

E-SJI News

August 2007

The Voice of the State Justice Institute

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LSC & SJI Continue Partnership in FY 2007

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) and SJI began working to tighten the bonds between courts and legal aid providers in FY 2006. In FY 2007, LSC and SJI are continuing that effort by recently finalizing a Partner Grant totaling **\$672,758**. This second year Partner Grant will fund a slate of innovative technology projects designed to promote full access to justice through the use of technology. The Partnership uses LSC's existing Technology Initiative Grants (TIG)



program to support these innovative projects. SJI's share, **\$336,379**, is fully matched by LSC, and will provide additional resources to develop collaborative efforts between the courts and legal service programs in order to better

serve self-represented and low-income litigants across the country. Between FY 2006 and 2007, LSC/SJI Partner Grants have supported **\$1.3 million** in TIG projects. The Institute is very excited about the continuation of this partnership. More information on the FY 2007 Partner Grant will be available in the future from both LSC and SJI. In the meantime, those interested in LSC's TIG program should visit the website: <http://tig.lsc.gov/>.

A Look Back: SJI Restructuring Changes the Picture of Grant Recipients

As those of you who have known SJI from its early beginnings are aware, the programmatic changes implemented in the past few years have had an impact on both what we do and where the money goes. When Congress required that SJI restructure its efforts (while keeping the same mission), staff began to seek innovative ways of doing business. For example, SJI implemented a cash match requirement for all grants and discontinued grant continuations in order to

assure that SJI funds do not become the sole source of funding for the existence of a program.

We have not completed awarding the FY 2007 4th quarter grant applications, but as of this month, we have found that the restructuring from several years ago has certainly impacted how Institute funds are being distributed. The following charts show that in FY 1995 (one of the more active fiscal years for SJI), the majority of grant funds

were provided to non-court entities, or those non-profit agencies and universities that support courts in both research and areas of program development. In fact, only 24% of the grant funds went directly to the courts.

In FY 2007, 67% of the funds have gone directly to the courts and only 24% have been awarded to non-court entities. This clearly illustrates that SJI is complying with Congressional intent.

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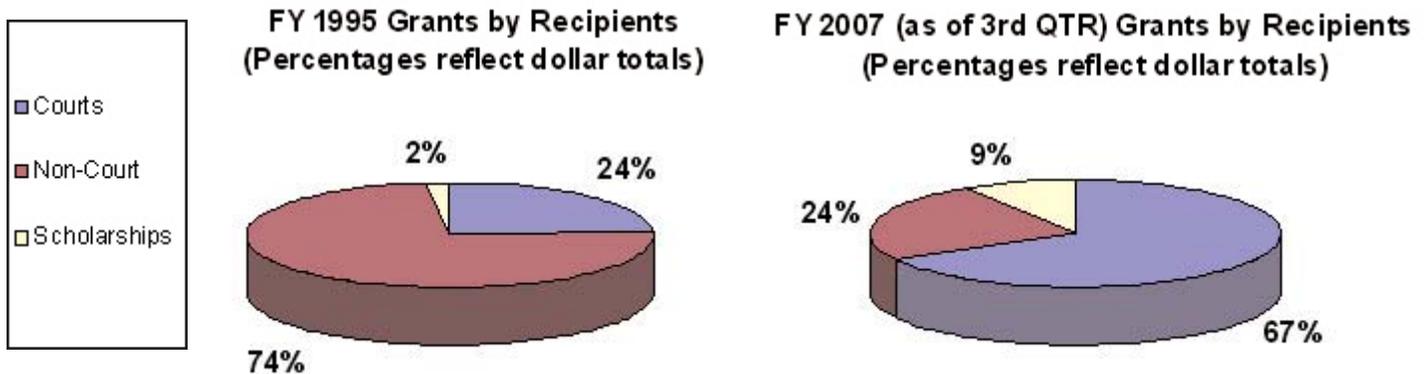
What's Inside

A Look Back: SJI Restructuring Changes the Picture of Grant Recipients.(continued).....	2
New Scholarship Forms for FY 2008.....	2-3
FY 2007 4th Quarter Grant Applications.....	3
Contact the Staff.....	3

A Look Back: SJI Restructuring Changes the Picture of Grant Recipients

[continued from previous page](#)

In addition, Congress also required SJI to find a way to leverage additional funds for court support. This is being accomplished through the requirement of cash match for all grants except scholarships. As of the 3rd quarter of FY 2007, there has been over \$1.4 million in cash match to SJI grant awards (not including Partnership Grants). The Institute is pleased that we have been able to restructure in a way that still allows us to assist the courts in some very promising ways.



New Scholarship Forms for FY 2008

In the July E-SJI Newsletter, SJI announced that it was making some changes to the Scholarship program in FY 2008. These changes will be published in the Federal Register this fall. New scholarship application forms (SJI Forms S1 & S2) will be made available on the SJI website after October 1, 2007. A significant item that SJI would like to highlight is the requirement to identify whether State or local funds are available for the proposed course. Furthermore, the Concurrence Form (S2) will require that the Chief Justice (or Designee) indicate whether State or local funds are available for the applicant to attend the course. Specifically, the Chief Justice will have to certify that: 1) Public funds **are not** available to enable the applicant to attend this course, and receipt of a scholarship would not diminish the amount of funds made avail-

able by the State for judicial branch education; or 2) Public funds **are** available to support the applicant, but are insufficient to cover total costs. Therefore, funding from SJI is requested. The purpose is to avoid supplanting State and local funds in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 10706(b).

SJI may not make payments for tuition, transportation, and lodging expenses for a course in excess of \$1,500. Therefore, if a scholarship applicant has acquired State funds to attend a course, that amount will be deducted from the maximum payment SJI can make.

Here is an example:

A judge decides to attend a course that costs \$1,500, which includes tuition, transportation, and lodging. He or she is successful in obtaining State funding that will cover \$1,000 of the total cost. The judge decides to submit a scholarship application to SJI for help in covering the full cost of the course. Should SJI make a scholarship award to this judge, the award would cover the remaining \$500.

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The State Justice Institute is a private, non-profit corporation established by Congress in 1984 to provide financial support for projects to improve the quality of justice in State courts. SJI is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.



New Scholarship Forms for FY 2008

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More information about the Scholarship program will be available in the FY 2008 Federal Register and the SJI Website. If there are any questions, feel free to also contact the Institute directly.

FY 2007 4th Quarter Grant Applications

SJI received 20 grant applications requesting a total of **\$1.3 million** for the 4th quarter of FY 2007. The Board will meet on September 21, 2007, to make decisions on grant awards. The results of this final FY 2007 Board meeting will be available the following week. Next month's E-SJI Newsletter will also include information on the final awards for this fiscal year, along with a recap on total FY 2007 grant applications and awards.

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