

SJI NEWSLETTER

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SJI Awards Fourth Quarter Grants

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SJI encourages grantees to promote the release of SJI-funded reports and culmination of projects using Facebook, and via Twitter at @statejustice

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The SJI Board of Directors met on September 12, 2016, at the Multnomah County Courthouse in Portland, Oregon, to make decisions on quarterly grant applications and awarded a total of eighteen (18) new grants.

One Strategic Initiatives Grant (SIG) was awarded to the National Center for State Courts to evaluate online dispute resolution projects in New York and Utah. One Project Grant was approved for the Arkansas Supreme Court Commission on Children, Youth, & Families for statewide implementation of juvenile justice reforms.

Nine (9) Technical Assistance (TA) Grants were approved, including: the Missouri Office of State Courts Administrator for a municipal court technology consolidation project; the New Orleans, Louisiana, Municipal Court for an assignment and case management plan consolidating Municipal and Traffic Courts; the Supreme Court of the U.S. Virgin Islands for implementation of administrative unification of the Supreme and Superior Courts; Juvenile probation performance measurement development for the Allegheny County, Pennsylvania Court of Common Pleas; and, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) for a project to assess and address human trafficking in the CNMI.



Seven (7) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were approved, including: support to the Supreme Court of Ohio for a court interpreter improvement program; the Maryland Judiciary for faculty development education; the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts for Safe Exchange Supervised Visitation (SESV) Practice Standards online training; and, the National Judicial College (NJC) for human trafficking education for state court judges.

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Sentencing Reform Highlighted in Latest Trends Publication

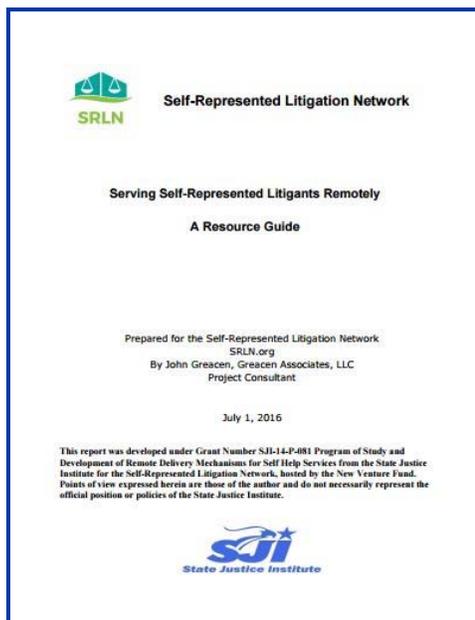


Earlier this year, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) released its annual [Trends in State Courts](#) publication. One of the keynote trends titled, [Recent Sentencing Reform Initiatives to Reduce Recidivism, Promote Fairness, and Control Costs](#), features the work of projects focused on evidence-based sentencing to reduce recidivism. This includes SJI-supported projects both nationally and in California.

Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely: A Resource Guide

The Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN), a dynamic network of organizations, individuals, and institutions that serve legal system professionals engaged in working with self-represented litigants, has released a resource guide on serving self-represented litigants remotely.

Developed through an SJI Strategic Initiatives Grant (SIG), the document titled,



[Serving Self-Represented Litigants Remotely - A Resource Guide](#), provides options for courts interested in providing services remotely to self-represented litigants. The Guide also includes information on technology and business process options; describes a study of how eight sites provide remote self-help services to self-represented litigants; and concludes with principal findings and recommendations.

In addition to the full report, there is an [Executive Summary](#), which presents the full report's key findings including:

- Delivery of services using telephone and internet-based technologies is an effective and efficient means of providing information and assistance to self-represented litigants, and should be a part of the service delivery strategy of every entity interacting with this customer group.
- Use of multiple remote services (e.g., telephone, e-mail, live chat, videoconferencing and text messaging) is advantageous to the service provider and the user.
- Service providers save resources in these ways: 1) remote services delivery staffing can be centralized; 2) staff/customer interaction time is shorter using most remote methods than face-to-face communications; 3) it is easier for staff to establish boundaries for a remote conversation; 4) staff are better able to control the pace and demands of their work; 5) facilities costs are reduced; 6) security

issues and costs are minimized, but not eliminated; and, 7) how merging technologies used in limited jurisdiction courts, such as those identified in Nebraska and Orange County, California, continue to maximize underutilized staff resources.

Benefits to customers and the ways in which remote services are exceeding internal and external expectations are described. The SRLN, conducted extensive in-person interviews, observational analysis, focus groups, and assisted each contributing state partner in completing a program characteristics spreadsheet. The Guide contains information from state-level programs in Alaska, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, and Utah, and county-level programs in Butte, Lake, Tehama, and Orange Counties in California.

The Guide encourages state courts and their partners to identify and deliver remote services for self-represented litigants that is jurisdictionally appropriate. In developing remote services for self-represented litigants, state courts should consider the following:

1. Available staff time and procedural gains from remote service.
2. Scope of services to be provided and demographics of self-represented litigants (language access, geographical size of jurisdiction relative to customers, etc.).
3. Court budget and community return on investment.
4. Compatibility with existing resources for customers, with an emphasis on new or added services.
5. Enhancing access to justice while also achieving planned goals.
6. Integration of new partners or resources, including technology that expedites caseloads in an effective manner.

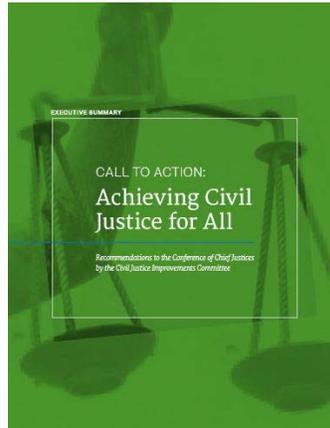
The Guide is not intended to define a "best practice" model for all courts or jurisdictions to use in establishing or expanding remote services to self-represented litigants. Rather, one of the major lessons from the study is the need to tailor remote service programs to the jurisdiction and customers being served. The SRLN is prepared to offer assistance to jurisdictions seeking more help than this Guide is able to provide. You can contact SRLN at consulting@srln.org.

Civil Justice Initiative: Executive Summary

As featured in the [August edition of the SJI Newsletter](#), a partnership between the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), [National Center for State Courts \(NCSC\)](#) and the [Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System \(IAALS\)](#), yielded a 41-page report, titled, [Call to Action: Achieving Civil Justice for All](#).

An 8-page [Executive Summary](#) is now available through the [NCSC Library e-Collection](#). The summary provides the 13 recommendations that the full report presents in detail, including:

- Courts must take responsibility for managing civil cases from time of filing to disposition.
- Beginning at the time each civil case is filed, courts must match resources with the needs of the case.
- Courts should use a mandatory pathway-assignment system to achieve right-sized case management.



- Courts should develop civil case management teams consisting of a responsible judge supported by appropriately trained staff.
- Courts must take full advantage of technology to implement right-size case management and achieve useful litigant-court interaction.
- Courts must take all necessary steps to increase convenience to litigants by simplifying the court-litigant interface and creating on-demand court assistance services.

Recently, SJI committed significant resources to support the Civil Justice Initiative Implementation Phase, which will support technical assistance, education, and demonstration projects for state courts to implement some or all of the CJJ recommendations. For more information about the Initiative, please visit: www.ncsc.org/civil.

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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.

