

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



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Encouraging courts to innovate, improve service is goal of new grant program

LANSING, MI, July 8, 2013 – Michigan trial courts with great ideas for improving court performance and public service can get a boost from a new grant program administered by the State Court Administrative Office, the administrative agency of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Grant money will be provided by the Court Performance Innovation Fund, created by the state Legislature earlier this year as part of the FY 2014 budget. SCAO opened the grant application process to the courts today.

State Court Administrator Chad C. Schmucker said that the fund will support the Michigan justice system's reform efforts.

"We're pursuing reforms on three fronts: technology, court performance, and efficiency – courts working smarter for a better Michigan," Schmucker explained. "And part of the reform process is unleashing the creativity of the trial courts."

Schmucker continued, "We are looking for innovative ideas that, if they're successful, can be emulated by other courts. With a grant, courts can explore innovations that they might not otherwise pursue for lack of funding."

Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. likened the grants to "research and development funding for the trial courts."

Young, who with Schmucker advocated for the Legislature to approve the Court Performance Innovation Fund, said, "I am convinced that our Michigan trial courts offer a rich, and to some extent untapped, source of creativity. One court's innovative idea may be the genesis for a statewide improvement. A relatively small grant from the innovation fund may yield untold benefits in the future."

Schmucker added that the grant program "is not about encouraging courts to add programs that have already been tried and adopted by many other courts. For example, we have had drug and sobriety courts in Michigan for many years, so a court that simply wants to add such a program would not be eligible for a grant."

SCAO will screen applications for grants from the \$1 million fund and will also monitor grant recipients' programs.

Courts are asked to complete a brief pre-application and submit it to SCAO by August 1. Applicants that pass the initial screening will be invited by August 15 to submit a full application, due September 15. Grant awards will be announced October 1.

For application forms and instructions, see
<http://www.courts.mi.gov/administration/admin/pages/grant-opportunities.aspx>.

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