

CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Policy Statement

Supporting the State Justice Institute

State judiciaries nationwide face rising criminal and civil caseloads and the accompanying complexity of issues, as well as the continuing augmentation of their responsibilities by both their own legislatures and Congress. Because the burdens of these demands are rarely met by sufficient State or local funding, the nation's courts need Federal financial assistance to enable them to experiment with new techniques and procedures that will enhance their effectiveness and will allow them to develop effective national responses. SJI is a valuable resource dedicated to helping State courts across the country cope with common problems and to improving the quality of justice.

Within our system of federalism there is a legitimate federal purpose and role for Congress in assisting state courts to satisfy their responsibilities and mission. The State Justice Institute is uniquely suited to carry out the federal government's role in supporting state and local court improvement efforts. Governed by a Board of Directors composed of State court judges, a State court administrator, and members of the public, the Institute's exclusive mission is to provide financial assistance to State courts nationwide. Established by statute as a non-profit organization, the Institute is not a Federal agency. As a result, it is not bound by the priorities of any particular political Administration but, instead, is responsive to the most urgent priorities identified by the State courts themselves. The Institute carries out its mission, not only by awarding grants to meet those priorities, but also by using its funds to support innovative solutions to new problems rising to confront the courts, and disseminating grant products to the leadership of every State court system so that the lessons gleaned from grant-supported projects can be applied in courthouses across the nation. The Institute also serves as an important resource for improved judicial education, practical research, and needed technical assistance.

In recognition of the vital role played by SJI in fulfilling its national mission, reinforces the principles of federalism and preserves the integrity of state judicial systems, the Conference of State Court Administrators hereby expresses, as a matter of policy, its support for the continued authorization and appropriate funding of the State Justice Institute.