

E-SJI News

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NEW CURRICULUM WILL ADDRESS IMMIGRATION ISSUES IN THE STATE COURTS

SJI began using the Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program in FY 2008 to address immigration issues in the state courts at a national impact level. 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).

As part of the NCSC/NJC grant, on Tuesday, November 18, 2008, a special 17-member **National Committee on the Impact of Immigration Cases in State and Local Courts** met at the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County to discuss legal substantive issues confronting trial judges who deal with cases involving both permanent resident immigrants and undocumented immigrants. Committee members included federal district and circuit court representatives, immigration advocates, limited and general jurisdiction state court judges and court managers, researchers, and immigration experts from a variety of states.

NCSC and NJC will use the information gathered at the meeting, in addition to data collected through focus groups, literature searches, questionnaires, technical assistance, and interviews with educators, to develop a 1-3 hour curriculum for state and local judicial officers about common problems, and essential legal advisories and processes regarding immigration cases. The curriculum will be available to state judicial educators and others for use nationally or locally.

The Committee determined that although the intersection of federal and state practices, policies, and laws vary from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction, there are recognized, effective judicial processes that judges can use to promote greater understanding and a better, more accurate court record. The prototype education program will also address little known, but commonplace impacts state court sentences have on subsequent federal district court and immigration administrative proceedings. Topics explored will include the juncture of immigration and criminal law, domestic relations, children and juvenile law, probate and mental health proceedings, and selected civil litigation. An initial curriculum will be available for distribution to the states and local jurisdictions by the summer of 2009. It is expected that updates to the curriculum will be frequent over the next several years, as federal and state law is likely to continue changing.

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FY 2009 1st QUARTER GRANT APPLICATIONS

SJI received 11 grant applications requesting a total of **\$435,029** for the 1st quarter of FY 2009. The Board will meet on December 5, 2008, to make decisions on grant awards for the 1st quarter. The results of this Board meeting will be available the following week.

SJI is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) (P.L. 110-329) through March 6, 2009. While under a CR, the Board of Directors will approve new grant requests for FY 2009, but will not make any awards until SJI's final appropriation is available. New grantees for FY 2009 may request to begin their project prior to the availability of SJI's appropriation. They may also request permission to use cash match funds until such time as SJI funds are available for reimbursement. New applicants are strongly encouraged to let SJI know in their grant applications that they need to start the project and spend cash match prior to the availability of appropriations.

The Senate Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Bill (S 3182), includes \$5.0 million for SJI in FY 2009; an increase of \$1.24 million over FY 2008. The House Appropriations Committee-approved CJS Bill (bill number pending), provides \$4.1 million for SJI; an increase of \$340,000 over FY 2008.

PARTNER GRANTS



Partner Grants were established in FY 2006 as a way for SJI to work with other federal agencies and non-profit organizations to provide grants that address court needs on a national level. These partnerships give SJI and its partner an opportunity to combine funding to increase support for the state courts.

SJI has continued to work closely with the U.S. Department of Justice to strengthen the state courts. Specifically, in FY 2008, SJI and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) jointly funded a Partner Grant for the Drug Court Planning Initiative; a BJA-funded training initiative that helps jurisdictions implement effective drug court programs. These combined resources enabled drug court teams who had limited resources to attend the training, and supported additional drug court teams (who would not have been included prior to the Partner Grant) to receive training. This Partner Grant marks the second year BJA and SJI have combined resources to support projects benefiting the state courts. **(continued on page 3)**

In FY 2008, SJI also finalized a Partner Grant with the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) to support a component of their Judicial Security Fellowship (JSF) Program. This program provides an opportunity for state and local law enforcement officers charged with court security to train with the USMS. The USMS/SJI Partner Grant directly supported a component of the JSF program that included joint training with court administrators at NCSC.

The Partner Grant between SJI and the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) began in FY 2006, and is designed to improve access to justice for self-represented and other low-income litigants. The Partner Grant continued in FY 2008, providing a total of \$600,000 to fund a slate of innovative technology projects designed to promote full access to justice through the use of technology. Between FY 2006 and 2008, LSC/SJI Partner Grants have supported \$1.9 million in TIG projects that have developed collaborative efforts between the state courts and legal service programs.

One of SJI's first Partner Grants with Pew Charitable Trusts increased the involvement of State courts in foster care issues. This \$1.2 million Partner Grant allowed state courts to take on major new roles and responsibilities as part of the foster care system in the United States. In FY 2008, SJI finalized a new Partner Grant with Pew's Public Safety Performance Project. The goal of these activities will be 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.

SJI is pleased to have the opportunity to work with other organizations to address these national scope projects, while at the same time supporting traditional Project, Technical Assistance, and Curriculum Adaptation and Training grants for state and local courts.

SJI GRANT PROGRAMS

SJI's mission is to improve the quality of justice in state courts, and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common issues faced by all courts. To fulfill this mission, SJI awards grants that benefit the nation's judicial system and the public it serves. SJI currently awards six types of grants, each of which is specifically targeted:

- Project Grants – are the centerpiece of the SJI's efforts to improve the administration of justice in state courts nationwide. Project Grants are intended to support innovative technical assistance, education and training, and demonstration projects that can improve the administration of justice.
- Partner Grants – allow SJI and federal, state, or local agencies or foundations, trusts, or other private entities to combine financial resources in pursuit of common interests.
- Strategic Initiatives Grants – provide SJI the flexibility to address national court issues as they occur, and develop solutions to those problems.
- Technical Assistance (TA) Grants – designed to provide state and local courts with funding to obtain expert assistance to diagnose a problem, develop a response to that problem, and initiate implementation of any needed changes. (continued on page 4)

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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.

- Curriculum Adaptation and Training (CAT) Grants – enable courts and regional or national court associations to modify and adapt model curricula or course modules to meet state or local jurisdiction educational needs; train instructors to present portions or all of the curricula; and pilot-test them to determine their appropriateness, quality, and effectiveness.
- Scholarships – enhance the skills, knowledge, and abilities of judges and court managers by supporting attendance at programs sponsored by national and state providers that they could not otherwise attend because of limited state, local, and personal budgets. SJI has reserved a total of \$175,000 for scholarships for FY 2009.

There are no funds reserved specifically for Project, Partner, TA, or CAT grants. SJI reviews applications for these grants on a competitive basis (in the case of Partner Grants, other review factors are used) to determine awards. Applicants may directly apply for each of the grant types above, within the requirements contained in the FY 2009 SJI [Grant Guideline](#). The exception is Strategic Initiatives Grants, which are awarded by SJI directly to select grantees based on the scope and objectives of the issue being addressed. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to contact SJI with any questions prior to submitting grant applications, or even to discuss ideas about future projects.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next grant and scholarship application deadline: February 1, 2009 (2nd QTR, FY 2009).
- The FY 2009 SJI [Grant Guideline](#) is now available on the SJI Website.
- For current and future grantees: all grant and scholarship payments are made directly from the U.S. Treasury, including paper checks.

