



Educational Program and Toolkit Aim to Build Problem-Solving Skills for State Judges Dealing With Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence and Mental Health Issues in Their Courts

Building a toolkit to develop problem-solving approaches within state courts

SUMMARY

The [National Center for State Courts](#) helped to organize an educational program on using a comprehensive problem-solving approach to address substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health and other complex and difficult issues in court.

The center also developed a toolkit, which is available [online](#), designed to aid judges and courts seeking to implement a problem-solving approach in court cases involving these and other complex issues.

Key Results

- The educational program was held as part of the annual meeting of the [Conference of Chief Justices](#) and the [Conference of State Court Administrators](#) in Salt Lake City, on July 28, 2004. Approximately 112 chief justices and state court administrators attended.
- The session included these components:
 - The history, purpose and benefits of comprehensive problem-solving court processes.
 - Examples of efforts to integrate problem-solving principles into the court system, including the development of specialized courts dealing with drug addiction, mental health and domestic violence.
 - Judicial and court manager concerns related to the approach.

- A special session that provided court policy leaders the opportunity to identify steps they could take to expand the use of the problem-solving approach in their states.
- The center developed the "Problem-Solving Justice Toolkit," which is available [online](#). According to its developers:
 - The toolkit's primary audience is local and state court officials interested in the problem-solving approach.
 - It can be used by individual judges who aspire to improve their decision-making, as well as committees seeking to create a separate docket to address specific cases such as those involving substance abuse, mental health or domestic violence.

Funding

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provided two grants totaling \$146,830 from August 2003 to April 2005 to support this project.

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Grant ID# 48812, 52846

Program area: Enterprise Level
