

SJI Newsletter

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Family-Centered Justice

The [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC) Family-Centered Justice is a court-wide approach committed to focusing on the family unit through meaningful, strength-based and trauma-responsive engagement, intentional case coordination, and multidisciplinary support. Similar to family-centered practice in child welfare, Family-Centered Justice promotes the value of family voice and family well-being.

The Family-Centered Justice program aims to transform the delivery of justice to children and families in courts throughout the United States by infusing effective family drug court principles into the broader family and dependency court system. The objective is to increase the capacity of state courts to intervene effectively with parents with substance use and/or co-occurring mental health disorders who are

involved with the court as a result of child abuse and neglect issues. This program has the potential to impact the lives of many children and families across the United States by supporting out-of-the-box solutions to address the shortcomings of traditional court processes. Through multi-disciplinary, collaborative work, participating jurisdictions will implement strategies believed to lead to improved outcomes for families impacted by parental substance use and child welfare involvement. The Family-Centered Justice funding opportunity is supported by SJI.

Family-Centered Justice Application Due Date: July 9th, 2021 at 5PM ET

Up to six sites will be selected to receive up to **\$50,000** in funding for a twelve-month project that includes a planning period. Applicants must demonstrate, at a minimum, buy-in from the courts, child welfare, and treatment. Selected grantees are expected to have a collaborative infrastructure in place that is capable of building the locality's capacity to meet a broad range of needs for families involved with substance use disorder treatment, child welfare systems, court, and other service organizations. Grantees are expected to implement targeted approaches designed to increase well-being, improve permanency outcomes, and enhance the safety of children and families experiencing substance use disorders.

[Access the Family-Centered Application](#)

[Access the full Family-Centered Solicitation and Application](#)



Children and Opioids In State Courts Toolkit

Difficult Conversations Webinar Series Recording

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), with support from SJI, hosted a series of five webinars titled Opioids and the Courts- Difficult Conversations. NCJFCJ and expert faculty explored challenges associated with referring children and families to services in dependency and delinquency cases. The faculty and webinar attendees had the opportunity to discuss how courts and services providers can work together to meet the needs of families and improve their lives. Recordings of this webinar series and links to related resources can be found on the [NCJFCJ](http://www.ncjfcj.org) website.

In addition to the webinar series, the NCJFCJ provided training and technical assistance to juvenile and family courts across the country to address the effects of opioid use disorders (OUDs) and other substance use disorders (SUDs) on children and families.

The project involved recruiting judicially-led court sites to engage in Targeted Resource Mapping to document the continuum of services available for children and families affected by OUDs and other SUDs. The project had two primary, interrelated goals for the sites to 1) gain knowledge of existing services on a local level; and 2) identify and address service gaps in an effort to ensure a healthy and effective continuum of services.

As a result of that work, the NCJFCJ developed the [Targeted Resource](#)

[Mapping Toolkit](#) (Mapping Toolkit). The Mapping Toolkit includes templates to develop a Targeted Resource Map (resource map), Targeted Resource Directory (resource directory), and Targeted Resource Mapping Action Plan (action plan).

The Mapping Toolkit is intended to encourage and provide guidance to courts that are seeking to better understand existing resources, identify and address service gaps, and build relationships with providers in their community.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Lessons Learned in Targeted Resource Mapping.



Funds Available for Mental Health Courts

Funds Available for Mental Health Courts at the Bureau of Justice Assistance

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is now accepting applications for its [Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program](#). This year, funding is available through this program to jurisdictions creating or expanding a mental health court.

The grant program seeks to provide support to justice system agencies partnering with mental health agencies to reduce crime and recidivism

associated with people with mental illnesses and co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

Grants are awarded over a period of 36 months beginning October 1, 2021 and are valued at up to \$550,000 per award.

Applicants must meet two deadlines as part of a new two-step application process for all Department of Justice grants:

- **June 22, 2021:** The SF-242 and SF-LLL must be submitted to Grants.gov
- **July 6, 2021:** The full application must be submitted to JustGrants

New this year, grant applicants must comply with Executive Order 13929 Safe Policing for Safe Communities. See the grant solicitation for details on complying with the order.

[Download the Solicitation](#)

Additional Resources for Applicants

Assistance is available on navigating the Department of Justice's new JustGrants system, including FAQs, an application submission checklist, and recordings of past virtual Q&A sessions. You can access the full library of training resources [here](#).

For technical assistance with submitting the SF-424 and SF- LLL in Grants.gov, contact the Grants.gov Customer Support Hotline at 800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

For technical assistance with submitting the full application in DOJ's Justice Grants System (JustGrants), contact the JustGrants Service Desk at 833-872-5175 or JustGrants.Support@usdoj.gov.



Guidance for Evaluations of Allied Legal Professional Programs

The [National Center for State Courts](#) has released an evaluation framework for Allied Legal Professional Programs. In response to increases in the number of self-represented litigants, several states have moved forward on plans to create an additional tier of legal service providers, who are authorized to give limited legal assistance at a lower price than attorneys.

These “allied legal professionals” (ALPs) go by several different names, including Non-lawyer Legal Service Providers, Licensed Paralegal Practitioners, Legal Paraprofessionals, Legal Document Preparers, Limited License Legal Technicians, or Limited License Practitioners. With a generous grant from the State Justice Institute (SJI-20-P-021), the NCSC has issued a new report that highlights factors that states should consider as they design new ALP programs as well as guidance on designing an evaluation plan to assess their effectiveness.

The evaluation framework employs a “balanced scorecard” approach to ensure that evaluation measures take into account perspectives of important stakeholders, including courts, ALP clients, and the ALPs themselves. All of the evaluation measures address the same underlying primary question: to what extent do ALPs improve access to justice? The report is available [here](#). The NCSC project team is also available to provide technical assistance to courts designing new ALP programs or planning an evaluation strategy.

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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.



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