

# E-SJI News

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## 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR FY 2011

SJI received 11 grant applications for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY 2011, requesting a total of \$1,258,037. The Board will meet on April 22, 2011, to make decisions on grant awards for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. The results of this Board meeting will be available the following week. As with the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of FY 2011, approved grant applications will not be awarded until SJI has its final appropriation from Congress.

SJI continues to experience an increase in applications, especially Technical Assistance (TA) and Curriculum Adaptation and Training (CAT) grant applications. To assist applicants in preparing and submitting thorough applications, SJI staff are available to answer questions about the grant program, and troubleshoot any issues the applicant may be experiencing in drafting the grant application. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact SJI to describe their ideas for a project prior to submitting a formal application. SJI Grant funding remains available on a **first-come, first-served, basis for grant applications that merit funding**. Deadlines for the remainder of FY 2011 are as follows: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter – May 1, 2011; and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter – August 1, 2011.

## SJI OFFICE RELOCATION

SJI relocated to Reston, Virginia (located outside of Washington, D.C.) in February. Please note the change in mailing address information:

**State Justice Institute  
11951 Freedom Drive  
Suite 1020  
Reston, VA 20190**

General phone, fax, and e-mail addresses remain the same, as does the website [www.sji.gov](http://www.sji.gov).

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## PRESIDENT'S BUDGET PROVIDES STRONG SUPPORT FOR SJI



The recently released FY 2012 President's Budget includes \$5,131,000 for SJI. SJI greatly appreciates the continued support, especially from the Office of Management and Budget who recommended to the President that SJI be included in his budget proposal for FY 2012. The funding requested will enable SJI to continue identifying issues that impact all courts, fostering innovative solutions, and sharing information on successful approaches nationwide. An [excerpted version](#) of the President's Budget Appendix that includes the SJI request is now available on the SJI website.

## VERMONT JUDICIARY COMPLETES THIRD PHASE OF COURT INTERPRETER IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT



Through continued support from SJI, the Vermont Supreme Court, Office of the Court Administrator, recently completed the implementation phase (SJI-10-T-008) of their multi-year court interpreter project. In the previous two phases, the Vermont Judiciary worked with Vermont Legal Aid, Inc., to develop and strengthen an action plan for court foreign-language interpreter services (SJI-08-T-077 and SJI-07-E-200).

The original project was conceived in 2004 after the Subcommittee on Interpreters of the Vermont Supreme Court's Committee on Fairness and Equal Access to Justice issued a report that recommended the development of policy and procedures to ensure that individuals with limited-English proficiency (LEP) have access to interpreters. **continued on page 3**

Overall, the project yielded the following important deliverables for the Judiciary and its stakeholders:

- Amendment of the Vermont Rules of Evidence, Criminal Procedure, Probate Procedure, and Statutes to bring the delivery of court interpreter services to LEP populations in compliance with federal laws;
- Creation and maintenance of a statewide interpreter resource list on the Judiciary website;
- A first-ever written test and oral proficiency interview of court interpreters given annually;
- Delivery of statewide training, eligible for continuing legal education (CLE) credit, to court interpreters on legal procedures, terminology, and the criminal justice system;
- Development of a training curriculum for staff and judges on the Court Interpreter Manual to be delivered court-by-court and at the next session of the Judicial College in late 2011; and
- The ongoing engagement of court interpreters, judges, administrators, attorneys, and constituent associations, including the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Project (VRRP) and Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), on the design of effective and efficient court interpreter services that promote access to justice and fairness.

Vermont will continue to refine the products created as a result of this grant, while offering subsequent training and court interpreter testing sessions. A review of the potential use of remote interpreters, and the financial support of court interpreter services with funding authorities, are considered next steps as part of the action plan. The final report for this project is available on the Vermont Judiciary's [website](#).

## FLORIDA JUDICIAL BRANCH RELEASES GOVERNANCE STUDY



With grant funding from SJI (SJI-09-T-131), the Florida Judicial Branch released an in-depth study of governance structure, processes, and practices. The review includes a comparative analysis of 11 state court systems.

This project builds on work previously completed under the Long-Range Strategic Plan for the Florida Judicial Branch (SJI-08-T-002), which identified a re-examination of the governance structure as a critical necessity because of the shift from a county-funded to state-funded court system under a recently revised law. **continued on page 4**

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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.



The Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) of the Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) was instrumental in organizing a study group internally to facilitate stakeholder data collection and identifying components of the study that Florida would consider modeling after another state, or modifying as it explores future changes to its governance structure.

SPU identified Arizona, California, Minnesota, and Utah as having both governance structures and processes of particular interest in the measurement of efficiency. The 4 states shared 6 elements identified in the report that SPU attributed to their ability to effectively administer court operations and ensure access to justice.

Recommendations in the report generated 7 areas for the court to examine as it moves forward; these included: 1) the role and responsibilities of the Supreme court and the role, responsibilities, term and selection of chief justice and chief judges; 2) rule-making and the current committee system; 3) the authorization of conferences; 4) legislative advocacy on behalf of the judicial branch; 5) the role of the OSCA; and 6) identifying emergent policy issues. These topics were identified through a unique 3-part analysis of stakeholders that included interviews with justices, judges, administrators, and staff, communication survey results, and responses from the bar and business community.

The report was presented to the Florida Judicial Branch Governance Study Group for their consideration. Since the release of the report, the Group has used the recommendations generated to guide continued strategic planning, and presented results to the Florida Supreme Court earlier this month. A copy of the Governance Study Group's report and consultants report (as an appendix) are available on the Florida Judicial Branch's [website](#).