

E-SJI News

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SJI AWARDS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES GRANTS

In May 2008, SJI finalized FY 2008 awards for the Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program. In FY 2008, SJI is using the SIG Program to focus on the impact of immigration in the state courts. Two grants were awarded; one to the Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS); and another to support a collaborative effort between the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and the National Judicial College (NJC).

CPPS will work with three diverse jurisdictions to learn what challenges they face in addressing the needs of immigrant populations that use the courts; and how best to address those challenges. A guidebook will be developed for addressing the impacts of immigration in the state courts that can be used in courts across the United States. The guidebook will build on the work of this project by incorporating the practical lessons learned from the three pilot sites, and provide useful information and tools for other courts to adapt to meet their own needs. CPPS will also prepare a bench book for assisting judges across the United States in addressing the practical implications of immigration in the state courts for a variety of topics including pretrial release decisions, eligibility for and conditions of probation, the effects of guilty pleas on immigration status, and the intersection of federal and state laws – to include the impact of foreign law/treaty agreements, and federal notifications. CPPS and SJI are currently working to finalize the pilot sites and will provide more detail about those in future editions of the E-SJI News.

The second SIG grant was awarded to NCSC and NJC to support and coordinate state and local efforts to address immigration issues. This project will gather current information from court leaders about the problems they are facing and solutions they have implemented to address this topic. Immediate, expert technical assistance will be provided to address critical trial court issues in dealing with both documented and undocumented immigrants. This technical assistance will use both proven case flow processes, in addition to developing new approaches to determining needs and providing solutions. In addition to the technical assistance, the project will develop an education curriculum, based on a needs assessment of trial judges and court staff confronting issues involving immigration.

As these projects move forward, SJI will provide updates in future editions of the E-SJI News and on the SJI website.

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GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINES

In FY 2008, SJI aligned the application deadlines for both new grant and scholarship applications. These deadlines, November 1; February 1; May 1; and August 1, correspond with the federal fiscal year quarters. The SJI Board meets on a federal fiscal year quarterly basis to make funding decisions because SJI is 100 percent federally funded. This structure allows SJI to start awarding new grants once its budget is provided by Congress each fiscal year, and award the grant funding across four fiscal quarters.

While scholarship applications are considered on a “first come – first served” basis, the Board still has to consider them on a quarterly basis as outlined above. SJI strongly encourages potential scholarship applicants to submit their applications as soon as possible after the start of the federal fiscal year (October 1). Demand for SJI scholarships is extremely high.

The majority of state and local courts operate on a calendar quarter basis; meaning the first calendar quarter of the year is January – March. Because of this, some applicants (especially for scholarships) have been confused about when to submit new applications to SJI. Staff hopes the following tables, which will also be available on the SJI website, provide more information:

NEW GRANT APPLICATIONS

Calendar QTR for Submission		Due Date	Federal Fiscal Year QTR
4	Oct-Dec	1-Nov	1
1	Jan-Mar	1-Feb	2
2	Apr-Jun	1-May	3
3	Jul-Sep	1-Aug	4

NEW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Calendar QTR for Submission		Due Date	Federal Fiscal Year QTR	For Courses Beginning After
4	Oct-Dec	1-Nov	1	1-Jan
1	Jan-Mar	1-Feb	2	1-Apr
2	Apr-Jun	1-May	3	1-Jul
3	Jul-Sep	1-Aug	4	1-Oct

NEXT GRANT & SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications for all grants and scholarships must be received by SJI on **August 1, 2008**, to be considered for the fourth quarter of FY 2008. Please be advised this is not a mail date, but the date the application must be physically received by SJI. Notification of awards for scholarships will be completed by the beginning of September. New grant awards will be made by the end of September.

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The State Justice Institute is a private, nonprofit 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.

MARYLAND JUDICIARY WORKS TO REDUCE TRUANCY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



The Maryland Judiciary was awarded a grant in FY 2008 to conduct an evaluation of three truancy court models. The goal of this evaluation is to provide the Judiciary with critical information on the most effective role Maryland's judges can play in truancy intervention. Under provisions of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the State's courts are charged to participate in enforcement of Maryland's compulsory school attendance laws. In lieu of punitive sanctions, which include fines and imprisonment of parents or guardians of truant children, Maryland's judges are also given the authority to intervene to "establish the terms and conditions which would promote the child's attendance." This authority to intervene is reflected in a pilot court-based truancy intervention program in Maryland's First Judicial Circuit. It is also reflected in the voluntary participation of judges in a non-court program in Baltimore City.

The objectives of this grant are to: 1) evaluate the processes and outcomes of the First Judicial Circuit and Baltimore City truancy intervention programs; 2) evaluate a mediation-oriented (non court-based) truancy intervention program operated by the University of Maryland's Center for Dispute Resolution; and 3) perform a comparative analysis of the three programs to assess the most appropriate and effective roles for courts and judges in truancy intervention activities. SJI is looking forward to future reports on this important topic.

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