

SJI Newsletter

May 2020 | Volume 30, No. 8



SJI Awards FY 2020 Second Quarter Grants

The SJI Board of Directors met virtually on April 27, 2020 to make decisions on quarterly [grant applications](#), and approved a total of 21 new grants.

Four (4) Strategic Initiatives Grants were awarded: the [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) to support Phase II of the Conference of Chief Justices/Conference of State Court Administrators [Mental Health Initiative](#); the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) (NCJFJC) to develop a National Bench Card Resource Center; and two SIG grants to the Utah Supreme Court to pilot the innovative Legal Services Oversight project, and in partnership with [Pew](#), to assess the [Online Dispute Resolution](#) (ODR) platform.

Four (4) Project Grants were awarded: The [National Disability Rights Network](#), on behalf of the [National Guardianship Network](#), to support the 4th National Guardianship Summit; the D.C. Court of Appeals for an organizational and management structure assessment; [The Center for Court Innovation](#) (CCI) for the Harlem Community Justice Center – Housing Help Center Community Project; and the NCSC to assist the Iowa and Kansas courts in planning for implementation of the Civil Case Management Team (CCMT) model.

Six (6) [Technical Assistance Grants](#) were awarded: the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts for a Recovery and Mental Health Oriented System of Care; the [Council for Court Excellence](#) (CCE) to evaluate estate administration in Washington, D.C.; the NCSC for a Cybersecurity in the Courts initiative; the Vermont Judiciary for an access and resource center planning project; the Montana Supreme Court for a district court workload assessment; and the 4th Judicial Circuit of Idaho for a comprehensive security assessment.

Eight (7) [Curriculum Adaptation and Training \(CAT\) Grants](#) were awarded: The NCSC and NCJFJC to build a replicable caseload management curriculum for juvenile and family courts; the Colorado Judiciary for a language access outreach and interpreter recruitment initiative; the [National Judicial College](#) for a series of webinars on judicial ethics; the [American Judges Association](#) (AJA) for educational programming; the NCSC for a curriculum for presiding judges on leading change; the Wisconsin Office of Judicial Education for a faculty development workshop; and the Oregon Judiciary for training on handling criminal defendants who are unable to stand trial by reason of incapacity.

The next deadline for grant applications is August 1, 2020.



Rapid Response Team: Pandemic Roadmap to Guide State Courts Forward

The Pandemic Rapid Response Team (RRT), a group of chief justices and state court administrators established in March 2020, has created a roadmap to help state courts move forward during the pandemic—and after it ends. The plan will be developed by a series of working groups that will determine what courts have learned, how to resume court operations as the curve flattens, and what they can do beyond to build a stronger judiciary.

The working groups will focus on court management, technology, and communications and funding issues. Recommendations will be completed within 90 days, though component parts may be delivered sooner. The RRT was created by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) and is supported by [National Center for State Courts \(NCSC\)](#). The [State Justice Institute \(SJI\)](#) is providing funding for this initiative.

Texas Chief Justice and CCJ President Nathan Hecht said the RRT has provided critical guidance to courts that had to quickly adapt to new business practices, while maintaining essential court functions. “Since the onset of the pandemic, courts throughout the country have determined to stay open to deliver justice without faltering, no matter the adjustments and sacrifices demanded, but also to protect staff, security, lawyers, parties, jurors, judges, and the public from the risks of disease...

We are learning new technology and practices together. Now, our Rapid Response Team is helping us shift attention to what's next for courts as we begin to dig out.”

New York Chief Judge Janet DiFiore, whose court system is at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, said her courts “pivoted quickly to create a virtual court system...As we improve and expand our virtual model, we must also begin planning ahead for a safe return to normal court operations. I am grateful that the CCJ/COSCA RRT is exploring the many difficult public health and operational challenges that will need to be overcome for our state court systems to resume delivering justice safely in what is undoubtedly going to be a ‘new normal.’”

The working groups—composed of court leaders from all levels of courts—will be tasked with identifying what the “new normal” is going to look like, and how to get there.

- Four working groups will be formed to study court management issues in the areas of: civil; criminal; children, families, and elders; and appellate.
- A technology working group will focus on ways that online dispute resolution, videoconferencing, electronic filing, and other tools that have allowed courts to conduct business during the pandemic can be used more in the future.
- A communications working group will provide guidance on how best to communicate with lawmakers, the executive branch, and the public

Have information to share on how your court is responding to the pandemic? Submit it to pandemic@ncsc.org.



Pandemic Rapid Response Team Webinar on Resuming Court Operations

As states begin to issue partial restart orders, more than 3,200 people from state, federal, and international courts recently attended the [Conference of Chief Justices \(CCJ\) / Conference of State Court Administrators \(COSCA\)](#) Pandemic Rapid Recovery Team’s [webinar](#) on planning for resuming normal court operations – the first of several to help courts as the coronavirus pandemic curve flattens and courts expand their services. At this point, there are more questions than answers, but it’s clear to court leaders that the pandemic will lead to changes—some known and some unknown.

The webinar focused on nine factors that courts should consider to help them decide when and how to expand services, and webinar attendees received [this document](#), which outlined the factors.

They include the health of court employees, scheduling, criteria for in-person hearings, vulnerable populations, social distancing, hygiene supplies, health screenings, face coverings, and cleaning courthouses. During the webinar, three topics surfaced more than others: 1) screening the public; 2) resuming jury trials; and 3) collaborating with local health officials

SJI continues to provide support for the RRT as an important resource to state courts. In addition, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has a [pandemic website](#) available that is cataloging state court actions to address the pandemic.



SJI Launches LinkedIn Presence

With over 500 million LinkedIn users and 100 million different companies and organizations registered, the [State Justice Institute \(SJI\)](#) has joined the ranks of those engaging with the platform to disseminate knowledge, provide informational leads, and share news of our organization's development.

The [SJI page](#) on LinkedIn is now live, and aims to distinguish itself as something different than our social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, which are both accessible to the public. Currently, we're sharing our [SJI Toolkit](#) Q&A, and will feature links to our forthcoming podcast, Court Cents.

If you have suggestions of what you would like to see on our LinkedIn page, please let us know by e-mailing contact@sj.gov and sharing those ideas.



NACM Podcasts Address the Coronavirus

The National Association for Court Management (NACM) regular podcast series, Court Leader's Advantage, which focuses on innovations, thought-provoking trends, and questions that matter to the court community, has been temporarily suspended in order to bring you weekly episodes on how courts are coping with the coronavirus crisis.

Court Leader's Advantage podcast series, began as a forum by court professionals for court professionals to share experiences and lessons learned. Episodes typically air the third Thursday of each month. Currently, the podcast is examining how the crisis is like nothing we've seen before, and the impact this has had on state courts. Throughout the crisis, the [weekly podcast](#) episodes will feature a "rotating panel" of guests that answer the question, "How are courts and court administrators dealing with the coronavirus on a daily basis?"

Do you have questions or comments about Court Leader's Advantage Podcasts? Contact clapodcast@nacmnet.org

Once the crisis subsides, NACM will return to their regular monthly schedule.

SJI Board of Directors

Chair

John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice
Supreme Court of Kentucky
Frankfort, KY

Vice Chair

Daniel J. Becker
State Court Administrator
(ret.) Utah AOC
Salt Lake City, UT

Secretary

Gayle A. Nachtigal
Senior Circuit Court Judge
Washington County Circuit
Court *Hillsboro, OR*

Treasurer

David V. Brewer
Justice
Oregon Supreme Court
Salem, OR

Jonathan Lippman
Chief Judge of New York (ret.)
of Counsel
Latham & Watkins, LLP
New York, NY

Chase T. Rogers

Chief Justice (ret.)
Supreme Court of Connecticut
Partner
Pitney Day, LLP
Hartford, CT

Wilfredo Martinez

Senior Judge
State of Florida
Orlando, FL

Marsha J. Rabiteau

Executive Director
Center for Human Trafficking Court
Solutions *Bloomfield, CT*

Hernan D. Vera

Principal
Bird Marella P.C.
Los Angeles, CA

Isabel Frammer

President
Language Access Consultants, LLC
Copley, OH

Jonathan D. Mattiello

Executive Director

The State Justice Institute is a federally-funded, non-profit corporation established by federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in the state courts.



FUNDING TOOLKIT
*for State Courts and
Justice System Partners*

Supporting local courts, state courts, and their justice system partners,
as they pursue federal and philanthropic funding opportunities.

Visit us for updates: www.fundingtoolkit.sji.gov

 
State Justice Institute RULO STRATEGIES LLC

Share the News

SJI uses [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to promote the work of its grantees and also shares information of interest to the entire state court community. If your organization's work complements ours, let us know and we will share.