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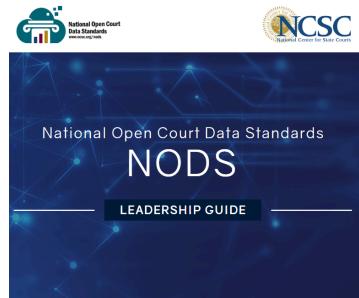
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Forward



February 2026 | Vol. 36, No. 5

Grantee Spotlight: Implementing National Open Court Data Standards in Pilot Courts



The [National Open Court Data Standards](#) (NODS) consists of business and technical court data standards designed to facilitate the sharing of court data, ensure consistency in how data are understood and used, and reduce the costs and efforts required for courts to respond to data requests. In addition, several states are using NODS as a framework to build statewide data repositories. Over the last four years, [SJI](#) has supported the implementation of NODS in 16 states. A recent evaluation of the project found that successful implementation has relied upon supportive executive leadership, dedicated staff, a designated NODS champion, and financial resources... [Read more](#)

In the News

NCSC to Bring AI Solutions to Rural Courts

Seventy-six percent of state courts are limited jurisdiction courts serving local communities—often under-resourced and without the same access to modern technology as larger court systems. To advance modernization and improve access to justice in these jurisdictions, the [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) is launching a new initiative focused on applying AI tools to address long-standing structural challenges that limit efficiency, accessibility, and service quality in rural courts. The effort is supported by [Microsoft](#), whose technology will inform potential solutions. The initiative aims to help close the digital divide facing the nation's rural courts. "Because small and rural... [Read more](#)

Rural Justice Exchange: February 2026 Edition

The *Rural Justice Exchange* is a publication dedicated to advancing collaboration, innovation, and learning across the rural justice and behavioral health landscape. Each issue highlights emerging research, promising practices, and local success stories that reflect the unique strengths and challenges of rural communities. Through features such as articles, podcasts, webinars, and program spotlights, the Exchange showcases how practitioners, policymakers, and partners are working together to build resilient communities. Designed as a resource for rural leaders and practitioners, the Exchange connects readers to practical tools, evidence-based strategies, and peer experiences that inspire meaningful and sustainable change in rural systems. View the... [Read more](#)

New National Playbook for States to Keep Youth Out of the Justice System

Children, teens, and young adults often enter the justice system because their health, education, and safety needs aren't met. As a result, justice systems are dealing with challenges they were never designed to address. The [Council of State Governments \(CSG\) Justice Center](#)'s new research-based guide can help states prevent violence, expand opportunities, and keep youth out of the justice system. The [Youth Safety Playbook for States](#) includes a community-based service continuum, strategies for financing, infrastructure, policy, service, workforce, and a checklist for implementing each strategy. This playbook is a product of the **CSG Justice Center's Collaborating for Youth and**

Public Safety Initiative (CYPSI), which partners with states to strengthen and scale research-based services and supports for youth and their families... [Read more](#)

Announcements



Upcoming Webinar! *Addressing Nonvisible Disabilities in Civil Cases: Considering the Impacts of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.* On **February 18th, 2026, at 12:00PM EST**, the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) (NCJFCJ) is virtually holding an important training focused on the often-overlooked role of nonvisible disabilities in civil legal proceedings involving military-connected survivors. This session will explore how conditions such as PTS/D, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and cognitive processing challenges can shape a survivor's engagement with the civil legal system. This training is designed for judges, court personnel, legal professionals, and anyone working with military-connected survivors in civil matters. Register [here](#).



Upcoming Webinar! *Empowering Rural Communities: Overcoming Barriers to Treatment.* The [Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies \(CASAT\)](#) School of Public Health will be hosting this webinar on **February 23rd, 2026, at 6:30PM EST**. Rural communities face unique challenges in addressing substance use disorders, from limited access to care and transportation barriers to social labeling and workforce shortages. This webinar will explore innovative, community driven strategies that are helping rural areas expand treatment access and build recovery-ready environments. Attendees will gain insights into successful models such as mobile clinics, telehealth, peer support networks, and faith-based partnerships... [Read more](#)



Upcoming Conference!
The [National Association for Court Management](#) (NACM)

will be hosting their 2026 Midyear Conference: *America 250: Preserving the Rule of Law and Judicial Independence* taking place from **March 15th - 17th, 2026**, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The themes reflect that in 2026 the American Republic will celebrate its 250th anniversary – the Semiquincentennial, or in short America250. It is a time for all court professionals to remember and celebrate in the foundational principles of our justice system and recommit to advancing them. Both Judges and Court Professionals must strive every day to ensure that the justice system lives up to its promise of being fair, accessible, and accountable to all. Learn more and register [here](#).



Upcoming Conference!
The [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) (NCJFCJ)

will be hosting the *2026 National Conference on Juvenile Justice* taking place **March 15th – 18th, 2026**, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the [Hyatt Regency Minneapolis](#). The conference will feature amazing presentations on current and cutting-edge topics that will inspire you, broaden your knowledge, and provoke discussions about issues facing the juvenile and family court system. There will be plenary and breakout sessions on juvenile justice, trafficking, child welfare, court best practices, and innovative solutions. This conference is designed for a wide range of disciplines and is open to all those interested in the improvement of child welfare and the juvenile justice system. Register [here](#).

If you are interested in sharing court related news or announcements in the SJI newsletter, please send all content to contact@sj.gov by the 10th of the month.

Are you a SJI grantee interested in being featured in our monthly newsletter and on our website? Follow the instructions on our [Grantee Spotlight Submission Instructions page](#).



The next deadline to submit a grant application to SJI is **May 1, 2026**.

Learn more about [SJI grants](#) and [apply](#) today!



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