

# E-SJI NEWS

## NACM 2014 Midyear Conference Sessions Now Available Online

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For more content from the recent SJI Board meeting, important national resource announcements, and partner updates, look no further than the SJI [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.



SJI support has assisted the [National Association for Court Management \(NACM\)](#) in providing training and educational content at its annual and midyear conferences for court managers, administrators, and judicial officers. Recently, NACM posted online educational sessions from its 2014 midyear conference, held in early February. [Video presentations](#) from more than a dozen sessions are available to the court community, regardless of NACM membership status. Some of the presenters include NACM President David Slayton, Vice President Stephanie Hess, Judge Brian MacKenzie, Professor Jacqueline Middleton, Editor-in-Chief of *The Washingtonian*, Garret Graff, and a host of well-known court consultants, leaders, and experts.

The [2014 NACM Annual Conference](#) will be held July 13 – 17, 2014 in Scottsdale, Arizona. Registration will open soon, and information on exhibitors and sponsorships is already available online.



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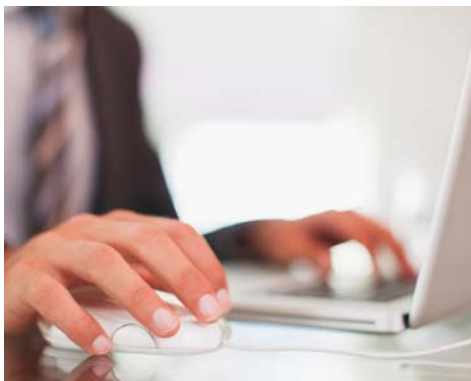
## SJI Submits FY 2015 Budget Request to Congress



For FY 2015, SJI is requesting \$5,121,000 to enhance its efforts to improve the quality of justice in the state courts.

The [request](#) is equal to the amount included in the FY 2015 President's Budget, and \$221,000 above the amount included for SJI in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014* (H.R. 3547). The funding requested for FY 2015 will enable SJI to continue identifying issues that impact all courts, fostering innovative solutions, and sharing information on successful approaches nationwide.

## Automated Forms Pilot Project for Self-Represented Litigants in New Mexico



With a Technical Assistance grant from SJI, the [New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts \(AOC\)](#) is currently piloting standardized domestic relations automated forms in Bernalillo County, seated in the city of Albuquerque (SJI-11-T-163).

The goal of the New Mexico Automated Forms Project is to develop interactive web-based legal forms available to the public, and in particular, to self-represented litigants on the New Mexico Supreme Court's website. The project will enable the AOC to incorporate interactive forms into the Judiciary's case management and electronic filing systems on a permanent basis, and update the interactive forms without the need for additional outside funding and technical assistance. This includes offering the interactive format in Spanish and other languages.

As in most courts across the United States, over 70 percent of domestic relations cases filed in New Mexico involve one or more self-represented litigants. State courts, public libraries and legal service organizations across the state field many more requests for information and legal assistance from self-represented litigants than staff can possibly respond to. The lack of consistent self-represented services and forms has been frustrating for staff and litigants.

The New Mexico Supreme Court approved standardized domestic relations forms that became effective May 31, 2013.

Through the SJI grant, the New Mexico AOC obtained expert technical assistance and access to automated form servers and authored several draft forms. However, several new forms automation products recently became available. In particular, Tyler Technologies introduced a new software product in 2013 that

ongoing. Public user data (collected through end-of-interview surveys) so far has been extremely positive. Judges are extremely pleased with the resulting uniform and legible pleadings. The court staff in Albuquerque have been enthusiastic in making the pilots a success. The automated forms ultimately will appear on the Supreme Court website and be available statewide for public use.



expands the New Mexico Judiciary's current Tyler/Odyssey case management and e-filing systems to include automated forms. The goal of the new product is to integrate the automated self-represented litigant forms seamlessly with the e-filing and case management systems, as well as providing user-friendly, informative public access to basic legal forms such as divorce.

The remainder of the grant provided expert attorney authoring of form scripts that will be incorporated into the Tyler authoring tools. The first form (free process) was piloted in the Second Judicial District (located in Albuquerque) in Fall 2013, while the divorce pilots are

Non-indigent self-represented litigants will pay the usual e-filing fees.

The use of these forms will reduce foot traffic in the courts, although some public use computers will remain available within the courthouses. Evaluative surveys are built into the form interviews and will provide valuable data as the forms are used.

SJI remains committed to assisting the state courts as they address the challenges of serving self-represented litigants. Self-Represented Litigation is a Priority Investment Area for SJI grant funding in FY 2014.

## Center for Elders and the Courts Expands Resources and Training

The [National Center for State Court's \(NCSC\)/Center for Elders and the Courts \(CEC\)](#), in partnership with the [University of California at Irvine School of Medicine's Center of Excellence on Elder Abuse and Neglect](#), has developed two training resources for judges and court personnel:

- The [Elder Abuse Curriculum for Judicial Officers](#) is available for download. The curriculum is comprised of three modules that provide an overview on the physiology of aging, identifying elder abuse and neglect, and crafting more effective court responses. The curriculum includes all course materials, an instruction manual, and supplemental



videos. The curriculum is also adaptable for in-person and educational sessions of varying length.

- The new online course, *Justice Responses to Elder Abuse*, will soon be available, free of charge, through the CEC website. The course is expected to be released in April 2014. This comprehensive resource expands on the curriculum and features expert medical, judicial, and prosecution faculty through the course's four key parts: 1) Aging in America; 2) Enhancing Elder

Abuse Awareness; 3) Special Issues and Tools for Courts; and, 4) Practical Application via Case Scenarios.

In FY 2011, SJI began a multi-year grant initiative to assist the NCSC with the needed upgrades to the CEC website, so that hosting of complex integrated materials and deployment of web-based training would be possible. For more information on these CEC products, please contact Brenda Uekert ([buekert@ncsc.org](mailto:buekert@ncsc.org)) or Denise Dancy ([ddancy@ncsc.org](mailto:ddancy@ncsc.org)) at the NCSC.

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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.

