



SJI Newsletter

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SJI Approves FY 2021 First Quarter Grants

The SJI Board of Directors met virtually on December 7, 2020 to make decisions on quarterly [grant applications](#), and approved a total of ten new grants.

Two Strategic Initiatives Grants were approved in support of SJI's Pandemic Response and Recovery Request for Applications (RFA); the Texas Office of Court Administration to assess the impact of remote hearings on judicial workload; and, the [National Courts and Sciences Institute](#) (NCSI) to provide sustainable case and evidentiary support for state court cases emanating from the pandemic. Three [Project Grants](#) were approved: the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia for an appellate e-filing project; the Franklin County, Ohio, Municipal Court for a self-help resource center project; and the [National Association for Court Management](#) (NACM) to support educational programming for court managers and judges, including the impact of the pandemic on court operations. Three [Technical Assistance Grants](#) were approved: the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts for a translation implementation project; the 5th Judicial District of Colorado for a mental health improvement initiative; and the District of Columbia Courts to assess high volume calendars. Two [Curriculum Adaptation and Training Grants](#) were approved: Lubbock County, Texas, for an educational program on mental health for mediators; and, the [National Association of Women Judges](#) (NAWJ) for a National Justice and Fairness Training program.

The next deadline for grant applications is February 1, 2021 (FY 2021, 2nd Quarter).

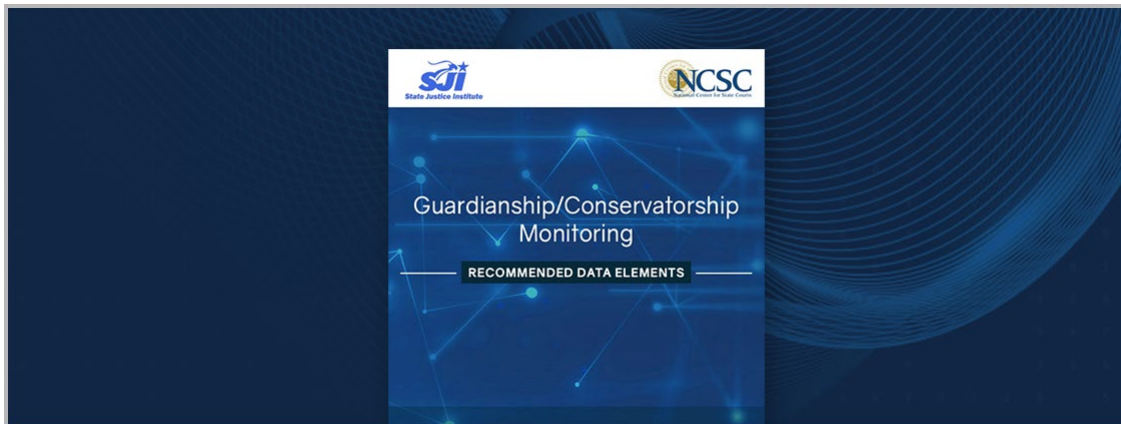


SJI Awards Grants to Support Pandemic Response and Recovery

Through a Request for Applications (RFA) process launched in FY 2020, SJI funded [multiple projects](#) that will assist state courts in their response to, and recovery from, COVID-19, with a look towards the future of court operations. SJI gave priority consideration for RFA funding to projects that focused on institutionalizing and/or replicating practices that have been implemented during the pandemic.

SJI supported projects that planned a system change approach (as opposed to the replication of narrowly focused programs or projects), and emphasized the use of case triage to match cases and parties to appropriate resources and services both within and outside the courthouse. This also includes the use of technology for innovations such as online dispute resolution (ODR), portal development, virtual hearings, and other efforts to allow court business to be conducted outside of the courthouse. These projects will also take into account access and fairness, and costs/benefits, not only to the courts, but also to court users.

A [summary](#) of these projects is available on the SJI website.



New Resources to Address Guardianship and Conservatorship Cases

“A man who became comatose after a fall counted on his daughter, who was assigned to be his guardian, to oversee his finances. However, she withdrew \$10,000 from her father’s savings account and made \$20,000 in cash advances from another account. When questioned, she said that her father always gave her generous gifts and would wish to continue to do so.” As the population of older Americans grows, so does the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly. Courts are charged with protecting the well-being and assets of persons who are placed under a guardianship or conservatorship. Because many judges only see a few guardianship cases, special resources to help them prevent and address problems are necessary. With support from SJI, NCSC has recently developed several such tools.

To guide judicial considerations when establishing a guardianship, the [Pre-appointment Protocol](#) provides examples and directs court staff to the next step at each stage in the process. The [Guardianship/Conservatorship Judicial Response Protocol](#) serves as an interactive tool to advise judges on steps to take and options to consider when allegations of wrong-doing have been made.

Courts cannot effectively monitor guardianship and conservatorship cases unless they have good information, yet the ability of state courts to provide basic data on these cases, let alone track those in which allegations of abuse or exploitation arise, is often inadequate. That is where the [Guardianship/Conservatorship Monitoring: Recommended Data Elements](#) come into play. They provide guidance on what data courts should collect and how to define it and use it to monitor cases. The need for judicial guardianship protocols, adequate data collection and tracking systems has become a priority for many state court leaders. NCSC’s newest resources contribute to reaching that goal. They can be found, along with other information and training resources, on the website for the [Center for Elders and the Courts](#).



SAMHSA GAINS Center Announces Criminal Justice Communities of Practice

The [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges \(NCJFCJ\)](#), with support from SJI, is hosting a series of five webinars titled, “Opioids and the Courts - Difficult Conversations.”

Join NCJFCJ and expert faculty as they explore challenges associated with referring children and families to services in dependency and delinquency cases and how courts and service providers can work together to meet their needs and improve their lives. The five-part series will include conversations on prevention, intervention, harm reduction, reducing overdose and death, and recovery.

The remaining webinars can be located using the links provided below for each session:

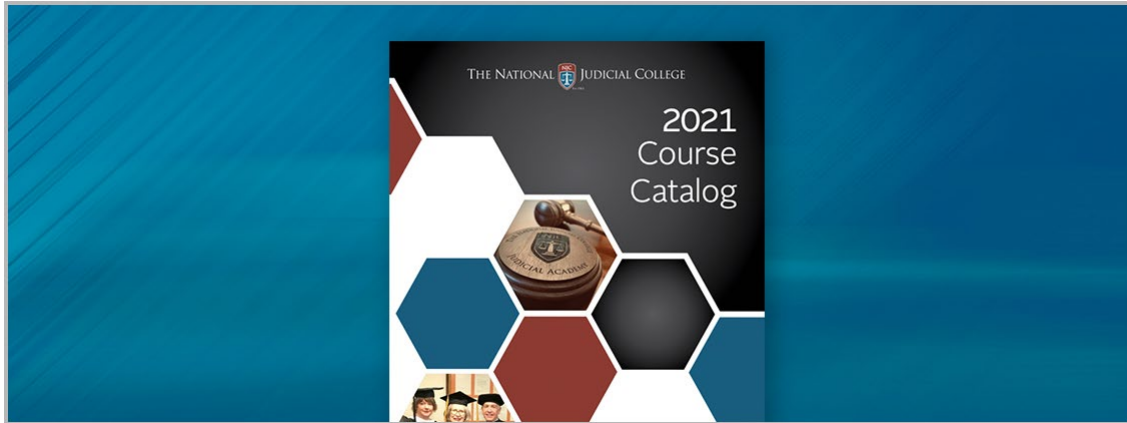
[Opioids and the Courts: Difficult Conversations Around Intervention and Treatment: 1/20/21](#)

[Opioids and the Courts: Difficult Conversations Around Harm Reduction: 2/17/21](#)

[Opioids and the Courts: Difficult Conversations Around Preventing Overdose and Death: 3/17/21](#)

[Opioids and the Courts: Difficult Conversations Around Recovery: 4/21/21](#)

Please note you will need to register for each webinar separately.



NJC Releases 2021 Course Catalog

The [National Judicial College \(NJC\)](#) announced its 2021 courses with a fully [interactive catalog](#) that links directly to registration information.

Courses include web-based offerings, in-person learning, and summit-style multi day sessions in the U.S. and abroad. Highlighted are the NJC Tribal Judicial Center, Judicial Academy for Aspiring Judges, and the Appellate Judges Education Institute.

The NJC remains an [SJI Education Support Program \(ESP\)](#) partner in 2021. ESP funds supports full-time state court judges and court managers to attend courses that enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities which they could not otherwise attend because of limited state, local, and personal budgets. NJC and the National Center for State Courts/Institute for Court Management (ICM) administer the ESP program separately, in partnership and with funding from SJI.

To seek an ESP to attend an NJC course, simply find the course you wish to attend on the NJC website: www.judges.org/courses, and click “register.” During the registration process, the website will ask whether you need a scholarship to attend. Simply follow the online instructions to request tuition assistance. If you have any questions about this process, you may contact NJC Scholarship Coordinator Brenda Pardini, at chrystn@judges.org or 800-255-8343. The NJC reserves the right to apply additional selection criteria.

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