



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 24-088

For business meeting on July 12, 2024

Title

Juvenile Law: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology and Fiscal Year 2024–25 Allocations

Agenda Item Type

Action Required

Effective Date

July 1, 2024

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

July 3, 2024

Recommended by

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee
Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse, Chair

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Executive Summary

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends the Judicial Council allocate funding for the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program, which includes an amendment to the funding methodology for allocation of a \$500,000 funding augmentation. The allocations will fund 45 CASA programs serving 52 counties and approximately 10,600 children statewide.

Recommendation

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council allocate the \$2.713 million in total grant funds for fiscal year 2024–25 as follows, effective July 1, 2024:

1. Allocate \$2.103 million in base funding based on the previously approved four-tier methodology.

2. Amend the funding methodology approved by the Judicial Council to include an ongoing funding methodology for the \$500,000 augmentation:
 - a. Allocate the funding as a separate growth-based incentive (Growth Incentive A);
 - b. Allocate this growth-based incentive to a total of 30 eligible local CASA programs, composed of 15 small and 15 large programs, based on the current methodology for determining incentive funding eligibility for small and large programs; and
 - c. Allocate this funding equally among the 30 eligible local CASA programs.
3. Allocate \$110,000 equally to the 27 programs, 13 small and 14 large, that are eligible for the existing growth-based incentive (Growth Incentive B).

Relevant Previous Council Action

A CASA program is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes trained volunteers appointed by a judicial officer to provide advocacy for a child who is under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. A CASA volunteer spends time with the child, monitors the child's needed services, and provides child-focused recommendations to the court based on the best interest of the child. Forty-five programs in 52 counties serve approximately 10,600 children with 7,400 trained volunteers.

In August 2003, at the recommendation of the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, the Executive Committee approved a formula-based method for distributing Judicial Council CASA program funding to California CASA programs. The new funding approach replaced the previous competitive request-for-proposals process with predetermined program awards. Then on August 23, 2013, the Judicial Council approved a new funding methodology that was formula-based and used program data submitted by local programs to evaluate the efficiency and growth of those programs.¹

On July 20, 2018, the Judicial Council adopted a revised methodology that provides a larger percentage of funds as base funding and replaced the two existing incentives with a growth incentive for those programs that are eligible.² The revised methodology made no changes to the four-tiered base funding portion of the methodology.

The Budget Act of 2018 included a \$500,000 augmentation to Judicial Council CASA funding, which increased funding from \$2.213 million to \$2.713 million to promote program growth. On September 21, 2018, the Judicial Council approved the allocation of these funds to CASA

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Dependency: Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Funding Methodology* (July 19, 2013), www.courts.ca.gov/documents/jc-20130823-itemM.pdf.

² Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Judicial Council Budget: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology and FY 2018–19 Allocations* (June 28, 2018), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6357571&GUID=C010F4D4-28C5-4868-871C-94B763688ACA>.

programs as additional base funding for fiscal years (FYs) 2018–19 and 2019–20 using the existing methodology.³ In this report to the council, the committee noted that it would develop recommendations for a methodology specific to these funds for implementation in FY 2020–21. The committee deferred this item during the pandemic.⁴

At its July 2023 meeting, the Judicial Council approved recommendations to continue allocation of the \$500,000 funding augmentation using the existing methodology.⁵ The council also directed the committee to continue to review data regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child welfare system and local CASA programs and present recommendations for a funding methodology for this \$500,000 augmentation for FY 2024–25.

Analysis/Rationale

\$500,000 augmentation

In FY 2023–24, the committee convened an ad hoc working group to work with program staff to develop an ongoing funding methodology for the \$500,000 funding augmentation. The ad hoc working group reviewed CASA Local Assistance base funding amounts for each county, the number of dependents served by CASA programs, and the resident population for each county. In developing its recommendation, the ad hoc working group considered several factors and options, including the intended purpose for the augmentation funding, equity, and potential impact on programs. Questions considered by the ad hoc working group are detailed below.

1. *Should the \$500,000 augmentation funding be allocated to programs as a separate growth-based incentive?*

The ad hoc working group determined that the \$500,000 funding augmentation should be awarded and allocated as a separate growth-based incentive as the purpose for this specific funding is to support efforts to increase the number of foster children served and reduce backlogs of youth in local courts waiting for a volunteer assignment.

2. *How many programs should be eligible for this second growth-based incentive?*

Currently, 27 programs are eligible for the existing growth incentive. The ad hoc working group determined that eligibility for this separate growth incentive should be increased to 30 programs, 15 small and 15 large,⁶ using the existing methodology for determining eligibility

³ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Judicial Council Budget: Allocation of Augmented Funding for Court Appointed Special Advocate Grant Program* (Aug. 14, 2018), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6612315&GUID=5A5F8317-1BC8-45A1-8CB8-AB2BEA0C37EE>.

⁴ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2021–22 Funding Allocations for Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance* (June 16, 2021), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9487734&GUID=BD0E146D-4BF6-40A9-B325-779E70763AAD>.

⁵ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology, Program Expansion, and Fiscal Year 2023–2024 Allocations* (June 21, 2023), <https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124955&GUID=4BBC2005-07B6-4FC7-AF49-155BED6339E0>.

⁶ Programs are categorized as small or large based on county population data from the most recent census. Programs in counties with populations up to 299,999 are categorized as small. Programs in counties with populations of

for incentive funding.⁷ Awarding the augmentation funding to 30 programs makes 75 percent of all programs eligible for incentive funding. The ad hoc working group determined that increasing the number of programs eligible for incentive funding would best support the purpose of the funding and promote equity.

3. *How should the \$500,000 augmentation funding be allocated to eligible programs?*

The ad hoc working group determined that the funding should be allocated equally among the 30 eligible programs as this option best advances the intended purpose of the funding, which is to support efforts to increase the number of foster children served and reduce backlogs of youth in local courts waiting for a volunteer assignment. In addition, this option will provide a fair and equitable distribution of the funds as eligible programs, both small and large, will receive equal funding.

After careful consideration, the ad hoc working group agreed that creating a separate growth-based incentive that distributes funding equally among 75 percent of all local CASA programs is the most equitable option.

Proposed funding allocations for FY 2024–25

The judicial branch budget for Judicial Council CASA grants for FY 2024–25 is \$2.713 million, including the ongoing \$500,000 augmentation. This funding supports 45 CASA programs serving 52 counties. Since FY 2018–19, the total funding for the allocation and augmentation has not changed. However, if the recommended allocation methodology for the augmentation funding is approved, it would be implemented in FY 2024–25 and will result in a change to the distribution of these funds to the local programs. The committee recommends allocation of the \$2.713 million for FY 2024–25 to the CASA programs based on the recommended amended methodology as outlined in Attachment A.

Policy implications

There are no policy implications to consider for the recommended allocation and methodology revisions.

300,000 or more are considered large. Programs serving multiple counties are categorized as small or large based on the sum of their combined county populations. The most recent census data is as of April 1, 2020. (United States Census Bureau, *California: 2020 Census* (Aug. 25, 2021), <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/california-population-change-between-census-decade.html>.)

⁷ The existing funding incentive is allocated to 13 small programs and 14 large programs. Programs serving counties with fewer than 50 children in foster care are exempt from receiving an incentive. Small programs are evaluated based on the percentage of children in foster care served by a CASA for the current year, with the top 13 programs serving the largest percentage receiving an incentive. Large programs are evaluated based on the number of children served by a CASA compared to the previous year, with the top 14 programs with the largest increase receiving an incentive.

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

Three alternatives to recommendation 2 were considered:

1. *Allocate the \$500,000 to a total of 27 programs based on the existing methodology for incentive funding.*

The ad hoc working group determined that allocating the \$500,000 funding as a separate growth incentive to additional programs would better promote growth and equity. Expanding eligibility to a total of 30 programs makes 75 percent of all local CASA programs eligible for incentive funding.

2. *Allocate the \$500,000 to 30 eligible programs (15 small and 15 large) with \$300,000 for large programs and \$200,000 for small programs.*

This option generated substantial discussion and consideration. The ad hoc working group found that this would advance the intended purpose of the funding and incentivize programs to increase the number of foster children served by CASAs. This option also would provide incentive funding to 75 percent of all programs. However, because the purpose of the augmentation funding is to increase the number of foster children served by CASAs, the ad hoc working group concluded that creating a separate growth-based incentive that distributes funding equally between eligible small and large programs is a slightly more equitable option.

3. *Allocate the \$500,000 to 30 eligible programs (15 small and 15 large) with \$300,000 for small programs and \$200,000 for large programs.*

As it did when considering alternative 2, the ad hoc working group determined that a separate growth-based incentive that distributes funding equally between eligible small and large programs is more equitable.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

This recommendation is for the allocation of funds that are included in the FY 2024–25 budget. If the recommended growth incentive–based funding methodology for the \$500,000 augmentation is approved, the 17 programs that do not receive a growth incentive will see a decrease in their total allocation compared to prior years when this funding was allocated to all programs as additional base funding using the four-tiered base funding methodology.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Proposed Allocation for FY 2024–25 Judicial Council Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance Funding

Judicial Council Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance Funding

Local CASA Programs by County/Counties	Base Allocations	Growth Incentive A \$500,000	Growth Incentive B	Total Proposed Judicial Council Local Assistance Grant
Alameda	\$57,500.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$78,227.66
*Amador/Calaveras	\$44,850.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$65,577.66
*Butte/Glenn	\$58,650.00	\$16,666.66		\$75,316.66
Contra Costa	\$57,500.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$78,227.66
*Del Norte	\$29,900.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$50,627.66
*El Dorado	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
Fresno/Madera	\$86,250.00	\$16,666.66		\$102,916.66
*Humboldt	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
*Imperial	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
*Inyo/Mono	\$44,850.00			\$44,850.00
Kern	\$57,500.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$78,227.66
*Kings	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
*Lassen	\$29,900.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$50,627.66
Los Angeles	\$57,500.00			\$57,500.00
*Marin	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
*Mariposa	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
*Mendocino/Lake	\$58,650.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$79,377.66
*Merced	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66		\$55,766.66
*Modoc	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
Monterey	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
*Napa	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
*Nevada	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
Orange	\$57,500.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$78,227.66
Placer/Yuba	\$72,450.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$93,177.66
*Plumas	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
Riverside	\$57,500.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$78,227.66
Sacramento	\$57,500.00			\$57,500.00
*San Benito	\$29,900.00			\$29,900.00
San Bernardino	\$57,500.00			\$57,500.00
San Diego	\$57,500.00			\$57,500.00
San Francisco	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
San Joaquin	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
*San Luis Obispo	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
San Mateo	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
Santa Barbara	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
Santa Clara	\$57,500.00			\$57,500.00
*Santa Cruz	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
*Shasta/Tehama	\$58,650.00			\$58,650.00

Judicial Council Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance Funding

Local CASA Programs by County/Counties	Base Allocations	Growth Incentive A \$500,000	Growth Incentive B	Total Proposed Judicial Council Local Assistance Grant
*Siskiyou	\$29,900.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$50,627.66
Solano	\$48,300.00			\$48,300.00
Sonoma	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
Stanislaus	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
Tulare	\$48,300.00			\$48,300.00
Ventura	\$48,300.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$69,027.66
*Yolo	\$39,100.00	\$16,666.66	\$4,061.00	\$59,827.66
Totals	\$2,103,350.00	\$499,999.80	\$109,647.00	\$2,712,996.80

Total Local Assistance Grant	\$2,713,000.00
Total Base Amounts	\$2,103,350.00
Growth Incentive A Awards for Top 30 Programs (15 Small & 15 Large)	\$499,999.80
Growth Incentive B Awards for Top 27 Programs (13 Small & 14 Large)	\$109,647.00

* Indicates small programs.

Base allocations are based on the four-tier methodology.

After allocating funds to the base according to the methodology, \$4,061.00 per qualified program was available for Growth Incentive B funding.