



Nebraska Judicial Branch Education 2011 Year End Report

It is essential to the public that judges and judicial branch employees continue their education in order to maintain and increase their professional competence, to fulfill their obligations under the Nebraska Code of Judicial Conduct, and to ensure the delivery of quality judicial and probation services to the people of the State of Nebraska. JBE provides high quality education for judges and staff of the courts and probation throughout the state of Nebraska.

History of Judicial Branch Education in Nebraska

Beginning in 2005 the Supreme Court mandated that all judges obtain 10 credit hours of education each year, and that all court staff, clerks of the district court and probation employees receive at least 8 hours of annual education. We have now phased in requirements that all employees of the district courts state wide obtain 8 hours of education. With this expanded pool of employees JBE is now responsible for providing education to 1667 judges and court staff. JBE is funded with \$1.00 from court filing fees which provides approximately \$390,000 of annual income to fund education for all judges and staff. As detailed in this report utilizing distance learning and seeking grant funding has enabled us to produce quality education for all judges and staff.

Judicial Branch Education: Ensuring the delivery of quality judicial services

2011 Education

Since late August JBE has been concentrating on providing education regarding the new guardian and conservatorship rules. 130 employees and judges attended our initial live education in Omaha on September 13 & 14. The session included a very good presentation on implicit bias by Kimberly Papillion, an attorney educator on the subject with California Judicial Education. We had several of our new judges present for the session. The conference was grant funded by SJI –that same grant source assisted with the cost of an education session on the new guardianship procedures for probate jurisdiction judges. The education included details of the characteristics of our aging population and the state wide initiatives meant to improve protection for vulnerable adults. We have held three webinars for court staff on the new procedures, and JBE has assisted in compiling the forms for training. On November 18, 2011 JBE was the sponsor and host of a webinar for current guardians and conservators to bring them in on the changes. The session is now hosted on the Supreme Court website as a teaching aid to guardians and conservators.



On November 28, 2011 JBE hosted and sponsored a webinar in conjunction with the Nebraska Bankers Association to educate the banking industry on the new required forms. That webinar is now hosted by JBE for future reference by the NBA members.

65 judges attended the DUI conference in Omaha in early August, but that did not hamper the attendance at the Fall meeting. It was the most highly attended meeting JBE has hosted. 130 judges and Court staff attended at least some portion of the Fall meeting.



Webinar Training and Web Site

In 2011 JBE hosted 52 webinars. That 52 hours of education is now recorded and archived on our web site. In addition we are in the process of adding several courses to our distance learning courses hosted on our web site. Through a grant from the National Center for Juvenile and Family Court judges we are building a 6 hour course for judges on domestic violence and protection orders. We have had judges assist in reviewing the content being built. The quality of the program is excellent.



JBE's webinar education has a wide reach. Court staff and judges are able to satisfy their annual education requirement using our resources, and feedback from users is positive. This year we have had over 2500 visits by our judges and staff to our training website.

The webinar archives provide a source of content in the area of leadership, dealing with pro se litigants, working well on the phone, as well as providing substantive legal content for judges. On November 23rd retired District Judge Pat Rogers provided a webinar for judges on sexual assault against the elderly and Professor Mangrum's evidence webinar in September was very well received. Those sessions can now be found in the archives.

2012 Education

We have begun planning the District judges education session for June 2012. We have received grant funding for a speaker on sex offender treatment, a ½ day session will be devoted to this important topic.

County Judges will have a day and 1/2 session focusing on domestic violence which we were able to afford through grant funding. It will take place in April 2012. The County judges with Juvenile jurisdiction will join the juvenile judges for a mandatory children's summit in late August.

Work has begun on the agenda for the Fall judges education meeting to be held October 24-26.

JBE has successfully obtained SJI grant funding that will allow us to bring a group of NJC faculty to Nebraska to conduct a "Train the Trainer" program for 20 judges. Our goal is to focus on the faculty of the new judge orientation and provide quality instruction for our programs.



We have several judges this year that have provided a great deal of assistance in training. Judges Susan Bazis, Teresa Luther, Paul Merritt, Paul Korslund and Laurie Yardley provide on-going faculty resources. We thank them for all their hard work and dedication to the cause of Judicial Education.

We are working on a grant that will allow us to bring Clerk Magistrates together for a meeting in September, dates are not yet set, but we are hopeful it will happen.

Probation Education

In September the Supreme Court held the first Swearing In Ceremony for new probation officers. After successfully completing all of their education the new officers were part of the first swearing in ceremony by Chief Justice Heavican. Approximately 28 officers were sworn in. With a new education schedule in place for 2012 the probation administration is hoping to have 2 swearing in ceremonies per year. New probation officer training is an extensive and concentrated program that provides our officers with needed skills as they begin to serve as probation officers.



New Office and Faces –

In June of 2011 Judicial Branch Education moved from the Executive Building into a more spacious and functional space in the Supreme Court Law Library on the 3rd floor of the State Capitol Building. The move was a perfect fit for JBE as it offers unlimited and for the most part unrestricted access to our own training room in the Reading Room of the library. The Reading Room has been great for Probation Officer training as well as webinars and executive meetings. The move also gave us more office space!



In September Diona Hartwig joined our staff to assist with the added workload of Mandatory Continuing Legal Education. While our call volume for MCLE was nowhere near last year's pace of 2500 calls in December, we responded to 1,800 calls and answered 1,850 emails during the month of December, we definitely saw an increase in questions during the reporting period in December. Without the added assistance of the Supreme Court Administrative Assistance staff we could not have responded to the call level. We deeply appreciate their help, and the work of Alicia Guerra and Diona Hartwig in going the extra mile during such a busy season.



JBE Advisory Board

Thanks to all serving on the JBE Advisory Board for a very productive year:

Justice John Gerrard, Nebraska Supreme Court

Judge John Irwin, Nebraska Court of Appeals

Janice Walker, Nebraska State Court Administrator

Ellen Brokofsky, Nebraska Probation Administrator

Judge John Colborn, Lancaster County District Court

Judge Alan Brodbeck, Holt County Court

Judge Linda Porter, Separate Juvenile Court Lancaster County

Judge Lauren Van Norman, Nebraska Workers Compensation Court

Vickie Prince, Clerk of the District Court

Barb Pousson, Judicial Administrator

Kathy Habben, Court Reporter

Jodi York, Chief Probation Officer

