 111-322). While under a CR, the Board of Directors will approve new grant requests for FY 2011, but will not make any awards until SJI's final appropriation is available.

Approved grants included a Project Grant to support the Utah Judicial Council's creation of a Court Visitor Volunteer program to assist elderly and incapacitated persons appearing before the court on matters of guardian or conservatorship. The National Association of Court Management (NACM) also received a Project Grant to support training on various topics, including court budgeting/reengineering and immigration issues in the state courts.

TA applications approved by the Board included: a mentoring program and training curriculum to support newly appointed judges in Virginia; support to the Vermont Supreme Court for the final phase of their Court Interpreter Action Plan; and a form translation project for the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) that will provide enhanced access to justice for limited English proficiency litigants, and reduce costs to the courts through e-filing.

CAT applications approved by the Board included: support to the Arkansas AOC for a National Judicial College (NJC) "train the trainers" curriculum development; leadership training for the Connecticut Judiciary; and support to the National Association for State Judicial Educators (NASJE) for curriculum development and training, focusing on how to maintain adequate training in the state courts with limited resources. (continued on page 2)

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Because of the significant demand for SJI grants, potential applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their grant applications as soon as possible, since SJI is on a **first-come, first-served, basis for grant applications that merit funding**. Deadlines for the remainder of FY 2011 are as follows: 2nd quarter – February 1, 2011; 3rd quarter – May 1, 2011; and 4th quarter – August 1, 2011.

SENATE CONFIRMS THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS



On December 22, 2010, the Senate confirmed 3 new members to the SJI Board of Directors: 1) Chief Justice Chase Rogers; 2) Judge Wilfredo Martinez; and 3) Ms. Isabel Frammer.

Chase Rogers has been the Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court since 2007. Prior to that, he served as a judge in the Connecticut Appellate Court from 2006 to 2007, and as a judge in Connecticut Superior Court from 1998 to 2006.

Wilfredo Martinez is currently a County Court Judge in the 9th Judicial Circuit Court of Florida. He was initially appointed to the Court in 1998. Previously, Judge Martinez was a sole practitioner in Orlando, focusing on real estate and business law.

Isabel Frammer is the founder and principal partner of Language Access Consultants, LLC. Since 1998, Ms. Frammer has worked as a consultant to defense attorneys, prosecutors, law enforcement, state and federal government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Justice, and advocacy firms on language access for limited English proficient communities in the court system.

By law, SJI is supervised by a Board of Directors consisting of 11 members appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 10703, the President appoints 6 judges and 1 state court administrator from a list of candidates submitted by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ). In addition, the President also appoints 4 public member positions, no more than 2 of whom can be from the same political party.

NEW MEXICO INTERPRETER AND LANGUAGE ACCESS PARTNERSHIP



The New Mexico Justice System Interpreter Resource Partnership was established to increase meaningful language access across the New Mexico justice system. SJI began supporting the project in FY 2008 (SJI-08-N-173). The subsequent dedication of resources in FY 2009 (SJI-09-N-157) acknowledged the progress made towards that vision. The FY 2009 grant continued to assist the New Mexico Judiciary and Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) in strengthening their partnership, while developing new objectives to ensure that justice system-involved individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) would have access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services, consistent with the State Constitution, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Executive Order 13166.

The creation of the New Mexico Center for Language Access (NMCLA) is a cornerstone of this project. NMCLA represents a collaboration of stakeholders including: New Mexico AOC; University of New Mexico — Los Alamos (UNM-LA); Doña Ana Community College; Central New Mexico Community College; and the University of New Mexico Hospital. NMCLA provides training for bilingual individuals interested in serving LEP persons throughout the justice and healthcare systems. With administrative leadership from the UNM-LA and support of the AOC, the Center became self-sustaining through student tuition. NMCLA offers state-of-the-art on-line training in justice system and medical interpreting and training for bilingual employees who want to build on their language abilities (e.g., court interpreters, nurses, court clerks, correction, and patrol officers), as Language Access Specialists. NMCLA has recruited a highly credentialed faculty team nationwide who, in addition to English, speak Spanish, Navajo, Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian.

In addition to the training and certification of qualified language access service providers, the AOC and its partners are working on future objectives including: training groups and agencies on how best to utilize interpreters; establishing a registry of interpreters; and increasing accountability for language access. While funding for training groups and community agencies is limited under the current budget constraints, the AOC has been able to complete the other objectives. In FY 2010, the AOC began a new phase to expand language access planning statewide with assistance from SJI (SJI-10-T-179). The project, currently being tested in the 9th Judicial District of New Mexico, will assist local courts in creating language access plans that are compliant with Title VI.

The final project report offers details on the partnership's approach, lessons learned, ideas regarding replication of the project, and evaluation findings. A copy of the [report](#) is available on the SJI website and through the New Mexico AOC.

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The State Justice Institute is a federally-funded, non-profit 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.



8TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT IN MINNESOTA COMPLETES RURAL JUSTICE CASE STUDY

When the Minnesota Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) began to examine how it could best serve the 125,000 residents in the 8th Judicial District – a rural area spanning 13 counties in the west central part of the state – reengineering was quickly identified as the best solution. Like many jurisdictions with a limited number of industries, the District experienced reduced workload due to a declining population, administrative and clerical staffing challenges, service accessibility issues, and resources dispersed across a large geographical multi-court region. With support from SJI (SJI-10-T-006) and technical assistance provided by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the AOC initiated a process of reinventing and improving the judicial system in the District.

Consultants from NCSC utilized a standard approach to the reengineering process that sought to define strategies and present the District with options, including: 1) combining jobs; 2) reducing the number of steps in the workflow process; 3) optimizing the process across boundaries; 4) performing work in a central location; 5) eliminating wasted steps; and 6) better utilizing technology to reduce costs. Working with both administrators at the state court and District levels, NCSC consultants were able to gather and analyze a significant amount of operational data, policies, and procedures, which were used to compile four strategies, a series of 15 recommendations, and a 3-year vision plan for the entire district. Throughout the process, the AOC and administrators from the District used a steering committee to provide oversight, input, and assistance in the collection of data.

Among the recommendations suggested were the unification of policies and procedures; clarifying the responsibilities of staff and the charges of the administrative team; improving, upgrading, and where necessary, implementing standards for technology; full or partial closure of some court facilities; reducing hours and operations to only those days when court was in session; centralizing call-center operations; and utilizing alternative workforce solutions, including contracting with local agencies or government facilities to provide staffing.

The final [report](#) for this project is available on the SJI website.