

# E-SJI NEWS

## Board Awards Grants for Fourth Quarter of FY 2011

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The SJI Board of Directors met on September 9, 2011, to consider grant applications for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of FY 2011. Thirteen (13) grants were awarded totaling \$581,752.

Two (2) Project Grants were awarded, one to the National Center for State Court’s (NCSC) Center for Elders and the Courts (CEC), to provide a more thorough resource on aging issues, elder abuse, and guardianships for the state courts, and another to the Texas Administrative Office of the Courts to support the educational component of the Texas Judicial Council Shared Solutions Summit.

Seven (7) Technical Assistance (TA) Grants were awarded, including: strategic planning projects for the Hawaii Judiciary, 5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District of Pennsylvania, and Orleans Parish Criminal District Court in Louisiana. The grant to Orleans Parish will focus primarily on information technology and build on their previous planning grant (SJI-10-T-150). In addition, the Board awarded a caseload and calendaring improvement project to the Merced County Superior Court in California; development of an implementation strategy for modernizing technology for the Florida Office of the State Court Administrator; a

courthouse security assessment of the 8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in Las Vegas, Nevada; and analysis of Multnomah County’s court facilities at the historical courthouse in Portland, Oregon.

Four (4) Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grants were awarded, including: two programs offered by the National Judicial College (NJC), one for new appellate court judges and another special topic course on adjudicating complex water law cases dividing water rights between agrarian and urban uses. SJI supported a second phase of the Council for Court Excellence’s education programs for D.C. judges, journalists, and court stakeholders, which like their initial program (SJI-09-E-163), will be a 4-part series. Also funded was delivery of a training program created by the National Association for Women Judges focused on removing obstacles for immigrant women and their families by examining the unique challenges these cases pose to the state courts. This training was previously made available to a national audience through SJI support (SJI-11-E-086).

In FY 2011, SJI awarded approximately \$2.5 million in Project, TA, and CAT Grants to state courts and national court support organizations.

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## Status of Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriations

On September 14, 2011, the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Subcommittee on Appropriations marked up the FY 2012 appropriations [bill](#). The Subcommittee included \$5,000,000 for SJI; approximately the same amount as appropriated in FY 2011. On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the full Senate Appropriations Committee met to consider the CJS bill, and approved the same level of funding. SJI greatly appreciates the Committee’s continued support of SJI’s mission.

In July, the House Appropriations Committee approved a funding level of \$5,115,879 for FY 2012. It is likely that there will be a Continuing Resolution (CR) for the federal government until November, which will allow Congress more time to complete the FY 2012 budget process. While under a CR, SJI will review grant applications and approve those that merit funding. However, SJI will not make official grant awards until the final budget is made available for the fiscal year.

## Bureau of Justice Assistance Partners With SJI on Critical State Court Initiatives

The collaborative efforts between the [Department of Justice/Office of Justice Programs/Bureau of Justice Assistance \(BJA\)](#) and the State Justice Institute (SJI) have been responsible for the advancement of two ongoing programs through Partner Grants, and continued state court reengineering efforts under the Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) Program.

In FY 2011, BJA has contributed \$723,000 to three projects. Without additional BJA support, the technical assistance and expertise provided to the National Association for Court Management (NACM) and the Executive Session for State Court Leaders: Phase II would have been much more limited, and fewer sites would have been selected for state court reengineering. The following is a summary of the projects.

### State Court Reengineering

Since FY 2009, SJI has recognized that investment in state court budgeting and reengineering is paramount to assisting courts with improving efficiency, addressing emerging



needs, and preparing for future challenges under current economic conditions. This project will enable the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to perform analysis and provide plans, tools, and resources to additional state courts. The most recent BJA funds received are in addition to SJI's \$2.5 million multi-year commitment to helping state courts achieve major changes to operations and budgets that will ensure sustainability and effectiveness. More information about the program can be obtained from the SJI website/SIG program activities [tab](#).

### Executive Session for State Court Leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In FY 2008, state court judges, administrators, and scholars convened to explore trends and

key issues impacting the justice system. The first phase was hosted by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and had more than twenty attendees at each of the symposia. Participants developed original papers and held discourse on state court issues. A second phase of the Executive Session was made possible through an SJI and BJA partnership in FY 2011. This phase will focus specifically on state court budgeting, process improvement through administration, and a continued examination of access to justice issues.

### NACM Core Competencies

This Partner Grant will enable NACM to review and revise its 10 Core Competencies; including changes to support materials and resources available to court managers. The project recognizes the valuable contributions the field of court management makes to improving and maintaining efficient and effective court operations. The current core competencies are available on the NACM [web-site](#).

## Education Support Program (ESP) Replaces SJI Scholarship Program Beginning FY 2012

During the September 9, 2011, meeting of the SJI Board of Directors, the Scholarship Program Review Committee (SPRC), a temporary committee established by the Board in June 2011, issued its recommendations on changes to SJI's current scholarship program. These changes were accepted and will become effective in FY 2012.

Beginning October 1, 2011, SJI will support the enhancement of skills and knowledge through training and education by awarding funds to individuals through the Education Support Program (ESP). ESP differs from the scholarship program in several ways, most notably in the maximum amount of an award and approved use of the award.

ESP awards are for full-time judges of state, trial, and appellate courts; full-time professional state or local court personnel with management responsibilities; and supervisory and management probation officials in judicial branch probation offices, in the amount of \$1,000 for **tuition only**. Conferences, mid-year or annual state/local association meetings, or symposia are not eligible educational programs for the ESP.

The ESP maximizes SJI investments with limited funding. Through ESP, SJI will encourage mechanisms that educate a greater number of judges and managers, respond more rapidly to the changing needs of those participating in educational programming,

and support distance learning. Consistent with the scholarship program, ESP applications are due quarterly on the first day of November, February, May, and August. In addition, ESP awards on a "first-come, first considered" basis.

SJI receives a number of frequently asked questions regarding the ESP (formerly the scholarship program). To better address these questions, the following page features the most commonly asked and answered questions that applicants should consider before applying to the program to support their professional development needs.

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## 10 Frequently Asked Questions on the Education Support Program (formerly the Scholarship Program)

- *Will a signature from my local jurisdiction's chief judge suffice for the concurrence form?*  
**Answer:** The ESP Application and Concurrence ([Forms ESP-1 & ESP-2](#)) must be signed by the chief justice of the state's supreme court or designee, typically the state court administrator. Please be sure to allow enough time for the signer to review the application and return it to you before the application deadline.
- *I work for the court and plan to continue my education by going to law school; can ESP cover the costs associated with my tuition?*  
**Answer:** No, ESP does not cover the cost associated with the pursuit of a terminal degree. Some master's level programs for judges and court administrators may be eligible for a \$1,000 award annually through ESP. To confirm the program's eligibility, please contact our office at 571-313-8843.
- *What is the difference between SJI's grant program and the ESP?*  
**Answer:** Grants can only be awarded to a state court or court support organization for the purposes described in the SJI Grant Guideline. ESP awards are only for individual judges and managers to attend educational programs and courses.
- *Can I get an ESP award to attend my state's drug court conference next year?*  
**Answer:** No, ESP does not cover in-state programs, or mid-year and annual conference events.
- *I have decided to retire, but was already approved by SJI to receive an ESP award. Can my successor have the funds I was awarded?*  
**Answer:** Awards are nontransferable. SJI should be notified immediately so it can deobligate these funds and make an award to another applicant.
- *Why does the payment form (ESP-3) require my Social Security Number (SSN)?*  
**Answer:** The ESP-3 requires an SSN in order for the U.S. Treasury to make payment on behalf of SJI.
- *There are no full-time judges in our court; could I still be eligible to receive an ESP award under these circumstances?*  
**Answer:** Only full-time judges are eligible to receive ESP awards; you may want to check with the organization hosting the program to see if they have financial assistance.
- *How many ESP awards can I receive in a 12-month period?*  
**Answer:** Recipients are limited to the receipt of one award in any two-year period unless multi-year commitment to a training or education program is required. In that event, applications can be submitted annually, with no more than one award in a 12-month period.
- *Do I have to declare the receipt of a scholarship from SJI on my taxes?*  
**Answer:** SJI encourages you to review the appropriate IRS Code or consult with your tax preparation professional.
- *I received a letter that indicated I will receive an ESP award; when will my check arrive?*  
**Answer:** Funds for ESP are payable on a cost-reimbursable basis. Once awarded, you must pay for and attend the program, and receive a certificate of completion/attendance. To receive reimbursement, submit an ESP Payment Request ([Form EPS-3](#)) with a paid tuition receipt from the program sponsor, and a copy of the certificate.

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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 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.



**State Justice Institute**