

SJI Newsletter

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Child Welfare Leaders Share Their Stories on New Podcast

Be sure to listen to court leaders share their stories about the [Court Improvement Program \(CIP\)](#), in a series of podcasts, moderated by Bill DeLisio, Colorado's Family Law Program manager.

CIP provides federal money to help families at risk or in crisis. DeLisio conducted the 10 interviews at the [National Judicial Leadership Summit on Child Welfare](#) in Minneapolis in September. The first podcast episode – a fireside chat – was posted in late November, and future episodes will be released every other week through March. The most recently released podcast features Alicia Davis, a Denver-based principal court management consultant with the [National Center for State Courts \(NCSC\)](#).



NAWJ Builds on #WeToo In the Legal Workplace

Underscored by recent research from the [ABA's Commission of Women](#), which highlighted the need to address workplace-related sexual harassment, the [National Association of Women Judges \(NAWJ\)](#) received a grant from SJI to develop and deliver educational programming for the legal community.

NAWJ's [#WeToo in the Legal Workplace program](#) provides content specifically for judges and other legal professionals on sexual harassment and misconduct in the workplace. Among NAWJ's education strategies, the program convenes state legislators and legislative women's caucus leaders with lawyers who have expertise in employment law and the workplace. Legislators shared and updated participants on 'landmark' legislation, as well as the status of any recent efforts to curb sexual harassment in the legislature and in the courts.

Earlier this year, NAWJ released a [report](#), on these activities, and future programming is planned. Additionally, the ABA Commission's Women in the Profession has adapted the research that informed the #WeToo in the Legal Workplace program to include [Zero Tolerance: Best Practices for Combating Sex- Based Harassment in the Legal Profession](#), which builds on work and introduces new information to the next generation. The Zero Tolerance Program educates women lawyers and firms alike on the signs and symptoms of an unhealthy work environment, and the best practices to correct it. [Download the toolkit for offline use here.](#)



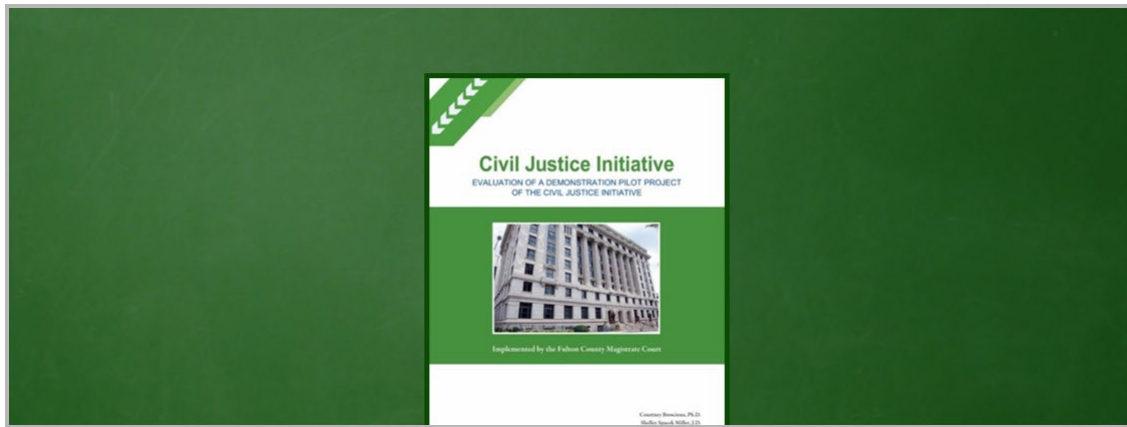
NJOTF Bench Cards and Bulletins Available in NCSC Library eCollection

Last month, SJI featured the culmination of a two-year project by the [National Judicial Opioid Task Force \(NJOTF\)](#). The report provided state courts nationwide with further information regarding the treatment of opioid-addicted defendants.

Housed within the [National Center for State Court Library's eCollection](#) is the final report and several special-subject bench cards or bulletins, which draw attention to general areas of the law and processes related to defendants in populations that may require special services.

- [Understanding the Basics of Addiction](#)
- [The Fundamentals of Screening and Assessment](#)
- [Sample Court Transfer Agreement - State and Tribal Courts](#)
- [Parent Partner Programs - Promising Practice to Keep Families Struggling with Substance Use Disorder Together](#)
- [Prenatal Substance Exposure: Improving Outcomes for Women and Infants](#)
- [Tribal State Court Forums](#)

The NJOTF received grant support from SJI for this content, and other elements of the project.



Fulton County Georgia Addresses High Volume Civil Dockets

With grant support from SJI, the [Fulton County Magistrate Court \(FCMC\)](#), located in Atlanta, Georgia, received funding in 2017 through the [National Center for State Courts' \(NCSC\) Civil Justice Initiative](#) for a demonstration pilot project to implement and test reforms on high-volume civil dockets. The FCMC caseload consists primarily of small claims (up to \$15,000), dispossessory (landlord/tenant evictions), and garnishment cases.

The reforms were originally promulgated as recommendations endorsed by the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators to secure the fair, speedy and inexpensive resolution of civil cases in state courts. Specific improvements implemented by the FCMC as part of the pilot project included the development and promulgation of informational resources, including brochures and web-based materials, for FCMC litigants; adjustments to court calendars to relieve case backlogs in dispossessory cases; and the development of checklists and training for judges and court staff to ensure consistent and accurate case processing. The reforms were implemented over an 18-month period beginning in March 2017 through October 2018.

At the end of the pilot project, the NCSC conducted a process evaluation to assess the immediate impact of the reforms and to glean lessons about effective implementation. The evaluation found that the reforms led to significantly reduced backlogs in dispossessory cases and reduced the time from filing to disposition for both small claims and garnishments; it did not find a significant reduction in time to disposition for dispossessory cases, likely because the timeframe was already so short that meaningful reductions would be very difficult to achieve. The evaluation also reported positive assessments of the informational resources developed for FCMC litigants, who found them very useful.

Conclusions about the pilot project highlighted challenges related to implementing reforms on high-volume dockets, especially the importance of stakeholder engagement and communication about how stakeholder input is integrated in program design; the need to allocate time, staff, and attention as key resources to ensure the success of pilot projects; and the value of soliciting litigant feedback both in the design and the assessment of pilot projects. The [report](#) closed with recommendations for ongoing reform efforts.



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES

WWW.NCJFCJ.ORG

Register for Upcoming NCJFCJ 2020 Courses

The [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges \(NCJFCJ\)](http://www.ncjfcj.org) is pleased to announce two courses to support juvenile and family court judges in 2020. The courses to be held in Reno, Nevada are:

- [The Institute for New Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#), April 21-24
- Evidentiary Problems in the Juvenile and Family Court, August 17-21

The NCJFCJ has scholarship opportunities available for these courses and both are eligible for the [SJI Education Support Program \(ESP\)](#). The SJI's ESP covers the cost of tuition up to a maximum of \$1,000 per award.

The NCJFCJ will also host two national conferences in 2020 and other scholarship opportunities are available for these programs:

- The [National Conference on Juvenile Justice](#) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 22-25
- The [83rd Annual Conference](#) in Reno, Nevada, July 19-22

To seek an ESP or other NCJFCJ scholarships to attend these NCJFCJ programs, contact Amy Saathoff, Curriculum and Education Programming Manager, at contactus@ncjfcj.org to access eligibility and application information.

For NCJFCJ's upcoming training events, please visit the NCJFCJ's 2020 training calendar at <http://www.ncjfcj.org/conference-training/calendar>.

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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.

Products and Resources

Since 2011, SJI has designated the library at the National Center for State Courts as the official repository of published work related to SJI-supported grant projects. You can search the ecollection online by using the term, State Justice Institute.

Share the News

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