

# E-SJI News

July 2009



Vol. 19, No. 10

## NEW GRANT TO FOCUS ON COURT SECURITY AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANNING



On June 23, 2009, SJI awarded a Strategic Initiatives Grant (SIG) to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) for a court security and continuity of operations planning project. This project builds off of NCSC's work in identifying the best practices, and steps to achieving those best practices, for court security. Specifically, the project will develop a companion piece on funding strategies for state courts to enable them to increase court security resources using sound performance data. NCSC will also develop an instructional DVD video for state courts so that they can better understand the threat level and ramifications of the H1N1 flu virus.

In order for state courts to improve their security, needs must be identified, spending guidelines must be established, and the associated costs and methods of measuring performance must be determined. Using NCSC's best practices approaches to court security as a foundation, NCSC will develop funding strategies that will: 1) identify the costs of courthouse security improvements; 2) emphasize the priorities for spending limited funding; 3) develop strategies to build a coalition of stakeholders in order to make effective requests to funding sources; and 4) develop performance and accountability measures to be supported by comprehensive incident reporting systems. This information will be distributed to every state court administrator, and made available on the NCSC website. NCSC will work with a core working group/security advisory committee already in place to complete this project. This committee consists of administrators and court security managers representing 10 states in all geographic areas of the United States. (continued on page 2)

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According to the Center for Disease Control, H1N1 is a new flu virus of swine origin that was first detected in April 2009. The virus is infecting people at an increasing rate, both domestically and abroad. The state courts are generally unprepared to deal with a quick and rampant spread of the H1N1 virus; therefore it is critical that they learn how to prepare, in addition to fitting the pandemic response into their existing “all hazards” approach to continuity of operations. In order to assist the state courts, NCSC will develop a basic instructional DVD that will include a step-by-step process to respond to a pandemic event in their jurisdictions. The DVD will address issues such as the probability of an event occurring; the effect of the 1918 – 1919 Spanish flu; what existing COOP response plans should contain; how a pandemic event will alter those plans; as well as other sources of information.

As a national impact issue, SJI remains committed to improving state court security. This project, in addition to previous Partner Grants with the U.S. Marshals Service that focused on court security, will contribute to the ongoing efforts to improve court security across the United States.

## COUNCIL FOR COURT EXCELLENCE RELEASES GUIDE TO THE D.C. JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM



The Council for Court Excellence (CCE) was awarded a SJI grant in FY 2007 for the *Guide to the D.C. Juvenile Justice System* (SJI-07-N-191). The Guide was released on June 29, 2009, and is the first written roadmap for the general public on how the District of Columbia’s juvenile justice system operates. The Guide explains how a case moves from arrest to discharge, what roles various government and non-governmental agencies and individuals play, and what rights victims of juvenile crime have.

The D.C. Juvenile Justice System is complex in that it involves several different government agencies. By statute the system is also confidential; which supports the mission of rehabilitating youth whose actions have brought them into the juvenile justice system. However, the nature of this confidentiality has also hindered the community’s understanding and confidence in the system as a whole. The purpose of this Guide is to provide the community with the information they need in order to understand how juvenile justice works in D.C. The Guide will also enable the community to hold the D.C. juvenile justice system accountable.

Whether the user is a parent, victim, witness, interested resident, or a juvenile involved with the juvenile justice system, the Guide is designed to help them understand how that system works. While it is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney, it provides useful information on the process from when a youth is first taken into custody until there is a final decision on a case. **(continued on page 3)**

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The State Justice Institute is a private, 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 Guide includes sections that deal with an attorney's responsibility to a juvenile client; provide special information for victims and witnesses; and list Q&As to common questions.

Copies of the Guide in English and Spanish are available on CCE's website:

<http://www.courtexcellence.org/PublicationsNew/Final%20Community%20Ed%20Books.htm>

## SJI/PEW PARTNER GRANT ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

In June 2009, SJI approved a Phase II Partner Grant to continue supporting the Pew Charitable Trusts' Public Safety Performance Project. The goal of the project is to promote fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices on sentencing and corrections that protect the public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control correctional costs. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC), the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI), and the National Judicial College (NJC) are working together to provide technical assistance, education, and training to state courts in this vital area.

During Phase II, NCSC will: 1) continue educating and mobilizing chief justices and other state court leaders in support of sentencing and corrections reforms that align with the project's goals and focus. This will help create a national visibility and awareness of the need for such reforms; 2) work with other sites to provide non-partisan research, analysis, training, and consulting services on evidence-based practices to court officials and community corrections executives – NCSC will make such information and services available to state courts and judges across the United States; 3) coordinate the work of a national working group on using risk and needs assessment information at sentencing; and 4) finalize and support the delivery of a model curriculum for state court judges on evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next grant and scholarship application deadline: **November 1, 2009** (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, FY 2010).
- The new SJI Grant Guideline for FY 2010 will be available on the SJI website in October 2009.