



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-170

For business meeting on October 24, 2025

Title

Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission

Report Type

Action Required

Effective Date

October 24, 2025

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

October 7, 2025

Recommended by

Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness

Contact

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Hon. Kevin C. Brazile, Cochair

Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Cochair

Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness recommends the approval of a distribution of \$5.25 million to the California Access to Justice Commission for grants to civil legal aid nonprofits, organizations to support the infrastructure and innovations needs of legal services in civil matters for indigent persons, and for administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness recommends that the Judicial Council, effective October 24, 2025, approve a distribution of \$5.25 million to the California Access to Justice Commission for grants to civil legal aid nonprofits and administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program, as authorized by the Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 4) and Senate Bill 133 (Stats. 2023, ch. 34).

Relevant Previous Council Action

Since fiscal year 2021–22, the state Budget Act has directed the Judicial Council to distribute \$5 million annually in Equal Access Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission for

grants to nonprofit civil legal aid providers (Links A, B, C, and D). A list of the grants to the providers made by the commission in the third year of funding is included as Attachment A. Beginning in fiscal year 2023–24, Senate Bill 133 directed the Judicial Council to distribute \$250,000 in Equal Access Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax–advantaged student loan repayment assistance program for legal aid attorneys employed by qualified legal services projects and support centers (Link E).

In February 2025, the Governor signed into law Senate Bill X1 2 (Wiener; Stats. 2024, ch. 4), which allocated \$5 million to the Access to Justice Commission for legal services to protect the constitutional and legal rights of vulnerable populations (Links F and G). A list of the grants to providers is included as Attachment B.

Analysis/Rationale

The California Access to Justice Commission is an independent nonprofit agency. The Budget Act of 2025 (Link H) provides that \$5 million be distributed by the Judicial Council to the commission for grants to nonprofit civil legal aid providers, including qualified legal services providers and support centers, to be used to support the infrastructure and innovation needs of legal services in civil matters for indigent people. The commission may use up to 2.5 percent of these funds for administrative costs associated with distributing and monitoring the grants¹ (Link H).

Additionally, beginning in fiscal year 2023–24, SB 133 directs the Judicial Council to distribute an additional \$250,000 of Equal Access Funds annually to the Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax–advantaged student loan repayment assistance program for legal aid attorneys employed by qualified legal services projects and support centers. The Commission reports to Judicial Council staff on the administration of the program each year.

Policy implications

This recommendation helps implement Goal I of the Strategic Plan for California’s Judicial Branch—Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion. By increasing representation and supporting the infrastructure needs of legal services in civil matters for indigent people, these funds will expand equal access to the courts, court proceedings, and programs.

Comments

Public comments were not solicited for this proposal because the recommendations are within the Judicial Council’s purview to approve without circulation.

Alternatives considered

No alternatives were considered because the funding is allocated as directed by the Budget Act of 2025.

¹ Stats. 2025, ch. 4, item 0250-101-0001, provision 2.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The funds for the California Access to Justice Commission require no court implementation because all funds will be provided as grants to legal services agencies.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: California Access to Justice Commission Legal Aid Infrastructure & Innovation Year 3 Grant Awards
2. Attachment B: California Access to Justice Commission Grants to Serve Vulnerable Communities Pursuant to Judicial Council Contract 115970
3. Link A: Judicial Council Report, Aug. 26, 2024, *Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission*,
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13262106&GUID=EA6FF99C-367C-4603-9896-DFE54072FF1E
4. Link B: Judicial Council Report, Aug. 11, 2023, *Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission*,
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12245978&GUID=38448FB7-D433-4E1B-80E1-BA6DF4AA820E
5. Link C: Judicial Council Report, Aug. 18, 2022, *Equal Access Fund: California Access to Justice Commission Grants*,
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11204297&GUID=6F13C8DB-71E8-43D8-A4C6-35E695DA112D
6. Link D: Judicial Council Report, Aug. 30, 2021, *Equal Access Fund: California Access to Justice Commission Grants*,
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9785553&GUID=9D1E060E-3A50-45FC-A3D7-990FB095A312
7. Link E: Senate Bill 133 (Stats. 2023, ch. 34),
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB133
8. Link F: Senate Bill X1 2 (Wiener; Stats. 2024, ch. 4),
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520261SB2
9. Link G: Circulating Order Memorandum, Feb. 10, 2025, *Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Fund Augmentation for California Access to Justice Commission*,
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=A&ID=1282323&GUID=C7A67992-AB8D-47CD-A31F-7F8A8317CE5E
10. Link H: Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 4),
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB101

**California Access to Justice Commission
Legal Aid Infrastructure & Innovation Year 3 Grant Awards**

Description of Funded Project	Grant Amount
AIDS Legal Referral Panel of the San Francisco Bay Area	\$100,000
Alameda County Homeless Action Center (HAC)	45,000
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL)	185,000
California Indian Legal Services (CILS)	165,000
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA)	55,000
Center for Gender and Refugee Studies - California, Inc. (CGRS)	141,000
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)	164,000
Contra Costa Senior Legal Services (CCSLs)	88,000
Dependency Advocacy Center (DAC)	85,000
Dolores Street Community Services	65,000
Elevate Community Center	25,000
Immigrant Legal Defense (ILD)	188,000
Immigration Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA)	129,000
Inland Counties Legal Services, Inc. (ICLS)	152,000
Inner City Law Center (ICLC)	125,000
Jubilee Immigration Advocates	47,000
Justice At Last, Inc.	50,000
LACBA Counsel for Justice (CFJ)	149,000
Latin Advocacy Network-LATINAN	117,000
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights (SF Bay Area) (LCCRSF)	150,000
Legal Access Alameda	94,000
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA)	200,000
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	38,000
Legal Aid of Marin	158,000
Legal Aid of Sonoma County (LASC)	80,000
Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino (LASSB)	100,000
Legal Assistance for Seniors (LAS)	86,000
Legal Assistance to the Elderly, Inc. (LAE)	82,000
Legal Services for Children, Inc. (LSC)	142,000
Loyola Marymount University (Loyola Social Justice Law Clinic or LSJLC)	92,000
Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS)	50,000
Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)	144,000
Mobile Pathways	155,000
National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)	235,000

Description of Funded Project	Grant Amount
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)	105,000
Public Interest Law Project (PILP)	80,000
Public Law Center (PLC)	98,000
Senior Advocacy Network (SAN)	50,000
Senior Legal Services (aka Senior Citizens Legal Services) (SLS	155,000
Swords to Plowshares Veterans Rights Organization	60,000
Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC)	250,000
The Congress of Neutrals (TCON)	60,000
The Impact Fund	46,000
Veterans Legal Institute (VLI)	90,000
TOTAL GRANT AWARDS	\$4,875,000¹

¹ The \$4,875,000 represents the total grant award after deducting the 2.5 percent allocated for administrative costs related to distributing and overseeing the grants.

**California Access to Justice Commission
Grants to Serve Vulnerable Communities Pursuant to Judicial Council
Contract 115970**

Description	Grant Amount
The ABA Immigration Justice Project (IJP)	\$125,000
AIDS Legal Referral Panel	50,000
The Alliance for Children's Rights (the Alliance)	50,000
Bet Tzedek	75,000
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) (for six organizations)	1,100,000
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc. (CRLAF)	130,000
Center for Gender and Refugee Studies - California (CGRS)	75,000
Center for Immigrant Protection's	100,000
Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)	125,000
Centro Legal de la Raza	150,000
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)	125,000
East Bay Community Law Center (EBCLC)	125,000
Education and Leadership Foundation (ELF)	100,000
Garment Worker Center	75,000
Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center of Orange County (dba LGBTQ Center OC)	120,000
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)	50,000
Immigration Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA)	175,000
The Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ)	125,000
The International Rescue Committee (IRC)	75,000
Jubilee Immigration Advocates (Jubilee)	30,000
Justice and Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco (JDC)	75,000
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)	120,000
Latin Advocacy Network (LATINAN)	100,000
Learning Rights Center Learning Rights Law Center (LRLC)	25,000
Legal Aid of Marin	128,000
Legal Aid of San Mateo (Legal Aid SMC)	50,000
Legal Services for Children, Inc. (LSC)	100,000
Legal Services of Northern California (LSNC)	50,000
Loyola Marymount University (Loyola Social Justice Law Clinic or LSJLC)	78,000
Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)	100,000
National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)	100,000
Oasis Legal Services	125,000
Opening Doors, Inc.	75,000
Pangea Legal Services	100,000
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)	85,000
San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation (SLOLAF)	60,000
Social Justice Collaborative (SJC)	100,000
Southern California Immigrant Project Southern California Immigration Project (SCIP)	50,000

Description	Grant Amount
The Impact Fund	71,000
DEC Legal Center Perris (TODEC)	138,000
Transgender Law Center (TLC)	50,000
The Watsonville Law Center (WLC)	75,000
The Youth Law Center (YLC)	40,000
TOTAL GRANT AWARDS	\$4,875,000²

² *Id.* at, p. 2.