View this email in your browser

Share Tweet Share Forward

March 2026 | Vol. 36, No. 6

Grantee Spotlight: New Mexico Supreme Court Assessment of Bar Licensure and Rural Access

The Supreme Court of New Mexico, with generous assistance from SJI, has convened a committee dedicated to the development of an alternative, supervised-practice means of licensure that focuses on a skills-based assessment of a bar applicant's legal abilities. The National Center for State Courts (NCSC), as contractor on the project, assisted the committee by gathering information about similar models in other states and surveying local interested persons so that the qualifications and requirements of the program fit the needs of New Mexico. The committee expects to provide a final report to the New Mexico Supreme... Read more

In the News

New Guidance Outlines Practical Process Improvements for Improved High-Volume Case Management

Docketing and case processing can be challenging in high-volume case types like debt collection, where courts may hear thousands, or even tens of thousands, of factually similar cases every year. In these cases, many defendants lack legal representation, and low appearance rates often lead to default judgments that may not serve justice or efficiently resolve disputes. To overcome these challenges, the National Center for State Courts recently released, "Supporting Appearance: Docketing and Process Simplification Considerations for Debt Collection Cases," to help courts implement practical process improvements in these cases. The debt collection reform implementation toolkit offers guidance for implementing debt collection rules or reforms that create better... Read more

How to Talk to Your Court Users About AI

Court users are increasingly using artificial intelligence (AI) tools to seek information and advice to navigate their legal issues. This guidance provides a framework to discuss AI use with court users while emphasizing accuracy, responsibility, and compliance with court rules. Court staff should familiarize themselves with their policy on providing legal information vs. legal advice (also known as a safe harbor policy) and make sure to provide guidance according to that governing policy. Access and download the guide... Read more

NODS Evaluation Highlights Progress, Promise of Standardized Court Data

As courts face increasing demands for data, the National Open Court Data Standards (NODS) are improving data quality and governance nationwide. Over the past five years, NCSC has worked to implement the National Open Court Data Standards (NODS) to establish business and technical standards to facilitate the sharing of standardized case-level data. The standards are intended to make data more accessible, understandable, and useful for the public, researchers, and justice system stakeholders. NODS is currently being adopted by at least 16 courts across multiple states, and an evaluation of the implementation shows great promise in helping courts ensure consistency and reduce the cost and effort required to respond to data requests. Survey responses from... Read more

Announcements

Upcoming Peer Exchange Opportunity! The Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR), on behalf of the State Justice Institute, is hosting a Peer Exchange in Adams County, Ohio on **May 5th – 6th, 2026**. Up to five communities will be selected to receive travel scholarships, allowing each selected site to send a team of 3–4 practitioners to participate in this structured two-day peer exchange at no cost. This is a great opportunity to connect with peers, share promising practices, and explore strategies to strengthen justice system responses in your community. Apply By **March 16th** for Priority Consideration. All

Upcoming Free Virtual Training! The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), in partnership with the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, is hosting the *Child Safety: An Immersive Training for Judges, Attorneys, and Child Welfare Leadership* on **March 26th, 2026, from 11AM – 5PM EST.** The Child Safety Guide offers a comprehensive approach to child safety decision making. It addresses the fundamentals of safety assessments and safety planning and lays out a clear framework to assess safety-related decisions such as removal, reunification, and

Submissions Due by **March 31st, 2026.** Apply here.

when to terminate jurisdiction, provides checklists... Read more

Upcoming Symposium! *Centering Ourselves for Leadership*. The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is excited to present an innovative training opportunity focused specifically on enhancing judicial leadership and well-being skills to be held at Beltane Ranch in the California Sonoma Valley, **April 9th – 12th, 2026.** Participants will have the opportunity to engage in honest conversations about what it means to be a judicial officer while developing practical tools necessary to avoid the burnout and nurture personal resilience. The program is designed to support the process of increasing a judge's quality of life off and on the bench. Register here.

Upcoming Webinar! The National Judicial College (NJC) is hosting: *Courts Using Artificial Intelligence: The Fundamentals* on **April 17th, 2026, at 3PM EST**. This session provides a practical, plain-language introduction to artificial intelligence designed specifically for judges. Using real judicial examples and a live demonstration, faculty will show how AI can assist with everyday judicial tasks — drafting orders, summarizing filings, and managing high-volume dockets — while explaining why careful verification is essential before relying on any AI-generated content. The program will focus on building confidence and practical skill rather than technical expertise. Register here.

If you are interested in sharing court related news or announcements in the SJI newsletter, please send all content to contact@sji.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!

State Justice Institute

12700 Fair Lakes Circle, Suite 340

Fairfax, VA 22033

Board of Directors

unsubscribe from this list.

Copyright © 2026, All rights reserved.