

E-SJI NEWS

Immigration & the State Courts Initiative Releases Bench Cards for Criminal, Family, and Juvenile Court Judges

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As part of the SJI *Immigration and the State Courts Initiative*, the Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) has produced an initial series of bench cards on federal immigration issues designed for state criminal, juvenile, and family court judges

The bench cards are designed to help judges identify circumstances where a litigant’s immigration status may impact a state court case, and/or limit the options available to judges in determining criminal sentences or case dispositions in juvenile and family cases. They are intended to complement the more detailed CPPS Bench Guides on immigration issues.

These new bench cards cover the following topics:

[Glossary of Key Immigration Terms](#). This card provides definitions of the most important immigration terms.

[Overview of Types of Immigration Status](#). Describes the eligibility requirements for naturalization, lawful permanent resident status, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitioner status, Special Immigrant Juvenile status, T (trafficking victim) and U (crime victim) visas, and temporary visas.

[Immigration Relief Requiring Discretionary Approval](#). Lists the requirements for different types of status that are subject to the discretion of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) or the immigration courts.

[Overview of Immigration Consequences of State Court Criminal Convictions](#). Describes how conviction of a variety of crimes can cause a person to be



deportable, inadmissible, or ineligible for discretionary immigration relief.

[Eligibility for Probation, Work, Benefits, and Services](#). Explains how immigration status can affect a litigant’s eligibility for work authorization and federally or state funded treatment or services that might be ordered by a judge.

[Risks to Immigrants From Drug Court Participation](#). Explains how participation in drug court poses risks to immigration status for any immigrant, including lawful permanent residents.

[Good Moral Character](#). Describes how good moral character is a requirement to be eligible for a variety of discretionary benefits, including naturalization.

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[Child Custody and Placement](#). Discusses how immigration status can affect where and with whom immigrants will be able to live.

[Immigration Rights of Battered Spouses and Children](#). Lists the special protections for immigrant battered spouses and children, including pathways to becoming a lawful permanent resident.

[Special Immigrant Juvenile Status](#). Explains how this status can be a pathway for abused or abandoned unauthorized immigrant children to become lawful residents.

The bench cards are available for download on the SJI website. [CPPS also has a website](#)



available for background information on this initiative, recent reports, and guidance for how to obtain technical assistance. There are three immigration and the state courts bench books available in addition to these new bench cards:

[Criminal Bench Guide](#); [Juvenile & Family Bench Guide](#); and a [Practitioner's Guidebook](#) for court administrators. All documents are available for download free of charge.

Center for Elders and Courts Re-launches Enhanced Website



The Center for Elders and Courts (CEC), a project of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), launched its revamped [website](#) on World Elder Abuse Day, June 15, 2012. This project was made possible through SJI support (SJI-11-N-177), and a grant from the Retirement Research Foundation.

In addition to an enhanced section on guardianship, the website now features a blog and Facebook page. The revamp of the website was accompanied by the CEC's release of two toolkits—one specifically for courts and one for prosecutors. The toolkits provide direction on how to effectively prosecute cases and improve court responses to cases involving abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of the elderly. The toolkits, which were funded through grants by the Department of Justice/Bureau of Justice Assistance, include a judicial bench card, interagency coordina-

tion guides, a prosecution guide, and proposed performance measures.

The CEC recently participated in a White House forum on elder abuse and financial exploitation. This event was convened to discuss how to prepare for the growing wave of people 65 or older expected to make up more than 20 percent of the population by 2030.

This high profile launch of the revamped CEC site, and subsequent attention to elder issues on World Elder Abuse Day, has already generated international interest in these resources, including inquiries from the Australian Supreme Court and downloads from courts in Portugal.

CEC content remains focused on the unprecedented challenges faced by state courts in dealing with elder issues. Additional enhancements and features are planned for the website, and will be announced as soon as they are available.

Unified Judiciary of Guam Completes Strategic Planning Process in Anticipation of BRAC Impacts

Judiciary of Guam last conducted a strategic planning process in 2006, and the courts have experienced significant changes since then, including an increased demand for services. With support from SJI and technical assistance from PRAXIS Consulting, the Judiciary was able to develop *Our Way Forward: The Strategic Plan for the Guam Judiciary 2012-2015 (SJI-11-T-156)*, which will serve as a blueprint for providing effective service with limited resources.

The Judiciary serves a population comprised primarily of U.S. Military personnel, their families, and an indigenous population, totaling approximately 171,000 residents. With the announcement of the U.S. Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) of an installation in Okinawa, Japan by 2014, the relocation of additional military

personnel and their families is expected to increase the demand for court services. Furthermore, the Judiciary has experienced significant reductions in its budget as a result of the economic situation. However, the Judiciary is committed to improving service delivery systems while reducing overall costs.

Previous strategic planning efforts focused on the mission, vision, and core values of the Judiciary, and also addressed long-range administrative, human resource, and caseload management issues. Added dimensions of this new strategic plan include trend analysis on social media, policy and political issues, and technology.

The Judiciary has concluded that increases in population, as well as population growth due to military deployments and BRAC, will gen-

erate substantial change in the Judiciary's workload, and create new challenges. As such, future priorities include the Judiciary's ability to:

- 1) address the loss of institutional knowledge due to retirements;
- 2) increase collaboration with key stakeholders, and;
- 3) continue updating and expanding the use of technology.

A full copy of the [report](#) is available online in the NCSC Digital Library and Archive. A shorter two-page [brochure](#) that provides an overview of the content contained within the full strategic planning document has also been archived.

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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 the state courts.

