

E-SJI NEWS

SJI Receives FY 2013 2nd Quarter Grant Applications



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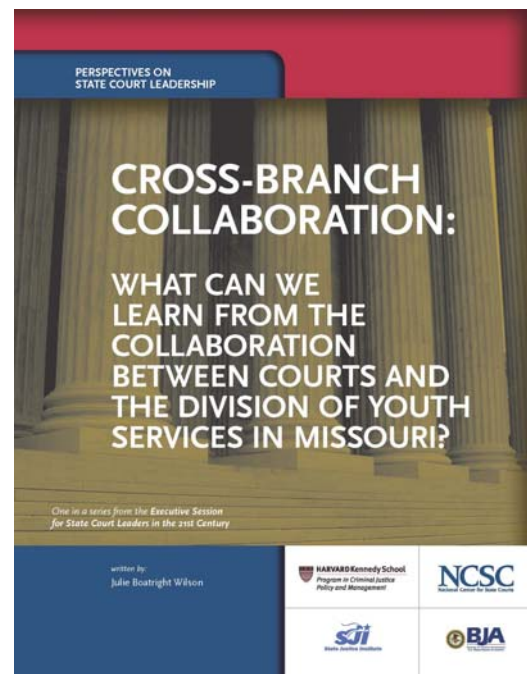
SJI received 13 grant applications requesting a total of \$553,143 for the 2nd quarter of FY 2013. Grant applications were received in all three grant types: Project Grants, Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants, and Technical Assistance (TA) Grants.

The SJI Board will meet on April 8, 2013 to finalize decisions on quarterly grant awards. SJI Grant funding remains available on a **first-come, first-served, basis for grant applications that merit funding**. Deadlines for the remainder of FY 2013 are as follows: 3rd quarter – May 1, 2013; and 4th quarter – August 1, 2013.

Latest Paper from Executive Session for State Court Leaders Now Available

The seventh paper of the SJI-supported [Executive Session for State Court Leaders in the 21st Century](#) is now available. This paper addresses a number of challenges and opportunities faced by state courts when working with internal and external partners.

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) Library has served as the official repository for the State Justice Institute since 2010. Its former Digital Archive is experiencing a major expansion and will now be referred to as the [NCSC Library eCollection](#). This will continue to be the source for all SJI final reports and products produced by SJI grantees. The eCollection already hosts more than 300 SJI-supported titles and plans to add another 75 by June 2013. To search for titles check out the [eCard Catalog](#).



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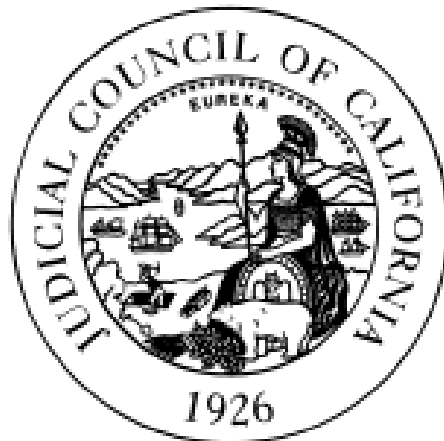
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5th Appellate District of California Streamlines Civil Case Records Transfer

Effective Fall of 2012, the California Court of Appeals, Fifth Appellate District (5DCA) began receiving electronic clerk's transcripts for civil cases from all nine of the trial courts within its jurisdiction. With an SJI grant award (SJI-11-N-151), the Court established the Transcript Assembly Program (TAP) for all trial courts within its jurisdiction. TAP is a software program that automates the trial court's labor intensive process of compiling a civil clerk's transcript and produces an electronic record that can be securely transmitted to the appellate court.

TAP started as a pilot project (SJI-09-T-160) between the 5DCA and the Superior Courts of Fresno and Stanislaus Counties. The first grant enabled the 5DCA and these select courts to conduct an assessment and determine how to implement the TAP solution in the remaining seven trial courts. Using TAP, the pilot trial courts reduced their appellate case processing workload by approximately 50 percent, partially offsetting their staffing reductions during this fiscal crisis. "It frees up clerks within our trial court's appellate division to cross train and to work on other projects," said Stephanie Kennedy, Operations Manager for the Superior Court of Stanislaus County. "We've been able to move some staff around to help other areas of the court that need backup and assistance, especially during these tough fiscal times when we have frozen positions within the court."

In addition to savings for the trial courts, the 5DCA no longer receives lengthy, printed records that need to be mailed or photocopied. "With the push of a button, any size transcript can be delivered electronically to our court," said Charlene Ynson, Court Administrator/Clerk for 5DCA. "Electronic records provide



the court significant savings. Otherwise we could spend thousands of dollars to store, retrieve, and move large records throughout the review process."

The results of TAP have been outstanding in the view of 5DCA and Courts. Since completion of the grant in October 2012, many of the trial courts are using this solution to electronically compile and file many other case types other than just civil cases. To date, just under 500 electronic records have been filed throughout the jurisdiction. All trial courts are filing civil appeals electronically; several are filing criminal; in addition to some juvenile and dependency cases. The staff time savings has been significant for the trial courts.

The trial courts estimate they save 50 percent of staff time using TAP to compile their civil transcripts. If the record requires correction, they save 100 percent of staff time because they no longer have to manually correct paper and reassemble, copy, and send – they can just make the correction, "re-tap", and e-transmit the record. This results in a significant savings of time where multiple volumes are involved. Some trial courts have reported over 80 percent time savings on dependency cases.

The 5DCA continues to experience its greatest savings in terms of storage. While there has been some acclimation to working with an electronic record, court staff do not have to create file folders for upwards of 40 or more volumes of a record. Therefore, staff no longer has to send these records to storage at the end of their life cycle and the savings is significant. In a cost study recently completed by the 5DCA, a savings of 50 percent of staff time is realized when they were able to receive and store records electronically.

The 5DCA and the Superior Courts of Fresno and Stanislaus Counties received the [2010-11 Ralph N. Kleps Collaborative Award for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts](#) for the successful deployment of TAP. The SJI grant helped support the deployment of TAP to the remaining seven trial courts within the 5DCA's jurisdiction: Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Tulare, and Tuolumne. The 5DCA hopes to expand the TAP program to all case types so it can redirect record storage savings into other areas of court operations.

Revised Probate Court Standards Now Available

On November 16, 2012, the National College of Probate Judges (NCPJ) unanimously adopted a set of revised *National Probate Court Standards* made possible through a Technical Assistance grant provided by SJI (SJI-10-T-180) and matching support from the Borchard Foundation Center on Law and Aging, the ACTEC Foundation, and the National Center for State Courts (NCSC).

This volume is the product of a two-year effort by a Task Force of NCPJ leaders and representatives of the National Association for Court Management (NACM) and the American Bar Association (ABA) Section on Real Estate, Probate, Trust and Estates assisted by staff from the NCSC.

Last month, the final document including the revisions to the standards, was endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices. The revision

effort was undertaken by NCPJ in recognition that there have been significant technological, legal, policy, procedural, and demographic developments that affect the way probate courts can and should operate since the early 1990s, when the original National Probate Court Standards were developed (also with SJI support). Adding urgency to the need generated by these developments is the impact that the “Baby Boom” population bulge will have on the probate courts.

The revised Standards are intended to be used by individual probate courts and by state court systems as:

- A source of ideas for improving the quality of justice, the effectiveness of operations, and efficient use of resources;

- A basis for requests for needed budgetary support;
- A tool for measuring progress; and
- A template for state standards.

In addition to setting forth the principles for probate court performance, the revised standards address administrative policies, procedures, and practices for probate courts; decedent’s estates; and guardianships and conservatorships for both adults and minors. Although the Standards focus on the probate court, they are also generally applicable to any judge responsible for a probate matter.

An electronic copy of the revised standards may be obtained [online](#) through the NCPJ and also on the NCSC’s probate court resource [page](#). To obtain a printed copy, contact Shelley Rockwell at rockwell@ncsc.org.

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