



**STATE OF VERMONT**  
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members  
From: Sorsha Anderson, Staff Associate  
Date: March 12, 2021  
Subject: Grant Requests – JFO #3042

Enclosed please find one (1) item, which the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the Administration.

**JFO #3042** - \$50,000 to the VT Judiciary from the State Justice Institute to secure consulting services of the National Center for State Courts to advise on the creation of an Access and Resource Center (ARC) which would serve self-represented parties and others looking for support navigating the justice process. *[Note: The budget materials include a \$5,000 Judiciary cash match and \$20,000 of in-kind match.]*  
*[JFO received 3/08/2021]*

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Sorsha Anderson: sanderson@leg.state.vt.us) if you have questions or would like this item held for legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by March 30, 2021, we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of this request.

STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)

BASIC GRANT INFORMATION					
<b>1. Agency:</b>		Judiciary			
<b>2. Department:</b>		Court Administrator's Office			
<b>3. Program:</b>		Access and Resource Center Planning Project			
<b>4. Legal Title of Grant:</b>		State Justice Institute Grant Number SJI-20-T-049			
<b>5. Federal Catalog #:</b>		16.585			
<b>6. Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b> State Justice Institute, 11951 Freedom Drive, Ste. 1020, Reston VA, 20190					
<b>7. Grant Period:</b>		<b>From:</b> 4/27/2020	<b>To:</b> 4/27/2021		
<b>8. Purpose of Grant:</b> Grant funds will be used to secure the consulting services of the National Center for State Courts (NCSC). The project will result in the NCSC generating recommendations for the Judiciary on the design and operations of the Judiciary's planned Access and Resource Center (ARC), to be housed on the first floor of the Costello Courthouse in Burlington. The ARC will be a resource for self-presented parties and others looking for information about their case or for support in navigating the judicial process. Language access and other services designed to assist the public are also expected to be provided at the ARC.					
<b>9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted:</b> If the grant is not accepted NCSC's consulting services will not be acquired and planning on this priority project may be delayed. NCSC has deep experience in this area of access to justice programming, which is a new initiative for the Judiciary.					
10. BUDGET INFORMATION					
	SFY 1	SFY 2	SFY 3	Comments	
<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>FY</b>	<b>FY</b>		
Personal Services	\$	\$	\$		
Operating Expenses	\$75,000	\$	\$		
Grants	\$	\$	\$		
<b>Total</b>	\$	\$	\$		
<b>Revenues:</b>					
State Funds:	\$	\$	\$		
Cash	\$5,000	\$	\$		
In-Kind	\$20,000	\$	\$		
Federal Funds:	\$	\$	\$		
(Direct Costs)	\$	\$	\$		
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	\$		
(Departmental Indirect)	\$	\$	\$		
Other Funds:	\$	\$	\$		
Grant (source SJI)	\$50,000	\$	\$		
<b>Total</b>	\$75,000	\$	\$		
<b>Appropriation No:</b>	2121000000	<b>Amount:</b>	\$75,000	\$50,000	
			\$	500	
			\$		

**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)**

			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
		<b>Total</b>	\$

**PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION**

**11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts?**  Yes  No  
 If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate intent to follow current competitive bidding process/policy.

Appointing Authority Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Agreed by: \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

<b>12. Limited Service Position Information:</b>	<b># Positions</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Total Positions</b>		

**12a. Equipment and space for these positions:**  Is presently available.  Can be obtained with available funds.

**13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT**

I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-1PN (if applicable):	Signature: <i>Gregg Mousley</i>	Date: 8/20/20
	Title: Chief, Finance and Administration	
	Signature:	Date:
	Title:	

**14. SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved:	(Secretary or designee signature) Kristin Clouser	Digitally signed by Kristin Clouser Date: 2021.02.23 10:49:13 -05'00'	Date:
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**15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted	<i>[Signature]</i> (Governor's signature)	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Rejected		3/5/21

**16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED**

<b>Required GRANT Documentation</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Request Memo	<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any)
<input type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award	<input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement	<input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget	

**End Form AA-1**

(\*) The term "grant" refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency.

**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)**

department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).

**STATE OF VERMONT  
 FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM**

<b>Grant Summary:</b>		This grant will be used to cover the costs of consultants (\$50K), who will perform a site review of Judiciary's Access and Resource Center (ARC). The review will generate design and operation recommendations for the ARC. This grant has \$20K of in-kind and \$5K in cash revenue - which is broken out in the Budget Narrative attachment.			
<b>Date:</b>		2/4/2021			
<b>Department:</b>		Judiciary			
<b>Legal Title of Grant:</b>		State Justice Institute Grant Number SJI-20-T-049			
<b>Federal Catalog #:</b>		16.585			
<b>Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b>		State Justice Institute, 11951 Freedom Drive, Ste. 1020, Reston VA, 20190			
<b>Grant Period:</b>		<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>		
		4/27/2020	4/27/2021		
<b>Grant/Donation</b>		\$50,000			
	<b>SFY 1</b>	<b>SFY 2</b>	<b>SFY 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000	
<b>Position Information:</b>	<b># Positions</b>	<b>Explanation/Comments</b>			
	0				
<b>Additional Comments:</b>		The total grant obligates Judiciary to expend \$25K (for a total grant project cost of \$75K).			
<b>Department of Finance &amp; Management</b>		Adam Greshin	<small>Digitally signed by Adam Greshin Date: 2021.02.04 14:09:36 -05'00'</small>	(Initial)	
<b>Secretary of Administration</b>		Kristin Clouser	<small>Digitally signed by Kristin Clouser Date: 2021.02.24 14:09:36 -05'00'</small>	(Initial)	
<b>Sent To Joint Fiscal Office</b>		Ariel Murphy	<small>Digitally signed by Ariel Murphy Date: 2021.03.08 08:04:25 -05'00'</small>	<b>Date</b>	



April 27, 2020

Scott Griffith  
Chief of Planning and Court Services  
Vermont Judiciary  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05609

Mr. Griffith:

On behalf of the SJI Board of Directors, I am pleased to inform you that the Vermont Judiciary has been awarded a grant to support the application titled *Access and Resource Center Planning Project*. The project has been assigned Grant Number SJI-20-T-049. Please use this number on all correspondence to SJI regarding this grant.

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the Grant Award. Please sign both and return the signed original to SJI. Keep the copy for your records. Please note that SJI's Grant Guideline requires submission of two copies of the progress and financial status reports 30 days after the end of each calendar quarter. Reports must be received in hard copy and should not be emailed. In addition, please review all compliance and financial requirements listed in the SJI Grant Guideline: [http://www.sji.gov/wp/wp-content/uploads/FY-2020-Grant-Guideline\\_Federal-Register.pdf](http://www.sji.gov/wp/wp-content/uploads/FY-2020-Grant-Guideline_Federal-Register.pdf).

Grant payments from SJI will be made through electronic fund transfers (EFTs) or hard checks issued directly from the U.S. Treasury. You are encouraged to participate in EFT since it is a faster form of receiving payment from the U.S. Treasury. Both the Request for Advance or Reimbursement (Form R) and EFT form (SF 3881) can be found on the SJI website: <http://www.sji.gov/forms.php>, in addition to the Form Q – Quarterly Progress Report, and Form F – Quarterly Financial Report.

Scott Griffith

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If you have any programmatic or financial questions, please contact SJI at 571-313-8843, or [contact@sjj.gov](mailto:contact@sjj.gov). We look forward to working with you.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. D. Mattiello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jonathan D. Mattiello  
Executive Director

# STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

## AWARD

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative Agreement		Page <u>1</u> of <u>1</u>
1. Grantee Name and Address Vermont Judiciary 109 State Street Montpelier, VT 05609	3. Award Number SJI-20-T-049 <hr/> 4. Award Period 4/27/20 – 4/27/21 <hr/> 5. Award Date 4/27/2020	
1a. Employer Identification No. 03-6000264	6. Award Amount \$50,000	
2. Entity to Receive Funds	7. Type of Award <input type="checkbox"/> Project Grant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical Assistance (TA) Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Adaptation & Training (CAT) Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Initiative Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Partner Grant	
2a. Employer Identification No.		
8. Project Title <i>Access and Resource Center Planning Project</i>		
9. Special Conditions (Check if applicable)  <input type="checkbox"/> The above project is approved subject to such conditions or limitations as set forth on the attached _____ page(s).		
STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE APPROVAL		GRANTEE ACCEPTANCE
10. Approving SJI Official  Name: <u>John D. Minton</u> Title: <u>Chair, Board of Directors</u> Signature:  Date: <u>April 27, 2020</u>	11. Authorized Official of Grantee  Name: <u>Patricia Gabel</u> Title: <u>State Court Administrator, Vermont</u> Signature:  Date: <u>May 14, 2020</u>	



## BUDGET NARRATIVE

**Project: Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center Planning Project**

The total cost of the project is a firm fixed price of \$75,000. The Vermont Judiciary is requesting \$50,000 in State Justice Institute (SJI) funds. Vermont will provide a cash match of \$5,000 and an in-kind match of \$20,000.

The budget is based on the following:

Total Budget:	\$75,000
SJI Request:	\$50,000
Judiciary Cash Match:	\$5,000
In-kind Match:	\$20,000
Project Liaison time (100 hours X \$100/hour)	\$10,000
Stakeholders time (100 hours X \$100/hour)	\$10,000
Consulting Personnel Costs:	\$50,700
Travel:	\$4,300
Task 1: Project Initiation – Kickoff Teleconference	\$2,762
Task 2: Review Background Material & Develop and Conduct Survey	\$9,048
Task 3: Initial Site Visit – Interview Key Stakeholders	\$22,338
Task 4: Draft Findings, Recommendations and Strategies	\$7,872
Task 5: Conference Call – Initial Findings and Recommendations	\$4,856
Task 6: Second Site Visit – Present Findings and Recommendations	\$8,124

Travel:

Site Visits: 2 trips with 2 to 3 consultants, estimated total of 5 days/4 nights (Tasks 3 & Task 6)

\*Note: Travel expenses include airfare, hotel, per diem, and ground transportation and are based on the National Center for State Courts policy that utilizes federal policies as guidelines. The travel days include travel time.

## Griffith, Scott

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**From:** Griffith, Scott  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2020 3:12 PM  
**To:** Jonathan Mattiello  
**Cc:** Gabel, Patricia; Grutchfield, Merrick  
**Subject:** Grant Application: Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center  
**Attachments:** Vermont Judiciary Proposal -- Access and Resource Center Planning Project - Signed.pdf; NCSC Letter of Support - SJI.pdf; Form\_A - Grant Application - Signed.pdf; Form\_B - Certificate of State Approval - Signed.pdf; Form\_C\_Project-Budget.pdf; Vermont Judiciary - Budget Narrative.pdf

Mr. Mattiello: Please see attached grant application from the Vermont Judiciary.

We will provide original copies via U.S. mail.

Thank you.

Scott Griffith  
Chief of Planning and Court Services  
Court Administrator's Office  
Vermont Judiciary  
[scott.griffith@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.griffith@vermont.gov)  
(802) 828-4767

VERMONT  
JUDICIARY 

Supreme Court of Vermont  
Office of State Court Administrator

PATRICIA GABEL, ESQ., State Court Administrator  
*patricia.gabel@vermont.gov*  
Mailing Address:  
Office of Court Administrator  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05609-0701  
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[www.vermontjudiciary.org](http://www.vermontjudiciary.org)

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January 31, 2020

Mr. Jonathan Mattiello  
Executive Director  
State Justice Institute  
11951 Freedom Drive, Suite 1020  
Reston, Virginia 20190

**BY E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

Dear Mr. Mattiello:

The Vermont Judiciary requests a Technical Assistance grant of \$50,000 to contract with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to provide consulting services to assist in the Judiciary's planning of a Judiciary Access and Resource Center in the Edward J. Costello Courthouse in Burlington (Chittenden County), Vermont. The space will be used to do the following: 1) improve the delivery of services to self-represented litigants (SRLs); 2) improve the delivery of services to individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP); 3) provide workshops and trainings for staff who assist individuals needing information about court cases, processes, and services; 4) provide resources for and services to for persons who cannot or choose not to retain counsel to obtain access to justice in the court; 5) to provide training to court interpreters and to be a hub for key Judiciary Language Access Program activities; and 6) to address the Judiciary's related access to justice priorities.

The project will involve an examination of the current needs of SRLs and LEP individuals in Chittenden County and the rest of Vermont and document the assets and processes in place to meet those needs. As part of the project the NCSC will develop facilities suggestions for the space in the Costello Courthouse that has been reserved for the Access and Resource Center. The assessment will result in a final report that will identify areas for improvement in the area of access to justice generally, and specifically as it relates to the need to meet the needs of persons who cannot or choose not to retain counsel serve and those persons with limited English proficiency.

The final report will be an essential planning tool for the Judiciary in its efforts to establish and improve its range of access to justice programs. While the project will be focused on the design and operations of the Access and Resource Center space at the Costello Courthouse, the

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project will inform SRL, LEP, and related access to justice programming in the Vermont Judiciary for years to come.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A. The Vermont Judiciary**

The Vermont Constitution provides that the Supreme Court has responsibility and authority to administer the Vermont Unified Court System, which includes all the courts in the state. The Supreme Court appoints a State Court Administrator, who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Judiciary. Her responsibilities include oversight of statewide trial court operations, including court services and programs and court facilities. The Supreme Court also appoints a Chief Superior Judge. The State Court Administrator and Chief Superior Judge cooperate to ensure that the statewide trial court system operates as efficiently as possible and to work toward the development of uniform and improved procedures in the trial courts.

The statewide Vermont Superior Court is divided into geographic units. The Chittenden Unit, the location of the Costello Courthouse, is managed by the Superior Court Clerk and Court Operations Managers, who work in collaboration with the Presiding Judge to oversee programs and services and to ensure that the Chittenden Unit operates as efficiently as possible. Administrators, judges, and court staff work together to achieve the Vermont Judiciary's mission and vision, as follows:

*Judiciary Mission: The mission of the Vermont Judiciary is to provide equal access to justice, protect individual rights, resolve legal disputes fairly and timely, and provide everyone the opportunity to have their day in court.*

*Judiciary Vision: The people of Vermont will have trust and confidence in the Vermont state courts because the courts are fair, impartial, accessible, responsive, consistent, free of discrimination, independent, and well-managed.*

### **B. The Costello Courthouse in Burlington, Vermont**

The Costello Courthouse, which was built in the 1980s, houses the county's Family, Criminal, and Environmental divisions. Cases heard include those involving divorce, parentage and child support, abuse prevention, juvenile abuse and neglect, traffic violations, felony prosecutions, misdemeanor prosecutions, juvenile delinquency actions, and various types of environmental appeals and de novo proceedings.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical data for the Judiciary can be found in the FY 2019 Annual Statistical Report with appendices. See <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/court-statistics-and-reports>.

The Courthouse houses the Superior Court Clerk's Office, courtrooms and adjunct offices on its upper stories. The Executive Branch Department of Corrections, which has occupied much of the ground floor, recently vacated its space, providing this opportunity for the Judiciary to establish its Access and Resource Center.

### **C. Overview of Self-Represented Litigant Services<sup>2</sup> and Self-Represented Litigant Services in Vermont**

#### *Self-Represented Litigant Services*

Self-Represented Litigant (SRL) services give litigants information and tools to help them understand how to start or respond to a case, move it forward, present the facts to the decision maker, and obtain the benefit of, or comply with, a court order. SRL services can be provided through one-on-one contact, informational materials, forms, internet-based tools, and educational programs. They can include provision of information about procedural and substantive law, information about the completion of forms, and general information about what the court needs in order to render the best decision. SRL services, which are to be available to all and offered in the form of information rather than advocacy for one side, are consistent with the neutral mission of the court in helping to ensure meaningful access to justice for all.

Experience and research in many states confirm the benefits of a well-run delivery system for SRL services—litigants have access to legal information and assistance that makes the promise of “justice for all” more meaningful. Judges and court staff can do their jobs best when they are not bogged down with improperly prepared filings and unprepared litigants. The efficiencies that result can also, among other things, improve case processing performance. Well-run SRL programs can help court staff avoid some of the ethical quandaries that may arise in trying to adequately assist SRLs. Private attorneys can better represent their own clients when the opposing self-represented litigant is prepared to advance their case.

Self-help services can be delivered through a variety of different models: a desk or office in the courthouse, state or local online or telephone services provided remotely, supervised volunteer college students, public library access to legal information, court website access to information in English and other languages, FAQs, videos, and online forms. Providing assistance to SRLs often involves a combination of services depending on local needs, funding, and support. Many of the delivery models involve partnerships between the court and an external group, such as legal aid, public or law libraries, or the bar.

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<sup>2</sup> Center on Court Access to Justice for All. Issue Brief. November 2012.

### *Self-Represented Litigant Services in Vermont*

The Vermont Judiciary provides information to SRLs through its Self-Help Center webpage.<sup>3</sup> SRLs can obtain information to assist them in abuse prevention, debt collection and small claims cases, divorce and parentage cases, housing cases, traffic violations, adult and minor guardianship matters, and wills, estates and trust matters. The website provides access to free court forms, and an interactive interview to help SRLs to complete necessary forms in small claims court and some family cases.

The Vermont Judiciary offers a monthly one-hour Pro Se Education Program for SRLs in family matters. The majority of SRL services are provided right now by front line staff in the courthouses and by staff in the Information Center, who take calls from the public regarding cases.

The proposed project will result in the identification of ways in which the Access and Resource Center can efficiently, consistently and directly support the needs of the SRL population in the state.

#### **D. Overview of Language Access Services and Language Access Services in Vermont**

##### *Language Access Services*

According to the National Center for State Courts, “[L]imited English Proficiency individuals ... look to state court systems to resolve some of the most important issues and controversies in their lives.”<sup>4</sup> It is understood that equal access to justice for all requires that every person understand what is happening in their case and in the courtroom. Language barriers have the potential to compromise this access, which in turn can call into the question the very fairness of the judicial process.<sup>5</sup>

Well-developed language access plans and programs can help ensure that state court systems are meeting their obligation to provide equal access. Essential elements of such plans and programs have been documented, and included among them are such things as training and educating court staff and stakeholders, training and certifying interpreters, enhancing collaboration and information sharing, and using technology (including video remote technology) solutions, among other things. Meeting goals associated with these and other key components of language access programming must be a priority in state courts, and building and maintaining the capacity to deliver high-quality language access services is essential.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/self-help>.

<sup>4</sup> See “A National Call to Action Access to Justice for Limited English Proficient Litigants: Creating Solutions to Language Barriers in State Courts” National Center for State Courts (2012), p.ii.  
<https://www.ncsc.org/-/media/Files/PDF/Services%20and%20Experts/Areas%20of%20expertise/Language%20Access/Call-to-Action.ashx>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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## *Language Access Services in Vermont*

The Vermont Judiciary recognizes its language access obligations. It is the policy of the Vermont Judiciary to pay for interpreter services in all court proceedings and court-ordered programs for all litigants and witnesses who have limited proficiency in the English language or who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Judiciary is committed to ensuring that people who have a limited ability to speak, read, write, or understand English as well as people who are deaf or hearing impaired have meaningful access to the Judiciary's programs and services.<sup>6</sup>

The Judiciary is currently involved in a range of activities to improve its language access program. Many of these activities are based on recommendations provided to the Judiciary by the National Center for State Courts, based on that organization's 2018 review of the Judiciary's Language Access Plan. This work involves the identification of both short- and long-term activities designed to improve the delivery of language access services. Examples of these activities include staff and judicial officer training; the identification of opportunities for the use of technology in delivering language access services; gathering, through surveys and other methods, feedback on language access issues from court users, lawyers, and others; collecting and analyzing data about language access need and usage; and a consideration of the development of minimum qualification standards for interpreters. This work is benefitting from the input of an External Advisory Committee and from technical assistance being received through an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

The proposed project will result in the identification of ways in which the Access and Resource Center can broaden the impact of the Judiciary's language efforts and accelerate the pace at which innovations and improvements can occur.

### **NEED FOR FUNDING**

The Vermont Judiciary has no specific line of funding available to undertake the activities the NCSC will perform in this project nor to contract with the NCSC to provide them. To demonstrate support and commitment to the objectives of this project, the Vermont Judiciary will contribute \$5,000 cash match, and an in-kind of \$20,000.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND WORK PLAN**

#### **I. Overview**

The NCSC project team will gather information regarding the current court processes, SRL services and national self-help center trends. The NCSC team will assess current processes available

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<sup>6</sup> See Vermont Judiciary Language Access Plan (2017) at <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/sites/default/files/documents/2017-01-03 - Language Access Plan.pdf>.

to pro se litigants (and other court users) in the Costello courthouse and the desires of various court stakeholders, and then identify areas for improvement in regard to how the Costello courthouse could best serve all court users (especially on the ground floor). The NCSC will in particular examine the use of triaging services, non-lawyer navigator programs, collaborations with private bar and civil legal aid organizations and non-legal community partners, and specific access services for self-represented litigants. The NCSC project team will identify recommended solutions, prioritize them and present options for implementation.

The NCSC team will also develop suggestions for how best to use the available Costello courthouse ground floor space and develop schematics and suggested floor plan ideas for that space. These plans will address the needs associated with delivering a range of services to court users, including self-represented parties, parties with limited English proficiency, and other who need information or assistance in interacting with the Judiciary. The NCSC will examine ideas such as a walk-up window, workstations to access the case management portal, and spaces for small group trainings, meetings, space for video remote interpreter activities, and additional functions that may be needed to support the Judiciary's access to justice goals.

The NCSC project team will document their findings and draft a final report including specific strategies and/or initiatives recommended, and then present its findings to the relevant stakeholders in Vermont.

## **II. Work Plan**

The Work Plan will include the following tasks:

### **Task 1: Project Initiation - Kickoff Teleconference**

Upon execution of the contract, the NCSC project directors will set up a teleconference with the Vermont project liaison and other persons designated by the project liaison to:

- Review and confirm the scope of work and the project's objectives, tasks, timelines, and consider any needed revisions to this work plan.
- Review and confirm the nature, form and scope of the products that the NCSC will deliver, as well as the intended recipients of those products.
- Identify communication channels, reporting relationships, and confirm the identity of a person who will be responsible for scheduling, obtaining required information, distributing surveys, and performing other administrative tasks necessary to facilitate the project.
- Identify the persons to receive the pre-visit survey of potential ideas for use of the first-floor space.
- Identify the timing and individuals to be interviewed by the NCSC during the site visit.
- Identify the timing of observations of court proceedings or Pro Se Education programs.



- Identify the timing and individuals to participate in focus groups that the NCSC project team will conduct during the site visit.
- Identify current initiatives, data and background information that the project liaison can provide to the NCSC project team for review prior to the initial site visit.

### **Task 2: Review Background Material and Develop and Conduct a Survey on the Use of the First Floor Space**

The NCSC project team will review background material provided by the project liaison and national Self-Help Center best practices. The project team will develop and provide to the project liaison for comment a pre-visit survey of potential ideas for use of the first-floor space. Once approved, the project team will provide the survey to the person identified at the Task 1 teleconference as responsible for its distribution to the persons identified in Task 1. The project team will compile the results.

### **Task 3: Initial Site Visit – Interview Key Stakeholders, Observe SRL Programs and the Flow of Court Users Across the Courthouse, Conduct Focus Groups and Present Initial Findings**

The NCSC project team will travel to Burlington to meet with and interview the project liaison and other stakeholders identified in Task 1. The team will identify what interviewees would like the programs that may be housed in the Access and Resource Center to accomplish, what current programs at the local and state level are most effective and which programs are underutilized, what needed self-help and related services are not being provided, and what other areas most need improvement. The NCSC project team will observe self-represented litigant court proceedings and the programs identified in the Task 1 initial kick-off teleconference.

The NCSC project team will use this initial site visit to also conduct focus groups with persons identified in the Task 1 initial teleconference to learn more about what programs are working and why, and to identify gaps in services needed by self-represented litigants and the problems caused by those unfulfilled services.

The project team will present to the project liaison and persons identified by the project liaison its initial findings on self-help best practices and the initial results of the pre-visit survey.

### **Task 4: Draft Findings, Recommendations and Strategies to Improve SRL Services and on Potential Uses and Layout of the Courthouse Ground Floor**

The NCSC project team will draft a report for review by the project liaison detailing what it has learned from its research, its interviews, and its focus groups on what self-help and access

to justice programs are working and why, what services needed by self-represented litigants are not being provided and the problems caused by those unfulfilled services.

The draft report will also include the results and the project team's analysis of the pre-visit survey on how the space can best be used to serve SRLs and others needing access to justice support and the team's initial recommendations on the best use and layout of the ground floor space.

**Task 5: Convene a Conference Call to Discuss the Initial Findings and Recommendations**

The NCSC project team will convene a conference call to discuss its draft findings and recommendations with the project liaison and persons identified by the project liaison. The NCSC project team will revise its findings as needed and appropriate.

**Task 6: Second Site Visit - Present Findings and Recommendations to Key Stakeholders**

The NCSC project team will travel to Burlington to present its revised findings and recommendations to the project liaison and other key stakeholders and to provide additional advice on how to implement its recommendations.

**III. Consultant Qualifications**

**NCSC Qualifications**

The NCSC is a non-profit corporation headquartered in Williamsburg, Virginia, which has been providing research, education, information, technology, and direct consulting services to state and local court systems for more than 40 years. The NCSC brings a broad range of resources to judicial system projects, including an expert staff, a history of work with diverse jurisdictions nationally and internationally, and institutional links to other national court-related organizations.

The NCSC's familiarity with the unique nature of courts and court-related offices enhances its ability to work effectively and efficiently with judicial officers, court staff, representatives of court-related agencies and organizations, and service providers. The NCSC is the secretariat to more than a dozen national court organizations, including the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators, the American Judges Association, the National College of Probate Judges, and the National Association for Court Management.

**The NCSC Project Team - The NCSC will assign Danielle Hirsch, Zachary Zarnow, Allison McKenzie and Lillian Wood to this project.**

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**Danielle Hirsch** is a Principal Court Management Consultant at the National Center for State Courts, focusing on access to justice initiatives. Before joining the NCSC, Danielle was the Assistant Director of Civil Justice Division of the Administrative Office of Illinois, where Danielle was responsible for leading and managing the judicial branch's work to promote, facilitate and enhance access to justice in Illinois with a particular emphasis on efforts to remove barriers and increase the ease of interacting with courts by persons who cannot afford lawyers to represent their interests and needs. Danielle brings a broad range of relevant experience to the NCSC. Immediately before joining the Illinois Administrative Office of Courts, Danielle served as the Executive Director of the Illinois Supreme Court Commission on Access to Justice and the Director of Advocacy at The Chicago Bar Foundation.

**Zach Zarnow** has focused his career on increasing access to justice. After graduating from Brandeis University, Zach spent two years in Eastern Ukraine as a Peace Corps Community Development Volunteer, where he developed civil society networks, established social enterprises, and created anti-corruption initiatives. This experience drove him to enroll at American University's Washington College of Law, where he focused his studies on access to justice, human rights, and legal empowerment. During law school and after he held fellowships and positions with the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative, the Open Society Foundations, Public Justice, the American Association for Justice, and the Council for Court Excellence.

As a consultant with the National Center for State Courts, Mr. Zarnow is working on national level initiatives to increase access to justice, including assisting in the development of online dispute resolution pilot projects and working with various court systems to improve the experience of self-represented litigants. Prior to joining NCSC, Zach was the Program Director at the Illinois Equal Justice Foundation, where he ran the statewide grantmaking and program evaluation of legal aid organizations. He still works with IEJF, running the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network, which he helped design and launch.

**Allison McKenzie** Ms. McKenzie is a registered Architect and a Judicial Facilities planning consultant for the National Center for State Courts. Allison has many years of project management, architectural planning and design experience. Over the years, she has worked on a diverse range of project types from court facilities to urban master planning.

As a licensed Architect, she can provide architectural design peer reviews, building code and zoning analyses, building assessments, facility master planning, space programming, and conceptual and schematic design drawings. In addition to new construction, she has experience with adaptive reuse as well as historic preservation projects. Allison is aware of the need to balance modern operations with prevailing design objectives.

Allison received her Bachelor of Architecture degree from University of Arkansas in 1997. During her academic tenure, she was recognized for her dedication and design ability by receiving various awards and honors including the coveted Fifth Year Prize for Outstanding Design Project.

Prior to her employment at the NCSC, Allison worked in the private sector where she led a team of architects and consultants. Her day to day role was overseeing the production and coordination of architectural drawings, communicating with clients, and on-site construction administration.

**Lillian Wood** began working at the National Center for State Courts in the Court Consulting Division located in Denver Colorado starting in 2019. Ms. Wood entered NCSC with a passion for improving equal access to justice and a varied career of advocating for and assisting low-wealth people. After college (University of Pennsylvania), Lillian worked as a housing, foreclosure, and credit counselor for a community development credit union in post-Katrina New Orleans, an experience that shone a spotlight on the need to improve legal systems for ordinary people. This propelled her to law school (University of California, Berkeley School of Law) where she strengthened her advocacy skills and gained a greater knowledge of the impediments to access to justice.

At NCSC, Lillian assists various access-related projects with legal research and writing, grant reporting and management, data collection and analysis, and communicating with project partners. She also provides administrative assistance to the Court Consulting Services department.

**Project Timeline**

Task	Months from Project Start					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Task 1: Project Initiation - Kickoff Teleconference	X					
Task 2: Review Background Information and Develop and Conduct a Survey on the Use of the First Floor Space	X	X				
Task 3: Initial Site Visit – Interview Key Stakeholders, Observe SRL Programs and the Flow of Court Users Across the Courthouse, Conduct Focus Groups and Present Initial Findings			X			
Task 4: Draft Findings, Recommendations and Strategies to Improve SRL Services and on Potential Uses and Layout of the Courthouse Ground Floor				X		
Task 5: Convene a Conference Call to Discuss the Initial Findings and Recommendations					X	
Task 6: Second Site Visit – Present Findings and Recommendations to Key Stakeholders						X

**IV. Budget**

The total cost of the project will be a firm fixed price of \$55,000. The Vermont Judiciary is requesting \$50,000 in SJI funds. The Judiciary will provide a cash match of \$5,000 and an in-kind contribution of \$20,000. A line item budget (Form C) and budget narrative are attached, as well as a letter from the NCSC affirming its participation.

**LIKELIHOOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The Vermont Judiciary is committed to providing all citizens with meaningful access to the judicial process by ensuring the information and procedures available to self-represented litigants and others provide efficient and effective access to justice. The Court is committed to making the best use of the available first floor space at the Costello Courthouse to serve its self-represented litigants and others needing support to access the courts.

**STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORT**

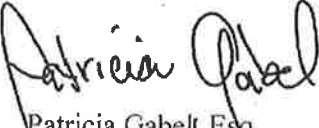
Vermont Chief Justice Paul Reiber and State Court Administrator Patricia Gabel support this effort and this grant application to the State Justice Institute.

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If you have any questions about our proposal, please contact Scott Griffith, Chief of Planning and Court Services at [scott.griffith@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.griffith@vermont.gov) or 802-828-4767.

Thank you for the opportunity to request this grant.

Sincerely,

  
Patricia Gabel Esq.  
State Court Administrator



*A nonprofit organization improving justice through leadership and service to courts*

Mary Campbell McQueen  
President

January 29, 2020

Mr. Jonathan Mattiello  
Executive Director  
State Justice Institute  
11951 Freedom Drive, Suite 1020  
Reston, Virginia 20190

Dear Mr. Mattiello:

The National Center for State Courts (NCSC) would be pleased to work with the Vermont Judiciary to provide consulting services to assess the delivery of services being provided to Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) in Chittenden County and create a resource space in the Edward J. Costello Courthouse in Burlington, Vermont. The space will be used to serve SRLs, to provide additional access services and space for workshops and trainings for persons without counsel to obtain access to justice in the court.

The NCSC will assist in the examination of current needs of SRLs at the Costello Courthouse, current available processes to meet those needs, and identify areas for improvement. The NCSC will also develop facilities suggestions for the Courthouse ground floor SRL space.

With the assistance of the State Justice Institute in funding, the Court and the NCSC will utilize the experience and expertise of Danielle Hirsch, as the project lead and Zach Zarnow, Allison McKenzie and Lillian Wood on the project team to conduct the survey, observe court practices, conduct focus groups and analysis and to develop recommendations and develop schematic facility suggestions on how to expand access to justice.

We look forward to the opportunity to assist the Vermont Judiciary to expand and improve services for self-represented litigants and courthouse space development.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Laura Klaversma  
Court Services Director

Headquarters  
300 Newport Avenue  
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147  
(800) 616-6164

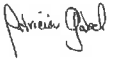
Court Consulting  
707 Seventeenth Street, Suite 2900  
Denver, CO 80202-3429  
(800) 466-3063

Washington Office  
2425 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 350  
Arlington, VA 22201-3326  
(800) 532-0204

[www.ncsc.org](http://www.ncsc.org)

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## STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE APPLICATION

<b>1. APPLICANT</b> a. Organization Name <u>Vermont Judiciary</u> b. Street/P.O. Box <u>109 State Street</u> c. City <u>Montpellier</u> d. State <u>VT</u> e. Zip Code <u>05609-0701</u> f. Phone Number <u>802-828-4767</u> g. Fax Number <u>802-828-3457</u> h. Web Site Address <u>www.vermontjudiciary.org</u> i. Name & Phone Number of Contact Person <u>Scott Griffith - 802-828-4767</u> j. Title <u>Chief of Planning and Court Services</u> k. E-Mail Address <u>scott.griffith@vermont.gov</u>	<b>2. TYPE OF APPLICANT (Check appropriate box)</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Court <input type="checkbox"/> National organization operating in conjunction with State court <input type="checkbox"/> National State court support organization <input type="checkbox"/> College or university <input type="checkbox"/> Other non-profit organization or agency <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation or partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Other unit of government <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ (Specify) _____
<b>3. PROPOSED START DATE</b> _____ April 1, 2020	
<b>4. PROJECT DURATION (months)</b> <u>6 months</u>	
<b>5. APPLICANT FINANCIAL CONTACT</b> a. Organization Name <u>Vermont Supreme Court, Office of the Court Administrator</u> b. Street/P.O. Box <u>109 State Street</u> c. City <u>Montpellier</u> d. State <u>Vermont</u> e. Zip Code <u>05609-0701</u> f. Phone Number <u>802-828-4767</u> g. Fax Number <u>802-828-3457</u> h. Web Site Address <u>www.vermontjudiciary.org</u> i. Name & Phone Number of Contact Person <u>Scott Griffith - 802-828-4767</u> j. Title <u>Chief of Planning and Court Services</u> k. E-Mail Address <u>scott.griffith@vermont.gov</u> l. Organization EIN <u>03-6000284</u>	<b>6. IF THIS APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO OTHER FUNDING SOURCES, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:</b> Source <u>N/A</u> Date Submitted _____ Amount Requested _____ Disposition (if any) or Current Status _____ _____ <b>7. a. AMOUNT REQUESTED FROM SJI</b> \$ <u>50,000</u> <b>b. AMOUNT OF MATCH</b> Cash Match \$ <u>5,000</u> In-kind Match \$ <u>20,000</u> <b>c. TOTAL MATCH</b> \$ <u>25,000</u> <b>d. OTHER CASH</b> \$ _____ <b>e. TOTAL PROJECT COST</b> \$ <u>75,000</u>
<b>8. TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT</b> <u>Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center Planning Project</u>	
<b>9. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:</b> <u>Peter Welch</u> <u>Burlington/Chittenden County/Statewide</u> <small>Name of Representative; District Number Project location (if different from applicant location); Name of Representative; District Number</small>	
<b>10. CERTIFICATION</b> On behalf of the applicant, I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and complete. I have read the attached assurances (Form D) and understand that if this application is approved for funding, the award will be subject to those assurances. I certify that the applicant will comply with the assurances if the application is approved, and that I am lawfully authorized to make these representations on the behalf of the applicant. <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">                   _____ State Court Administrator                  TITLE             </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;">                 _____                  DATE             </div>	
SIGNATURE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL (For applications from State and local courts, Form B - Certificate of State Approval, must be attached)	

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STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

Certificate of State Approval

The Vermont Supreme Court  
Name of State Supreme Court or Designated Agency or Council

has reviewed the application entitled Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center  
Planning Project

prepared by Vermont Judiciary Court Administrator's Office  
Name of Applicant

approves its submission to the State Justice Institute, and

- agrees to receive and administer and be accountable for all funds awarded by SJI pursuant to the application;
- hereby requests consideration of a reduction in cash match as requested by the applicant (NOTE: only applicable to Project Grant applications);
- designates Vermont Judiciary Court Administrator's Office  
Name of Trial or Appellate Court or Agency

as the entity to receive, administer, and be accountable for all funds awarded by SJI pursuant to the application.

*Paul L. Reiber*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

January 31, 2020  
Date

Honorable Paul L. Reiber  
Name

Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court  
Title

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## INSTRUCTIONS

The *State Justice Institute Act* requires that:

Each application for funding by a state or local court shall be approved, consistent with state law, by the state's supreme court, or its designated agency or council, which shall receive, administer, and be accountable for all funds awarded by SJI to such courts (42 U.S.C. 10705(b)(4)).

FORM B should be signed by the chief judge or chief justice of the state supreme court, or by the director of the designated agency or chair of the designated council.

The term "state supreme court" refers to the court of last resort of a state. "Designated agency or council" refers to the office or judicial body which is authorized under state law, or by delegation from the state supreme court, to approve applications for grant funding and to receive, administer, and be accountable for that funding.

# STATE JUSTICE INSTITUTE

## PROJECT BUDGET

(TABULAR FORMAT)

**Applicant:** VERMONT JUDICIARY

**Project Title:** Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center Planning Project

**For Project Activity from** 04/01/2020 **to** 09/30/2020

**Total Amount Requested for Project from SJI \$** 50,000.00

ITEM	SJI FUNDS	STATE FUNDS	FEDERAL FUNDS	APPLICANT FUNDS	OTHER FUNDS	IN-KIND SUPPORT	TOTAL
Personnel							0.00
Fringe Benefits							0.00
Consultant / Contractual	50,000.00			700.00			50,700.00
Travel				4,300.00			4,300.00
Equipment							0.00
Supplies							0.00
Telephone							0.00
Postage							0.00
Printing / Photocopying							0.00
Audit							0.00
Other (specify)						20,000.00	20,000.00
<b>Subtotal, Direct Costs</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>75,000.00</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>							<b>0.00</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>5,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>	<b>75,000.00</b>

Remarks:

6/1/19

## Application Budget Instructions

If the proposed project period is for more than 12 months, separate totals should be submitted for each succeeding twelve-month period or portion thereof beyond 12. However, a grand total project budget must also be included for multi-year projects.

In addition to Form C, applicants must provide a detailed budget narrative that explains the basis for the estimates in each budget category. If the applicant is requesting indirect costs and has an indirect cost rate that has been approved by a Federal agency, the basis for that rate, together with a copy of the letter or other official document stating that it has been approved, should be attached. Recoverable indirect costs are limited to no more than 75% of personnel and fringe benefit costs.

If matching funds from other sources are being sought, the source, current status of the request, and anticipated decision date must be provided.

## BUDGET NARRATIVE

### Project: Vermont Judiciary Access and Resource Center Planning Project

The total cost of the project is a firm fixed price of \$75,000. The Vermont Judiciary is requesting \$50,000 in State Justice Institute (SJI) funds. Vermont will provide a cash match of \$5,000 and an in-kind match of \$20,000.

The budget is based on the following:

Total Budget:	\$75,000
SJI Request:	\$50,000
Judiciary Cash Match:	\$5,000
In-kind Match:	\$20,000
Project Liaison time (100 hours X \$100/hour)	\$10,000
Stakeholders time (100 hours X \$100/hour)	\$10,000
Consulting Personnel Costs:	\$50,700
Travel:	\$4,300
Task 1: Project Initiation – Kickoff Teleconference	\$2,762
Task 2: Review Background Material & Develop and Conduct Survey	\$9,048
Task 3: Initial Site Visit – Interview Key Stakeholders	\$22,338
Task 4: Draft Findings, Recommendations and Strategies	\$7,872
Task 5: Conference Call – Initial Findings and Recommendations	\$4,856
Task 6: Second Site Visit – Present Findings and Recommendations	\$8,124

Travel:

Site Visits: 2 trips with 2 to 3 consultants, estimated total of 5 days/4 nights (Tasks 3 & Task 6)

\*Note: Travel expenses include airfare, hotel, per diem, and ground transportation and are based on the National Center for State Courts policy that utilizes federal policies as guidelines. The travel days include travel time.