



NEWS RELEASE

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National Center for State Courts Leads Court Improvement Efforts in the Area of Elder Abuse

Williamsburg, VA (June 15, 2006) – In support of the United Nations' World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15), the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) today released a seminal Policy Paper resulting from the first-ever meeting of the *Elder Abuse and Courts Working Group* in April. The Policy Paper outlines specific products, strategies, and recommendations that can be developed and implemented to increase awareness among the judiciary and improve court responses to the serious and growing problem of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The report can be found at www.ncsconline.org/famviol/elderabuse/index.html.

The multidisciplinary *Elder Abuse and the Courts Working Group* is comprised of many of the nation's elder abuse experts, with representation from courts, criminal justice agencies, adult protective services, advocacy and legal organizations and government agencies. The Working Group was established by the NCSC in 2005 to increase judicial awareness, build court capacity, and develop tools that courts can use to improve the identification of and response to the growing problem of elder abuse.

The first national meeting of the Working Group, which was supported through funds from the Archstone Foundation, was held at NCSC headquarters in Williamsburg, Virginia in April. The meeting report concludes with five recommendations that emerged from the meeting. The recommendations highlight the role of judicial leadership, recognition of elder abuse as a problem, training, data collection and documentation, and resources. The meeting resulted in an invigorated national network of key individuals who can move the agenda forward. Working Group participants remain committed to helping the courts craft a proactive informed response to improve the lives of older Americans.

The NCSC is currently engaged in a number of follow-up activities to implement these recommendations and provide leadership to the courts.

The National Center for State Courts, founded in 1971 by Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the administration of justice and provides leadership, research, technology, education, and training to the state courts. The National Center also is taking the lead on several key issues facing the justice system. For example, the National Center is working to improve citizens' participation in the jury system, reform the judicial selection process, and develop a model policy on public access to court records. The National Center is headquartered in Williamsburg, Va., with offices in Washington, D.C. and Denver, Colo.

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