

E-SJI News

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SJI GRANT PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO ADDRESS NATIONAL COURT ISSUES

During FY 2008, SJI continued to focus on national court issues in addition to supporting individual state and local court projects. To accomplish this, SJI used its existing Partner Grant program to address several court issues, and also the newly established Strategic Initiatives Grants (SIG) program. In fact, Partner Grant and SIG awards accounted for 46 percent of the total grant awards in FY 2008. Both were very successful in FY 2008, and SJI will continue to build on these successes in FY 2009.

The SIG program was approved by Congress in FY 2008, and is enabling SJI to address national court issues as they occur, and develop solutions to those problems. For example, recent immigration growth is having a significant impact on state and local courts. Courts along the Southwest Border and other areas of the United States with large immigrant populations are contending with issues such as how to provide culturally appropriate services; increase in gang-crime cases involving immigrants; and the impact of federal and state immigration policies on court operations. SJI began using the SIG program to address immigration issues in the state courts at a national impact level. Two grants were awarded; one to the Center for Public Policy Studies (CPPS); and another to support a collaborative effort between the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and the National Judicial College (NJC). Both are currently in progress and SJI continues to provide project updates in the E-SJI News.

The Partner Grant program continues to provide significant resources to address court issues on a national level. Partner Grants were created in FY 2006 to allow SJI and other federal departments or agencies, or other non-profits, combine financial resources in pursuit of common interests. Between FY 2006 and 2008, SJI awarded \$2,478,295 in Partner Grants; all of which were 100 percent matched by SJI's partners. These grants increase coordination between SJI and other grant-making agencies such as the U.S. Department of Justice/Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Legal Services Corporation (LSC), and the Pew Charitable Trusts. FY 2008 marked another successful year for Partner Grants, including new Partner Grants with BJA on drug court training; the U.S. Marshals Service on court and judicial security; and LSC to continue supporting collaborative efforts between the state courts and legal service programs.

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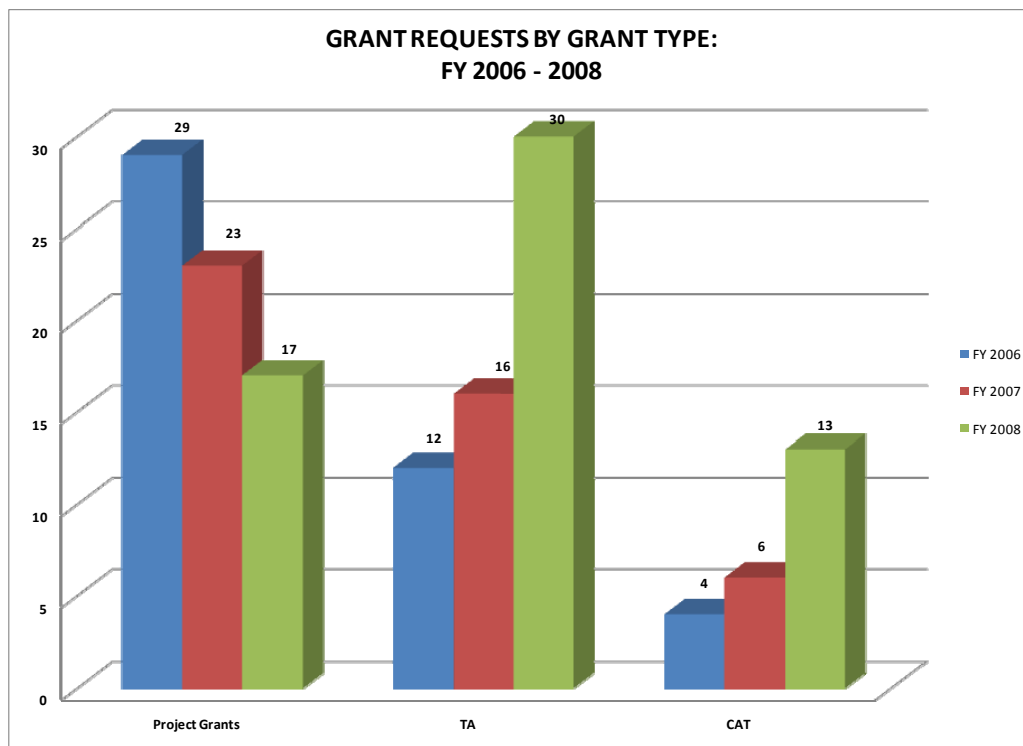
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FINAL GRANT AWARDS FOR FY 2008 AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FY 2009

For FY 2008, there were 270 grants requested; totaling \$4,439,428. This was approximately the same amount of funding requested in FY 2007; however, the total number of grant requests increased 6 percent over FY 2007. More discussion is required about the types of grants requested, because this dynamic has changed.

Between FY 2006 and 2008, the total number of Project Grant requests decreased by 41 percent; whereas the total number of TA Grant requests increased by 150 percent and the number of CAT Grant requests increased by 225 percent. Furthermore, between FY 2007 and 2008, the total dollar amount requested for Project Grants decreased by 41 percent (from \$2,771,533 in FY 2007 to \$1,630,178 in FY 2008). However, the total dollar amount requested for TA and CAT requests increased by 106 percent (from \$496,760 in FY 2007 to \$1,024,108 in FY 2008). Therefore, the demand for smaller TA and CAT grants has increased; whereas the demand for the larger Project Grants has decreased.

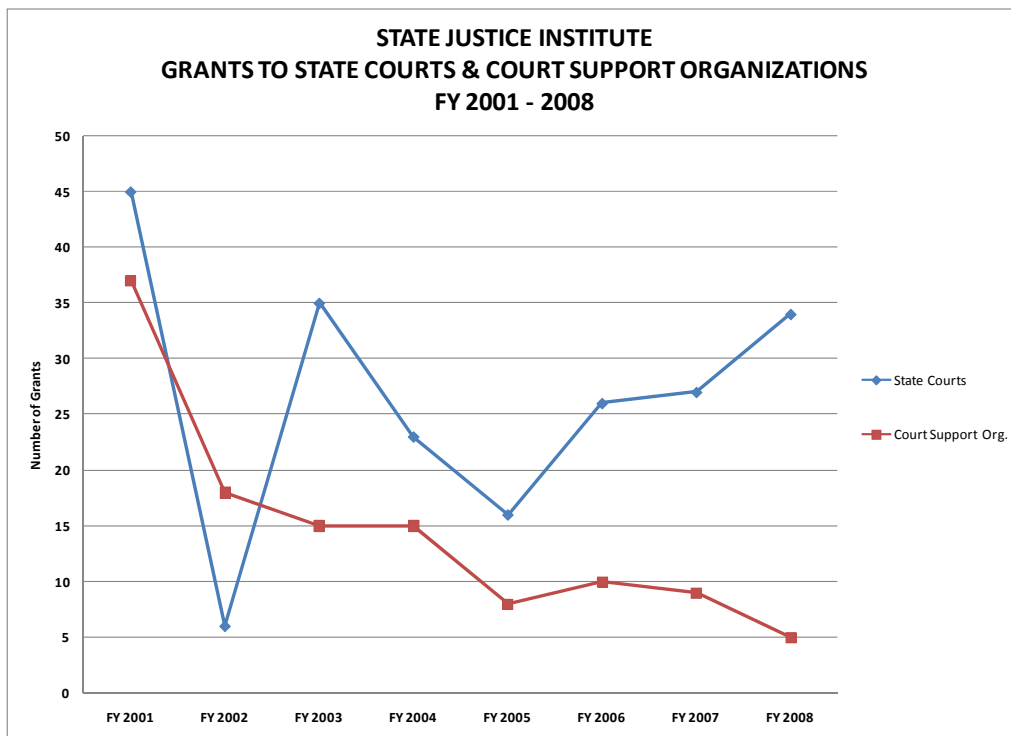


Many state courts were experiencing (and are continuing to experience) significant budget issues in FY 2008. The reason for the drop in Project Grant requests is two-fold: 1) in this climate of severe budget restraints, state courts do not have the financial or manpower resources required to conduct large projects; and 2) the dollar-for-dollar cash match requirement for project grants is unattainable for many state courts, but there is state funding available to support TA and CAT grants because these grant programs only require a 50 percent match (as opposed to a dollar-for-dollar match for Project Grants), of which only 20 percent must be cash match. (continued on page 3)

State court budgets are unlikely to experience any budget relief in the near future. Therefore, SJI expects that the requests for TAs and CATs will continue to increase in FY 2009. These smaller grants are critical to state and local courts, and SJI will support these projects while continuing use the other larger grant programs to address national court issues.

GRANTS TO STATE COURTS AND COURT SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

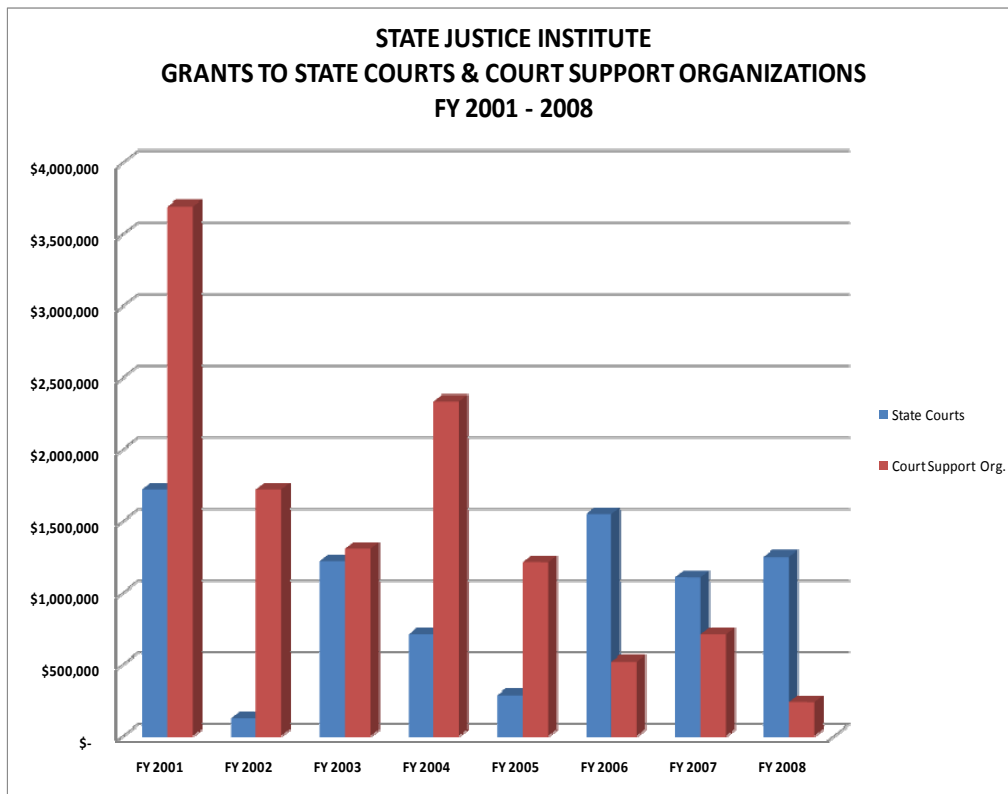
The Conference Report (H.R. 109-272) accompanying the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (P.L. 109-108) directed that successful applicants for new SJI grants provide a cash match. This has had a significant impact on the state courts and court support organizations. Since FY 2006, the state courts have received the majority of SJI grants and grant dollars, compared to previous years.



Note: Number of grants and amounts do not include Scholarships, Strategic Initiatives Grants, or Partner Grants.

After the cash match requirement was established a new dynamic emerged where the state courts and court support organizations combined their efforts to compete for SJI grants. Typically, the state courts have the money available for the cash match requirement, whereas the court support organizations do not. Conversely, the court support organizations have the expertise to apply for and execute grant projects. (continued on page 4)

SJI now receives numerous grant applications where a State court has identified a critical issue to be addressed and a court support organization is providing the technical assistance for the project. The result of the cash match requirement has been a far greater convergence of court needs and court support organization capabilities; both of which have benefited judicial systems across the United States.



Note: Number of grants and amounts do not include Scholarships, Strategic Initiatives Grants, or Partner Grants.

NEW PAYMENT PROCESS FOR GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Beginning in FY 2009, SJI contracted a significant portion of its financial processes to the General Services Administration (GSA). This includes payments for awarded grants and scholarships. SJI will no longer issue checks directly; rather, electronic fund transfers (EFTs) or hard checks will be issued from the U.S. Treasury.

Current grantees and scholarship recipients are encouraged to receive payments via EFT. This is a faster method of receiving payment from SJI. To participate in EFT, SJI will need a completed **SF 3881-Automated Clearing House (ACH)/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form**. This form is available on the SJI website: <http://www.sji.gov/forms.php>. Please feel free to contact SJI if there are questions regarding this new payment process.

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The State Justice Institute is a private, non-profit corporation established by Federal law in 1984 to improve the quality of justice in state courts, and foster innovative, efficient solutions to common issues faced by all courts. SJI is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

FY 2009 SJI BUDGET

SJI is currently operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) (P.L. 110-329) through March 6, 2009. While under a CR, the Board of Directors will approve new grant requests for FY 2009, but will not make any awards until SJI's final appropriation is available. New grantees for FY 2009 may request to begin their project prior to the availability of SJI's appropriation. They may also request permission to use cash match funds until such time as SJI funds are available for reimbursement. New applicants are strongly encouraged to let SJI know in their grant applications that they need to start the project and spend cash match prior to the availability of appropriations.

The Senate Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations Bill (S 3182), includes \$5.0 million for SJI in FY 2009; an increase of \$1.24 million over FY 2008. The House Appropriations Committee-approved CJS Bill (bill number pending), provides \$4.1 million for SJI; an increase of \$340,000 over FY 2008.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next grant and scholarship application deadline: February 1, 2009 (2nd QTR, FY 2009).
- The FY 2009 SJI Grant Guideline is now available on the SJI Website.
- The NCSC's *Guide for Continuity of Operations (COOP)* planning for courts has been updated with a new online course that augments and reinforces the information provided in the *COOP Planning Guide*. http://www.ncsconline.org/D_Research/coop/index.html.

