

# E-SJI News

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## BOARD AWARDS GRANTS FOR THE 2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER

The SJI Board of Directors met on March 25, 2010, to award grants for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY 2010. Fourteen (14) new grants were awarded, totaling \$593,121. Three (3) Project Grants were awarded, including: support to the Michigan State Court Administrative Office for a judicial workload assessment; funding to the Minnesota Judicial Branch for technology enhanced learning integration and statewide training; and assistance to the American Bar Association to build a volunteer guardian assistance program for the state courts, to include updating a 1992 volunteer guardianship monitoring manual and making it available on the internet.

Four (4) Technical Assistance (TA) Projects were awarded, including: an improvement project for immigration, cultural competency, and litigant access to justice for the Sonoma County, California, Superior Court; a caseload assessment for the Seattle Municipal Court; a study of potential court consolidation in Mahoning County, Ohio; and professional development standardization for the National Association for State Judicial Educators (NASJE). Seven (7) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were awarded, including: immigration in the state courts training programs for Michigan and Washington; education for judges in New Mexico and North Dakota on decision-making in juvenile sex offense cases; and Institute for Court Management (ICM) training in various locations across California.

## UPDATED BENCH GUIDE AVAILABLE ON IMMIGRATION ISSUES IN THE STATE COURTS

As part of its efforts through SJI's Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program, the Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS) has recently finalized an updated [Bench Guide](#) for state trial court judges on immigration issues. The Bench Guide is intended to help judges identify circumstances before them in which a state criminal conviction or sentence may have collateral immigration consequences. The updated bench guide is even more user-friendly than previous versions, and the PDF document is available to all on the SJI website. CPPS is currently working to finalize a bench guide on juvenile and family immigration issues, which should be available next month. This will also be made available on the SJI website.

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# INDIANA IMPLEMENTS NEW MARRIAGE LICENSE DATABASE TO CONTROL COSTS AND INCREASE CHILD SUPPORT



The Indiana Supreme Court, Division of State Court Administration, Judicial Technology Committee (JTAC) was created to assist Indiana trial courts and clerks with technology efforts. JTAC partnered with clerks of the court to design, develop, and deploy an electronic marriage license application. Under state law, clerks of the circuit courts are responsible for marriage license issuance. With SJI support through a Project Grant in FY 2008 (SJI-08-N-082), JTAC: 1) developed a public access capability for the marriage license database, and 2) linked the database to other databases with the goal of addressing Title IV-D child support enforcement efforts.

The public access component of the marriage license database allows users the ability to complete their applications electronically. They can use their home computers, or public access terminals located in the courts or other public locations (such as public libraries, etc.). This saves the courts time and funding on the manpower required to manually process marriage license applications at the courthouse. By shifting data entry to the applicants, staff are able to perform other critical tasks. In addition, it gives the applicant more time to gather the necessary information required to apply for a marriage license that he/she may not have (for example a parent's birthplace). Applicants for a marriage license still have to physically appear before a clerk after submitting an online application to validate the request.

The focal point of this initiative was to develop a system to locate individuals who owe child support but were unable to be located. Many individuals who owe child support are very mobile and move from address to address, and it is difficult for officials in Indiana to track their movements with the current tools available. The second component of this initiative allowed JTAC to develop a capability to do this, by linking the marriage license database with other databases used by prosecutor offices and the Child Support Bureau. At the point that an individual applies for a marriage license, the most recent address is captured and can be matched up with existing information to identify the individual as being delinquent on child support. The custodial parent can work through the prosecutor's office to locate and file enforcement action against the delinquent parent under the Title IV-D program.

This project is one of many examples of how the state courts are developing innovative ways to control costs, while ensuring access to justice. In this case, the Indiana courts were able to develop a cost-controlling application that also could be used to support child enforcement efforts across the state.

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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.



# SCHOLARSHIP CONCURRENCE FORM

Applicants for scholarships must submit a SJI Form S2 – Concurrence Form. This form must be signed by the chief justice of the applicant's state, and the original submitted to SJI along with the Form S1 – Application. The signature of the presiding judge of the applicant's court may not be substituted for that of the chief justice or his/her designee. A designee of the chief justice can only be established by a letter directly from the chief justice to SJI notating who has signature authority in his/her state for scholarship purposes. SJI maintains these designation letters on file.

Potential scholarship applicants are strongly encouraged to contact SJI with any questions prior to submitting their applications.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next grant and scholarship application deadline: **May 1, 2010** (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, FY 2010).
- Grant and scholarship application deadlines for the remainder of the fiscal year: **August 1, 2010** (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter).
- Current and future grantees and scholarship recipients can choose to receive payments via EFT. This is a faster method of receiving payment from SJI. To participate in EFT, SJI will need a completed [SF 3881-Automated Clearing House \(ACH\)/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form](#), which is available on the SJI website under the [Forms](#) tab.