



Judicial Council of California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 25-164
For business meeting on October 24, 2025

Title

Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds for
IOLTA-Formula Grants and Partnership
Grants

Report Type

Action Required

Effective Date

October 24, 2025

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Date of Report

October 3, 2025

Recommended by

State Bar Legal Services Trust Fund
Commission
Amin Al-Sarraf, Cochair
Erica Connolly, Cochair

Contact

Melanie Snider, 916-263-5442
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Executive Summary

The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission recommends approving the distribution of up to \$40,487,700 to the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission of the State Bar of California for the Equal Access Fund Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts–Formula Grants and Partnership Grants as authorized by the Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 4). The commission will distribute the funds as grants to legal services providers and support centers to be used for legal services in civil matters for indigent people and self-represented litigants to improve equal access and the fair administration of justice, as authorized by the Budget Act.

Recommendation

The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission recommends that the Judicial Council, effective October 24, 2025:

1. Approve the distribution of up to \$40,487,700 to the State Bar of California for the Equal Access Fund Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (IOLTA)–Formula Grants and Partnership Grants (Link A), as authorized by the Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 4), including:

- Up to \$772,600 for administration of the program by the State Bar;
- Up to \$386,300 for retention by the Judicial Council for administration of the grant;
- 90 percent of the total after administrative costs, or up to \$35,743,590, to be allocated through IOLTA-Formula Grants to provide legal services in civil matters for indigent persons, and 15 percent of the allocation to support centers that provide technical and legal assistance to the legal services providers;
- 10 percent of the total after administrative costs, or \$3,971,510, to be allocated through Partnership Grants to legal services providers for projects conducted jointly with the courts to provide legal assistance to self-represented litigants; and

2. Approve the grant awards recommended by the commission. The proposed IOLTA-Formula Grant and Partnership Grant recipients are in Attachments A6 and A8, respectively, of the commission's distribution report, which is included as Attachment A to this report.

Relevant Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council has approved the distributions and awards of IOLTA-Formula and Partnership Grant funds annually for the past 25 years, consistent with the Budget Act.

Analysis/Rationale

Since 1999, the Budget Act has appropriated funds to the Equal Access Fund and directed the Judicial Council to distribute them through the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission to qualified legal services providers and support centers to improve equal access and the fair administration of justice. Under the Budget Act, the Equal Access Fund (under item 0250-101-0932, provision 7) may be augmented in accordance with Government Code section 68085.3(c)(3), which provides a distribution of \$4.80 per filing fee (Link B). The Judicial Council also approves the awards recommended by the commission (see Attachment A).

The Budget Act provides that 90 percent of the appropriated funds remaining after administrative costs be distributed through IOLTA-Formula Grants to legal services agencies according to a statutory formula set out in Business and Professions Code section 6216 (Link C). The formula distributes funds among qualified legal services providers based on the poverty population in the county and the amount an organization spent providing free legal services to indigent people in that county in the prior calendar year. Projects that use volunteers as the principal means of delivering legal services share an additional pro bono allocation, and support centers that provide technical and legal assistance to the legal services providers receive 15 percent of the IOLTA-Formula Grant funds.

The Budget Act provides that 10 percent of the appropriated funds remaining after administrative costs be distributed through Partnership Grants to legal services providers for projects conducted jointly with the courts to provide legal assistance to self-represented litigants. Partnership Grants are awarded through a competitive application process.

The commission's recommended funding allocations are detailed in Attachment A. The commission determined that the proposed budget of each grant complies with statutory and other guidelines. The commission will distribute IOLTA-Formula and Partnership Grant funds on a calendar-year basis beginning January 1, 2026. If filing fees exceed projected revenues, the commission will hold the funds in reserve to cover disbursement delays or future shortfalls in projections.

The commission is required to report on the Equal Access Fund programs to the Judicial Council, which is then required to submit the report to the Department of Finance. The report submitted on December 31, 2024, was provided to the Judicial Council in January 2025 (Link D).

Policy implications

The recommendation supports Goal I of the Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch—Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion—by increasing representation for low-income persons and services to self-represented litigants and by ensuring 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.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

The IOLTA-Formula Grants require no court implementation. Partnership Grants require the courts that have elected to participate in joint projects with local legal services providers to collaborate in the manner proposed in their grant applications. Judicial Council staff will work with the staff of the commission to oversee the administration of the Equal Access Fund, including fulfillment of requirements for reports on the commission's evaluation.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: *Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funding for IOLTA-Formula Grants and Partnership Grants Under the Budget Act of 2025*
2. Link A: Budget Act of 2025 (Stats. 2025, ch. 4),
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB101
3. Link B: Gov. Code, § 68085.3,
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=68085.3&lawCode=GOV
4. Link C: Bus. & Prof. Code, § 6216,
leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=6216&lawCode=BPC

5. Link D: *Equal Access Fund: Reports to the Department of Finance* (Jan. 28, 2025),
jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13703527&GUID=F27D600B-EA6E-4E65-8F35-13038DD29FDB



The State Bar of California

OFFICE OF ACCESS & INCLUSION

ATTACHMENT A to the report: Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds for IOLTA-Formula Grants and Partnership Grants under the Budget Act of 2025

DATE: August 15, 2025

TO: The Judicial Council of California

FROM: Joyce Song, Program Director, Office of Access & Inclusion

CC: Erica Connolly, Chair, Legal Services Trust Fund Commission

SUBJECT: Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funding for IOLTA-Formula Grants and Partnership Grants Under the Budget Act of 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Equal Access Fund (EAF) is distributed in two parts: (1) 90 percent of the funds are distributed according to the statutory Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts ("IOLTA") formula and, (2) 10 percent of the funds are distributed as Partnership Grants, i.e., discretionary grants for joint projects between court and legal service programs to provide legal assistance at or near court houses to pro per litigants.

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of the EAF grants administered on behalf of the Judicial Council by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission and the State Bar in 2025. The State Bar also requests that the Judicial Council approve a distribution of \$40,487,700 for the 2026 EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants and Partnership Grants authorized by the Budget Act of 2025, which will be administered in the 2026 calendar year, and EAF reserves. This distribution amount includes:

- (1) \$34,507,200¹ allocated by the General Fund. By the terms of the Budget Act, \$31,056,480 (90 percent) of these funds are allocated to EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants and \$3,450,720 (10 percent) is allocated to Partnership Grants.
- (2) \$3,020,790² of filing fees. The Budget Act allocated \$4,687,110 (90 percent) to filing fees

¹ Per the Budget Act of 2025, \$35,392,000 of the General Fund is appropriated to the Equal Access Fund. Of that amount, 2.5 percent (\$884,800) is subtracted for administrative costs, leaving \$34,507,200 for distribution to grantees. Judicial Council receives one-third of the administrative costs (\$294,933) and the State Bar receives the remaining two-thirds (\$589,867).

² Under the Budget Act of 2025, \$5,482,000 of the filing fees is appropriated to the Equal Access Fund. Of that amount, 5 percent (\$274,100) is subtracted for administrative costs, leaving \$5,207,900 for distribution to

for EAF-IOLTA-Formula Grants. Of that amount, we are requesting to distribute \$2,500,000. The Budget Act also allocated \$520,790 (10 percent) to filing fees for Partnership Grants, and we are requesting distribution of that entire amount. \$3,020,790 represents the total of those requested amounts.

- (3) \$2,187,110 of the remaining EAF-IOLTA Formula filing fees will be retained as EAF reserve funds, used to cover any future disbursements delays or shortfalls in filing fee projections³.
- (4) \$772,600 for administrative costs⁴ to the State Bar pursuant to the Budget Act.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the State Budget Act established the Equal Access Fund (EAF) in the judicial branch budget to provide grants for free legal assistance to indigent Californians. The Budget Act identifies two separate uses for the money appropriated to the EAF:

- Ninety percent of the grant funds are to be distributed to IOLTA-eligible legal services providers according to a formula set forth in California’s IOLTA statute. These are known as “IOLTA-Formula” Grants.
- Ten percent of the grant funds are set aside for Partnership Grants to IOLTA-eligible legal services providers for “joint projects of court and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants.”

These grants are administered through the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (LSTFC) of the State Bar of California (see Attachment A1), but recommendations for the distribution of the grant funds must be approved by the Judicial Council. Relevant portions of the Budget Act of 2025 are included in Attachment A2.

The initial appropriation for the EAF in 1999 was \$10 million. This amount has since increased with the addition of State Appropriation Limit funding for a few years, filing fee revenue,⁵ and in more recent years, the appropriation of additional general fund monies.⁶ In the 2025–2026

grantees. Judicial Council receives one-third of administrative costs (\$91,367) and the State Bar receives the remaining two-thirds (\$182,733)

³ The reserve is approximately \$14 million. This will be used for 2026 distributions, while awaiting installment payments from the Judicial Council.

⁴ This is the total administrative costs allocated to the State Bar from the General Funds (\$589,867) and filing fees (\$182,733).

⁵ Since 2006, the Budget Act has allocated \$4.80 from first paper filing fees to the Equal Access Fund, with 90 percent of these funds directed to IOLTA-Formula Grants and 10 percent reserved for Partnership Grants.

⁶ In 2016, the EAF general fund was increased by \$5 million to \$10,392,000. In 2017, it was increased by an additional \$5 million to \$20,392,000. In 2019 the Legislature also provided an increase of \$20 million to fund homelessness prevention activities. In 2021, the Legislature increased the appropriations by \$50 million, \$45 million of which was distributed through the LSTFC, and further included \$40 million for additional homelessness prevention activities. In 2022, the Legislature maintained its baseline appropriation of \$35 million for the EAF

state budget, the Legislature maintained its baseline appropriation of \$35 million for the EAF general fund.

On November 8, 2024, the LSTFC approved a strategic realignment of its committee structure to enhance operational effectiveness and support the implementation of its 2024-2028 strategic plan. The new structure transitions from grant-specific committees to cross-functional committees focused on key operational areas: grant eligibility criteria, comprehensive grantee support services, impact assessment, and policy codification. This restructuring aims to create a more cohesive and efficient approach to grant management across all programs.

Under this structure, the newly formed Grant Eligibility and Support (GES) committee is responsible for recommending eligibility and grant amounts for existing grants such as the Partnership Grants for LSTFC approval. Previously, this was the responsibility of the Partnership Grants Committee.

THE LEGAL SERVICES TRUST FUND PROGRAM

Eligibility for EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants

The Budget Act requires that 90 percent of the Equal Access Fund (EAF) grants be distributed “to qualified legal services projects and support centers as defined in Sections 6213 to 6215, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code.” Those provisions establish the basic eligibility requirements for the two categories of organizations that are entitled to receive IOLTA funding:

- “Legal Services Projects,” which have as their primary purpose the provision of civil legal services directly to indigent clients without charge [Business and Professions Code §6213(a)]; and
- “Support Centers,” which provide legal training, technical assistance, and advocacy support to legal services projects on a statewide basis. [Business and Professions Code § 6213(b)]

All legal services projects and support centers receiving IOLTA and EAF funding must be nonprofit corporations, maintain quality control procedures approved by the LSTFC, and meet minimum funding and service criteria that are set out in Business and Professions Code sections 6214–6215. Business and Professions Code sections 6210–6228 (referred to as the IOLTA statute) require recipient legal services projects to use these grants to provide free civil legal services to indigent persons in the counties for which the funds are allocated. In addition, legal services projects must make extra efforts to increase services to especially disadvantaged and underserved client groups. Recipient support centers must publicize the availability of their services and demonstrate that they actually provide legal support without charge to qualified legal services projects on a statewide basis.⁷

general fund but included an additional \$15 million for consumer debt legal assistance and \$30 million for homelessness prevention funding.

⁷ Business and Professions Code §§ 6218, 6220, 6221, 6223.

Administration and Oversight

Applicants are required to complete an extensive application for funding, which includes detailed information about the organization's activities and services. The application also requires that an audit (or reviewed financial statement if an organization's gross expenditures are less than \$500,000) by an independent certified public accountant accompanies the application to verify reported qualified expenditures.

State Bar staff reviews all applications to confirm eligibility and compliance with governing authorities. Complex eligibility issues are elevated to be reviewed and addressed by the LSTFC's GES committee. The LSTFC then makes a determination of eligibility and the allocation of IOLTA-Formula Grant amounts. Once determined eligible, applicants are required to submit a proposed budget for use of the allocated funds, with a narrative description of the services to be provided and how the efficacy and impact of those services will be measured and maximized.

The LSTFC reviews this budget to ensure that it complies with the requirements noted above before any funds are distributed. Requirements regarding eligibility and use of funds are reflected in regulating rules and grant conditions approved by the State Bar and are incorporated into a written grant agreement with each grant recipient.

Funding is then distributed to qualified organizations under the statutory allocation formula found at Business and Professions Code section 6216:

- Fifteen percent of the grant money is reserved for Support Centers and is divided among those organizations equally.
- The remaining eighty-five percent of the funds is allocated among all California counties based on poverty population, and then within each county among legal services projects based on the amount each such organization spent in the prior calendar year providing free legal services to the indigent in that county. Programs that utilize volunteers as their principal means of delivering legal services share an additional pro bono allocation in each county where they so qualify.

After the grant year concludes, grant recipients provide written reports of their expenditure of grant funds, services provided, clients or customers served, and the impact of their services. Monitoring visits supplement review of the application and budget documentation to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and grant conditions as well as to evaluate provider effectiveness and validate the provider's fiscal practices for the handling of grant funds. State Bar staff, sometimes joined by LSTFC members and Judicial Council staff, conduct these visits on a three-year cycle. Monitoring visits have continued to be conducted remotely with the exception for new grantees whose visits are conducted on-site.

Eligibility for Partnership Grants

The Budget Act allocates 10 percent of the Equal Access Fund for joint projects of court and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants. Under Business and Professions Code section 6213(a), Partnership Grants are restricted to Qualified Legal Services Projects (QLSPs).

The Budget Act identifies four requirements for Partnership Grants:

- (1) Recipients must be eligible for Legal Services Trust Fund Program grants.
- (2) The funds must be used for joint projects of legal services programs and courts.
- (3) The services must be for “indigent persons.”
- (4) The services must be for self-represented litigants.

At the conclusion of each grant year, recipient organizations are required to submit an evaluation report on the use and impact of Partnership Grant funds. In conjunction with the Judicial Council, the LSTFC articulates funding priorities to guide the allocation of available funding among eligible proposals. In prior years, the primary focus of these grants was to “seed” new projects with start-up funding for up to five years. For the 2026 grant year, the primary focus of these grants is to fund new projects and projects that support underserved populations.

Administration and Oversight of Partnership Grants

Applicants are required to complete a project proposal with a requested funding amount. The proposal includes detailed information on how the project plans to serve indigent self-represented litigants, a letter of support from the Partner Court’s Presiding Judge, a written Memorandum of Understanding between the applicant and the Partner Court, staffing information, anticipated service goals, a proposed budget, evaluation plans, and demonstrated efforts for project continuity.

Partnership Grants are awarded through a competitive process. Grant proposals are reviewed by a scoring team comprised of no more than two commissioners and staff. Once scoring is completed, the scoring team confers with the GES committee who are charged with making tentative funding recommendations to the LSTFC for final approval by the Judicial Council. State Bar staff confirms eligibility, and the scoring team utilizes a scoring rubric as a tool to guide review of all eligible proposals and to make funding recommendations. Unlike the EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants, the scoring team is given discretion to make specific funding award recommendations. If selected for funding, applicants must submit a project budget describing how Partnership Grant monies will be used during the grant period.

Because all recipients of the Partnership Grants receive IOLTA and EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants through the State Bar, they are already subject to the oversight processes in place, including monitoring visits to each organization every three years and submitting an evaluation report at specified reporting periods during and at the end of grant year.

DISCUSSION

2025 GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

Pursuant to the Judicial Council’s approval of recommended EAF grants last year, the State Bar is currently administering the 2025 EAF IOLTA-Formula and 2025 Partnership Grants.

2025 EAF–IOLTA Formula Grants

The approved \$31,442,696 for 2025 IOLTA-Formula Grants provides support to a total of 114 QLSPs and support centers. The funds help the most vulnerable Californians when they face critical, life-changing legal issues affecting basic needs, safety, and security. Grantees handle a wide variety of legal issues, including but not limited to elder abuse, domestic violence, family support, housing, and access to health care. Among those served are the working poor, children, people who live in isolated rural areas, veterans, people with limited English proficiency, people suffering abuse, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The lingering effects of the pandemic have only exacerbated the severity of these issues and made funded legal services that much more valuable. A list of the 2025 grant recipients under the Budget Act of 2024 is included as Attachment A3.

2025 Partnership Grants

The approved \$3,805,317 for 2025 Partnership Grants provides support for 29 projects from 20 organizations that enhance the ability of unrepresented litigants to pursue justice in civil courts across California. These projects offer services in a variety of substantive areas, including but not limited to, housing, family, guardianship, estate planning, and small claims. In response to the court closures due to the pandemic, most programs have pivoted from initial plans and are currently providing remote and/or hybrid services to litigants. A list of the 2025 Partnership Grant recipients is included as Attachment A4.

2026 GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

2026 EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants

The 2026 EAF IOLTA-Formula Grant applications were released on April 2, 2025, and due on May 15, 2025. From May through July, State Bar staff and members of the LSTFC will review applications to determine if applicants (1) meet primary purpose; (2) have identified appropriate qualified expenditures; and (3) have adequate quality controls in place, as determined by the State Bar, to ensure proper oversight and service.

The State Bar received 120 applications for funding for grant year 2026. There were 114 renewal applications and 6 new applications for funding. The LSTFC met on August 8, 2025, to vote on eligibility for the 98 qualified legal services projects and 22 support center applicants. The State Bar will then calculate the grant award for each program based on funds available for EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants under the Budget Act of 2025. Staff will notify the organizations of their tentative grant award and request a program budget. Proposed budgets will be reviewed by State Bar staff to ensure grantee compliance with the statute, rules and guidelines, prior to distribution of grant funds. Proposed budgets will be presented to the LSTFC for approval at its November 7, 2025, meeting. Attachment A5 is a copy of the 2026 EAF grant agreement.

The total estimated amount for 2026 EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants is \$31,506,480⁸. Attachment A6 includes a list of 2026 EAF-IOLTA applicant organizations.

⁸ This is the sum of the General Fund allocation of \$31,056,480 and the \$450,000 of filing fees.

2026 Partnership Grants

The 2026 Partnership Grant RFP and application was released on May 6, 2025, and due on June 6, 2025. On May 12, 2025, State Bar staff held optional office hours to answer questions regarding the 2026 RFP requirements, scoring rubric, and application updates.

For the 2026 Partnership Grants application cycle, 43 applications were received from 28 QLSPs requesting a total of \$7,962,388 in funding. The requested funding amounts ranged from \$46,000 to \$402,000. The proposed projects would address 11 substantive areas, with most projects providing services in family/domestic violence, housing, and consumer/finance. In terms of geography, the proposed projects would span 19 counties in California.

Under the new LSTFC committee structure, there is no longer a dedicated committee responsible for scoring applications. That opportunity is now available to the full commission. In April 2025, staff reached out to the LSTFC asking for two commissioners to score applications alongside State Bar staff. The scoring rubric was included in the RFP and the application was updated to align with the rubric categories (Attachment A7).

Several processes were developed to ensure consistent scoring and interpretation of the rubric categories. Commissioners and staff engaged in an initial calibration process to ensure consistency in the application of the scoring rubric. This entailed independently reviewing and scoring fifteen selected proposals for discussion on June 12, 2025. The scoring team discussed outlier scores, reasons for their own scores, and provided general guidance to the scoring team on how to apply the scoring rubric. Following initial calibration, the scoring team reviewed and scored the remaining proposals, applying the calibrated scoring rubric. In order to address any scores that did not reach a consensus on a particular section, the scoring team took the average of each team member's score in order to calculate a final score for all proposals.

The GES committee reviewed all final rubric scores and developed final funding recommendations at its July 25, 2025, meeting. These recommendations were presented and approved at the August 8, 2025, LSTFC meeting. The Council has final responsibility for approving the LSTFC's recommendations for grant awards at its October 2025 meeting. The total estimated amount available for the 2026 Partnership Grant Awards is \$6,182,838⁹. Attachment A8 includes a list of 2026 Partnership Grant applicants, a brief summary of each project, and requested award amounts.

2026 DISTRIBUTION REQUEST TO THE COUNCIL

The State Bar requests an estimated 2025 grant distribution of (1) \$40,487,700 pursuant to the Budget Act of 2025 for EAF–IOLTA Formula Grants, Partnership Grants, and costs of administration; and (2) approval of the grants specified below as follows:¹⁰

⁹ This is the sum of the Budget Act allocation of \$3,971,510 (general fund plus filing fees), plus an additional \$2,211,328 identified from Partnership Grant reserves, unallocated funds from Partnership Grants 2.0, and returned Partnership Grant funds.

¹⁰ The sum actually allocated as grants may vary from this figure by a negligible amount due to rounding.

2026 EAF–IOLTA-Formula Grants – Distribution Request

The State Bar requests that the Judicial Council approve 2026 EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants in the amount \$33,556,480 which includes the General Fund Budget Act allocation of \$31,056,480 and filing fee revenue of \$2,500,000. The remaining \$2,187,110 in filing fees will be retained as EAF reserve funds, used to cover any future disbursements delays or shortfalls in filing fee projections.

2026 Partnership Grants – Distribution Request

The State Bar requests a distribution of \$3,971,510 for 2026 Partnership Grants for calendar year 2026, which includes the General Fund Budget Act allocation of \$3,450,720 and filing fee revenue of \$520,790. These discretionary grants are being awarded exclusively to organizations that are eligible for IOLTA funding, after a careful analysis of grant proposals, based on established criteria. Partnership Grants will, upon approval, be distributed as early in 2026 as practicable to projects that have completed the required documentation.

2026 Administrative Allocation

The 2025 Budget Act allocates 2.5 percent for administrative costs for the IOLTA Formula Grants and 5 percent for administrative costs from the filing fees. The State Bar requests that the Judicial Council approve a distribution of \$772,600 for administrative costs, which is two thirds of the total amount. The remaining \$386,300 is the Judicial Council's share of administrative costs.

NEXT STEPS

The Budget Act provides that “the Judicial Council shall approve awards made by the LSTFC if the Council determines that the awards comply with statutory and other relevant guidelines.” It is now timely and appropriate for the Council to approve:

The estimated 2026 distribution of four equal disbursements for IOLTA-Formula Grants to legal services providers determined by the LSTFC to be in compliance with applicable guidelines. The funds will be paid out to the eligible legal services programs quarterly (or as close to quarterly as possible depending on contract timing), for the 2025–2026 fiscal year.

The LSTFC, working through staff, will be responsible for the administration of these Equal Access Funds. The LSTFC will continue its oversight of the EAF Grant program, including through the onsite triennial monitoring of all recipients and review of programmatic and expenditure reports.

State Bar staff will continue to work closely with Judicial Council staff to require appropriate evaluation of the use of grant funding. State Bar staff continues to encourage legal services providers to use evaluative tools to make critical assessments of their work and its impact on the communities they serve. Additionally, staff will continue to assess outcome reports and analyze the economic benefits from legal services as we strive to communicate the importance of including legal aid in the safety net for low-income Californians.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTION REQUESTED

The State Bar requests that the Judicial Council approve a distribution of \$40,487,700 to the State Bar pursuant to the Budget Act of 2025. This sum includes:

- (1) \$34,507,200 allocated by the General Fund. By the terms of the Budget Act, \$31,056,480 (90 percent) of these funds is allocated to EAF IOLTA-Formula Grants and \$3,450,720 (10 percent) is allocated to Partnership Grants.
- (2) \$3,020,790 of filing fees. The Budget Act allocated \$4,687,110 (90 percent) to filing fees for EAF-IOLTA-Formula Grants. Of that amount, we are requesting to distribute \$2,500,000. The Budget Act also allocated \$520,790 (10 percent) to filing fees for Partnership Grants, and we are requesting distribution of that entire amount. \$3,020,790 represents the total of those requested amounts.
- (3) \$2,187,110 of the remaining EAF-IOLTA Formula filing fees will be retained as EAF reserve funds, used to cover any future disbursements delays or shortfalls in filing fee projections.
- (4) \$772,600 for administrative costs to the State Bar pursuant to the Budget Act.

The above requests exclude returned and residuary funding of previously distributed grant funds. There is approximately \$2,211,328 by the end of 2025 in Partnership Grants funds, which will be distributed during the 2026 grant year. The total EAF reserve as of June 30, 2025, is approximately \$14 million, which will be used for upcoming grantee distributions, while awaiting installment payments from the Judicial Council. Council approval is necessary to enable timely distribution of funds.

ATTACHMENTS LIST

- A1.** 2024–2025 Legal Services Trust Fund Commission Roster
- A2.** Relevant Portions of the 2025 State Budget Act
- A3.** 2025 EAF–IOLTA Formula Equal Access Fund Grant Recipients
- A4.** 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients
- A5.** Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants
- A6.** 2026 EAF IOLTA Applicants
- A7.** 2026 Partnership Grants Request for Proposal
- A8.** Summary of 2026 Partnership Grant Proposals

**2024–2025 LEGAL SERVICES TRUST FUND COMMISSION
OPEN ROSTER**

LEGAL SERVICE TRUST FUND COMMISSION	
Staff Coordinator: Doan Nguyen	
Meeting Dates: February 28, 2025 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. (Los Angeles) May 21, 2025 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (Zoom) August 8, 2025 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (Hybrid) November 7, 2025 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m. (Zoom)	

Erica Connolly, Co-Chair (2026) (State Bar appointment, attorney member) Officer: Sept. 15, 2024- Sept. 15, 2025 Term: Sept. 22-2023, 2022 - Sept. 24-25, 2026
Amin Al-Sarraf, Co-Chair (2027) (State Bar appointee, attorney member) Officer: Sept. 15, 2024 - Sept. 15, 2025 Term: Sept. 2023 – Sept. 2027
Efrain Escobedo, Co-Vice-Chair (2027) (Assembly appointee, public member) Officer: Sept. 15, 2024 - Sept. 15, 2025 Term: March 2, 2023 – March 2, 2027
Patience Milrod, Co-Vice-Chair (2026) (Judicial Council appointee, attorney member) Officer: September 15, 2024-September 15, 2025 Term: January 1, 2023 – September 14, 2026
Jacqueline Alikhaani (2027) (Legal Services Trust Fund Commission appointee, public member) Term: September 22, 2023-September 24, 2027
Kenneth W. Babcock (2028) (Judicial Council appointee) Term: September 14, 2024 – September 14, 2028
Catherine Blakemore (2026) (Senate Rules Committee appointee, public member) Term: August 3, 2022 – August 3, 2026
Venetta Campbell (2026) (Legal Services Trust Fund Commission appointee, public member) Term: September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2026
Jason B. Galkin (Judicial Council appointee, public member) Term: September 14, 2024 – September 14, 2028
Eloina Gonzalez (2026) (Judicial Council appointee, attorney member) Term: September 15, 2023 – September 14, 2026
Toni Hoang (2027) (State Bar appointee, attorney member) Term: January 19, 2024 – September 2027

Angie King (2026) (Legal Services Trust Fund Commission appointee, public member) Term: September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2026
Judge Clifford Klein Ret. (2026) (Senate Rules Committee appointee, attorney member) Term: February 2, 2022 – February 2, 2026
Tammy Mahoney (2028) (Judicial Council appointee, public member) Term: September 14, 2024 – September 14, 2028
Maria Morales (2027) (Speaker of the Assembly appointee, public member) Term: April 17, 2023 – April 17, 2027
Jodi L. Prior (2028) (Judicial Council appointee, attorney member) Term: January 1, 2024 - September 14, 2028
Judge Kristin Rosi (2028) (State Bar appointee, attorney member) Term: September 19-20, 2024 – September 2028
Jonathan Sandville (2027) (State Bar appointee, public member) Term: September 22, 2023 – September 24, 2027
Erin C. Smith (2028) (Judicial Council appointee, attorney member) Term: September 14, 2024 – September 14, 2028
Robert Stalker (2028) (State Bar appointee, attorney member) Term: September 19-20, 2024 – September 2028
Xavier Vargas (2026) (Legal Services Trust Fund Commission appointee, public member) Term: September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2026

ADVISORS
Justice Victor Rodriguez (2027) (Judicial Council appointee, non-voting member) Term: September 15, 2022 – September 14, 2027
Judge Julie Weng-Gutierrez (2028) (Judicial Council appointee, non-voting member) Term: September 14, 2024 – September 14, 2028
Judge Bryant Yang (2025) (Judicial Council appointee, non-voting member) Term: September 15, 2022 – September 14, 2025

Attachment A2. Relevant Portions of the 2025 State Budget Act

2025 BUDGET ACT LANGUAGE RELEVANT TO THE EQUAL ACCESS FUND
Assembly Bill No. 227
CHAPTER 22

An act making appropriations for the support of the government of the State of California and for several public purposes in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of Article IV of the Constitution of the State of California, relating to the state budget, to take effect immediately, budget bill.

Approved by Governor June 27, 2025. Filed with Secretary of State June 27, 2025.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

[...]

0250-101-0001—For local assistance, Judicial Branch..... 150,838,000
Schedule

[...]

(5) 0150083-Equal Access Fund..... 57,177,000

[...]

Provisions:

1. In order to improve equal access and the fair administration of justice, \$35,392,000 of the funds appropriated in Schedule (5) are to be distributed by the Judicial Council through the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission to qualified legal services projects and support centers as defined in Sections 6213 to 6215, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code, to be used for legal services in civil matters for indigent persons. The Judicial Council shall approve awards made by the commission if the council determines that the awards comply with statutory and other relevant guidelines. Up to 10 percent of the funds appropriated for purposes of this provision shall be for joint projects of courts and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants and not less than 90 percent of the funds appropriated for purposes of this provision shall be distributed consistent with Sections 6216 to 6223, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code. Any funding not allocated for joint projects shall be redistributed consistent with Sections 6216 to 6223, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code. The Judicial Council may establish additional reporting or quality control requirements consistent with Sections 6213 to 6223, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code. Of the amount appropriated for purposes of this provision, not more than 2.5 percent shall be available, upon order of the Department of Finance, for administrative costs of the Judicial Council and the State Bar.

[...]

3. The funds described in Provisions 1 and 2 are available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2027.

Attachment A2. Relevant Portions of the 2025 State Budget Act

[...]

0250-101-0932—For local assistance, Judicial Branch, payable from the Trial Court Trust Fund
.....3,428,669,000

[...]

(7) 0150083-Equal Access Fund5,482,000

[...]

Provisions

[...]

4. In order to improve equal access and the fair administration of justice, the funds appropriated in Schedule (7) are available for distribution by the Judicial Council through the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission in support of the Equal Access Fund program to qualified legal services projects and support centers as defined in Sections 6213 to 6215, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code, to be used for legal services in civil matters for indigent persons. The Judicial Council shall approve awards made by the commission if the council determines that the awards comply with statutory and other relevant guidelines. Upon approval by the Administrative Director of the Courts, the Controller shall transfer up to 5 percent of the funding appropriated in Schedule (7) to Item 0250-001-0932 for administrative expenses. Ten percent of the funds remaining after administrative costs shall be for joint projects of courts and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants and 90 percent of the funds remaining after administrative costs shall be distributed, consistent with Sections 6216 to 6223, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code. The Judicial Council may establish additional reporting or quality control requirements, consistent with Sections 6213 to 6223, inclusive, of the Business and Professions Code.
5. Funds available for expenditure in Schedule (7) may be augmented by order of the Director of Finance by the amount of any additional resources deposited for distribution to the Equal Access Fund program in accordance with Sections 68085.3 and 68085.4 of the Government Code. Any augmentation under this provision shall be authorized not sooner than 30 days after notification in writing to the chairpersons of the committees in each house of the Legislature that consider appropriations, the chairpersons of the committees and appropriate subcommittees that consider the State Budget, and the Chairperson of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, or not sooner than whatever lesser time the chairperson of the joint committee, or the chairperson's designee, may determine.

[...]

Attachment A3. 2025 EAF-IOLTA Formula Equal Access Fund Grant Recipients

#	Organization	EAF-IOLTA Amount	Additional EAF grant allocation amount (SBX1-2):	Total EAF-IOLTA Amount
1	Affordable Housing Advocates	\$ 6,425	\$ 25,000	\$ 31,425
2	Aids Legal Referral Panel	\$ 23,211	\$ 25,000	\$ 48,211
3	Al Otro Lado, Inc.	\$ 263,156	\$ 84,530	\$ 347,686
4	Alameda County Homeless Action Center	\$ 154,780	\$ 49,717	\$ 204,497
5	Alliance for Children's Rights	\$ 424,448	\$ -	\$ 424,448
6	Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California	\$ 476,064	\$ 152,919	\$ 628,983
7	Asian Law Caucus	\$ 289,365	\$ 92,948	\$ 382,313
8	Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach	\$ 270,603	\$ 86,922	\$ 357,525
9	Bay Area Legal Aid	\$ 448,679	\$ 144,123	\$ 592,802
10	Bet Tzedek Legal Services	\$ 988,007	\$ 226,590	\$ 1,214,597
11	California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
12	California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice	\$ 129,003	\$ 41,437	\$ 170,440
13	California Indian Legal Services	\$ 166,145	\$ 53,368	\$ 219,513
14	California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
15	California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	\$ 1,848,147	\$ 593,655	\$ 2,441,802
16	California Women's Law Center	\$ 217,921	\$ -	\$ 217,921
17	Capital Pro Bono Inc.	\$ 134,893	\$ 25,000	\$ 159,893
18	Casa Cornelia Law Center	\$ 231,279	\$ 43,910	\$ 275,189
19	Center for Access to QDROs	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
20	Center for Gender and Refugee Studies - California	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
21	Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
22	Center for Immigrant Protection dba The LGBT Asylum Project	\$ 6,898	\$ 25,000	\$ 31,898
23	Center for Workers' Rights	\$ 51,944	\$ 25,000	\$ 76,944
24	Central California Legal Services	\$ 959,386	\$ 308,170	\$ 1,267,556
25	Centro Legal de la Raza	\$ 204,864	\$ 65,805	\$ 270,669
26	Child Care Law Center	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
27	Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
28	Community Lawyers Inc.	\$ 8,464	\$ 25,000	\$ 33,464
29	Community Legal Aid SoCal	\$ 717,577	\$ 230,497	\$ 948,074
30	Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto	\$ 163,681	\$ 28,084	\$ 191,765
31	Contra Costa Senior Legal Services	\$ 49,630	\$ 25,000	\$ 74,630
32	Dependency Advocacy Center	\$ 66,320	\$ -	\$ 66,320
33	Disability Rights California	\$ 2,304,006	\$ 740,084	\$ 3,044,090
34	Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
35	Disability Rights Legal Center	\$ 106,310	\$ 30,819	\$ 137,129
36	East Bay Community Law Center	\$ 134,610	\$ 43,238	\$ 177,848
37	Elder Law & Advocacy	\$ 97,570	\$ 31,341	\$ 128,911
38	Elder Law and Disability Rights Center	\$ 35,015	\$ 25,000	\$ 60,015
39	Elevate Community Center	\$ 10,620	\$ 25,000	\$ 35,620
40	Eviction Defense Collaborative	\$ 99,766	\$ 32,046	\$ 131,812
41	Family Violence Appellate Project	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
42	Family Violence Law Center	\$ 25,167	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,167
43	Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance	\$ 424,570	\$ 136,378	\$ 560,948
44	Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law	\$ 127,246	\$ 29,182	\$ 156,428
45	Housing and Economic Rights Advocates	\$ 159,098	\$ 51,104	\$ 210,202
46	Immigrant Defenders Law Center	\$ 1,098,738	\$ 352,932	\$ 1,451,670
47	Immigrant Legal Defense	\$ 483,239	\$ 155,224	\$ 638,463
48	Immigrant Legal Resource Center	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
49	Impact Fund	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045
50	Inland Counties Legal Services	\$ 1,650,604	\$ 530,201	\$ 2,180,805
51	Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association, Inc.	\$ 25,240	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,240
52	Inner City Law Center	\$ 670,746	\$ 215,454	\$ 886,200
53	Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco	\$ 88,089	\$ 25,000	\$ 113,089
54	Justice in Aging	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045

#	Organization	EAF-IOLTA Amount	Additional EAF grant allocation amount (SBX1-2):		Total EAF-IOLTA Amount
55	La Raza Centro Legal	\$ 22,917	\$ 25,000	\$ 47,917	
56	LACBA Counsel for Justice	\$ 95,032	\$ 25,000	\$ 120,032	
57	Law Foundation of Silicon Valley	\$ 237,960	\$ 76,436	\$ 314,396	
58	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	\$ 236,405	\$ 29,375	\$ 265,780	
59	Learning Rights Law Center	\$ 106,810	\$ 34,309	\$ 141,119	
60	Legal Access Alameda	\$ 55,412	\$ 25,000	\$ 80,412	
61	Legal Aid at Work	\$ 315,457	\$ 101,330	\$ 416,787	
62	Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	\$ 1,214,667	\$ 390,171	\$ 1,604,838	
63	Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	\$ 131,890	\$ 42,365	\$ 174,255	
64	Legal Aid of Marin	\$ 52,375	\$ 25,000	\$ 77,375	
65	Legal Aid of Sonoma County	\$ 155,908	\$ 50,080	\$ 205,988	
66	Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	\$ 517,710	\$ 92,268	\$ 609,978	
67	Legal Aid Society of San Diego	\$ 849,503	\$ 272,874	\$ 1,122,377	
68	Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County	\$ 105,103	\$ 33,760	\$ 138,863	
69	Legal Assistance for Seniors	\$ 31,062	\$ 25,000	\$ 56,062	
70	Legal Assistance to the Elderly	\$ 39,792	\$ 25,000	\$ 64,792	
71	Legal Link	\$ 4,245	\$ 25,000	\$ 29,245	
72	Legal Services for Children	\$ 31,995	\$ 25,000	\$ 56,995	
73	Legal Services for Prisoners with Children	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
74	Legal Services for Seniors	\$ 58,130	\$ 25,000	\$ 83,130	
75	Legal Services of Northern California	\$ 1,163,136	\$ 373,618	\$ 1,536,754	
76	Loyola Marymount University	\$ 197,647	\$ 63,487	\$ 261,134	
77	McGeorge Community Legal Services	\$ 91,410	\$ -	\$ 91,410	
78	Mental Health Advocacy Services	\$ 105,297	\$ 33,823	\$ 139,120	
79	National Center for Youth Law	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
80	National Health Law Program	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
81	National Housing Law Project	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
82	Neighborhood Legal Services	\$ 1,019,851	\$ 327,593	\$ 1,347,444	
83	Oasis Legal Services	\$ 57,888	\$ 25,000	\$ 82,888	
84	OneJustice	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
85	Open Door Legal	\$ 48,839	\$ 25,000	\$ 73,839	
86	Prison Law Office	\$ 316,537	\$ -	\$ 316,537	
87	Public Advocates Inc.	\$ 285,209	\$ 91,613	\$ 376,822	
88	Public Counsel	\$ 1,014,358	\$ 232,631	\$ 1,246,989	
89	Public Interest Law Project	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
90	Public Law Center	\$ 537,283	\$ 119,682	\$ 656,965	
91	Riverside Legal Aid	\$ 108,235	\$ 34,766	\$ 143,001	
92	San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program	\$ 243,539	\$ 46,237	\$ 289,776	
93	San Joaquin College of Law	\$ 36,550	\$ 25,000	\$ 61,550	
94	San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation	\$ 68,240	\$ 25,000	\$ 93,240	
95	Santa Barbara County Immigrant Legal Defense Center	\$ 71,394	\$ 25,000	\$ 96,394	
96	Santa Clara County Asian Law Alliance	\$ 60,310	\$ 25,000	\$ 85,310	
97	Santa Clara University Alexander Law Center	\$ 23,160	\$ 25,000	\$ 48,160	
98	Senior Adults Legal Assistance	\$ 17,960	\$ 25,000	\$ 42,960	
99	Senior Advocacy Network	\$ 107,820	\$ 34,633	\$ 142,453	
100	Senior Citizens Legal Services	\$ 64,901	\$ 25,000	\$ 89,901	
101	Social Justice Collaborative	\$ 41,331	\$ 25,000	\$ 66,331	
102	Southern California Immigration Project	\$ 23,831	\$ 25,000	\$ 48,831	
103	Step Forward Foundation	\$ 52,821	\$ 25,000	\$ 77,821	
104	Survivor Justice Center	\$ 148,776	\$ 47,789	\$ 196,565	
105	UC Davis School of Law Legal Clinics	\$ 175,302	\$ 56,309	\$ 231,611	
106	UnCommon Law	\$ 244,445	\$ 78,519	\$ 322,964	
107	USD School of Law Legal Clinics	\$ 136,900	\$ 43,974	\$ 180,874	
108	Ventura County Legal Aid, Inc.	\$ 21,292	\$ 25,000	\$ 46,292	
109	Veterans Legal Institute	\$ 184,588	\$ 27,475	\$ 212,063	

#	Organization	EAF-IOLTA Amount	Additional EAF grant allocation amount (SBX1-2):		Total EAF-IOLTA Amount
110	Wage Justice Center	\$ 37,803	\$ 25,000	\$ 62,803	
111	Watsonville Law Center	\$ 47,870	\$ 25,000	\$ 72,870	
112	Western Center on Law and Poverty	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
113	Worksafe, Inc.	\$ 217,921	\$ -	\$ 217,921	
114	Youth Law Center	\$ 217,921	\$ 73,124	\$ 291,045	
		Total	\$ 31,434,761	\$ 9,648,275	\$ 41,083,036

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

As recommended by the Partnership Grant Committee on July 16, 2024 and approved by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 9, 2024

Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Access to Supported Decision Making	Los Angeles,	<p>Bet Tzedek proposes an Access to Supported Decision Making (ASDM) project to provide education and resources to potential conservatorship petitioners and potential conservatees about less restrictive decision-making options, such as Supported Decision Making (SDM). The project will align with the intentions of the newly passed AB 1663 to ensure litigants only enter into a conservatorship as a last resort. The bill establishes SDM as a legal tool in California and requires conservatorship petitioners to explore alternative options prior to filing. Through this project, Bet Tzedek will educate litigants on alternative decision-making tools; create pathways to self-help instruments such as SDM, Advanced Directives, and Education Authorization; and use technology to increase accessibility and usability of these tools for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). A 2025 grant would allow us to provide workshops and develop an enhanced technological platform that offers I/DD adults and their supporters highly interactive, accessible, step-by-step guidance on SDM and other alternative decision-making tools. The court will partner on evaluation, referrals, and outreach.</p> <p>The goal of this initiative is to ensure litigants have meaningful access to less restrictive, alternative decision-making tools in order to reduce the number of people who lose their rights under conservatorships.</p> <p>The ASDM initiative will be staffed by Self Help Conservatorship Clinic staff and a new Program Coordinator. The online platform with decision-making tools and workshop schedule will be available 24/7 for individuals to sign up. If in-person services are scheduled in a courthouse, we will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled.</p>	\$ 140,000	\$ 126,037
Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Decedent Estate Clinic	Los Angeles,	<p>Probate is a time-consuming and expensive process, but one that lends itself to a self-help model. In 2022, with State Bar Partnership funding, Bet Tzedek and the Los Angeles Superior Court established the County's only court-based clinic that provides free self-help services to litigants in decedent estate matters. The project, which is staffed by Decedent Estate Clinic staff, operates remotely from Stanley Mosk Courthouse (hours of operation determined in collaboration with court staff), with services available countywide. If in-person services are scheduled in a courthouse, we will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled.</p> <p>In 2025, to expand the project in line with community need, Bet Tzedek will leverage technology to enhance litigants' ability to efficiently navigate the probate process. In collaboration with the court, we will identify common issues faced by litigants that lead to probate notes or multiple continuances. Our team will then create smart forms that generate pleadings ready to file, increasing overall efficiency and accessibility. Additionally, clinic staff and volunteers will continue to triage decedent's estate cases for litigants and provide legal information, self-help assistance, and/or referrals; help litigants determine if they need a full probate, summary probate procedure, or probate alternative; and provide self-help assistance with out-of-court procedures for small estates and summary court procedures for transferring property. Litigants who need to probate a decedent's estate will be referred to the private bar. The clinic will continue to work with the court to assess community need for other probate-related procedures and develop practicable self-help services.</p>	\$ 200,000	\$ 180,037
Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Pro Se Technology Initiative	Los Angeles,	<p>Bet Tzedek is committed to building technology bridges for litigants in need. In 2022, with State Bar Partnership funding, Bet Tzedek and the Los Angeles Superior Court developed the Remote Pro Se Technology Initiative, which refined and expanded the reach of our virtual Self-Help Conservatorship Clinic (SHCC) and Elder Abuse Restraining Clinic (EAROC) services through technological innovations. The remote pro se assistance model has significantly increased access for the community, and in 2025 Bet Tzedek is committed to continuing this successful model and expanding the project's reach and capacity.</p> <p>Incorporating lessons learned through project evaluation, in 2025 Bet Tzedek will expand project services by serving as technology navigators both remotely and at supplemental in-person workshops, helping litigants access court-based e-services, including Guide & File, remote hearings, and other services as needed. Components of the project will include remote SHCC and EAROC services, online video tutorials/modules, improvement of new technologies that support remote assistance, outreach to publicize remote services, in-person workshops to help litigants with Guide & File, and remote EARO Kiosk intake. Staff will continue to utilize evaluation results to identify pain points, improve piloted technologies, and maximize accessibility and efficiency. This initiative will increase access to justice and provide a model for effective remote services throughout California.</p> <p>The project will be staffed by SHCC and EAROC staff. The remote SHCC will operate Monday-Friday from 10:00am-3:00pm. Remote EAROC assistance is available Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 10:00am-3:00pm. If in-person services are scheduled in a courthouse, we will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled.</p>	\$ 175,000	\$ 157,537

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

As recommended by the Partnership Grant Committee on July 16, 2024 and approved by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 9, 2024

Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	2025 San Joaquin County Housing Court Clinic Partnership	San Joaquin,	<p>California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) will provide one-on-one legal advice and/or information to San Joaquin County tenants with housing concerns, focusing on housing retention and prevention of homelessness. This project meets San Joaquin County tenants' high demand for legal assistance to address housing issues. Before this project's launch, the Court Self-Help Center was overwhelmed with requests from tenants and had limited capacity to address other legal issues faced by self-represented litigants.</p> <p>Legal advocates will provide tenants with individual phone consultations as well as providing in-person services at the CRLA Stockton office. CRLA will offer weekly answer and trial preparation clinics as needed, if demand exceeds the capacity to provide individual services. Clinics will be available to all San Joaquin County tenants and landlords.</p> <p>San Joaquin County tenants not eligible for CRLA services are given legal information, know your rights (KYR) print and video resources available in multiple languages, referrals, and access to weekly clinics. Landlords are offered information, KYR resources, access to our clinics, and referrals back to the Court Self-Help Center and the San Joaquin Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service for additional assistance. Additionally, tenants who do not meet CRLA residency requirements, as well as all landlords, are now eligible for warm referral to El Concilio through other CRLA grant partnerships. El Concilio will provide counsel and advice as well as document preparation assistance to eligible landlords and tenants. CRLA's helpline will be open Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Answer clinics will be held once a week on-site at the courthouse.</p>	\$ 162,500	\$ 115,413
Central California Legal Services	Tenant/Landlord Housing Law Project	Fresno,	<p>In partnership with the Fresno County Superior Court, CCLS's Project previously and successfully provided legal information and self-help assistance to unrepresented litigants in Unlawful Detainer (UD) matters.</p> <p>Litigants are screened for eligibility before receiving assistance. Self-represented litigants—tenants and landlords—obtain assistance with completing required Judicial Council forms; legal information about tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities, the UD process, and preparing for trial; and referrals to social service providers.</p> <p>The project will conduct four weekly sessions on Tuesday and Thursday, mornings and afternoons, at the Sisk Courthouse. The Thursday afternoon session focuses on trial preparation and is open to all parties scheduled for trial. Information packets on rights and responsibilities are updated for distribution at the clinic, online, and with community partners. When litigants are educated about the eviction process, the required "pro per" legal paperwork is more accurate, and litigants are in a better position to self-advocate during settlement and at trial.</p> <p>The project expands access to the courts, providing self-represented litigants with information giving them a better understanding of the UD process, requirements, short timeframes, and available resources. The project has supported the Court's neutral role, providing all parties access to legal information and assistance. During the pandemic, the sessions were suspended, and forms were made available on the Court's website.</p>	\$ 265,000	\$ 188,188
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto	Preventing Homelessness: Mandatory Settlement Conference Clinic	San Mateo,	<p>More tenants are being evicted in San Mateo County than in pre-pandemic years. San Mateo County Superior Court and CLSEPA will meet this crisis with a sustainable and wide-reaching project that will prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. This partnership will operate a weekly Unlawful Detainer MSC Clinic, lasting approximately 4 hours, to settle eviction cases before they go to trial. Indigent, pro per litigants, both tenants and landlords, need more accessible legal help in order to navigate the eviction process. We will reach out directly before MSC, provide advice and sample templates for settlement purposes via video and text, and provide direct access to an attorney during MSC. The Court will provide indigent, pro per landlords access to an attorney. While this partnership has lasted over 8 years, with increased remote access and better use of technology, both the Court and CLSEPA have the experience, familiarity, and know-how to ensure this partnership will be responsive to the current eviction crisis in our community.</p> <p>Our MSC model offers advice, limited scope services, and will also leverage pro bono attorneys to maximize the capacity to meet the demand. Operationally, our goal is to decrease staff workload and Court trials, while providing high-quality legal services.</p> <p>Beyond MSC, CLSEPA will leverage free SMS texting and our social worker to connect families to resources like housing counselors and food banks. Our innovative legal/social work collaboration will help families move from crisis to safe landings.</p>	\$ 249,700	\$ 224,767

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

As recommended by the Partnership Grant Committee on July 16, 2024 and approved by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 9, 2024

Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Elder Law & Advocacy	Imperial County Restraining Order and Unlawful Detainer Clinic	Imperial,	The Imperial County Restraining Order and Unlawful Detainer Clinic is intended to serve older adult self-represented litigants, including those who are limited or non-English speakers, and offer services at the central Imperial County Superior Court. The goal for each participant is that they will be able to gain legal information regarding Restraining Orders or Unlawful Detainers, depending on what is appropriate for their situation, and successfully complete the necessary paperwork to submit a request and/or answer. The project will be an expansion of the 2023 and 2024 Partnership Clinic which created two Restraining Order kiosks located within the Imperial County Courthouse. Along with staff, the kiosks will guide eligible participants through the process of a restraining order in a step-by-step manner in order to facilitate accurate completion of the required forms. Elder Law & Advocacy (EL&A) will work to serve residents of this geographically large, diverse, and underserved county. Meetings between EL&A and the Court will consist of in-depth discussions of matters concerning ongoing clinic operations and will result in changes where indicated.	\$ 83,800	\$ 59,536
Family Violence Law Center	Domestic Violence Pro Per (DVPP) Project	Alameda,	The DVPP Project is a well-established program delivered by Family Violence Law Center (FVLC) in partnership with Legal Access Alameda (LAA) and the Alameda County Superior Court's Self-Help Center (the SHC). The Project improves equal access to legal services and supports the fair administration of justice by providing legal assistance to indigent pro per litigants in Alameda County, with an emphasis on South Alameda County. Partners serve self-represented Petitioners and Respondents, providing information on legal options/court procedures as well as document preparation/review in Domestic Violence Prevention Act (DVPA) restraining orders, family and housing law. Partners will meet the needs of self-represented litigants, including those who are low income and/or limited English proficient, by implementing the following: (1) FVLC will provide Petitioner clinic services including legal information and document preparation for DVPA petitioners, staffed by the DVPP Project attorney, FVLC pro bono attorneys/law clerks and/or LAA pro bono attorneys; (2) If fully funded, FVLC's dedicated DVPP Project staff will provide follow-up, ongoing legal and procedural information and document preparation at all stages of litigation; (3) The SHC will provide legal information and document preparation to DVPA respondents and petitioners, and LAA will provide assistance to respondents and petitioners through LAA clinics; and (4) FVLC will accept warm referrals from SHC, LAA and clinics for leveraged legal representation in court as resources allow. As a result of Partnership services, Alameda County litigants will be better-equipped and prepared to pursue available court remedies in DVPA restraining orders, family law and housing matters.	\$ 120,000	\$ 85,237
Inland Counties Legal Services	Consumer Rights Clinic EXPANDED	Riverside, San Bernardino,	Currently, the CRC is a successful and growing partnership between ICLS, the San Bernardino Superior Court, and the Riverside Superior Courts providing legal assistance to unrepresented indigent consumers with debt collection lawsuits. This application will support the already existing four clinics throughout both counties, and further expand the project to an additional courthouse, and incorporate direct referrals gained through ICLS' interview research results investigating why debtors fail to participate in the litigation process. One-Sided Litigation: Lessons from Civil Docket Data in California Debt Collection Lawsuits Debt Collection Lab. The project will fund an attorney, a paralegal, and a legal assistant, and builds upon a document automation application created for the project that allows consumers to respond, propound discovery, and attempt settlement with opposing counsel. All documents produced are reviewed by an attorney. The San Bernardino Superior Court (at the Justice Center, Central District) and the Riverside Superior Court (at the Riverside Self Help Centers) will continue to provide space for ICLS to operate and make referrals to the Clinic. Staff will serve pro se defendants in the courthouses or virtually on a regular schedule preparing responsive pleadings and settlement offers. Staff will also attempt to settle/dismiss cases as soon as possible. ICLS will not represent the client on the record or appear in court on the client's behalf. Through counsel and advice and document preparation, ICLS will continue to increase access to justice for clients and alleviate the demand on the court's time by resolving cases expeditiously.	\$ 274,600	\$ 195,003

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

As recommended by the Partnership Grant Committee on July 16, 2024 and approved by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 9, 2024

Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco	Family Law Self-Help (FLASH) Project	San Francisco,	<p>The Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco (JDC) requests continued Partnership Grant support to operate the Family Law Assisted Self Help (FLASH) project, which provides legal assistance to indigent Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) seeking marriage dissolutions at the San Francisco Superior Court (Court), via its ACCESS Self-Help Center. FLASH provides culturally sensitive and trauma-informed services in Spanish and English to DV survivors and other indigent SRLs who would otherwise be barred from access to justice.</p> <p>Services consist of direct legal assistance to SRLs who are referred by the ACCESS Center. ACCESS staff screen SRLs for income eligibility and prioritize cases where the SRL would benefit most from receiving FLASH services. The FLASH Attorney meets one-on-one with SRLs referred by the ACCESS Center at each stage of their cases until a judgment of dissolution is obtained. The FLASH Attorney provides information and guidance and drafts all necessary pleadings for SRLs who would not be able to complete their divorce paperwork without the assistance of FLASH.</p> <p>FLASH also provides day-of-court assistance to SRLs on the Family Centered Case Resolution (FCCR) Calendar, where the court calls cases that have failed to conclude within 18 months of the initial filing. Indigent SRLs who appear on this calendar have filed for divorce but have been unable to obtain a judgment. The FLASH Attorney works with income-qualified litigants on the day of this calendar and schedules individual appointments with these SRLs to complete their matters.</p> <p>As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, JDC has developed innovative methods to communicate and interact with SRLs. Our intake form has been converted to an electronic fillable document so the ACCESS Center can complete the initial set of pleadings for each SRL. Additionally, we have added text communication capability as most of the FLASH Attorney's low-income clients are unable to use video-conferencing. These practices continue, even as in-person services have resumed, since some clients prefer to meet remotely for their own convenience. For those SRLs who prefer in-person meetings, FLASH maintains a regular presence at the court within the ACCESS Center's offices.</p> <p>In March 2020, the Court ended Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) Workshops and, indeed, all workshops and clinics. The Court now refers litigants directly to JDC when income-qualified SRLs need help with MSCs and MSC Statements. The FLASH Attorney works individually with each qualified SRL to complete the extensive MSC Statement and to prepare to present their case at the MSC.</p>	\$ 70,000	\$ 63,037
LACBA Counsel for Justice	Eviction Legal Services Project	Los Angeles,	<p>The Eviction Legal Services Project (ELSP) is a new project that will assist self-represented defendants in UD cases. In LA County, 90% of tenants are self-represented due to insufficient income and a county-wide defense attorney deficit. The Court's Self-Help Centers (SHC) don't have capacity to address the volume of tenants needing assistance. The Project will provide legal information, referrals, and assistance with completing court forms. Volunteer attorneys and law students recruited, trained, and supervised by ELSP will remotely assist litigants located in and referred by staff at the SHC. SHC staff will send litigant paperwork to ELSP and connect litigants to a virtual conference where ELSP volunteers will provide services. After review by a project attorney, ELSP will submit the forms to Court staff to work with the litigant for signature and preparation for service, and filing, where available. ELSP will be a remotely-provided service for litigants in the SHC during SHC hours. ELSP will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled on all days the SHC is open. ELSP will be staffed by an attorney, paralegal, and project coordinator. ELSP has been developed in collaboration with the Court and piloted for a 4-month period beginning March 2024. Throughout the project, the Court will be involved daily in making referrals, communicating with Project staff, and addressing issues as they arise. The goal of ELSP is to enable litigants to make informed choices about their legal problems and properly present their issues to the court, fostering an efficient and fair judicial process.</p>	\$ 195,200	\$ 138,630
LACBA Counsel for Justice	Domestic Violence Legal Services Project	Los Angeles,	<p>The LACBA Counsel for Justice Domestic Violence Legal Services Project (DVP or Project) assists self-represented litigants in restraining order cases. DVP provides legal information, referrals, and individual services with court forms such as requests, responses, child custody mediation, and renewals. The main goal of the Project is to bridge the access to justice gap for restraining order litigants in these complex cases by providing information and forms preparation; thereby enabling litigants to make informed choices about their legal problems and properly present their issues to the court. DVP recruits and trains volunteer lawyers and law students who work one-on-one with litigants to prepare the court forms with review by the Project Attorney. DVP also assists litigants who prepare their own petitions before filing with form review and by printing evidence they wish to submit with their filing. DVP is located on the second floor of the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, along with the Restraining Order Center and Family Court Services. DVP is open Mondays-Thursdays 8:00-12:00 and 1:00-3:30, Fridays 8:00-12:00. DVP will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled on days the Court is open. The Project is staffed by a Project Attorney and a Paralegal who work with litigants and assist and supervise volunteers. DVP's Directing Attorney is responsible for overall supervision and direction of the Project. The Project Coordinator assists with pro bono volunteer scheduling and data gathering. As it has for over 30 years, DVP works closely and continuously with the Court on issues including cross-referrals, program development, and evaluation.</p>	\$ 152,300	\$ 108,170

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

As recommended by the Partnership Grant Committee on July 16, 2024 and approved by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 9, 2024

Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Legal Access Alameda	Family Law Day of Court	Alameda,	<p>Legal Access Alameda's Family Law Day of Court Clinic (FLDOC) is an in-court clinic where staff and volunteers take referrals directly from the bench on the Family Law Pro Per Request for Order (RFO) calendars. In Alameda County, self-represented litigants (SRLs) RFOs are generally assigned a specific day on each Family Law Department's calendar. Each clinic is staffed by a supervisor, either the FLDOC Attorney or a Self-Help staff person, and one to three volunteers. Volunteers and clinic staff work closely with judicial officers and courtroom personnel. The clinic seeks to assist all SRLs whose cases are set on the RFO calendar and who appear for their hearing. The hearings are short-cause hearings that are generally for child custody, child visitation, and support.</p> <p>FLDOC provides assistance to the six non-DCSS family law departments on their pro per RFO calendars. These calendars occur in the morning six times per week. The FLDOC Attorney is onsite and the FLDOC clinic provides both in-person and remote services as necessary.</p> <p>The primary goal of the clinic is to provide SRLs with signed, clear, and enforceable orders as soon as possible after their hearing. Clinic staff and volunteers draft the orders immediately after the hearing and submit proposed orders for the judge's signature and filing by the courtroom clerk. FLDOC also assist SRLs by clarifying the newly issued orders, explaining legal terms and court procedures, completing necessary paperwork, providing referrals to other legal service organizations, and running child and temporary spousal support calculations.</p>	\$ 25,000	\$ 17,787
Legal Access Alameda	Family Law Status Conference Clinic	Alameda,	<p>The Family Law Status Conference Clinic ("FLSC Clinic") offers assistance to litigants appearing on special Self-Represented Litigant Family Law Status Conference calendars in a family law department. This program brings a Legal Access staff attorney (the FLSC Attorney) on-site to provide expanded services to litigants and oversight of volunteer attorneys.</p> <p>The FLSC clinic assists with Dissolution, Legal Separation, Nullity, and Parentage cases. Clinic staff (the FLSC attorney and Self-Help staff) and volunteer attorneys help low-income litigants understand case procedure and complete or correct necessary forms, with the ultimate goal of assisting litigants in moving their cases to a final resolution, either by completing a judgment or referring the case for trial setting. This helps the court with the status conference compliance requirement under CRC Rule 5.83(c)(2) and facilitates more efficient support to litigants with on-the-spot assistance and by identifying issues early in the process.</p> <p>Starting in mid-2020, the FLSC department began holding all hearings via Zoom video conference and consolidated all FLSC clinic cases to Tuesdays. While providing services remotely, clinic staff send litigants required forms electronically or by mail. The FLSC Attorney follows up with litigants after each clinic with materials, written instructions, and the forms completed during the clinic. When not clinic, the FLSC Attorney also reviews proposed judgments for completeness and assists litigants with submitting their forms for filing. Finally, the FLSC Attorney identifies cases in other family law departments that would benefit from clinic assistance and works with bench officers to facilitate referrals to the clinic.</p>	\$ 65,000	\$ 46,187
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Remote Self Help Center Access Project	Los Angeles,	<p>In rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles nimbly partnered with the Los Angeles County Superior Court in 2020 to develop the first live self-help hotline to deliver remote services to self-represented litigants throughout Los Angeles County. To date, LAFLA has remotely served over 30,000 pro per litigants and remains the only Los Angeles Superior Court partner with a live telephone hotline that provides immediate remote assistance to low-income litigants facing legal crises with their housing stability, personal safety, and family-related matters. This project seeks continuing funding for one full-time-equivalent attorney (1) to sustain our unique live self-help telephone hotline for self-represented litigants, (2) in collaboration with the Court, to enhance our remote supervision of the Court's JusticeCorps members who staff our joint remote Unlawful Detainer Answer Clinic, and (3) to expand our dynamic web-based and mobile-friendly interactive workshops to include emergent unmet litigant needs that are ripe for remote assistance, such as name change and civil harassment restraining order matters. As LAFLA entrenches its reputation as a regional leader in the development and implementation of hybrid self-help technologies, the project attorney will also collaborate with Court and legal service partners to cross-train and document best practices in remote self-help service delivery. LAFLA recognizes that self-help services scheduled in courthouses are considered essential. We will strive to maintain coverage as scheduled, in accordance and as long as we are in compliance with LAFLA's collective bargaining agreement.</p>	\$ 124,600	\$ 88,503

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Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Torrance Self Help Center Access Project	Los Angeles,	For 20 years, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) has closely partnered with Los Angeles Superior Court to deliver high-quality, courthouse-based assistance to self-represented litigants. This application seeks continuing funding to supplement staffing at the Torrance Courthouse Self-Help Center. LAFLA received initial funding to augment this partnership in 2020, and for the past four years, has closely collaborated with the Court to nimbly provide self-represented litigants with critical family law, restraining order, and housing services. In light of the ongoing pandemic, our responsive approach has included virtual assistance to ensure that services continued, and hands-on, on-site assistance once in-person services resumed. In FY2025, LAFLA seeks to fully re-invest in on-site services, some of which have remained unavailable due to ongoing COVID-related impacts, and to expand our hybrid services to best assist low-income litigants within the Los Angeles' South Bay region. Specifically, the project requests funding for one FTE attorney to (1) rebuild and resume onsite litigant workshops in cooperation with the Court, its JusticeCorps members, and the County Law Library, (2) expand the Center's family law services to better align with Torrance judicial officer referrals, and (3) collaborate with the Court, LAFLA, and regional legal service providers' self-help staff to enhance our emergent hybrid family law and domestic violence restraining order workshops. LAFLA recognizes that self-help services scheduled in courthouses are considered essential, so we will strive to maintain coverage as scheduled, in accordance and as long as we are in compliance with LAFLA's collective bargaining agreement.	\$ 152,200	\$ 108,099
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	Legal Resource Center Partnership	Santa Barbara,	LAFSBC proposes to continue Partnership funding for a self-help attorney for the civil Legal Resource Centers (LRC) and a part-time assistant. Until the hiring of a 3rd LRC attorney with Partnership funds in 2020, the staffing level of the Legal Resource Centers had not increased for at least 16 years. Santa Barbara County and the central coast continues to be underserved for civil legal needs for indigent people. Santa Barbara County has no ABA law schools, no international law firms, nor any local volunteer attorney services organization. In calendar year 2023, the LRCs countywide served a record-breaking number of over 8,000 self-represented litigants in civil matters. The LRC partnership attorney, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, will work 1 day per week in person at the Lompoc courthouse. For this year, we also plan to add 1 day per week in-person in Santa Barbara due to increasing demand for in-person services. On the remaining days, the bilingual LRC Partnership attorney will assist SRLs countywide by phone, email, or videoconference, with a focus on mid and south county residents. The LRC assistant will provide in-person bilingual Spanish language support to the LRC at the Santa Barbara courthouse. The other two attorneys, funded separately, will cover in-person services in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria. We believe that by providing a combination of remote and in-person services, we will best meet the needs of residents across the 75 mile length of our county.	\$ 234,000	\$ 166,177
Legal Aid of Marin	UDMSC Partnership with Marin Superior Court	Marin,	The Marin Unlawful Detainer Mandatory Settlement Conference Program is a partnership between Marin Superior Court and Legal Aid of Marin (LAM) to provide critical pre-trial settlement negotiation services to pro per litigants involved in eviction cases. Supporting both tenants and landlords, the Program's target constituency is low-income or otherwise marginalized pro per litigants who live in Marin County and are unable to pay legal representation but are facing life-defining eviction proceedings. Without help negotiating settlement, pro per litigants run the risk of being forced to represent themselves at eviction trials, where the stakes are high and often result in litigants facing housing instability, displacement, homelessness, or substantial financial hardship. Unlawful detainer mandatory settlement conferences (UDMSCs) are required by the local rules of Marin Superior Court in all eviction cases, and LAM staffs these conferences with attorneys who help resolve eviction cases pretrial. UDMSCs are held via Zoom every Thursday starting at 1:30pm. In-house housing staff attorneys and pro bono attorneys support pro per litigants at UDMSCs. A Marin Superior Court judge presides over every UDMSC docket, aids in settlement negotiations, and approves proposed settlement agreements when reached by the parties. The main goals of the UDMSC program are to increase access to justice for pro per litigants, reduce housing instability, displacement, and the likelihood of homelessness faced by low-income and underserved tenants, ensure fairness to both landlords and tenants involved in eviction cases, encourage landlords and tenants to settle their disputes creatively and on their own terms, support judicial economy, and engage the private bar in volunteer activities that substantially increase access to legal assistance for Marin residents.	\$ 120,300	\$ 85,451
Legal Aid of Marin	Marin Community Court Partnership	Marin,	Found nowhere else in California and a model for innovative partnership between the Judiciary and legal services, Marin Community Court (MCC) is a poverty alleviation program where non-criminal traffic, parking, and lifestyle infractions are diverted to a specialized docket offering participants the opportunity for waiver of fines and fees. Marin Superior Court and Legal Aid of Marin partner to help hundreds of the most marginalized Marin residents annually obtain relief from overwhelming fines and fees in exchange for participants completing restorative community service in Marin. MCC addresses non-criminal traffic, parking, and lifestyle infractions typically imposed on individuals who are experiencing poverty and economic instability. The target constituency includes low-income individuals, many of whom are experiencing housing instability or homelessness. Legal Aid of Marin (LAM) offers services from intake to case closure, guiding participants through the process of appearing before the Court, completing required community service hours, and finalizing the waiver of fines and fees once the Court's requirements are met. LAM also pairs participants with pro bono attorneys who advocate for them during MCC hearings before Marin Superior Court. LAM provides interpretation services to participants. Every MCC docket takes place on the second Tuesday of each month from 2pm-5pm via Zoom. Project staffing includes LAM's Administrative Advocate, LAM's Managing Attorney, LAM's Programs Officer, and several Marin Superior Court clerks. Marin Superior Court Judge Sheila Lichtblau presides over MCC. MCC's main goals are to alleviate poverty and eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency for extremely marginalized Marin community members.	\$ 157,300	\$ 141,607

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

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Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	Caregivers and Small Estates Accessing Justice (CSEAJ)	San Bernardino,	<p>The Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino collaborates with local courts to enhance the legal experience for Pro Se litigants handling Small Estates, Conservatorship, and Guardianship cases. Our initiatives focus on document preparation and providing case-specific guidance to reduce court backlogs and ease interactions within the legal system. This collaboration aims to minimize courthouse visits and alleviate the stress often associated with legal proceedings, thus enhancing system accessibility and efficiency.</p> <p>Our skilled team dedicates efforts to explain legal concepts, prepare and correct pleadings, and assist clients through pre- and post-hearing procedures to ensure smooth and prompt case management. We strive to make legal processes more comprehensible and manageable for all parties involved.</p> <p>The demand for our services has grown significantly, particularly among vulnerable families seeking to care for minors or aging adults. We have expanded our offerings to include the Fontana and Victorville Superior Courts. These services are available in both English and Spanish and include virtual and telephonic support, extending our reach, especially in rural areas where legal resources are limited.</p> <p>By streamlining case processing, providing procedural guidance, and enhancing service accessibility, our initiative not only expedites case resolution but also ensures vital care and support for disabled adults and minors. Our efforts represent a significant advancement towards a more navigable and responsive legal system, offering substantial relief to those in challenging circumstances.</p>	\$ 203,000	\$ 182,737
Legal Aid Society of San Diego	East County Restraining Order Clinic	San Diego,	<p>In partnership with the San Diego Superior Court, Legal Aid Society of San Diego's (LASSD) Pro Bono Program seeks to continue offering a full-time Domestic Violence/Civil Harassment/Elder Abuse Restraining Order Clinic at the East County branch of the San Diego Superior Court. The Court has expressed a need for daily full-time services to be offered to East County residents who are seeking protection from violence, stalking, sexual assault, elder/dependent adult abuse, and severe harassment. The project will operate daily in the East County Regional Center branch court from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, providing assistance with court forms, explanation of the law, options and alternatives, and referrals.</p> <p>The project will be staffed with one staff attorney, one advocate, and volunteer attorneys and students. Ongoing communication with court personnel will create a collaborative program that benefits both the court and self-represented litigants in having appropriate paperwork processed efficiently.</p> <p>The main goals of the project are to help self-represented litigants access and fully participate in the legal system, and educate litigants so they can make more informed choices that result in effective and efficient filings for the litigant and the Court. Helping litigants complete necessary paperwork ensures that the Court is given the information necessary to render a decision on a temporary restraining order that day. By providing these services, the project assists pro per petitioners protect themselves from dangerous situations, and pro per respondents protect themselves from frivolous litigation.</p>	\$ 190,000	\$ 134,937
Legal Aid Society of San Diego	South Bay Restraining Order Project	San Diego,	<p>In partnership with the San Diego Superior Court, the Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD) Pro Bono Program seeks to offer the sole full-time Domestic Violence/Civil Harassment/Elder Abuse Restraining Order Clinic at the South County branch of the San Diego Superior Court. The Court has expressed the need for daily full-time services to assist the rising number of South County residents seeking protection from violence, stalking, sexual assault, elder/dependent adult abuse, and severe harassment. The project would operate daily in the South County Regional Center branch court from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, providing assistance with court forms, explanation of the law, options and alternatives, and referrals.</p> <p>The project will be staffed with one staff attorney, one advocate, and volunteer attorneys and students. Ongoing communication with court personnel will create a collaborative project that benefits both the court and self-represented litigants in having appropriate paperwork processed efficiently.</p> <p>The main goals of the project are to help self-represented litigants access and fully participate in the legal system, and educate litigants so they can make informed choices resulting in effective and efficient filings for the litigant and the Court. Helping litigants complete necessary paperwork ensures that the Court receives the information necessary to render a decision on a temporary restraining order that day. By providing these services, the project assists pro per petitioners protect themselves from dangerous situations, and pro per respondents protect their due process rights by properly responding to petitions.</p>	\$ 180,000	\$ 127,837

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

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Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Mental Health Advocacy Services	Mental Health and CARE Court Clinic	Los Angeles,	<p>Mental Health Advocacy Services proposes continuing and expanding its clinic with the Los Angeles County Mental Health Court to provide self-help legal services to individuals with mental health disabilities. The Mental Health and CARE Court Clinic will operate four days/week (M-Th) via phone and email and one day/week (F) in-person at the Norwalk Courthouse. The project will be staffed by at least one Attorney, one Social Worker, and one Case Manager. During the grant period, the Clinic will provide services to approximately 450 individuals. MHAS understands that, when scheduled to provide services in-person, our self-help staff qualify as essential court workers and will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled.</p> <p>The Clinic will provide Court-approved information and resources about Mental Health and CARE Court proceedings to litigants and other members of the public. The Clinic will also offer legal information and referrals on a range of ancillary civil legal issues with a goal of helping litigants achieve greater overall stability, thus allowing them to move through their court proceedings with greater efficiency and success—and with less likelihood of returning. This will include helping litigants secure and maintain housing, access SSI or other public benefits, and obtain—or reinstate—their Driver's License or California ID, among other civil legal needs.</p>	\$ 310,000	\$ 279,037
Neighborhood Legal Services	POMONA - READY FOR TRIAL!	Los Angeles,	<p>Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) proposes the continuation of "Ready for Trial!", an intensive family law trial preparation project based in the Pomona Courthouse, that supports self-represented litigants. The project attorney has developed a two-part workshop that aims to prepare litigants for all aspects of their upcoming trial. The initial workshop prepares litigants for trial day by familiarizing them with the process, walking them through how to check-in upon arrival, informing them of the proper way to address the court, introducing them to trial brief forms, and more. In the second workshop, litigants receive assistance in completing their trial brief and other forms. The workshops are provided in English and Spanish and the workshop in Spanish will address unique issues facing non-English proficient litigants, like presenting evidence in a different language and working with court interpreters. Materials, curriculum and protocols developed in this project will be shared so that legal aid and court self-help staff can collaborate to implement its use in other self-help centers. The project will also create a video that provides an overview of trial day at family court, which can be easily shared across the County. The goal of the project is to demystify the Court processes and reduce the anxiety and stress litigants experience when going to trial. This project will give litigants information and confidence needed to represent themselves in court.</p>	\$ 118,000	\$ 83,818
Neighborhood Legal Services	PASADENA - CONTINUUM OF SERVICE	Los Angeles,	<p>NLSLA proposes continuing its project in the Pasadena Courthouse to maintain assistance with UD Answers. Housing continues to be the state's number one priority and State and local leaders continue to work to provide critical services in the homeless prevention efforts. A Right to Counsel Project continues to take shape; the Stay Housed LA Project is overwhelmed with requests for representation from tenants facing eviction.</p> <p>The need continues to be great and even with Stay Housed L.A. resources, Legal Aids simply cannot meet the need and help all tenants with eviction cases at the Pasadena Courthouse. The Unlawful Detainer (UD) process is an expedited one and it is difficult to meet the needs of the numerous tenants who must file an Answer to the UD within the five-day response deadline under the statute. The Court whose primary focus is family law staffs the Pasadena Self-Help Center at the Courthouse. This NLSLA attorney can provide services and supervise volunteers to assist self-help walk-ins with housing services more quickly using the self-help model. To fill the gap in services, it is essential to continue to fund an attorney from NLSLA to help maintain the continuum of services for housing cases at the Pasadena Self-Help Center for at least four days a week, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. NLSLA recognizes that when our self-help center staff are scheduled to provide in-person services, they are considered essential workers. We will strive to maintain coverage as scheduled, in accordance with NLSLA's Collective Bargaining Agreement.</p>	\$ 150,000	\$ 135,037
Neighborhood Legal Services	STABILIZING FAMILIES PROJECT	Los Angeles,	<p>NLSLA proposes to continue operating "Stabilizing Families" to support self-represented litigants through the Probate Guardianship process. This project includes education on alternative options to guardianship, application preparation, service requirements, clearing probate notes, and preparing Letters and Orders. This service focuses on empowerment and education to litigants, who otherwise cannot afford legal representation throughout the long process of probate guardianship. The program helps litigants seeking information and support to obtain, object to, or terminate a legal guardianship, with resources and support offered at all stages.</p> <p>The program operates in conjunction with the Self-Help Center hours of operation: 8:30am – 4:30pm on Mondays-Thursdays and Fridays 8:30am – 12:00 pm. NLSLA recognizes that when our self-help center staff are scheduled to provide in-person services, they are considered essential workers. We will strive to maintain coverage as scheduled, in accordance with NLSLA's Collective Bargaining Agreement.</p> <p>An NLSLA attorney at the Antelope Valley courthouses will provide both remote and on-site support to litigants. Following the Self-Help model, there will be no attorney-client relationship between the attorney and litigants, no court appearances, and no legal advice is provided. The program's main goals are to alleviate the confusion with probate guardianships through targeted education and to support litigants who are navigating their ways through process without representation.</p>	\$ 113,000	\$ 80,267

Attachment A4. 2025 Partnership Grant Recipients

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Organization	Project Name	County	Project Abstract	Amount Requested	Final Grant Award
Public Counsel	Appellate Clinic Innovation	Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura,	<p>The Appellate Clinic for Self-Represented Litigants, located at the Court of Appeal in downtown Los Angeles, operates five days a week to enhance access to justice for indigent, pro se litigants. Staffed by an experienced Supervising Attorney and a full-time Paralegal, supplemented by pro bono attorneys, the Clinic provides essential resources and guidance to help litigants effectively navigate the appellate process.</p> <p>Central to our mission is the Online Library of Resources and Materials. This digital library equips litigants with legal information and procedural guidance, enabling them to prepare accurate and persuasive briefs and reduce procedural errors that can delay Court proceedings.</p> <p>Our operations are closely coordinated with Court clerks and the Second District Justices to ensure alignment with judicial needs, enhancing the efficiency of the Court system. Regular communication with the Court ensures our services remain relevant and impactful.</p> <p>The Clinic's main goals are to empower indigent appellants with accessible, comprehensive legal resources, and to reduce judicial delays through better-prepared filings; and utilize digital tools, including potential future applications of generative AI, to expand the reach and impact of our services. A litigant praised the Clinic, stating it empowered him with helpful materials that are integral to his legal education and case handling, demonstrating the transformative effect of our support.</p>	\$ 319,200	\$ 226,669
San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program	North County Restraining Order Clinic	San Diego,	<p>The North County Restraining Order Clinic (NCROC) is a collaboration between San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Inc. (SDVLP) and the San Diego County Superior Court (Court), to assist victims of abuse in obtaining legal protection and referrals for legal and social services providers. Rates of domestic violence are at an all-time high in North County - victims of domestic violence in this region account for 46% of the County's domestic violence-related homicides.</p> <p>The NCROC is located on the first floor of the Vista Courthouse at 325 South Melrose Drive Vista, CA 92081, and is open Monday through Friday during the Court's operating hours of 8:30a.m - 5:00p.m., excluding court holidays. The NCROC is staffed by one Senior Staff Attorney and a bilingual Legal Administrative Assistant, who are both on-site full-time. Additional support is provided by SDVLP volunteers, including attorneys and law student interns. The NCROC staff provide one-on-one assistance to victims of domestic violence, civil harassment, and elder abuse, by completing restraining order applications which victims file as self-represented litigants (SRLs). Litigants helped by the NCROC are also given access to SDVLP's online library of informational videos and webinars on how to identify relevant evidence and file it, how to prepare for a TRO hearing, what constitutes proper service and how to accomplish it, and technology abuse. SDVLP regularly collaborates with the Court through quarterly meetings with court staff, judicial officers, and other DV service providers, and yearly focus groups where court staff and judicial officers provide feedback on NCROC services.</p>	\$ 170,000	\$ 153,037
Survivor Justice Center	Domestic Violence Resource Center	Los Angeles,	<p>Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice (LACLJ) proposes a project in partnership with the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC) to enhance information available to, and facilitate connection with, resources for self-represented litigants who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking. Every day a high number of survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault seek help beyond the volume that Court Self-Help staff has capacity to assist. LACLJ's project aims to establish a survivor DV resource center phone line to connect survivors to resources and leverage technology to expedite access to crucial services. The DV resource center phone line would be staffed by a receptionist screening callers in a trauma informed and culturally responsive way and connecting them to community service providers offering restraining order preparation assistance or other related services. Additionally, for survivors seeking services after hours or online anytime, the project would create an online screening tool to generate tailored referrals and facilitate access to help. LACLJ will work with LASC offices such as the Self-Help Center and Family Law Facilitator to distribute information about the DV information/resource referral line which will be available during court hours. LACLJ will strive to keep that service open on all days the Court is open. By enhancing the efficiency and accuracy of information/referrals, we aim to empower individuals with timely and relevant support. LACLJ Director of Legal Services, Jimena Vasquez will be responsible for overseeing the project and coordinating activities with LASC staff.</p>	\$ 150,000	\$ 106,538

GRANT AGREEMENT

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF ACCESS & INCLUSION – EQUAL ACCESS FUND IOLTA FORMULA GRANT

This Grant Agreement (“Agreement”) is made as of January 1, «GrantYear», (“Effective Date”) between The State Bar of California, a California public corporation, with a principal place of business at 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105 (“State Bar”), and «ProgramLegalName», a California nonprofit corporation, with a principal place of business at «ProgramPPBaddress» (“Recipient”). This Agreement sets forth the terms and conditions for receiving the Equal Access Fund IOLTA-Formula Grant. State Bar and Recipient are sometimes hereinafter referred to individually as a “Party,” and together as the “Parties.”

RECITALS

- A. Pursuant to California Business and Professions Code Section 6210-6228 (“Act”), and Title 3, Division 5, Chapter 2 of the Rules of the State Bar of California (“Rules”), a Legal Services Trust Fund Program (“Program”) has been established in the State of California. The Office of Access & Inclusion administers the Program. The Program includes an Equal Access Fund (“Fund”) that is funded pursuant to the annual California Budget Act (“Budget Act”) and the Uniform Civil Fees and Standard Fee Schedule Act of 2005 (“Fee Schedule Act”).
- B. Recipient has completed, executed, and submitted to the State Bar an application for funding under the Program and Fund. As part of the application for funding, Recipient has completed, executed, and submitted to the State Bar, Certifications, Assurances, Attachments, and a Proposed Budget (“Application Materials”).
- C. In reliance upon the representations and agreements made in the Application Materials, the State Bar has determined that Recipient is eligible for an Equal Access Fund IOLTA-Formula grant (“Grant”) under the Program and the Fund.
- D. NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of covenants and agreements herein, and for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties hereto, intending to be legally bound hereby, agree as follows:

AGREEMENTS

1. Pursuant to the Act, Rules, and Fund, and in reliance upon the promises and representations made by Recipient, the State Bar grants to Recipient «FinalEAFGrantAllocation» (“Grant Amount”).
2. The grant period will commence on January 1, «GrantYear» (“Start Date”) and end on December 31, «GrantYear» (“End Date,” with the period from the Start Date to the End Date known as the “Grant Period”).
3. The Act, Budget Act, Fee Schedule Act, Rules, Legal Services Trust Fund Program General Grant Provisions (“Grant Provisions”), Legal Services Trust Fund Program

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants

Program Name and Number: «ProgramNumber»

Eligibility Guidelines (“Eligibility Guidelines”), and Application Materials, including any additions or amendments made to the Application Materials by an agreement between the State Bar and Recipient, are incorporated into this Agreement as if set forth in their entirety in this Agreement. Recipient agrees to comply with the Act, Budget Act, Fee Schedule Act, Rules, Grant Provisions, Eligibility Guidelines, Assurances, and other agreements made in the Application Materials. Recipient agrees to comply with all lawful statutes, rules, regulations, guidelines, policies, instructions, and similar directives pertaining to the Program and the Fund (collectively, “Directives”) issued by the State of California, the Supreme Court of the State of California or the State Bar, including without limitation, any Directive adopted after the Effective Date. These Directives include, but are not limited to, Equal Access Fund reporting requirements related to funding allocations, annual expenditures, program outcomes by service area, and a final evaluation report for the period of January 1 - December 31, pursuant to instructions and deadlines to be provided by the State Bar. Recipient agrees to submit expense reports.

4. Recipient represents and warrants that its governing board, the officers, executive director, and similarly empowered staff have read and understand this Agreement, the Act, Rules, Application Materials, Eligibility Guidelines, and Grant Provisions. Recipient has familiarized appropriate staff with the requirements of this Agreement, the Act, the Rules, the Grant Provisions, and the Application Materials.
5. Recipient acknowledges that the terms of this Grant, including Grant Provision Article 4.05, Regulating Rule 3.680(E)(1), and Business and Professions Code Section 6222, require Recipient to submit to the State Bar an accurate and complete financial statement that has been audited or reviewed by an independent certified public accountant as specified in the Schedule of Charges and Deadlines.
6. The State Bar will pay the Grant Amount in accordance with the Grant Provisions. However, under no circumstances will the State Bar bear any liability to Recipient or to other persons or entities for delays in payments.
7. Termination.
 - a) Notwithstanding the Grant Provisions or any other provision of this Agreement regarding the payment of the Grant, Recipient acknowledges that the Grant Amount and all payments thereof shall be made from funds received by the State Bar pursuant to the Budget Act and Fee Schedule Act (“State Funding”), and are contingent upon the availability and sufficiency of such funds, as determined by the State Bar in its sole discretion. Consequently, Recipient shall not be guaranteed any specific dollar amount in grant funds, or any grant funds at all, if funds received pursuant to State Funding are insufficient or unavailable to the State Bar. This Agreement shall terminate automatically if State Funding becomes unavailable. The State Bar will not assume any liability whatsoever to Recipient for any failure to pay the Grant Amount or any part thereof that results because funds are insufficient or unavailable.
 - b) The State Bar may terminate this Agreement pursuant to the process set forth in Rule 3.691.
 - c) The State Bar may terminate this Agreement, in its sole discretion, with or without cause and for any reason upon thirty (30) days’ written notice to Recipient.

- d) The State Bar may terminate for cause, without prejudice to State Bar's right to recover any Grant Amount previously paid, if Recipient fails to comply with the provisions of this Agreement. The termination shall be effective five (5) business days after the State Bar sends written notice of termination to Recipient.
- e) This Agreement will terminate automatically in the event of the bankruptcy or insolvency of either Party.

8. This Agreement does not impose on the State Bar any obligation to provide Recipient funds in excess of the Grant Amount or beyond the end of the Grant Period.

9. Recipient shall spend the Grant Amount received in connection with the Program and Fund in each county and in the amounts set forth in Attachment A – Grant Allocation Detail, which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

10. Recipient represents and warrants that the Recipient's Application Materials for the Grant under the Program and Fund does not misstate or omit any material fact. Recipient will notify the State Bar within five (5) business days after any change in any material fact affecting Recipient's eligibility to receive funds under the Program and Fund, including without limitation, any change that affects the accuracy of any statement made in conjunction with Recipient's application for the grant under the Program and Fund. Recipient will also notify the State Bar within five (5) business days of any material change in the planned activities or proposed budget contained in the Application Materials or any revision thereto.

11. Recipient will not make any misrepresentations or misstatements of fact in any communications or report to the State Bar. In the event Recipient later discovers that any statement made to the State Bar is no longer true, Recipient will notify the State Bar within five (5) business days after discovering that the statement is no longer true. This obligation of Recipient shall survive the termination of the Agreement and/or the expiration of the Grant Period.

12. Recipient will notify the State Bar within five (5) business days of Recipient's awareness of any of the following events: (1) a decision to change Recipient's name, merge or consolidate with another entity, cease operations, or cease the activities funded by the Grant; (2) a decision to close or relocate any main or branch office; (3) significant management changes, including the departure of and/or hiring or appointment of the executive director or board chairperson; (4) Recipient becomes insolvent or is in danger of becoming insolvent within three months; (5) a monetary judgment, settlement, sanction, penalty, or force majeure event that will substantially impact Recipient's delivery of legal services; (6) Recipient or any of Recipient's officials (e.g., officers and executive team members) or employees with control over finances or financial management responsibilities is investigated for or charged with fraud, misappropriation, embezzlement, theft, or any similar offense, or are suspended, disciplined, or delicensed by a bar or other professional licensing organization; (7) Recipient is investigated or audited by the Legal Services Corporation or any other provider of funds to Recipient; (8) Recipient is required to report to the Legal Services Corporation or any provider of funds the discovery by an independent auditor of an irregularity, illegal act, or other noncompliance. This obligation

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants
Program Name and Number: **«ProgramNumber»**

of Recipient shall survive the termination of the Agreement and/or the expiration of the Grant Period.

13. In support of the State Bar's obligation to the Judicial Council to ensure full participation by Program recipients in maintaining and using statewide on-line resources for legal advocates and consumers of legal services, Recipient will:
 - a) Ensure that, during the Grant Period, Recipient is accurately identified on the statewide legal services websites, including, as appropriate, in the:
 - i. Client referral directory on LawHelpCA.org;
 - ii. Legal Services Directories (support center and field program directories) available through LAACdirectory.org and LAAConline.org; and
 - iii. *Pro Bono* Programs Guide on CaliforniaProBono.org;
 - b) Include information about LawHelpCA.org and LAAConline.org in trainings for new staff advocates, circulate information received from state coordinators about these websites to appropriate staff members, encourage staff to join the LAAConline.org website, and must encourage participation in brief trainings about the websites as available; and
 - c) Provide a link to LawHelpCA.org on its own program's website.
14. Recipient will permit the State Bar's personnel, independent contractors or agents ("Personnel") to inspect at any time any records and/or any office or other premises maintained by Recipient or used by Recipient in connection with the expenditure of the Grant Amount received under the Program. Recipient will cooperate with the State Bar's Personnel during such inspections and will furnish to the Personnel any information that the Personnel reasonably request as relevant to determining Recipient's compliance with this Agreement. The State Bar's right of access to Recipient's records and premises for purposes of compliance will survive the expiration of the Grant Period and/or any termination of this Agreement. In complying with disclosure requirements of this Agreement and of the Program and Fund, Recipient may withhold any client-identifying information when Recipient reasonably determines that disclosure would violate the Act, the Rules, a rule of professional responsibility, or any other laws.
15. The Act, Budget Act, Fee Schedule Act, Rules, Grant Provisions, Eligibility Guidelines, and Directives set forth requirements concerning the use of Program funds and payment for subcontracts to provide legal services ("Subcontracted Services"). Recipient acknowledges its obligation to inform all providers of Subcontracted Services of the requirements of the Program and to obtain from all Subcontracted Services providers a written agreement to comply with all requirements of this Agreement as if that provider is the Recipient. Recipient assigns to the State Bar all rights that Recipient has or shall acquire to inspect the premises and records of providers of Subcontracted Services to ensure compliance with Program; provided, however, that disclosure of client-identifying information by a provider of Subcontracted Services shall be governed by the provisions of Section 14 above.
16. Recipient shall not represent or in any way suggest that it may obligate or pledge the credit of the State of California or of the State Bar.

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants
Program Name and Number: «ProgramNumber»

17. Except as otherwise required by law, Recipient shall own all rights, title and interest in any materials produced as a result of this Grant (the "Grant Work Product"). Recipient hereby grants to the State Bar and Judicial Council a non-exclusive, transferable, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty-free, paid-up, worldwide right and license to use, re-use, display, perform, reproduce, publish, copy, modify, create derivative works and distribute, for non-commercial purposes, the Grant Work Product and any other work product arising out of or resulting from the Grant Amount, including all intellectual property rights appurtenant thereto, and to sublicense such rights to third parties. Without limiting the foregoing, such license includes the right of the State Bar and Judicial Council to publish the Grant Work Product on the State Bar's and/or Judicial Council's websites, and for use in periodic reports, press releases, meetings, and fact sheets. Recipient further acknowledges and agrees, at the State Bar's and/or Judicial Council's request, to execute any additional documents necessary to effect such license.
18. Recipient agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless State Bar (including its Board of Trustees, officers, agents, and employees, as the same may be constituted now and from time to time hereafter) from and against any and all liabilities, losses, damages, expenses or costs, whatsoever (including reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses), which may arise against or be incurred by the State Bar as a result of or in connection with (i) claims by any and all contractors, subcontractors, providers of consulting services, materialmen, laborers, or any other person, firm, or corporation retained by Recipient to furnish or supply work, service, materials, or supplies in connection with the performance of this Agreement; (ii) claims by any person, firm, or corporation for loss, injury or damage by Recipient or Recipient's agents in connection with the provision of legal services pursuant to this Agreement; (iii) any acts or omissions of Recipient, or its officers, employees or agents, in applying for, accepting, expending or applying the Grant Amount or in performing activities or services in breach of this Agreement. Recipient shall be liable to the State Bar for all costs (including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and expenses) that may be incurred) arising from or in connection with the State Bar's enforcement of its rights under this Section 18. This indemnity provision shall survive the termination or expiration of this Agreement.
19. Recipient will maintain insurance coverage such as commercial general liability insurance, workers' compensation insurance and comprehensive automobile liability sufficient to cover its services, activities, risks, and potential omissions of the services in accordance with generally accepted industry standards and as required by law. Recipient shall provide the State Bar offices at 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105 Attn: Risk Management with these certificates of insurance within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date. Recipient will ensure subcontractors maintain insurance coverage consistent with this Section.
20. Any notices to be given by either Party to the other must be in writing, and both emailed and delivered personally or by first-class, certified, registered, or overnight mail addressed to the Parties at the addresses stated below:

State Bar: The State Bar of California
180 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Attention: Doan Nguyen, Program Director
Office of Access & Inclusion

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants
Program Name and Number: **«ProgramNumber»**

doan.nguyen@calbar.ca.gov

Recipient: «ProgramLegalName»
«Address1» «Address2»
«City», «State» «ZipCode»
«Add primary contact email address»

Attention: «PrimaryContactName»
«PrimaryContactJobTitle»

Each Party may change the notice address appearing above by giving the other Party written notice in accordance with this Section. Such changes in address for purposes of giving notice will be effective two (2) weeks after giving notice of the change in address.

21. This Agreement, together with the Act, Budget Act, Fee Schedule Act, Application Materials, Rules, Grant Provisions, Assurances, Eligibility Guidelines, Directives, and Attachment A contains and constitutes the entire agreement between the State Bar and Recipient regarding the State Bar's Grant of Equal Access Fund monies to Recipient and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, or agreements, either written or oral.
22. The Recipient shall neither assign nor transfer any rights or obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the State Bar. This Agreement shall be binding upon agents and successors of both Parties.
23. No amendment, alteration or variation of the terms of this Agreement will be valid unless made in writing and signed by both of the Parties.
24. This Agreement was made and entered into by the Parties in the State of California and shall be construed according to the laws of the State of California. Any action or suit brought to interpret, construe, or enforce the provisions of this Agreement shall be commenced in the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the County of San Francisco.
25. Each Party represents that it has full power and authority to enter into and perform this Agreement and the person signing this Agreement on behalf of each Party has been properly authorized and empowered to enter into this Agreement. Each Party further acknowledges that its Directors, Trustees, or similarly empowered persons have read this Agreement, understand it, and agree to be bound by it.
26. No term or provision herein shall be deemed waived and no breach excused unless such waiver or consent is in writing and signed by the Party claimed to have waived or consented. No consent or waiver by one Party to a breach of this Agreement by the other Party, whether expressed or implied, shall constitute consent to, waiver of, or excuse for any other, different, or subsequent breach. No amendment, consent, or waiver on behalf of the State Bar shall be binding upon the State Bar unless it is executed by the Executive Director of the State Bar or the Executive Director's designee.
27. Each provision of this Agreement shall be separately enforceable, and the invalidity or unenforceability of one provision shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision.

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants
Program Name and Number: «ProgramNumber»

28. This Agreement may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which will be deemed to be an original, and all of which, together will constitute but one and the same instrument. Delivery of an executed counterpart of this Agreement by facsimile, email or any other reliable means will be effective for all purposes as delivery of a manually executed original counterpart. Either Party may maintain a copy of this Agreement in electronic form. The Parties further agree that a copy produced from the delivered counterpart or electronic form by any reliable means (for example, photocopy, facsimile, or printed image) will in all respects be considered an original.

[Signatures Follow]

Attachment A5. Sample Grant Agreement for 2026 IOLTA-Formula Equal Access Fund Grants

Program Name and Number: «ProgramNumber»

By executing this Agreement below, the Parties agree to its terms and conditions. This Agreement has been executed and delivered by the duly authorized representatives of State Bar and Recipient as of the date first written above.

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA

Date:

By:

Name of State Bar Executive Officer

Title of State Bar Executive Officer

RECIPIENT

Date:

By:

Name of Executive Director

By:

Name of Board Officer

By:

Title of Board Officer

THE STATE BAR OF CALIFORNIA
OFFICE OF ACCESS & INCLUSION – EQUAL ACCESS FUND
IOLTA FORMULA GRANT

ATTACHMENT A – GRANT ALLOCATION DETAIL

The below indicates the amount of the total grant award to be allocated to each county in which Recipient provides services, if applicable.

Recipient: «ProgramLegalName»

Equal Access Fund

Grant Period: January 1, «GrantYear» - December 31, «GrantYear»

Grant Amount: «FinalEAFGrantAllocation»

County	Qualified Expenditures	Basic Allocation	Pro Bono Allocation	Total Allocation
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Attachment A6. 2026 EAF- IOLTA Applicants*As recommended eligible by the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission on August 8, 2025*

#	Grant Year	Organization	Acronym	Grantee Type
1	2026	Affordable Housing Advocates	AHA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
2	2026	Aids Legal Referral Panel	ALRP	IOLTA/EAF LSP
3	2026	Al Otro Lado, Inc.	AOL	IOLTA/EAF LSP
4	2026	Alameda County Homeless Action Center	HAC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
5	2026	Alliance for Children's Rights	Alliance	IOLTA/EAF LSP
6	2026	Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California	AAAJ-LA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
7	2026	Asian Law Caucus	AJ-ALC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
8	2026	Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach	APILO	IOLTA/EAF LSP
9	2026	Bay Area Legal Aid	BayLegal	IOLTA/EAF LSP
10	2026	Bet Tzedek Legal Services	BetTzedek	IOLTA/EAF LSP
11	2026	California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform	CANHR	IOLTA/EAF SC
12	2026	California Center for Movement Legal Services		IOLTA/EAF LSP
13	2026	California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice	CCIJ	IOLTA/EAF LSP
14	2026	California Immigration Project		IOLTA/EAF LSP
15	2026	California Indian Legal Services	CILS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
16	2026	California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation	CRLAF	IOLTA/EAF SC
17	2026	California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	CRLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
18	2026	California Women's Law Center	CWLC	IOLTA/EAF SC
19	2026	Capital Pro Bono Inc.	CPB	IOLTA/EAF LSP
20	2026	CARECEN CENTRAL AMERICAN RESOURCE CENTER		IOLTA/EAF LSP
21	2026	Casa Cornelia Law Center	CasaCornelia	IOLTA/EAF LSP
22	2026	Center for Access to QDROs	CAQDRO	IOLTA/EAF SC
23	2026	Center for Gender and Refugee Studies - California	CGRS-CA	IOLTA/EAF SC
24	2026	Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law	CHRCL	IOLTA/EAF SC
25	2026	Center for Immigrant Protection dba The LGBT Asylum Projec	CIP	IOLTA/EAF LSP
26	2026	Center for Workers' Rights	CWR	IOLTA/EAF LSP
27	2026	Central California Legal Services	CCLS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
28	2026	Centro Legal de la Raza	CentroLegal	IOLTA/EAF LSP
29	2026	Child Care Law Center	CCLC	IOLTA/EAF SC
30	2026	Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations	CCWRO	IOLTA/EAF SC
31	2026	Community Lawyers Inc.	CLI	IOLTA/EAF LSP
32	2026	Community Legal Aid SoCal	CLASC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
33	2026	Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto	CLSEPA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
34	2026	Contra Costa Senior Legal Services	CCSenior	IOLTA/EAF LSP
35	2026	Dependency Advocacy Center	DAC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
36	2026	Dependency Legal Services		IOLTA/EAF LSP
37	2026	Disability Rights California	DRC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
38	2026	Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	DREDF	IOLTA/EAF SC
39	2026	Disability Rights Legal Center	DRLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
40	2026	East Bay Community Law Center	EBCLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
41	2026	Elder Law & Advocacy	ELA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
42	2026	Elder Law and Disability Rights Center	ELDRC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
43	2026	Elevate Community Center	ECC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
44	2026	Eviction Defense Collaborative	EDC	IOLTA/EAF LSP

#	Grant Year	Organization	Acronym	Grantee Type
45	2026	Family Violence Appellate Project	FVAP	IOLTA/EAF SC
46	2026	Family Violence Law Center	FVLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
47	2026	Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance	GBLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
48	2026	Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law	HarriettBuhai	IOLTA/EAF LSP
49	2026	Housing and Economic Rights Advocates	HERA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
50	2026	Immigrant Defenders Law Center	IDLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
51	2026	Immigrant Legal Defense	ILD	IOLTA/EAF LSP
52	2026	Immigrant Legal Resource Center	ILRC	IOLTA/EAF SC
53	2026	Impact Fund	ImpactFund	IOLTA/EAF SC
54	2026	Inland Counties Legal Services	ICLS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
55	2026	Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Association, Inc.	IELLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
56	2026	Inner City Law Center	ICLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
57	2026	Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco	JDC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
58	2026	Justice in Aging	JIA	IOLTA/EAF SC
59	2026	La Raza Centro Legal	LaRaza	IOLTA/EAF LSP
60	2026	LACBA Counsel for Justice	LACBA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
61	2026	Law Foundation of Silicon Valley	LFSV	IOLTA/EAF LSP
62	2026	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	LCCR	IOLTA/EAF LSP
63	2026	Learning Rights Law Center	LRLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
64	2026	Legal Access Alameda	LAA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
65	2026	Legal Aid at Work	LAAW	IOLTA/EAF LSP
66	2026	Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	LAFLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
67	2026	Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	LAFSBC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
68	2026	Legal Aid of Marin	LAM	IOLTA/EAF LSP
69	2026	Legal Aid of Sonoma County	LASC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
70	2026	Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	LASSB	IOLTA/EAF LSP
71	2026	Legal Aid Society of San Diego	LASSD	IOLTA/EAF LSP
72	2026	Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County	LASSMC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
73	2026	Legal Assistance for Seniors	LAS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
74	2026	Legal Assistance to the Elderly	LAE	IOLTA/EAF LSP
75	2026	Legal Services for Children	LSC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
76	2026	Legal Services for Prisoners with Children	LSPC	IOLTA/EAF SC
77	2026	Legal Services for Seniors	LSS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
78	2026	Legal Services of Northern California	LSNC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
79	2026	Loyola Marymount University	LMU	IOLTA/EAF LSP
80	2026	McGeorge Community Legal Services	McGeorge	IOLTA/EAF LSP
81	2026	Mental Health Advocacy Services	MHAS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
82	2026	National Center for Youth Law	NCYL	IOLTA/EAF SC
83	2026	National Health Law Program	NHLP	IOLTA/EAF SC
84	2026	National Housing Law Project	NationalHousing	IOLTA/EAF SC
85	2026	Neighborhood Legal Services	NLS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
86	2026	Oasis Legal Services	Oasis	IOLTA/EAF LSP
87	2026	OneJustice	OneJustice	IOLTA/EAF SC
88	2026	Open Door Legal	ODL	IOLTA/EAF LSP
89	2026	Pangea Legal Services		IOLTA/EAF LSP
90	2026	Prison Law Office	PLO	IOLTA/EAF LSP
91	2026	Public Advocates Inc.	PublicAdvocates	IOLTA/EAF LSP

#	Grant Year	Organization	Acronym	Grantee Type
92	2026	Public Counsel	PublicCounsel	IOLTA/EAF LSP
93	2026	Public Interest Law Project	PILP	IOLTA/EAF SC
94	2026	Public Law Center	PLC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
95	2026	Riverside Legal Aid	RLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
96	2026	San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program	SDVLP	IOLTA/EAF LSP
97	2026	San Joaquin College of Law	SJCL	IOLTA/EAF LSP
98	2026	San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation	SLOLAF	IOLTA/EAF LSP
99	2026	Santa Barbara County Immigrant Legal Defense Center	SBILDC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
100	2026	Santa Clara County Asian Law Alliance	SCALA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
101	2026	Santa Clara University Alexander Law Center	KGALC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
102	2026	Senior Adults Legal Assistance	SALA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
103	2026	Senior Advocacy Network	SAN	IOLTA/EAF LSP
104	2026	Senior Citizens Legal Services	SCLS	IOLTA/EAF LSP
105	2026	Social Justice Collaborative	SJC	IOLTA/EAF LSP
106	2026	Southern California Immigration Project	SCIP	IOLTA/EAF LSP
107	2026	Step Forward Foundation	SFF	IOLTA/EAF LSP
108	2026	Survivor Justice Center	LACIJ	IOLTA/EAF LSP
109	2026	UC Davis School of Law Legal Clinics	UCDavis	IOLTA/EAF LSP
110	2026	UFW Foundation		IOLTA/EAF LSP
111	2026	UnCommon Law	UCLAW	IOLTA/EAF LSP
112	2026	USD School of Law Legal Clinics	USD	IOLTA/EAF LSP
113	2026	Ventura County Legal Aid, Inc.	VCLA	IOLTA/EAF LSP
114	2026	Veterans Legal Institute	VLI	IOLTA/EAF LSP
115	2026	Wage Justice Center	WageJustice	IOLTA/EAF LSP
116	2026	Watsonville Law Center	Watsonville	IOLTA/EAF LSP
117	2026	Western Center on Law and Poverty	WCLP	IOLTA/EAF SC
118	2026	Worksafe, Inc.	Worksafe	IOLTA/EAF SC
119	2026	Youth Law Center	YLC	IOLTA/EAF SC



The State Bar of California

OFFICE OF ACCESS & INCLUSION

2026 PARTNERSHIP GRANTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

This document provides information for organizations interested in submitting proposals for Partnership Grants. Organizations should review this document to ensure that the proposed projects are eligible for this funding.

Partnership Grants are competitive and discretionary. Project proposals must be submitted on SmartSimple by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 6, 2025**.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Chong at michael.chong@calbar.ca.gov.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the California Legislature established the Equal Access Fund (EAF) “to improve equal access and the fair administration of justice.” The EAF is allocated to the Judicial Council and administered by the State Bar of California, through its Legal Services Trust Fund Commission (LSTFC). Ten percent of the Equal Access Fund is reserved for “joint projects of courts and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants.”

Partnership Grants are awarded through a competitive process. The LSTFC reviews and compares all eligible proposals and makes funding recommendations to the Judicial Council. Decisions of the LSTFC, as approved by the Judicial Council, are final; there is no appeals process. Due to the limited availability of funding, some proposals may not be funded, and award amounts may vary depending on the number and quality of proposals. Consideration is also given to ensure the funding supports projects that—as a group—serve a diverse range of geographic areas, substantive issues, and client constituencies. When determining a recommendation, reviewers may also consider the number of proposals a grantee submitted.

Historically, Partnership Grant projects have been funded in a range from approximately \$20,000 to \$250,000. For the 2025 grant year, a total of \$3.8 million was awarded to 29 eligible projects. Partnership Grants are awarded for a one-year period commencing January 1 and ending December 31. At the conclusion of the grant year, grantees must submit a report and evaluation on the use and impact of these funds.

2026 PARTNERSHIP GRANTS SCORING RUBRIC

In an effort to provide transparency and equity in the review process, the LSTFC uses a scoring rubric as a tool to help guide review of all proposals. The rubric is comprised of four sections - Eligibility Requirements, Selection Criteria, Funding Priorities, and Innovation.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible to submit a proposal:

- **Qualified Legal Services Projects (QLSPs):** Pursuant to Business & Professions Code 6210 et seq., only QLSPs are eligible to apply for Partnership Grants.
- **Joint Court/QLSPs:** Proposals must be for projects jointly developed and implemented by California State courts and QLSPs. Partnership Grant funding may be used to support supervised settlement services to assist litigants in settling their litigation, so long as the settlement services are a component of court-based litigation and overseen by an attorney.
- **Indigent Persons:** Use of Partnership Grant funds is restricted to the provision of services to indigent persons as defined under Business and Professions Code §6213(d). “Indigent person” means a person whose income is (1) 200 percent or less of the current poverty threshold established by the United States Office of Management and Budget or (2) who is eligible for Supplemental Security Income or free services under the Older Americans Act or Developmentally Disabled Assistance Act.
- **Self-Represented Civil Litigants:** Partnership Grant funding is restricted to providing assistance to individuals who are or expect to be engaged in civil litigation without representation by counsel. These funds cannot be used to make court appearances on behalf of litigants. Self-represented litigants are not prohibited from forming a confidential relationship with a lawyer, so long as they are unrepresented when they appear in court and an attorney does not sign or appear on any of their court filings.

If the proposed project will be serving non-indigent persons or if individuals will be engaged in civil litigation, the project must identify non-Partnership Grant funds that will be used to cover this work.

Selection Criteria (85 points)

Based on responses provided in the proposal, the LSTFC will evaluate the project based on the following categories: court involvement, project impact, administration, continuity planning, and evaluation. The LSTFC will score each category as “Exceeds Expectations,” “Meets Expectations,” or “Below Expectations” with corresponding multipliers for a maximum of 85 points. Generally, responses that provide relevant and detailed information, such as metrics or specific examples, would be scored favorably. Responses that do not appear responsive to the selection criteria’s description may be considered “below expectations.”

Funding Priorities (15 points)

The LSTFC will exercise its discretion and score the project 1-3 based on funding priorities. That number will be multiplied by 5 for a maximum section score of 15 points. In making decisions regarding funding priorities, the LSTFC will consider factors that include, but are not limited to:

- Whether the project is new. The LSTFC maintains discretion to determine what is considered a new project, and may consider factors, that include, but are not limited to, whether the project was previously or currently funded or proposes a substantial change to an existing service delivery model.
- Whether the project supports underserved populations. Whether a population is “underserved” may be based on factors such as unmet rural needs, or on the population comprising individuals with particular characteristics who are underserved in the particular county, including but not limited to characteristics based on race, ethnicity, age, limited English proficiency, disability status, and veteran status.

Optional—Innovation (up to 5 points)

The LSTFC encourages innovative projects and may award up to five bonus points for innovation. Examples of innovation may include:

- Projects exploring new ways of providing services or using technology to expand or improve services.
- Initial projects in a case type (first consumer program, first conservatorship program, etc.).
- Projects with models that were successful in other jurisdictions but are new to the court.
- Projects involving courts that have not had projects in a long time.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS			
Please select “yes” or “no” for each requirement.			
Applicant is a Qualified Legal Services Project.	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Proposal is jointly developed and implemented by a California State court.	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Proposed services will be provided only to indigent persons, as defined under Business and Profession Code §6213(d).	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
If NO, has the project identified non-Partnership Grant funds that will cover this work?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Proposed services will be provided only to self-represented litigants (individuals who are or expect to be engaged in civil litigation without representation by counsel).	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	
If NO, has the project identified non-Partnership Grant funds that will cover this work?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

DEFINITIONS	
Exceeds Expectations	Response is very high quality, addressing all questions in the request for proposal and all elements of the selection criteria. The identified

Attachment A7. Request for Proposal for 2026 Partnership Grants

	strengths are substantial with minimal or no weaknesses. Any identified weakness has minimal effect on the overall quality of the response.
Meets Expectations	Response is good, effectively addressing most questions in the request for proposal and selection criteria. Strengths and weaknesses are identified that may balance each other in significance. Overall quality of response is satisfactory.
Below Expectations	Response is weak, neglecting to address questions in the request for proposal and elements of the criteria. The identified weaknesses hold significant weight, overshadowing the identified strengths. Overall quality of response is inadequate, with significant flaws in key elements.

SELECTION CRITERIA (85 PTS)

Checkmark the appropriate ranking for each category, and then multiply by the number below. Add sub-scores from A and B to get the total points for this section.

CATEGORY & DESCRIPTION	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Court Involvement A successful proposal will indicate significant cooperation between the partner court and legal services organization, integration with other court-based services, and if the project's services are to be reserved for only one litigant role, such as petitioners but not respondents, this has been thoroughly explored with the court, and alternate legal resources that can provide meaningful if not equivalent levels of assistance to the opposing parties have been identified.			
Project Impact A successful proposal will clearly describe the needs of the targeted population and how anticipated outcomes and related budget of the proposed activity(ies) will have a meaningful impact on this population. Outcomes may include the number of people served, nature of the impact, and other project deliverables that will be achieved with this grant funding during the grant period.			
A. Number of Check Marks	X20=	X15=	X10=
Subtotal (A)			
Administration A successful proposal will demonstrate the ability and capacity to implement and manage the proposed activity(ies). Strong administration includes adequate staffing, leadership, and oversight of project monitoring, outreach, and resource development. An applicant's historical demonstration of its ability to meet goals from prior grants and timely reporting of results/outcomes will also be considered under this category.			
Continuity Planning			

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A successful proposal will address whether or how its proposed services can continue with funds other than those provided by Partnership Grants and provide details of past efforts and future plans to secure such alternate funding.			
Evaluation A successful proposal will incorporate meaningful evaluation plans and metrics that effectively demonstrate whether and how the project's planned goals are being achieved. This may include a clear statement of the project goals, strategies to be used to achieve those goals, evaluation methods to be used to make any mid-course adjustments to the delivery model, and evaluation methods to gauge the project's success. Returning organizations applying for the same funding opportunity will also need to address prior evaluation outcomes and metrics.			
B. Number of Check Marks	X15=	X10=	X5=
Subtotal (B)			
Selection Criteria Total (A+B)			

FUNDING PRIORITIES (15 PTS)

Keeping the funding priorities in mind, determine the number of points you wish to score this project and then multiply by the number below.

In making decisions regarding funding priorities, consider factors that include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the project is new. The LSTFC maintains discretion to determine what is considered a new project, and may consider factors, that include, but are not limited to, whether the project was previously or currently funded or proposes a substantial change to an existing service delivery model. • Whether the project supports underserved populations. Whether a population is “underserved” may be based on factors such as unmet rural needs, or on the population comprising individuals with particular characteristics who are underserved in the particular county, including but not limited to characteristics based on race, ethnicity, age, limited English proficiency, disability status, and veteran status. 	3 2 1
Funding Priority Total Score	X5 =

OPTIONAL - INNOVATION (up to 5 PTS)

The LSTFC may exercise discretion in awarding points for innovation. Based on your review of the proposal, determine if you wish to score additional points for innovation and provide your reason(s) below.

In deciding to award additional points for innovation, consider factors such as whether the project explores new ways of providing services or using technology, offers an initial case type (first consumer program, first conservatorship program, etc.), or applies a model that was successful in another jurisdiction but is new to this court.	YES	NO
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Attachment A7. Request for Proposal for 2026 Partnership Grants

Bonus Points Awarded (1-5 pts)	
Reason(s) for awarding bonus points for innovation:	

GRANTMAKING TIMELINE

Date(s)*	Activity
May 6, 2025	Application released
June 6, 2025	Applications due
June-July, 2025	LSTFC and staff review and score applications
August 8, 2025	LSTFC makes funding recommendations
October 23-24, 2025	Judicial Council approves grant recommendations
November 15, 2025	Applicants submit budgets and remaining application information (i.e., letter of support, MOUs)
December 30, 2025	Grant agreements signed
January 1, 2026	Grant period starts

*Dates are approximate to accommodate applicant, commissioner, and staff availability and needs

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

At the end of the grant year, grantees must submit a comprehensive report and evaluation on the use and impact of the Partnership Grant funds, providing quantitative and qualitative data describing project activities.

Reporting requirements will include:

- A. **Expenditures:** Report actual expenditures for the grant period. Grantees with discrepancies in actual expenditures compared to the approved budget or approved budget modification must provide an explanation. Any Partnership Grant funds that remain unspent at the end of the grant period without an approved carryover must be returned to the State Bar. Grantees with approved carryovers are permitted to spend remaining Partnership Grant funds for up to an additional six months and will be required to close out the grant at that time.
- B. **Activities:** Report on all project activities funded by the Partnership Grant during the grant period, including project focus areas, demographic groups served, language services offered, project goals versus actuals, services provided, and number of individuals served.
- C. **Evaluation:** Report on evaluation efforts during the grant period, including how litigant feedback was obtained and how project impact was assessed. Grantees will also describe how project staff and partner court staff collaborated to provide services.

Attachment A8. Summary of 2026 Partnership Grants Proposals and Recommended Funding

As recommended at the August, 8, 2025, Legal Services Trust Fund Commission Meeting

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Access to Supported Decision Making	Los Angeles,	<p>In partnership with the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC), Bet Tzedek launched its Access to Supported Decision-Making (ASDM) earlier this year. In 2026, Bet Tzedek will expand the project by creating new tools for our digital platform that ensure adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), dependent adults, and their supporters have meaningful access to alternatives to conservatorship. This next phase focuses on developing interactive, accessible tools - available 24/7 - that help increase protection for adults under conservatorship in alignment with AB 1663 and prevent the filing of conservatorship by helping petitioners understand their legal obligation to consider alternatives before filing. These tools will also support individuals already under conservatorship in understanding and asserting their rights, including paths to modification or termination, by increasing access to the Judicial Council's new "Notice of Conservatee's Rights."</p> <p>The tools will incorporate AI-enabled features such as voice-to-text, plain-language content, audio guidance, and multi-language functionality to ensure accessibility for a wide range of users. These digital resources will be supplemented by in-person and virtual workshops, public education, and one-on-one assistance delivered by the Self-Help Conservatorship Clinic (SHCC) team and a dedicated ASDM Program Coordinator.</p> <p>Ongoing collaboration with LASC will continue to guide design and outreach strategies. By leveraging technology and strengthening court partnerships, this project will close the access gap in AB 1663's implementation and provide a replicable model to help Californians protect autonomy and dignity through less restrictive decision-making options and providing resources for those already under conservatorship.</p>	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00
2026	Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Decedent Estate Clinic	Los Angeles,	<p>Wills and living trusts facilitate the proper transfer of assets to family members through inheritance. Unfortunately, few low-income families have wills, and many heirs find themselves in probate court after the death of a loved one. Bet Tzedek's Decedent Estate Clinic (DEC) is Los Angeles County's only court-based project that provides free self-help services to litigants in estate matters. Established in collaboration with the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC), DEC equips low-income litigants to protect their primary source of intergenerational wealth -- their family home -- helping to build housing security and economic resilience for generations.</p> <p>Staffed by a bilingual coordinator, staff attorneys, and trained volunteers, DEC operates remotely from the Stanley Mosk Courthouse (hours determined in collaboration with LASC), with services available countywide. DEC staff and volunteers provide legal information, self-help assistance, and/or referrals; help determine if litigants need full a probate, summary probate procedure, or probate alternative; leverage technology to design/implement smart forms and other interactive tools for litigants; and assist with out-of-court procedures for small estates and summary court procedures for transferring property. DEC will continue working with LASC to assess community need for other probate-related procedures and develop practicable self-help services.</p> <p>In response to the devastating 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, DEC partnered with LASC to deliver crucial self-help services within impacted communities. In 2026, we will build on this strong collaboration to continue serving wildfire survivors, who will need support for years to come. We will also support LASC's strategic efforts to reach underserved communities through mobile services.</p>	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 237,500.00
2026	Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Pro Se Technology Initiative	Los Angeles,	<p>Conservatorships and restraining orders are essential legal tools for protecting seniors and dependent adults from abuse and neglect, yet they remain inaccessible to many Los Angeles County residents who lack legal representation and face language, literacy, or mobility barriers. Bet Tzedek's Remote Pro Se Technology Initiative, developed in partnership with the Los Angeles Superior Court (LASC), expands access to these protective legal remedies through replicable, technology-based solutions targeted to underserved communities.</p> <p>The project is staffed by Bet Tzedek's Self-Help Conservatorship Clinic (SHCC) and Elder Abuse Restraining Order Clinic (EAROC) staff, including a bilingual coordinator, staff attorney, paralegals, and trained volunteers. SHCC operates remotely Monday-Friday 10:00am-3:00pm. Remote EAROC assistance is available Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:00am-3:00pm.</p> <p>Services include self-help assistance with conservatorship and elder abuse restraining orders; online video tutorials/modules, smart forms, and other interactive tools for litigants; outreach to publicize remote services; and a remote EARO Kiosk intake at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. Our team will continue to serve as technology navigators, both remotely and through in-person workshops, helping litigants access Guide & File, remote hearings, and other court-based e-services as needed.</p> <p>In 2026, in collaboration with LASC, we will begin efforts to expand Guide & File to include general conservatorship filings, which will benefit self-help centers throughout California and ultimately strengthen services statewide. Currently, the Guide & File platform only supports limited conservatorships for adults with developmental disabilities, leaving families who are caring for an incapacitated loved one -- often elderly parents or other senior relatives -- without accessible tools to navigate this complex legal process.</p>	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 237,500.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	Partnership to Prevent Homelessness in San Joaquin County	San Joaquin,	<p>California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA) will provide general legal information and direct legal assistance to self-represented litigants in San Joaquin County facing housing issues. The project objective is to prevent homelessness and housing instability for San Joaquin County tenants. The primary method for doing so will be to prevent tenants from obtaining an eviction on their record as this significantly weakens their approval odds for other rentals. We will prioritize project services for tenants requiring immediate assistance to address active unlawful detainers or to prepare for a scheduled trial date. As appropriate, the project will also address non-eviction issues that threaten housing stability, like habitability and fair housing violations.</p> <p>While the target constituency is tenants as they are far more likely to go unrepresented, self-represented landlords – and other litigants ineligible for CRLA services – may receive comparable services from the San Joaquin County Court Self-Help Center or CRLA's partner El Concilio. The project will be staffed by the Eviction Prevention Program's case worker and attorney advocates.</p> <p>Court participation will include direct assistance to tenants and landlords who are ineligible for CRLA services, referrals to CRLA and El Concilio, record sharing with CRLA, and dedication of court space to the project. The Eviction Prevention Program's intake hotline and CRLA's Rural Justice Center in Stockton are open during normal business hours Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM. Answer clinics will be held once a week on-site at the Court Self Help Center.</p>	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 110,000.00
2026	Central California Legal Services	CCLS Guardianship Project	Fresno,	<p>The Guardianship Project expands and re-establishes a prior successful court partnership between the Fresno County Superior Court and Central California Legal Services (CCLS). The project provides legal information and self-help document assistance about the guardianship process to unrepresented litigants involved in court proceedings when a non-parent needs legal authority to care for a child.</p> <p>New for this application is the addition of the region's only Medical Legal Partnership - a project between Valley Children's Hospital and CCLS - as an unfunded community outreach partner to connect families, often non-English speaking and/or from rural communities, with project guardianship resources.</p> <p>The target population is unrepresented, low-income caregivers – often grandparents – who need legal guardianship to care for a child, and other family members in the court process. There is an increased critical need for guardianship assistance due to parental incarceration, high poverty, the opioid epidemic, and other factors. Guardianship requests by seniors have increased, especially in rural communities lacking resources, geographically isolated, with insufficient social safety nets.</p> <p>The project's legal services are provided by CCLS staff and pro bono volunteers. The Court provides courthouse space near its self-help center and coordinates through project partner meetings. The clinic is held bi-monthly; in-person at the courthouse and virtual sessions.</p> <p>The project fills a tremendous gap in the region—there is no other legal services provider in Fresno County offering free guardianship assistance. Project operations are coordinated to achieve the goals of removing barriers and increasing public access to legal information and assistance with guardianship.</p>	\$ 191,300.00	\$ 141,500.00
2026	Community Legal Aid SoCal	Los Angeles County Court UD Hotline	Los Angeles,	<p>In 2025, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, in conjunction with the Stanford Law School released, "A Blueprint for Expanding Access to Justice," a landmark report documenting the challenges and opportunities for addressing self-represented litigants' lack of understanding about legal systems and procedures, particularly in eviction cases.</p> <p>Community Legal Aid SoCal (CLA SoCal) proposes to pilot an innovative Unlawful Detainer (UD) Hotline to help address these challenges. Focused on the Compton and Norwalk courthouses, this project responds to a critical justice gap: many tenants do not know they need to file an answer until a notice to vacate is posted on their door. Litigants need fast, easy access to information which this Hotline will provide to a high volume of self-represented litigants to assist them in understanding the urgency of filing an answer, accessing their case online, and locating additional resources. The project will also continue providing existing self-help UD services such as answer review.</p> <p>Services will be implemented by 1.0 FTE attorney and 0.2 FTE paralegal at the Compton Self-Help Center. It will operate on weekdays from 8:30am-12pm and 1pm-4:30pm and will combine in-person and remote access. The Hotline will also operate with maximum staffing on Friday mornings, dedicated to answering follow-up questions for litigants already assisted, helping to fill in the information gap.</p>	\$ 166,200.00	\$ 141,300.00
2026	Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto	Preventing Homelessness: Mandatory Settlement Conference Clinic	San Mateo,	<p>Through this partnership, San Mateo County Superior Court and CLEPA will address the continued surge in evictions with a sustainable and wide-reaching project that will prevent homelessness and promote housing stability. Our project will continue to provide advice and limited scope representation to pro se tenants at a weekly Unlawful Detainer Mandatory Settlement Conference Clinic (MSC). Through this project, we will leverage pro bono support and enhanced self-help resources to promote settlement and prevent trial in eviction cases. Operationally, our goal is to increase judicial efficiency while providing high-quality legal assistance that leads to better housing outcomes for pro se tenants.</p> <p>With the support of this grant, CLEPA will look to develop a self-help tool to assess the viability of a settlement proposal. We also will develop a resource bank that our attorneys and pro bono attorneys can access during the clinic, and a resource bank for pro per litigants to access throughout the settlement process.</p> <p>The target constituency of our project is indigent, unrepresented tenants in San Mateo County. According to a 2024 Stanford Law School study, alleged nonpayment of rent was the basis for eviction in 85% of cases in San Mateo County in 2023 - up from 75% in 2019. In 2024, 30% of our MSC litigants self-identified as disabled or lived with a disabled person in their household, 35% identified as female head of household, and 39% of all of our housing clients were limited English proficient.</p>	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Elder Law and Disability Rights Center	Clearing the Way: A Probate Partnership	Orange,	<p>Probate court addresses critical legal issues including guardianships, conservatorships, and decedents' estates—proceedings essential to the well-being of individuals impacted by age, illness, or incapacity. To move these cases forward, courts require litigants to respond to probate examiner's notes. However, this process presents one of the greatest barriers for self-represented litigants (SRLs), often resulting in repeated continuances and delays in final orders.</p> <p>This project will expand the Orange County Superior Court's existing Clearing Probate Notes Workshop at the Costa Mesa Justice Center (CMJC), a program that has proven highly effective but is currently limited by capacity. In partnership with the Court's Self-Help Services (SHS), the Elder Law and Disability Rights Center (ELDR) will increase the workshops from one half-day to one full-day per week, with the goal of adding more hours once fully operational.</p> <p>ELDR staff and trained volunteers will collaborate with SHS to provide in-person procedural guidance to SRLs. Services will include understanding probate notes, completing forms correctly, filing documentation on time, and learning how to access future notes online. No legal advice will be given, and no attorney-client relationship will be formed.</p> <p>Special attention will be paid to vulnerable populations, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families seeking limited conservatorships for minors with special needs. To reduce language barriers, services will be offered in Spanish and Vietnamese.</p> <p>This collaboration will empower SRLs, increase access to justice, and reduce the burden on court operations by minimizing delays and ensuring more cases proceed to final resolution.</p>	\$ 138,100.00	\$ 117,400.00
2026	Inland Counties Legal Services	Consumer Rights Clinic (CRC) EXPANDED	Riverside, San Bernardino,	<p>The Consumer Rights Clinic (CRC) reflects a successful and growing partnership with the Riverside and San Bernardino Superior Courts, providing legal assistance to unrepresented indigent consumers with debt collection lawsuits. If funded in 2026 the CRC will support existing clinics as well as adding an additional courthouse. A new component will include incorporating direct referrals gained through ICLS' interview research results which consist of investigating why debtors fail to participate in the litigation process. One-Sided Litigation: Lessons from Civil Docket Data in California Debt Collection Lawsuits Debt Collection Lab.</p> <p>The CRC will fund an attorney, a paralegal, and a legal assistant, building upon a document automation application created for the project (with non-Partnership funds) that allows consumers to respond, propound discovery, and attempt settlement with opposing counsel. All documents produced are reviewed by an attorney.</p> <p>The San Bernardino Superior Court (at the Central District Justice Center) and the Riverside Superior Court (at Self-Help Centers) will continue providing space for ICLS to operate and make CRC referrals. Staff will serve pro se defendants in the courthouses or virtually on a regular schedule preparing responsive pleadings and settlement offers. Staff will also attempt to settle/dismiss cases as soon as possible.</p> <p>ICLS will not represent the client on the record or appear in court on the client's behalf. Through counsel and advice and document preparation, ICLS will continue to increase access to justice for clients and alleviate the demand on the court's time by resolving cases expeditiously.</p>	\$ 288,300.00	\$ 250,000.00
2026	Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco	FLASH AOD	San Francisco,	<p>The Justice & Diversity Center of the Bar Association of San Francisco (JDC) requests Partnership Grant support to operate the Family Law Assisted Self Help and Attorney of the Day (FLASH AOD) project, which provides legal assistance to indigent Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) seeking dissolutions of marriage at the San Francisco Superior Court (Court), via its ACCESS Self-Help Center (ACCESS Center), along with volunteer attorney advocacy and/or settlement assistance via the AOD component of this new project. FLASH provides culturally sensitive and trauma-informed services in Spanish, Mandarin and English to DV survivors and other indigent SRLs who would otherwise be barred from access to justice.</p> <p>FLASH services consist of direct legal assistance to SRLs who are referred by the ACCESS Center. ACCESS staff screen SRLs for income eligibility and prioritize cases where the SRL would benefit most from receiving FLASH services. The FLASH Attorney meets one-on-one with SRLs referred by the ACCESS Center at each stage of their cases until a judgment of dissolution is obtained. The FLASH Attorney provides information and guidance and drafts all necessary pleadings for SRLs who would not be able to complete their divorce paperwork without the assistance of FLASH.</p> <p>Meanwhile, through the AOD component of this project, JDC will recruit, train, and coordinate volunteer attorneys to provide in-court legal assistance, advocacy, and/or settlement assistance for indigent SRLs on the Court's Law and Motion calendar, taking the FLASH Attorney's work one step further by ensuring that SRLs have access to competent counsel during their hearings. This new project enhancement will create a seamless service system to ensure that SRLs on the Court's Law and Motion calendar have access to competent in-court legal assistance to back up the pro se preparation and documents prepared by the FLASH Attorney.</p> <p>In March 2020, the ACCESS Center ended Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) Workshops and, indeed, all workshops and clinics. The Court now refers litigants directly to JDC's FLASH attorney when income-qualified SRLs need help with preparing for their MSCs and drafting MSC Statements. The FLASH Attorney works individually with each qualified SRL to complete the extensive MSC Statement and to prepare to present their case at the MSC.</p>	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	LACBA Counsel for Justice	Eviction Legal Services Project	Los Angeles,	<p>The Project (ELSP) offers self-help legal services to self-represented tenants and landlords involved in unlawful detainer proceedings. ELSP targets low-income residents of LA County, with a focus on those appearing at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse. Many of these litigants face procedural barriers that prevent meaningful participation in their cases, including lack of understanding of available legal options, unfamiliarity with court processes, and limited access to legal assistance. The Project provides legal information, assistance with court forms, and referrals to other legal and social service providers. Individual services include individual help with answers to unlawful detainer complaints, motions to set aside, claims of right to possession, and discovery-related documents for tenants. Individual services are provided through a hybrid model: litigants meet in person with a courthouse-based paralegal and connect virtually with trained pro bono attorneys using the court's Webex platform. A monthly in-person workshop offers discovery guidance for self-represented landlords. The Project will endeavor to provide coverage as scheduled on all days the SHC is open. Staff include an on-site paralegal, remote project attorney, remote supervising attorney and pro bono volunteers. The court provides dedicated workspace, access to shared equipment, and validated parking for clinic staff. Throughout the project, Court staff will be involved daily in making referrals, communicating with Project staff, and addressing issues as they arise. The goals of the project are to reduce defaults, improve litigant understanding of their legal options, and support procedural fairness by enabling meaningful participation in eviction cases through targeted, early-stage legal support.</p>	\$ 179,000.00	\$ 179,000.00
2026	LACBA Counsel for Justice	Domestic Violence Legal Services Project (DVP)	Los Angeles,	<p>DVP supports self-represented litigants in restraining order cases by providing legal information, help with court forms—including requests, responses, custody mediation, and renewals—and warm referrals for counseling, legal aid, and court accompaniment. By empowering litigants to make informed decisions and engage with the court system, DVP helps bridge the access-to-justice gap.</p> <p>Volunteer attorneys and law students assist litigants one-on-one, with all work reviewed by the Directing or Project Attorney. Volunteers complete training, a practice assignment, and shadowing shifts to ensure high-quality service. Participation is available both in person and remotely, improving pro bono accessibility. DVP also reviews self-drafted petitions and explains court procedures to litigants seeking technical assistance.</p> <p>Located in Room 235 of the Stanley Mosk Courthouse near the Restraining Order Center, DVP operates Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and 1:00–3:30 p.m., and Friday, 8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m., in alignment with Court hours.</p> <p>The Project is staffed by a Directing Attorney, Project Attorney, Coordinator, and Paralegal. The Directing Attorney manages operations; the Coordinator handles scheduling, LegalServer, and grant reporting.</p> <p>Focusing on DVROs for 40 years, DVP proposes expanding services to include CHRO litigants in response to a Court-identified need. This expansion would support with CHRO requests and responses for extended family members and individuals facing harassment due to new relationships involving ex-partners with children who do not qualify for DVROs. Plans include updating or creating a web-based forms preparation platform, developing CHRO-specific pro se materials, training staff, and preparing volunteers to assist with both CHRO and DVRO cases—broadening access and pro bono engagement.</p>	\$ 127,354.00	\$ 127,400.00
2026	Law Foundation of Silicon Valley	SCC Court Partnership	Santa Clara,	<p>Santa Clara County has the second-highest number of court-ordered evictions in the Bay Area, following Alameda County. While eviction filings declined during the pandemic, unlawful detainer (UD) cases have since surged and remain elevated. With the expiration of COVID-era protections and resources, many low-income, unrepresented litigants are now navigating a complex and high-stakes legal process.</p> <p>This Partnership proposal aims to support both unrepresented landlords and tenants involved in UD cases. The initiative would include courthouse-based UD Navigators, staffed by the Law Foundation, serving as the first point of contact for litigants seeking assistance. These Navigators will direct individuals to existing services and help set realistic expectations about the court process.</p> <p>Additional services will include workshops available to all litigants, covering topics such as an overview of the court process, trial preparation, and settlement strategy. The Law Foundation will also expand its in pro per Answer Clinic to supplement the Court's existing Self-Help Center. Individualized case services will prioritize post-judgment matters and include referrals to supportive services and credit repair resources. Bilingual outreach will specifically target Spanish- and Vietnamese-speaking litigants, and all services will be immigration status-neutral.</p> <p>Outreach efforts will prioritize high-eviction zip codes, particularly in San Jose's downtown and East Side neighborhoods, while also extending to rural areas in South County.</p> <p>By addressing the increasing complexity and volume of UD cases, this proposal seeks to reduce the risk of homelessness, improve legal outcomes, and promote housing stability across both urban and rural communities in Santa Clara County.</p>	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 202,500.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Legal Access Alameda	Family Law Status Conference	Alameda,	<p>The Family Law Status Conference Clinic ("FLSC Clinic") assists litigants appearing on special Self-Represented Litigant Family Law Status Conference calendars in a family law department. This program brings a Legal Access staff attorney (the FLSC Attorney) on-site to provide expanded services to litigants and oversight of volunteer attorneys.</p> <p>The FLSC clinic assists with Dissolution, Legal Separation, Nullity, and Parentage cases. Clinic staff (the FLSC attorney and Self-Help attorney) and volunteer attorneys help low-income litigants understand family law case procedure and complete or correct necessary forms, with the goal of assisting litigants in moving their cases to a final resolution, either by completing judgment, dismissal, or referring the case for trial setting. This helps the court with the status conference compliance requirement under CRC Rule 5.83(c)(2) and facilitates more efficient support to litigants with on-the-spot assistance and by identifying and correcting issues early in the case.</p> <p>Beginning mid-2020, the FLSC department began holding all its hearings via Zoom video conference and consolidated all FLSC clinic cases to Tuesdays. Clinic staff send litigants required forms electronically, by mail or sets an in-person appointment. The FLSC Attorney follows up with litigants after each clinic with the forms completed during the clinic, written instructions for next steps, and referral information. When not clinic, the FLSC Attorney also reviews proposed judgments for completeness and assists litigants with submitting forms for filing. Finally, the FLSC Attorney identifies cases in other family law departments that would benefit from clinic assistance and works with bench officers to facilitate referrals to the clinic.</p>	\$ 46,000.00	\$ 46,000.00
2026	Legal Access Alameda	Request for Order and Service Project	Alameda,	<p>The Request for Order and Service Project will offer Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) seeking custody and support orders assistance with the steps of the order process, from drafting the Request for Order (RFO) (Form FL-300) to submitting the order after hearing for judicial review. A Legal Access Alameda attorney (LAA Attorney) will work onsite at the Hayward Hall of Justice in collaboration with Self-Help Center (SHC). The LAA Attorney will train and schedule volunteer attorneys to assist the program.</p> <p>The LAA Attorney will hold in-person and remote appointments to assist SRLs with all steps of a RFO, including: drafting the FL-300 and supporting documentation, including temporary emergency requests; reviewing proof of service forms before the hearing; and provide support with filing of required forms. The appointments will be made by SHC staff, for low-income SRLs who are unable to be served by the SHC.</p> <p>The project will also offer in-court assistance on the court's SRL-Only RFO calendars. In court, project staff and volunteers will work closely with courtroom staff to assist SRLs and the Court by drafting the order after hearing, providing information about court procedures, and assisting with support calculations.</p> <p>The main goal of this project is to address roadblocks that SRLs face when seeking custody and support orders, leaving them unprepared for their initial hearing. It provides early intervention to fix issues that contribute to continuances for the court and SRLs. The project seeks to ensure that SRLs leave their hearing with a signed, clear, and enforceable court order.</p>	\$ 62,000.00	\$ 62,000.00
2026	Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Post-Judgment Relief Project	Los Angeles,	<p>For over 20 years, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) has partnered with the Los Angeles Superior Court to provide high-quality, courthouse-based assistance to self-represented litigants. In the upcoming year, LAFLA seeks Partnership Grant funds to support two full-time attorneys to develop a unique Post-Judgment Relief Project at the Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse in Long Beach. This project will be strategically located within the South region's largest courthouse and self-help center, assisting thousands of low-income litigants who have received a court decision that they need to finalize or wish to modify. By doing so, the project will enable litigants to successfully exit the court system, while empowering others to alter or enforce judgments that affect their stability and well-being.</p> <p>Specifically, project attorneys will collaborate with the Court to assist with post-judgment matters related to eviction, family law, consumer debt, and criminal records. The project will also support indigent litigants seeking to finalize family law judgments. Given that 80% of family law cases involve at least one self-represented litigant by the time of judgment, this initiative addresses a crucial need for those navigating this complex process. In addition to providing individualized services, the project will conduct onsite eviction settlement and trial preparation workshops in response to the increasing number of self-represented litigants who obtain default judgments or lose at trial. The project will operate inside the Long Beach Courthouse Self-Help Center from Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM, and Monday to Thursday, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM.</p>	\$ 299,000.00	\$ 263,038.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Rapid Response Remote Project	Los Angeles,	<p>Since 2020, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) has been at the forefront of providing remote self-help assistance, serving over 35,000 litigants through its evolving suite of telephone and electronic resources. In the upcoming year, LAFLA is seeking Partnership Grant funds to support a full-time attorney who will develop a new remote self-help model. This model is aimed at providing time-sensitive assistance to low-income litigants across Greater Los Angeles who cannot visit a self-help center due to barriers like disasters, disability, and employment.</p> <p>First, this project will focus on delivering extended services, such as document preparation, for litigants isolated from courthouse-based centers and facing imminent threats to their safety and security. To support this initiative, LAFLA will enhance its legal intake and triage tool to identify impacted individuals and continue to operate its live self-help hotline Monday to Thursday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Additionally, LAFLA will establish a volunteer program to increase its capacity and collaborate with the Court to remotely supervise its Eviction Answer Clinic. The project will also work together with the Court, the Judicial Council, and other partners to create a Self-Help Disaster Assistance webpage. This resource will be the first of its kind in California, showcasing both existing and forthcoming self-help resources to enable a more rapid response during current and future disasters.</p> <p>By concentrating its remote efforts on the intersections between case urgency and courthouse accessibility, LAFLA's assistance will ensure that access to justice is within reach for more vulnerable Angelenos.</p>	\$ 147,200.00	\$ 147,200.00
2026	Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara County	Legal Resource Center Partnership	Santa Barbara,	<p>LAFSBC proposes to continue its successful Partnership program by using grant funds for an experienced self-help attorney for the civil Legal Resource Centers (LRC) and a part-time legal assistant. Until the hiring of a 3rd LRC attorney with Partnership funds in 2020, the staffing level of the courthouse Legal Resource Centers had not increased for at least 16 years. Santa Barbara County and the Central Coast continues to be underserved for civil legal needs for indigent people. Santa Barbara County has no ABA law schools, no international law firms, nor any local volunteer attorney services organization. In calendar year 2024, the LRCs countywide served over 9,000 self-represented litigants in civil matters. The LRC partnership attorney, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, will work 1 day per week in person at the Lompoc courthouse. On the remaining days, the bilingual LRC Partnership attorney will assist SRRLs countywide by phone, email, or videoconference, with a focus on mid and south county residents. The LRC legal assistant will provide in-person bilingual Spanish language support to the LRC at the Santa Barbara courthouse. The other attorneys, funded separately, will cover in-person services in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria. We believe that by providing a combination of remote and in-person services, we will best meet the needs of residents across the 75 mile length of our county.</p>	\$ 229,200.00	\$ 206,300.00
2026	Legal Aid of Marin	Eliminating Barriers to Economic Stability Through Marin Community Court	Marin,	<p>Marin Community Court (MCC) removes barriers to economic stability for low-income Marin County residents by providing an alternative to traditional traffic court. Operated by Legal Aid of Marin (LAM), in partnership with the Marin County Superior Court (MCSC), MCC helps resolve non-criminal traffic infractions, parking tickets, lifestyle citations (e.g., jaywalking or open container), and related driver's license issues that can lead to housing precarity and economic instability. Additionally, MCC helps participants negotiate FastTrak late fees and secure financial assistance for vehicle registration and insurance costs (financial assistance has come from another grant funded by Marin County). MCC dockets are held on the second Tuesday of each month, from 2 to 5 p.m., in a hybrid format, both in person and via Zoom, to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities and those with limited digital access. Each session is staffed by LAM staff, pro bono attorneys, and an MCSC Judge and clerk. MCC intake is available at all of LAM's almost 200plus annual outreach events, strategically held across the county to ensure geographic equity and consistent access to services in community-based settings. To deepen impact, LAM will expand targeted outreach and follow-up case management to ensure participants are not only assisted through current MCC services but also connected with additional services that support long-term stability. Project funding will support LAM staffing and support of MCC operations, along with targeted efforts to: (1) resolve traffic court matters, (2) expand targeted MCC outreach, and (3) strengthen case management and service linkages.</p>	\$ 211,200.00	\$ 200,600.00
2026	Legal Aid of Marin	Homelessness Prevention Through UDMSC Partnership with Marin Superior Court	Marin,	<p>The Marin Unlawful Detainer Mandatory Settlement Conference (UDMSC) program is a critical intervention in Marin's affordable housing crisis, serving as a lifeline for marginalized residents facing potential eviction. This innovative partnership between Marin County Superior Court and Legal Aid of Marin (LAM) delivers essential pre-trial settlement services to unrepresented litigants who cannot afford attorneys yet face proceedings that will fundamentally impact their housing security and economic stability.</p> <p>Every Thursday at 1:30pm, experienced housing attorneys—both dedicated staff and committed pro bono volunteers—advocate for low-income tenants and landlords navigating the complicated and technical nature of eviction proceedings. Without the vital intervention this program provides, marginalized residents would confront seasoned opposing counsel alone, almost inevitably resulting in displacement, homelessness, and damaging financial consequences that reverberate long after an eviction proceeding is over.</p> <p>Operating through mandatory Zoom conferences overseen by Marin Superior Court Judges, Marin's UDMSC program transforms traditionally adversarial proceedings into opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Skilled attorneys guide parties toward creative, mutually acceptable resolutions that preserve housing stability while respecting the property rights of housing providers.</p> <p>The program's impact extends beyond individual cases. By systematically preventing displacements and homelessness, increasing judicial efficiency, and mobilizing private attorneys to advance access to justice, this initiative addresses Marin's acute housing crisis while strengthening the judicial system's fundamental responsibility to serve all residents fairly. When families remain housed and disputes are resolved through skilled mediation, entire communities experience measurable benefits in housing stability, economic independence, and civility.</p>	\$ 182,100.00	\$ 182,100.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	Caregivers and Small Estates Accessing Justice (CSEAJ)	San Bernardino,	<p>The Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino (LASSB), in partnership with the Superior Court of California, County of San Bernardino, seeks to expand a proven court-based initiative addressing urgent legal needs in Small Estates, Guardianship, and Conservatorship cases. These issues place immense burdens on low-income families—particularly those caring for aging adults or vulnerable children—who are often left to navigate the legal system alone.</p> <p>Our project focuses on assisting self-represented litigants in historically under-resourced areas like Fontana and Victorville. These regions serve as legal access points for many rural residents who would otherwise face long travel times or insurmountable barriers to justice. Too often, these communities are overlooked by traditional legal service delivery models.</p> <p>Services are offered in English and Spanish, in-person and virtually, with a focus on trauma-informed support, document preparation, and procedural guidance before and after court hearings. Our project also serves as a regional hub for pro bono volunteers and law student interns, leveraging community resources to expand impact.</p> <p>Currently staffed by 1.0 FTE attorney and 2.0 FTE paralegals, we will add 0.5 FTE for an onsite paralegal at the Fontana courthouse, where demand continues to grow. This new position will enhance intake and client support capacity, ensuring timely and effective services.</p> <p>By continuing and expanding this work, we will reduce court backlog, strengthen procedural fairness, and deliver vital legal help to communities too often left behind.</p>	\$ 250,877.00	\$ 250,000.00
2026	Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	Riverside Court Domestic Violence Housing Program	Riverside	<p>The Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino (LASSB), in partnership with the Riverside Superior Court, proposes a court-based legal access project to support survivors of domestic violence—particularly those who are low-income, marginalized, and navigating multiple systemic barriers. Domestic violence is a leading cause of housing instability and poverty for women and families, yet survivors are too often left to navigate a complex, retraumatizing legal system without support.</p> <p>LASSB will provide trauma-informed, culturally competent legal services to help survivors stabilize their lives and assert their rights. Services will include document preparation, court navigation, and access to legal counsel. Two trained paralegals will be onsite at the Riverside Superior Court: one focused on procedural assistance and safety planning, and one dedicated to more intensive support, including drafting declarations and preparing for court. Due to space constraints, a supervising attorney will be available virtually to review cases and provide real-time legal guidance.</p> <p>The clinic will operate Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.–4:00 p.m. The Court will play a critical role in connecting litigants to services and supporting referral workflows. LASSB would be onsite in Riverside Court and Menifee Court. Menifee is subject to space.</p> <p>In 2024, LASSB assisted 1,793 domestic violence survivors—33% in Riverside County. Of those served: 82% were women; 27% were from limited English proficient households; 25% spoke Spanish; 13% were disabled; 2% were veterans; and 84% identified as Black, Hispanic, or other communities of color. This project meets an urgent and growing need.</p>	\$ 250,600.00	\$ 250,000.00
2026	Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	San Bernardino Court Domestic Violence Housing Program	San Bernardino	<p>The Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino (LASSB), in partnership with the San Bernardino Superior Court, proposes a court-based legal access initiative to support survivors of domestic violence—particularly those navigating the intersection of poverty, language barriers, and systemic discrimination. Domestic violence remains a leading cause of homelessness, trauma, and court involvement in San Bernardino County, where survivors are too often left to face the legal system alone.</p> <p>This project will embed trauma-informed legal assistance directly within the courthouse, ensuring that survivors—many of whom are women of color, immigrants, or limited English proficient—receive timely, accessible support. LASSB will provide legal information, document preparation, and procedural guidance tailored to the needs of those experiencing abuse. Two trained paralegals will be stationed onsite at the San Bernardino courthouse to assist walk-in litigants and referrals. A supervising attorney will provide same-day legal oversight and consultation virtually, an efficient model that accommodates space limitations while maintaining high-quality service delivery.</p> <p>The clinic will operate Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., leveraging LASSB's deep community trust and history of collaboration with the court. Judicial officers and staff will help identify high-need litigants and support streamlined referrals.</p> <p>In 2024 alone, LASSB assisted 1,793 applicants with domestic violence-related issues—83% of whom were women, 29% from limited English proficient households, and 77% Hispanic. This project responds directly to their needs and advances a more just and accessible court system.</p>	\$ 255,157.00	\$ 237,500.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Legal Aid Society of San Diego	East County Restraining Order Clinic	San Diego,	<p>In partnership with the San Diego Superior Court, Legal Aid Society of San Diego's (LASSD) Pro Bono Program seeks to continue offering a full-time Domestic Violence/Civil Harassment/Elder Abuse Restraining Order Clinic at the East County branch of the San Diego Superior Court. The Court expressed a need for daily full-time services to be offered to East County residents who are seeking protection from violence, stalking, sexual assault, elder/dependent adult abuse, and severe harassment. The project will operate daily in the East County Regional Center branch court from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, providing assistance with court forms, explanation of the law, options and alternatives, and referrals.</p> <p>The project will be staffed with one staff attorney, one advocate, and volunteer attorneys and students. Ongoing communication with court personnel will create a collaborative program that benefits both the court and self-represented litigants in having appropriate paperwork processed efficiently.</p> <p>The main goals of the project are to help self-represented litigants access and fully participate in the legal system, and educate litigants so they can make more informed choices that result in effective and efficient filings for the litigant and the Court. Helping litigants complete necessary paperwork ensures that the Court is given the information necessary to render a decision on a temporary restraining order that day. By providing these services, the project assists pro per petitioners <u>protect themselves from dangerous situations, and pro per respondents protect themselves from frivolous litigation.</u></p>	\$ 247,100.00	\$ 247,100.00
2026	Legal Aid Society of San Diego	South Bay Restraining Order Project	San Diego,	<p>In partnership with the San Diego Superior Court, the Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD) Pro Bono Program seeks to continue offering the sole full-time Domestic Violence/Civil Harassment/Elder Abuse Restraining Order Clinic at the South County branch of the San Diego Superior Court. The Court has expressed the need for daily full-time services to assist South County residents seeking protection from violence, stalking, sexual assault, elder/dependent adult abuse, and severe harassment. The project would operate daily in the South County Regional Center branch court from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, providing assistance with court forms, explanation of the law, options and alternatives, and referrals.</p> <p>The project will be staffed with one staff attorney, one advocate, and volunteer attorneys and students. Ongoing communication with court personnel will create a collaborative project that benefits both the court and self-represented litigants in having appropriate paperwork processed efficiently.</p> <p>The main goals of the project are to help self-represented litigants access and fully participate in the legal system, and educate litigants so they can make informed choices resulting in effective and efficient filings for the litigant and the Court. Helping litigants complete necessary paperwork ensures that the Court receives the information necessary to render a decision on a temporary restraining order that day. By providing these services, the project assists pro per petitioners <u>protect themselves from dangerous situations, and pro per respondents protect their due process rights by properly responding to petitions.</u></p>	\$ 215,700.00	\$ 215,700.00
2026	Legal Assistance for Seniors	Alameda County Probate Court Clinics	Alameda,	<p>Legal Assistance for Seniors and the Alameda County Court's Self Help Center will provide pro per assistance to low income litigants with probate procedural requirements for small estate affidavits, guardianships of the person, and limited conservatorships of the person. Low-income litigants fail to collect estate assets because they are unaware of the small estate affidavit process and believe a costly probate is required. Without this project, there are no resources to assist guardianship and limited conservatorship litigants with the complicated procedural requirements. Access to these processes can be key to financial security, housing stability, access to medical care, education and basic needs.</p> <p>Self Help will host two clinics a month in Oakland, staffed by both Self Help staff and LAS staff. Guardianship petitioners will be helped on the first Monday of the month from 1:30-4:00pm, and limited conservatorship petitioners will be assisted on the third Monday of the month 1:30-4:00pm.</p> <p>LAS will host two clinics on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 1:30-4:00pm, providing assistance with notice, procedural issues and objections. The LAS workshops will be staffed by LAS staff and volunteers. LAS staff and volunteers will provide one-on-one assistance for small estate affidavits. Self Help staff will help screen and refer these litigants. Part of the evaluation process will be to determine if a clinic should be added specifically for small estate affidavit assistance.</p> <p><u>The goal of this project is to increase access to probate court processes and to reduce continuances for unrepresented low income litigants.</u></p>	\$ 101,300.00	\$ 101,300.00
2026	Legal Assistance for Seniors	Alameda County Consumer Law Assistance for Seniors	Alameda,	<p>Legal Assistance for Seniors and the Alameda County Court's Self Help Center will provide pro per assistance to low-income older adults with consumer law matters. In our consumer law practice, we are seeing an increased demand for help with all types of consumer issues, and an increased need for the small claims petition assistance we provide as part of our housing practice. In observing the case management conference calendars for consumer debt collection cases, and in speaking with the Judge presiding over those cases, there is a significant number of unrepresented older adult litigants who need assistance navigating the process.</p> <p>One element of the project is a clinic for assistance with small claims petitions, which will be held virtually on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 1:30 -3:30pm. Self Help will host the clinic and it will be staffed by Self Help and LAS. The second element is day of court assistance, at the debt collection case management conference calendars, provided by LAS and volunteers twice a month on Thursdays from 9:30am to 11:30am. The court will make the litigants aware of the project and will allow access to a breakout room if available.</p> <p>Our goal is to provide access to justice for older adult litigants through assistance with small claims petitions, help asserting defenses in debt collection cases, and providing assistance with negotiations with creditors at the day of court. We will also educate litigants about the processes in small claims cases and debt collection cases.</p>	\$ 80,400.00	\$ 80,400.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Neighborhood Legal Services	Housing, a Chance to be Heard	Los Angeles,	<p>Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) proposes to continue and expand its vital work in the Pasadena Courthouse under a new project name: Housing, a Chance to be Heard. This project demonstrated significant impact and revealed a critical need for enhanced support for tenants facing eviction, particularly in a region still recovering from the Eaton wildfires.</p> <p>The Pasadena Courthouse processes a high volume of Unlawful Detainer (UD) cases. These are fast-tracked eviction proceedings in which tenants must file an Answer within 10 days of being served. The project will assist tenants by expanding services to include Motions to Set Aside Default Judgments in addition to helping file timely Answers. This support can mean the difference between unjust displacement and a fair opportunity to be heard in court. The project also aids tenants in filing motions for more time to relocate, promoting greater stability during transitions happening under extreme stress.</p> <p>In 2024, the Los Angeles Superior Court, with Stanford Law School's Legal Design Lab, released findings that underscored the urgency of expanding housing-related legal services, particularly to address the high rate of default judgments in UD cases. Their research confirmed what NLSLA sees daily: tenants are falling through the cracks at every stage of the eviction process.</p> <p>The project will also collect and analyze data to better understand why tenants fall into default, identify systemic barriers within the eviction process, and design targeted interventions that improve outcomes for vulnerable renters.</p>	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 162,000.00
2026	Neighborhood Legal Services	Stabilizing Families in the Antelope Valley and Beyond	Los Angeles,	<p>Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) proposes to expand its critical work in the Antelope Valley Courthouse under a new project name: Stabilizing Families in the Antelope Valley and Beyond. The program will support litigants seeking to obtain, contest, or terminate legal guardianships by providing comprehensive resources and assistance at all stages of the process.</p> <p>Los Angeles County, spanning over 4,000 square miles, has only two courthouses that handle Guardianship matters, creating significant barriers to access to judicial relief for many families. One of these key hubs is located in the Antelope Valley, a geographically remote region in the high desert, which remains an underserved area with substantial community needs. This project will continue to offer in-person assistance at the Antelope Valley Courthouse while expanding remote services to ensure guardianship support is available to litigants countywide.</p> <p>To meet rising demand for language assistance, the project will incorporate additional bilingual paralegal support, enabling more families to receive culturally and linguistically appropriate assistance. Following the established Self-Help model, services will be limited to legal information, document preparation, and procedural guidance, without creating an attorney-client relationship, providing legal advice, or making court appearances.</p> <p>Stabilizing Families in the Antelope Valley and Beyond aims to increase access to justice, promote family stability, and ensure that individuals navigating guardianship proceedings are supported with the tools and information they need, no matter where they live in Los Angeles County.</p>	\$ 264,000.00	\$ 212,500.00
2026	Neighborhood Legal Services	Barriers to Justice: Empowering Self-Represented Litigants	Los Angeles,	<p>Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County (NLSLA) proposes a new project – Barriers to Justice: Empowering Self-Represented Litigants – a project designed to support self-represented litigants in the Pomona area.</p> <p>The project will focus on helping individuals overcome the most persistent challenges to advancing their family law cases. Litigants often ask why it is easy to get married yet so difficult to get divorced; the reality is that navigating the family court system without legal representation can be overwhelming. Initiating a case is only the first step – many litigants become stuck before reaching the final judgment due to procedural hurdles and systemic barriers.</p> <p>NLSLA identified the most common barriers that prevent cases from moving forward. Barriers to Justice is designed to specifically meet those needs.</p> <p>Key services will include assistance with posting and publication when litigants are unable to locate the opposing party in their case, as well as support for international service of process under the Hague Service Convention. NLSLA developed specialized expertise in this area through a prior Partnership Grant, and currently, no other court-based or legal aid organization provides this support. This one-of-a-kind project will also offer guidance with both financial disclosures and trial preparation.</p> <p>By addressing these procedural and informational gaps, the project seeks to not only remove barriers but to equip self-represented litigants with the tools, knowledge, and confidence needed to effectively advocate for themselves. In doing so, NLSLA aims to make justice more accessible and equitable for all.</p>	\$ 169,000.00	\$ 143,700.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	Public Counsel	Appellate Clinic - Los Expanded Innovation	Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo,	<p>The Appellate Clinic for Self-Represented Litigants, located at the Court of Appeal in Downtown Los Angeles, operates five days a week (with appointments three times per week from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm) to enhance access to justice. Staffed by an experienced, full-time Supervising Attorney and a full-time Paralegal, supplemented by pro bono attorneys, the Clinic provides essential resources and guidance to help litigants effectively navigate the appellate process.</p> <p>Central to our mission is the Online Library of Resources and Materials, which equips litigants with legal information and procedural guidance, enabling them to prepare accurate and persuasive briefs and reduce procedural errors that can delay Court proceedings.</p> <p>Our operations are closely coordinated with court and procedural developments to ensure alignment with emerging needs and enhance the efficiency of the Court system. Regular communication with the Court ensures our services remain relevant and impactful.</p> <p>Our main goals are to empower low-income appellants with knowledge and tools, reduce delays in the appellate system by improving pro se filings, and innovate with technology (including careful integration of generative AI) to extend our reach and the efficacy of the legal assistance and information we provide. One litigant recently described the Clinic as “a pillar I leaned on... without it, I would have broken down,” illustrating the transformative impact of our support on individuals.</p> <p>By bridging the technology gap between the court system and self-represented individuals, we seek to meet the unmet needs of the many individuals across society who cannot afford to hire a lawyer to represent them.</p>	\$ 370,000.00	\$ 212,500.00
2026	Public Counsel	Guardianship Clinic	Los Angeles,	<p>Public Counsel's Pro Per Guardianship Clinic addresses self-represented litigants' unmet need for guidance in navigating what can be a long and complex legal process. Our services result in fewer delays, improved court efficiency, and more favorable outcomes for litigants.</p> <p>The Clinic is located at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse in Downtown LA and operates Monday through Wednesday from 9am to 3pm. Staffed by a supervising attorney, a paralegal, and an intake coordinator—supplemented by trained volunteers—the Clinic provides the following services in English and Spanish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Screening to ensure that the litigant's legal matter is appropriate for filing in probate court; * Assistance in preparing petitions for guardianship, petitions to terminate guardianship, requests for visitation, and a variety of ex parte requests; and * Assistance with notices and other required forms. <p>Demand for our services increases every year and has been particularly high recently due to the increased threat of deportations. Unfortunately, we were forced to reduce staff and days of operation in January of this year, due to reduced funding. A Partnership Grant would enable us to rehire a second attorney and resume operating four days a week.</p> <p>Some litigants are scared to visit the courthouse due to their immigration status. We have therefore uploaded guides in English and Spanish onto Public Counsel's website that cover various aspects of the Guardianship process. A Partnership Grant would expand our community outreach activities to this group.</p> <p>Our operations are closely coordinated with court clerks and investigators to ensure alignment with judicial needs, enhancing the efficiency of the court system. Regular communication with the Court ensures our services remain relevant and impactful.</p> <p><i>The Clinic's main goal is to provide the litigants we serve with the tools they need to understand their case and to obtain the outcome they hope to achieve.</i></p>	\$ 402,100.00	\$ 237,500.00
2026	Riverside Legal Aid	Community Probate and Conservatorship Access Project	Riverside,	<p>Riverside Legal Aid (RLA) proposes to provide legal assistance in the areas of probate small estates, probate accounting, guardianships, and conservatorships, with an emphasis on supporting low-income families and vulnerable children and adults. RLA's goal is to increase access to justice for low-income residents by demystifying complex legal processes, reducing procedural barriers, and equipping clients with the legal tools they need to stabilize and protect their families and loved ones.</p> <p>This project will serve heirs of small, cash-poor estates and indigent parties involved in protective proceedings who meet IOLTA income eligibility guidelines. RLA assistance will help ensure timely and accurate filings, reducing court congestion and helping cases move more efficiently through the system. RLA will provide one-on-one consultations, workshops, and self-help clinics, both virtually and in person. The project will operate from RLA's offices in Riverside and Indio, as well as clinics located at the Riverside, Palm Springs, and Murrieta courthouses. Emphasis will be placed on expanding access in underserved areas of Riverside County. Clients will have access to individualized consultations by phone or in person Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Weekly courthouse-based clinics will offer in-person assistance, with a specialized probate accounting clinic scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of every month. Project staffing will include one part-time staff attorney, one contract attorney, five volunteer attorneys, and 2.5 paralegals. Court services will include in-court and telephonic referral support, provided in collaboration with the Superior Court.</p>	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 166,300.00

Grant Year	Organization Name	Project Name	Counties	Project Abstract	Total Amount Requested	Recommended Grant Amount
2026	San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program	North County Restraining Order Clinic	San Diego,	<p>The North County Restraining Order Clinic (NCROC) is a collaboration between San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Inc. (SDVLP) and the San Diego Superior Court (Court), to assist survivors of abuse in obtaining legal protection and referrals for legal and social services providers. Rates of domestic violence are at an all-time high in North County - survivors of domestic violence in this region account for 46% of the County's domestic violence-related homicides.</p> <p>The NCROC is located on the first floor of the Vista Courthouse at 325 South Melrose Drive Vista, CA 92081, and is open Monday through Friday during the Court's operating hours of 8:30a.m - 5:00p.m., excluding court holidays. The NCROC is staffed by one Senior Staff Attorney and a bilingual Legal Administrative Assistant, who are both on-site full-time. Additional support is provided by SDVLP volunteers, including attorneys and law student interns. The NCROC staff provide one-on-one assistance to survivors of domestic violence, civil harassment, and elder abuse, by completing restraining order applications which survivors file as self-represented litigants (SRLs). Litigants helped by the NCROC are also given access to SDVLP's online library of informational videos and webinars on how to identify relevant evidence and file it, how to prepare for a TRO hearing, what constitutes proper service and how to accomplish it, and technology abuse. SDVLP regularly collaborates with the Court through quarterly meetings with court staff, judicial officers, and other DV service providers, and yearly focus groups where court staff and judicial officers provide feedback on NCROC services.</p>	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 180,000.00
2026	San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation	Small Claims Advisor	San Luis Obispo,	<p>For at least the last decade, the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office ran the Small Claims Advisor program out of their office in the court house. One long-time non-attorney employee ran the program as part of her position with the Economic Crimes Unit. During the pandemic, the program continued to run remotely with questions answered by email or phone. In June 2024 the long-time Small Claims Advisor employee retired from the DA's office and the office decided to terminate the program. Since that time, organizations assisting self-represented litigants, including SLOLAF, have experienced an increase in calls looking for help with small claims with nowhere to send them for help. The Superior Court Commissioner, who hears the small claims calendar, noticed noticed the loss of the Small Claims Advisor almost immediately with far more mistakes being made, trials being continued due to these mistakes and many more frustrated self-represented litigants trying to navigate the process without anywhere to turn for help. This proposed grant project would meet that need by allowing SLOLAF to hire a half-time paralegal or legal assistant to provide office hours at the court house, three days a week, as well as by email and phone. Court participation will include providing accessible space for the Small Claims Advisor in the court house, information on the Court's web site, collaboration with the Court's Self-Help Center team, and participation in quarterly meetings to provide feedback on the project.</p>	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 65,000.00
						Total \$ 6,849,488.00 \$ 6,182,838.00