

SJI Newsletter

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Probation System Review Guidebook

3RD EDITION

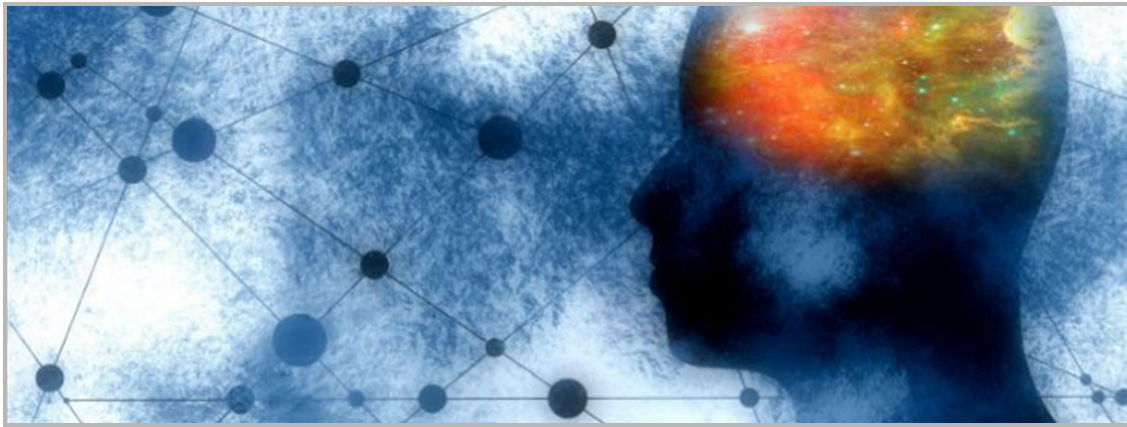
John A. Tuell and Kari L. Harp

RFK National Resource Center Releases Probation System Review Guidebook

The [Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice](#) (RFK National Resource Center), recently announced the release of the [Probation System Review Guidebook](#), 3rd Edition, in support of states and jurisdictions embracing the transformation of probation and juvenile justice policy and practice across the United States.

The new release features the framework that the RFK National Resource Center has used to achieve substantial improvements in youth outcomes and system performance, in partnership with twenty-five jurisdictions across nearly one-third of the states and territories. The latest edition includes:

- An increased focus on the translation of adolescent development into practice;
- Renewed emphasis on resiliency and positive youth development;
- Improved and updated tools and guidance related to risk-needs-responsivity instruments that support data driven and informed practice;
- Addition of a probation orders analysis and court observation methodologies;
- Specific benefits to undertaking a system review;
- New information about the [RFK National Resource Center's Training Institute](#);
- Updated jurisdictional examples and lessons learned;
- Testimonials by probation and juvenile justice leaders who have undertaken the review, and
- achieved more positive outcomes for the youth they serve.



NCSC Assists Judges in Convening Teams to Address Mentally Ill Individuals

Delivering justice to individuals who struggle with mental health or behavioral issues can be extraordinarily difficult. As leaders of their courts and communities, presiding judges are well positioned to convene and engage others to solve complicated problems. With that in mind, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) recently [published a practical guide](#) to equip presiding judges in Arizona with the information they need to convene teams of court and community leaders who can systematically address individuals with mental illness.

The guide was funded by a grant from SJI to the Arizona Supreme Court. A new grant from SJI to the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), and the NCSC will adapt the Arizona guide for use in other states, among other national activities. This will address [a recent resolution](#) from CCJ/COSCA that urges court leaders to examine community-wide strategies to help those with mental illness.

"Knowing that the guide will be adapted for broader use is very exciting," said Patti Tobias, NCSC principal court management consultant and one of the guide's authors.

The Arizona guide highlights the roles that probation officers, mental health workers, police officers, public defenders and others can take to help reduce the number of people with mental illness and behavioral health issues who find themselves in the justice system. Ms. Tobias said the NCSC team used and expanded upon the long-established Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), a framework that aims to keep individuals from continuing to penetrate the justice system. "Arizona court leaders thought it was necessary to go beyond SIM," she said, "because the challenges are so complex."

Ms. Tobias and NCSC Research Director Nicole Waters interviewed 49 state and local stakeholders from across Arizona, but mostly focused on Yavapai, Pima, and Coconino counties, as requested by court leaders in the state. Ms. Waters served as project director, assisted by Tobias and court research associate Shelley Spacek.



Minnesota Judiciary Launches New E-Learning Course on Juvenile Sex Trafficking

Juvenile sex trafficking is a significant problem nationwide, and occurs in urban areas as well as small towns, farms, and tribal lands. The state courts can play an important role in addressing this complex problem.

With SJI support, the [Minnesota Judicial Branch](#) developed a 75-minute, [self-paced eLearning course](#) on working with the juvenile victims of sex trafficking. By viewing this course, participants will develop a deeper understanding of juvenile sex trafficking and be better equipped to: 1) recognize victims of sex trafficking who appear in court hearings; 2) identify traffickers and buyers in the courtroom; 3) support victims by applying the law effectively; and 4) connect victims with critical support services and resources.

Throughout the six modules in the course, participants will hear the powerful stories of real-life victims of juvenile sex trafficking and view video expert testimony from a variety of system professionals, including judges, law enforcement, public health professionals, and victim advocates.



Webinars Address Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)

The [Civil Justice Initiative](#), a massive effort to help reform the civil justice system so that it works better for everyone, involves work at many different levels and in many different areas. Supported by SJI since 2017, this initiative addresses multi-partner strategies to align and maximize resources.

One area with great potential is online dispute resolution (ODR), which allows people to use their smart phones or computers to file small claims cases and communicate with other parties without having to appear in court. Done the right way, it can revolutionize how people use the courts to settle disputes.

[Webinars](#) sponsored by the [Self-Represented Litigation Network](#), are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, March 13, 2019. Retired California Superior Court Judge Sherrill Ellsworth and Jonathan Verk, founder of a website called [Co-Parenter](#), will discuss the role that the website has in helping to resolve disputes. Ellsworth works with courts and families as a mediator, "resolving disputes and removing children from conflict."
- Tuesday, April 23, 2019. Shannon Salter, Chair of British Columbia's pioneering online court, will discuss the court, which is called the [Civil Resolution Tribunal](#). The court, the first of its kind in Canada, hears disputes of less than \$5,000, and Salter has reported that 94 percent of the cases settle before they get to a judge.



Culture Matters: Connecticut Judicial Branch Addresses Cultural Competency

The [Connecticut Judicial Branch](#) defines cultural competency as the ability of the Branch and its employees to communicate, cooperate, and serve people from all cultural identities with respect, professionalism, integrity, and fairness in a manner that recognizes the individual dignity of each person.

With SJI support, the Judicial Branch developed a [video](#) as part of a larger product that is being used to train judges and court staff on becoming more culturally competent and responsive to the public.

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Products and Resources

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