

E-SJI News

May 2009



Vol. 19, No. 8

NEW STRATEGIC INITIATIVES GRANTS WILL CONTINUE ADDRESSING NATIONAL COURT ISSUES

During the April 24, 2009, Board meeting, two new Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) were awarded; one to the Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) for Phase II of the Immigration and the State Courts project; and one to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to address state court budgeting issues. These SIG projects, totaling \$470,000, will address two high priority issues impacting the state courts.

During the second phase of the Immigration and the State Courts project, CPPS will continue their work in Maricopa County, Arizona; Miami-Dade County, Florida; and western Minnesota. In addition, CPPS will expand their work to additional diverse learning sites across the United States. The new sites will be selected on the basis of obtaining a different mix of immigrant populations, active court and court administration participation, geographic diversity, and the existence of state laws that might have consequences for both federal and state immigration policy and practice. The learning site assessment and technical assistance tools developed in Phase I will be expanded and tested in the new sites. Other activities included in Phase II are: the development and testing of a model measurement system for determining the magnitude and impacts of immigration in state trial courts; the preparation of a family and juvenile electronic bench guide; development of training courses for both judicial and non-judicial court personnel to create a capacity to understand the scope and consequences of immigration on a state court; and practical strategies to facilitate on-going federal/state dialog on these issues.

The second SIG project will enable NSCS to provide direct technical assistance to state courts facing severe budget shortfalls. The current and projected fiscal conditions for state and local governments are extremely dire; having a significant negative impact on the state courts. SJI has already received grant requests to assist state courts in these difficult times. For example, this year SJI awarded a grant to the Vermont Supreme Court to re-engineer the court system as a result of budget shortfalls in that state. This SIG project will provide the technical assistance needed to assist the state courts in adapting to budget cuts, while maintaining service delivery and access to justice. The assistance will include: documenting and analyzing the experiences at selected sites for general guidance for courts; and assistance to the sites in defining and prioritizing their options, and re-engineering processes. The results of NCSC's work in the selected sites will be made available to all state courts.

Inside

President's Budget Includes
Funding for SJI 2

National Institute of Corrections and
SJI Support Risk Assessments in
Sentencing 2, 3

FY 2009 3rd Quarter Grant
Applications 3

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET INCLUDES FUNDING FOR SJI



The recently released full version of the FY 2010 President's Budget includes SJI's full request of \$5,131,000. SJI greatly appreciates the support, especially from the Office of Management and Budget who recommended to the President that SJI be included in his budget proposal for FY 2010. 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: http://www.sji.gov/PDF/FY_2010_Presidents_Budget_SJI.pdf.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CORRECTIONS AND SJI SUPPORT RISK ASSESSMENTS IN SENTENCING



SJI and the Department of Justice/Federal Bureau of Prisons/National Institute of Corrections (NIC) recently finalized a Partner Grant to support the California Risk Assessment Pilot Project (CALRAPP). The purpose of the project is to explore ways in which criminal offender risk assessment information can be successfully used in adult sentencing and violation of probation proceedings to reduce offender recidivism and improve accountability. The Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will work jointly with the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) to coordinate the operation and evaluation of pilot locations in several counties.

This project will build upon recent and on-going national and state sentencing reform activities to demonstrate one of the most promising developments in state sentencing and corrections reform – the use of actuarial risk/needs assessment information. A variety of proprietary and non-proprietary risk/needs assessment tools are now increasingly in use by juvenile and adult probation and parole agencies. (continued on page 3)

Board of Directors

Chairman

Robert A. Miller
Chief Justice (Ret.)
Supreme Court of South Dakota
Pierre, SD

Vice Chairman

Joseph F. Baca
Chief Justice (Ret.)
New Mexico Supreme Court
Santa Fe, NM

Secretary

Sandra A. O'Connor
*States Attorney of Baltimore
County (Ret.)*
Towson, MD

Executive Committee Member

Keith McNamara, Esq.
McNamara & McNamara
Columbus, OH

Terrence B. Adamson, Esq.
Executive Vice-President
The National Geographic Society

Robert N. Baldwin
*Executive Vice President and
General Counsel*
National Center for State Courts

Sophia H. Hall
Administrative Presiding Judge
Circuit Court of Cook County
Chicago, IL

Tommy Jewell
*Presiding Children's Court Judge
(Ret.)*
Second Judicial District Court
Albuquerque, NM

Arthur A. McGiverin
Chief Justice (Ret.)
Supreme Court of Iowa
Des Moines, IA

Janice Munsterman
Executive Director

Jonathan Mattiello
Deputy Director

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.



Unfortunately, while there are over 15,000 state courts in the U.S., only a handful of state judges and courts have significant experience in using risk/needs assessment information in sentencing offenders or responding to violations of probation. However, the use of accurate risk and needs assessment information is critical in making evidence-based judicial determinations of many recurring sentencing issues.

The California AOC will select 6 sites to participate in this project based on obtaining optimal diversity in location, size, region, availability of resources, and urban/rural settings. The project will target male and female offenders between the ages of 18 and 25 who are residents of the selected pilot counties, convicted of a felony offense, and placed on formal probation. Members of the target population remain members of the project until they are discharged from probation, establish a residence outside the pilot county, or until the conclusion of the project, whichever occurs first. Technical assistance will be provided to the pilot sites throughout the project. The project will facilitate case planning, reduce recidivism, and improve offender accountability.

FY 2009 3rd QUARTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

SJI received 12 grant applications requesting a total of **\$724,747** for the 3rd quarter of FY 2009. The Board will meet on June 26, 2009, to make decisions on grant awards for the 3rd quarter. The results of this Board meeting will be available the following week.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next grant and scholarship application deadline: **August 1, 2009** (4th Quarter, FY 2009).
- The FY 2009 SJI [Grant Guideline](#) is available on the SJI website.
- All SJI forms are available on the website under the following tab: <http://www.sji.gov/forms.php>.