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## Grantee Spotlight: Arizona Lawyer Apprentice Program (ALAP)



The [Arizona Supreme Court](#) implemented the Arizona Lawyer Apprentice Program (ALAP) on September 1, 2024, with generous grant support from the [State Justice Institute](#), creating an alternative pathway to law licensure. ALAP is designed for candidates who narrowly miss Arizona's Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) passing score of 270, recognizing that a single cut score does not perfectly measure attorney competence and future success. Rather than requiring these candidates to retake the UBE, ALAP allows those scoring between 260 and 269 to practice law under the supervision of an experienced Arizona attorney. Participants... [Read more](#)

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## In the News

### 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](#)

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### Supporting Courts AI Readiness and Other Resources

The [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) offers a range of practical resources to help courts understand and adopt artificial intelligence responsibly, including a set of [AI readiness materials](#) that give courts a clear framework for assessing preparedness, identifying risks and opportunities, and planning for responsible implementation that was made possible through support from the [State Justice Institute](#). These resources help court leaders understand where their organization stands today and outline concrete steps to build capacity, strengthen governance, and ensure that AI tools are used in ways that support fairness, transparency, and public trust. In addition to the AI readiness framework, NCSC provides guidance on topics such as document automation, data... [Read more](#)

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### IAALS Launches the Uncomplicated Courts Initiative to Redesign the Justice Journey for All

The [IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System](#), has just launched the **Uncomplicated Courts Initiative**, a national effort to redesign how people navigate high-volume civil cases. SJI is honored to fund this initiative—driving forward solutions that make our courts clearer, easier to navigate, and more responsive to the

people they serve. Through this initiative, IAALS aims to create a justice journey that is simpler, more supportive, and more responsive to the millions of people who navigate these cases each year. It will provide a clear, research-driven framework... [Read more](#)

## Announcements



Upcoming Webinar!  
The [NCSC](#) will be  
hosting: *Human  
Trafficking Awareness*

*from the Roadway to the Courtroom*  
on **January 22nd, 2026, at 1:00PM EST**. During Human Trafficking Awareness Month, join the Driving Justice Collective for this important webinar focused on protecting our roadways, strengthening accountability, and supporting victims. This session will explain what constitutes a "severe form of trafficking in persons" and why a conviction involving a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) can result in a lifetime commercial driver's license (CDL) disqualification. The course emphasizes the role drivers can play as the eyes and ears on our roadways and promotes safe reporting of suspicious activity. Register [here](#).



Upcoming Webinar!  
The [National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers](#) (NAPCO) is hosting: *The Life and Legacy of Ernie Friesen: Court Reformer par Excellence* on **January 22nd, 2026, at 3:00PM EST**. Many court leaders throughout the United States and worldwide were recently saddened to learn Ernie Friesen, one of the most influential icons in court and judicial management, died December 11, 2025, at 97 years of age. His work toward improving trial court governance structures and case processing efficiencies is legendary, living on today as strategic, practical principles in managing courts and evidence-based remedies for reducing needless court delay. As his obituary touted, "He was..." [Read more](#)



Upcoming Webinar!  
The [NCSC](#) will be  
hosting: *Using  
Technology & Remote  
Services in Navigator*

*Programs* on **February 6th, 2026, at 1:00PM EST**. Join in for the third *Court Navigator School* lecture, highlighting how programs leverage technology to streamline administrative tasks, improve user experience, and increase efficiency. You will also explore potential challenges and pitfalls that programs should watch for when integrating new tools. Learn from court navigator programs that provide services remotely and explore how technology is transforming their work. Students will hear directly from programs that use a variety of digital tools, including AI, to enhance service delivery. To learn more and to register today, click [here](#).



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

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



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](#).



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 SJJ newsletter,  
please send all content to [contact@sjj.gov](mailto:contact@sjj.gov) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Are you a SJJ 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 SJJ  
is **Feb 1, 2026**.

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



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