

E-SJI NEWS

SJI Announces New Priority Investment Areas

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On November 30, 2011, the SJI Board of Directors announced SJI's new [Priority Investment Areas](#). SJI will allocate significant financial resources through grant-making for these following Priority Investment Areas (in no ranking order):

- **Self-Represented Litigation** - e.g., self-help centers, online services, training.
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** - e.g., interpretation service plans, remote interpretation (outside the courtroom), interpreter certification, courtroom services (plain language forms, websites, etc.).
- **Reengineering in Response to Budget Reductions** - e.g., the process of reengineering, regionalization or centralization of services, structural changes, the electronic record.

➤ **Immigration Issues in the State Courts** - e.g., impact of federal and state immigration law and policies, juvenile and family issues, training.

➤ **Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Elder Issues** - e.g., visitor programs, electronic reporting, reports, training.

The Priority Investment Areas replace the former Special Interest Categories for Project Grants in many ways - most importantly in that they apply to ALL grant types (with the exception of the Education Support Program). SJI strongly encourages potential grant applicants to consider projects addressing one or more of these [Priority Investment Areas](#). More information about the Priority Investment Areas will be provided in the future.

SJI Board Awards Grants for the First Quarter of FY 2012

SJI received 18 grant applications requesting a total of \$1,662,598 for the 1st quarter of FY 2012. The Board met on November 28, 2011, to make decisions on quarterly grant awards.

Five (5) Project Grants were awarded, including: curriculum development support for the National Association of Court Management (NACM); a grant to the Connecticut Judicial Branch to evaluate their foreclosure mediation program; Phase II support of the Maryland Judiciary's analysis of alternative dispute resolution programs in the state; and two grants to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to support Phase II of the Center for Elders and the Courts (CEC), and a collaborative project with the American Judges Association (AJA), to improve the quality of judicial decision-making.

Four (4) Technical Assistance (TA) Grants were awarded, including: a grant to the Arkansas Supreme Court to develop time standards, which will build on the recently released, *Model Time Standards for State Trial Courts* (SJI-09-N-127); an evaluation project for the Utah's Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission, which will establish and pilot an evaluation process for part-time judges throughout the state; a website improvement project for the Council of Chief Judges of State Courts of Appeal (CCJSCA); and development of a centralized training, testing, and interpreter service provider for the Vermont Supreme Court's Language Access Program.

Five (5) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were awarded, including: the online adaptation of the NCSC's Institute for Court Management

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(ICM) Purposes & Responsibilities of Courts course; curriculum development support for the National Association of State Judicial Educators (NASJE); on-site presentation of the National Judicial College's (NJC) Faculty Development Program for the Nebraska Judicial Branch; delivery of an immigration issues training program for trial court judges in

Texas by the NJC and Texas Center for the Judiciary; and support for the development of a Statewide Children's Summit for the Nebraska Supreme Court, in partnership with the National Center for Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ).

SJI also approved a Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) to the NCSC for a National Summit on Language Access in the Courts. The

Summit, which is endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), will engage state court leadership to address issues surrounding language access planning, and ensure access to justice for people with limited English proficiency (LEP). States will work to develop LEP action plans and formulate strategies for implementation of these plans.

SJI Receives Final Appropriation for FY 2012



On November 17, 2011, the House and Senate agreed to a funding level for SJI totaling \$5,121,000 for FY 2012 - the same amount appropriated for FY 2011.

H.R. 2112 was signed by the President on November 18, 2011; therefore, SJI has its full appropriation for FY 2012. SJI greatly appreciates the continued support of Congress and the President.

The funding provided in FY 2012 will enable SJI to continue supporting critical projects that will improve the administration of justice in the state courts.

Revised Model Time Standards for Trial Courts

With SJI support, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), in conjunction with the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) recently completed a two-year evaluation and revision of model time standards for trial courts (SJI-09-N-127). NCSC has released a publication, [Model Time Standards for State Trial Courts](#) that details the revision to the COSCA Delay Reduction Time Standards, which were first developed and adopted in 1982. The project also compared the COSCA standards with those of the American Bar Association (ABA), which were last modified in 1992.

NCSC worked with other stakeholders to provide an overall objective and qualitative analysis of current standards, and revise the COSCA Delay Reduction Time Standards. A nine person steering committee provided project oversight, and were responsible for reviewing data on current standards, with additional input from other experts in the field. The committee, based on their wealth of experience with state courts across the nation,



established a reasonable set of expectations that would benefit the courts, attorneys, and the public.

The revised model time standards attempt to unify the current sets of disparate national time standards. The model standards are designed for use by the judicial branch of each state as a basis for establishing their own time standards for general and limited jurisdiction courts. Currently, two-thirds of state courts follow time standards. Courts can look to the time standards for guidance on developing achievable goals, whereas attorneys and the public

will find value in the standards when preparing for court and assessing expectations for reasonableness.

In addition to data by case type and an explanation of the model standards, readers will also find valuable information on the prior national standards (where available) and recommendations for seeking technical assistance, achieving compliance with the model standards, and details on how to use the new standards and measure progress on timely case processing.

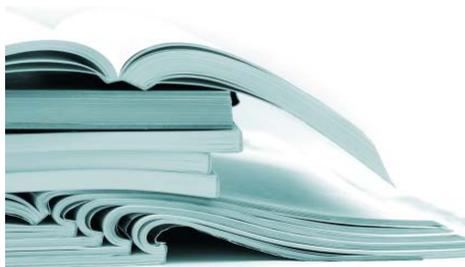
The model time standards were recently approved by CCJ, COSCA, ABA's House of Delegates, and the National Association for Court Management (NACM). The project was critical to many of the partners involved, since an objective and thorough review of existing time standards had not been performed for nearly two decades.

The model time standards are available online in the [NCSC Library and Digital Archive](#). Hard copies are available from the NCSC by request.

New Volunteer Guardianship Monitoring Handbooks Are Now Available Online

The American Bar Association (ABA) Commission on Law and Aging received a grant (SJI-10-N-085) from SJI to update and revise the 1991 American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Handbook for Courts on Volunteer Guardianship Monitoring and Assistance Programs. The draft version was reviewed by an advisory committee, two pilot courts, and several additional volunteer guardianship monitoring program coordinators in October 2011. A final PDF version is now available, with hard copies to follow in 2012.

The ABA adapted and developed a series of three handbooks and a primer. The [Volunteer Guardianship Monitoring and Assistance: Serving the Court and the Community](#), is a practical hands-on guide to help courts establish volunteer programs. It is based on the extensive experience of AARP, as well as existing court volunteer guardianship review



programs. In addition to the [Introduction](#), the guide includes three handbooks:

The [Program Coordinator's Handbook](#) sets out basic steps for planning a program, as well as recruiting and managing volunteers. Judges and/or court administrators considering initiating a volunteer program are encouraged to review the manual, particularly the sections on adapting the program to a specific court and the key planning factors.

Program coordinators are encouraged to review the entire manual and use it as a guide for tailoring the program for the court.

The [Trainer's Handbook](#) offers materials needed to plan comprehensive training for volunteers, including training tips, a model training agenda, and a complete outline of lectures and exercises for a two-day curriculum for "volunteer court visitors." The Trainer's Handbook also includes a one-day training for "volunteer auditors."

The [Volunteer's Handbook](#) is a separate text designed as a take-home reference for volunteers. It includes background information, local resources, fact sheets, forms, and other materials that volunteers need to function effectively in the program. Courts can adapt the handbook to the state guardianship statutes and other relevant state laws, local court procedures, and community resources.

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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.

