



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-165

For business meeting on October 24, 2025

Title

Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act: Fiscal
Year 2025–26 Trial Court Trust Fund
Allocation Increase for Sargent Shriver Civil
Counsel Program

Report Type

Action Required

Effective Date

October 24, 2025

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

September 18, 2025

Recommended by

Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee
Hon. Jonathan B. Conklin, Chair
Ms. Rebecca Fleming, Vice-Chair

Contact

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Executive Summary

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends approving a \$1.4 million augmentation to the fiscal year 2025–26 Trial Court Trust Fund allocation for the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Program. The additional funding would be taken from program reserves and distributed on a pro rata basis to current Shriver projects to expand and sustain legal representation and court services in housing and other civil cases.

Recommendation

The Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee recommends the Judicial Council, effective October 24, 2025, approve an increase to the approved fiscal year (FY) 2025–26 Trial Court Trust Fund allocation for the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Program of \$1.4 million, which results in a total program allocation of \$19.6 million for the current year. This amount will be allocated and distributed to current Shriver projects, on a pro rata basis according to the award amounts for the 2023–26 grant cycle, for FY 2025–26 as identified in Attachment A.

Relevant Previous Council Action

On July 21, 2023, the Judicial Council approved the Shriver Civil Counsel Act Implementation Committee's recommendation of 14 three-year grants for a total of \$48.3 million to qualified legal services providers and their court partners for the administration of projects during the 2023–26 grant cycle.¹ The approved grants totaled \$15.8 million for FY 2023–24.

On November 15, 2024, the council approved a one-time midcycle allocation of \$3.569 million of the \$5 million made available to providers from the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act grant program's existing Trial Court Trust Fund (TCTF) reserves to current Shriver projects. The council also approved designating the unrequested amount of \$1.4 million in program reserves for allocation in the 2026–29 grant cycle.²

On July 18, 2025, the council approved the FY 2025–26 TCTF local assistance allocation of \$18.2 million for the Shriver program.³

Analysis/Rationale

Funding for the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Program has been augmented in recent years by fee revenue and one-time settlement revenue directed to the program by the Legislature. Funding is allocated through a competitive solicitation process every three years to courts and their justice partners. Although the program makes every effort to disseminate the grant opportunity and encourage applications, overall revenues have exceeded expenditures. The total reserve funding for the program before the recommended distribution is \$15.3 million. By statute, unspent funds are held in reserve exclusively for the program and cannot be used for other trial court purposes.⁴

On June 5, 2025, the Shriver Civil Counsel Act Implementation Committee approved allocating the remaining \$1.4 million funding to current Shriver projects in FY 2025–26, rather than reserving it for the 2026–29 grant cycle. This approval was made in response to recent wildfires that caused significant housing loss and cuts in federal funding. The \$1.4 million was the unallocated portion of the \$5 million made available to existing Shriver projects in FY 2024–25, which was held in reserve for the next grant cycle.⁵ In support of this request, on June 9, 2025, a request for proposals was issued to current Shriver projects, inviting them to submit revised

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act: Selection of Pilot Projects* (June 2, 2023), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124930&GUID=FB567EA4-D0EA-4B2E-A554-6352E555984D.

² Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act: Midcycle Allocation to Current Projects* (Oct. 23, 2024), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13393796&GUID=0C4E75C5-E5D4-4AD1-8CE2-5832105FA27F.

³ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Trial Court Budget: Allocations from the Trial Court Trust Fund and Trial Court Allocations for Fiscal Year 2025–26* (June 24, 2025), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14317995&GUID=ECD8C9DA-C4D0-4251-9D6E-F59B81DF112E.

⁴ Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act (as amended by Assem. Bill 2193; Stats. 2022, ch. 486).

⁵ Shriver Civil Counsel Act Implementation Committee meeting agenda (June 5, 2025), courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/shriver-060525-noticeagenda_0.pdf.

project plans, budgets, and budget narratives detailing how they would use a proposed pro rata allocation. Of the 14 Shriver projects, 12 submitted proposals for their full pro rata amount, one submitted a proposal for less than its share, and one project declined its full pro rata share.

On July 18, 2025, the Shriver Committee approved 13 proposals via vote by email recommending the augmentation of up to \$1.4 million from program reserves to support current projects. This augmentation would bring funding allocations for the 2023–26 grant cycle to the total of \$53,033,963.⁶ Attachment A displays the \$3.56 million pro rata midcycle allocation amounts and the proposed \$1.4 million midyear augmentation amounts, both based on the pro rata share of the 2023–26 grant cycle allocations. It summarizes total funding for each project, including the initial grant awards, the midcycle allocations, and the proposed midyear augmentations. Following the allocation of \$1.4 million, the remaining reserve balance for the program will be \$13.9 million.

This recommendation to approve an increase to the approved FY 2025–26 TCTF allocation through an augmentation of \$1.4 million was approved by the Revenue and Expenditures Subcommittee of the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee on August 12, the Trial Court Budget Advisory Committee on August 25, and the Judicial Branch Budget Committee on September 4, 2025.

Policy implications

The recommendation supports Goal I of the Strategic Plan for California’s Judicial Branch—Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion—by increasing representation and court services for low-income persons, regardless of immigration status, in diverse geographic areas of California.

Comments

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

Alternatives considered

The program is funded by revenues that are to be used solely by the program; therefore, no alternative funding recommendations were considered.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

This recommendation is for the allocation of funds designated for the program. No additional costs or impacts are anticipated.

⁶ The Shriver Civil Counsel Act Implementation Committee voted by email on July 18, 2025. This action by email (courts.ca.gov/system/files/file/shriver-20250718-minutes-actionbyemail.pdf) was previously discussed at a previous meeting open to the public (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.75(o)(1)(A)).

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Program Midyear Augmentation Pro Rata Distribution

Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Program Midyear Augmentation Pro Rata Distribution

Lead Legal Services Agency	Court Partner	Case Type	Approved 2023–26 Grant Awards	Midcycle Allocation 2024	Midyear Augmentation 2025	Total Revised 2023–26 Grant Amounts ¹
California Rural Legal Assistance	San Joaquin	Housing	\$2,456,611	\$255,716	\$76,925	\$2,789,252
Central California Legal Services	Fresno	Housing	1,979,657	206,068	61,989	2,247,714
Centro Legal de la Raza	Alameda	Housing	2,168,678	225,745	67,909	2,462,332
Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance Inc.	Kern	Housing	3,066,468	319,077	96,021	3,481,566
Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco	San Francisco	Child Custody	1,219,949	126,988	38,201	1,385,138
Legal Access Alameda	Alameda	Child Custody	313,938	0	9,831	323,769
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	Santa Barbara	Housing Guardianship Conservatorship	3,914,413	117,125	116,666	4,148,204
Legal Aid Society of San Diego	San Diego	Housing	10,149,125	0	317,802	10,466,927
Legal Services of Northern California	Yolo	Housing	1,147,846	119,483	35,943	1,303,272
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice dba Survivor Justice Center	Los Angeles	Child Custody	3,007,407	313,050	94,172	3,414,629
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County	Los Angeles	Housing	12,911,086	1,343,954	404,289	14,659,329
Public Law Center	Orange	Child Custody	489,484	0	0	489,484
San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (custody) ²	San Diego	Child Custody	1,392,980	144,202	13,563	1,550,745
San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (domestic violence) ²	San Diego	Domestic Violence	961,185	99,774	8,904	1,069,863
San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation	San Luis Obispo	Housing Elder Abuse Guardianship Conservatorship	2,855,136	297,200	89,403	3,241,739
TOTAL			\$48,033,963	\$3,568,382	\$1,431,618	\$53,033,963

¹ Inclusive of approved Trial Court Trust Fund allocations for FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25 and the allocation requested for FY 2025–26.

² San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program is one Shriver project, but its funding is separated by case type to demonstrate compliance with Government Code section 68651(2), which states that proposals to provide counsel in child custody cases should be considered among the highest priorities for funding and up to 20 percent of available funds shall be directed to programs involving actions under the Family Code (leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=&title=8.&part=&chapter=2.1.&article=).