

# National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Receives \$900,000 NoVo Foundation Grant to Address Sex Trafficking

*The NCJFCJ announced a grant from the NoVo Foundation to support systems-based solutions to commercial sexual exploitation.*

RENO, NV, UNITED STATES, January 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges \(NCJFCJ\)](#) announced a \$900,000 grant from the NoVo Foundation to support systems-based solutions to commercial sexual exploitation. The grant will support the NCJFCJ project to identify and promote promising practices in juvenile and family courts to address child sex trafficking.



The funding is a part of The Life Story Grants, a \$10 million, three-year investment in survivor-centered programs in the U.S. The NCJFCJ is among 15 projects awarded to address the systemic failures that allow the sex trade to thrive and harm the most marginalized communities, including girls and women of color, as well as trans, LGBTQ, immigrant, and Indigenous girls and women.

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*Judge John J. Romero, Jr.*

After receiving more than 400 letters of inquiry and consulting with a panel of survivor leaders, the NCJFCJ was selected based on its targeted approach and its commitment to survivor engagement along with partners Rights4Girls, National American Indian Court Judges Association, National Immigrant Women’s Advocacy Project, Awaken, and Toni McKinley, LLC. The NCJFCJ understands that there must be a system-wide response

and a cultural shift toward holding perpetrators and buyers responsible.

“The NCJFCJ has been at the forefront of educating judges and court staff in the area of commercial sexual exploitation and have engaged experts and incorporated survivor voices to build a national foundational understanding for judges and court staff of the needs in the field,” said Joey Orduna Hastings, NCJFCJ CEO. “We are honored to be selected for The Life Story Grants to expand our work to address domestic child sex trafficking and promote promising practices in juvenile and family courts across the country.”

Key strategies and initiatives include:

- Establish a Project Advisory Committee and engage and host a roundtable with a wide variety of judges, survivors of trafficking, victim advocates, professionals, and other training and technical assistance providers to serve and lead;

- Implement a multiple-day all-sites meeting for courts that address the commercial sexual exploitation of youth to foster peer-to-peer learning;
- Conduct court technical assistance site visits with juvenile and family courts to start new programming, a specialty docket or court for commercially exploited youth;
- Conduct court trauma assessments to help address issues around environment, policy, and practice to ensure a trauma-informed approach to better serve children and families;
- Convene a Youth Advisory Council to provide youth survivor voice to project activities; and
- Create and disseminate a resource guide on how to implement court-based strategies specific to address identifying commercial and sexually exploited youth, building collaborative partnerships, and providing trauma responsive services and programs.

"Youth who have been commercially and sexually exploited often become involved in the juvenile and family justice system for offenses related to being trafficked such as theft, curfew violations, running away, substance use and distribution," said NCJFCJ past president Judge John J. Romero, Jr., Children's Court Division of the Second Judicial District Court of New Mexico. "Oftentimes their circumstances are overlooked or misinterpreted by those working in the justice system including judges. Through our new partnership with the NoVo Foundation and judicial leadership, the NCJFCJ intends to close these on-ramps to commercial sexual exploitation for youth by addressing conditions in the juvenile and family justice system that continue to foster trafficking."

For more information about the work underway, visit <http://www.ncjfcj.org> or <https://thelifestory.org>.

About the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ):  
Founded in 1937, the Reno, Nev.-based National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, is the nation's oldest judicial membership organization and focused on improving the effectiveness of our nation's juvenile and family courts. A leader in continuing education opportunities, research, and policy development in the field of juvenile and family justice, the 2,000-member organization is unique in providing practice-based resources to jurisdictions and communities nationwide.

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