EQUAL ACCESS PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

The Equal Access Fund was first created by the Budget Act of 1999 and has been renewed in each subsequent Budget Act. Each of these budgets allocated $10 million to the Judicial Council to be distributed in grants to legal services providers through the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission of the State Bar ("the commission"). We anticipate an additional $5 million in calendar year 2006 and subsequent years due to a special allocation in the Trial Court Trust Fund. The budget control language provides for two kinds of grants:

* Ninety percent of the funds remaining after administrative costs are to be distributed to legal services programs according to a formula set forth in California's Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts ("IOLTA") statute.

* Ten percent of the funds remaining after administrative costs are set aside for Partnership Grants to legal services programs for "joint projects of courts and legal services programs to make legal assistance available to pro per litigants."

Thus, in 2006, there will be approximately $1,425,000 in Partnership Grant funds.

Request for Proposals

In August the commission issues a Request for Proposals (RFP) Partnership Grants to the approximately 100 legal services programs currently receiving Legal Services Trust Fund funding. Proposals are due in September.

Selection Criteria

The Budget Act contains four essential elements for Partnership Grants:

* Recipients must be organizations that are eligible for a Legal Services Trust Fund Program grant.

* The funds must be granted for joint projects of legal services programs and courts.

* The services must be for indigent persons as defined in the Trust Fund Program statute.

* The services must be for self-represented litigants.

The commission funds a range of projects to address different needs. Partnership grants are to be considered as "seed money" for new efforts, and projects selected for funding are expected to find alternate sources of funding for a significant part of each project after three years of partnership support and to be independent of the Partnership Grant Program after no more than five years. Consequently we have encouraged programs to identify alternate sources of funding.

All proposals must include the following:

§ A letter of support from the applicable court's presiding judge.

§ Agreements between the legal services programs and the courts. As part of the grant process, we require recipients to develop a written agreement with the cooperating court indicating how the joint project, the court, and any existing self-help center, including the family law facilitator as appropriate, will work together.

§ Plans to provide for lawyers to assist and to provide direct supervision of paralegals and other support staff.

§ Protocols to minimize conflicts of interest, or to address them as needed, including: what resources are available to individuals who cannot be served for any reason; what would be the relationship between the provider and the pro per litigant; and other similar issues.

§ A plan to anticipate and meet the needs of litigants who are not within the legal services provider's service area or are ineligible for their services. While this can be a challenge for organizations with limited funding, a number of applicants have developed collaborations with other legal services providers that facilitate a broad availability of services. These solutions are being studied by the commission for possible applicability to other programs.

§ A plan to address the needs of unrepresented litigants who do not meet the financial eligibility requirements (e.g., by providing general information in the form of local information sheets, videos, workshops, etc.). Programs that have achieved success in this field are being closely evaluated so that ideas may be gleaned which might be effective for other programs that have yet to establish an effective referrals protocol.

§ A clearly stated policy regarding administration of financial eligibility standards, and established protocols to observe that policy.

§ A plan for project continuity, including efforts to identify and secure additional funding within three years.

Because all recipients of the Partnership Grants are organizations that are already receiving IOLTA Grants and IOLTA-Formula Grants through the Legal Services Trust Fund Program, they are subject to requirements for oversight and reporting that are already in place. The commission has also developed additional reporting requirements and evaluation procedures to apply specifically to the work to be done under these additional grants.

For additional information on these partnership grants please contact:

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or

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2005-06 PARTNERSHIP GRANTS WITH PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

PROGRAM LEGAL NAME	PROJECT NAME	COUNTY	NEW OR RETURNING APPLICANT?	DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED AWARD
BAY AREA LEGAL AID	Domestic Violence Emergency Orders Clinic	San Mateo	Second year of funding	At this project at the San Mateo Courthouse, clinic staff will assist pro per drop-ins who are filing or responding to domestic violence related restraining order applications, assisting people on an individual basis to complete the applications, review pleadings, and draft orders. The project will operate in partnership with a community social services organization for battered women.	$60,000
CALIFORNIA RURAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE	Landlord/Tenant and Small Claims Pro Per Assistance Project	San Joaquin	New proposal	The Court Administration Building will be the site for this project in which an attorney will provide advisory services or informational packets on landlord-tenant and small claims cases to indigent pro per litigants four full days each week.	$58,000
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA LEGAL SERVICES, INC.	Domestic Violence Rural Access Partnership	Kings	Second year of funding	This project increases access for victims of domestic violence for rural residents in Kings County. The project co-locates attorney or paralegal staff at rural shelters and other community-based sites. A strong community education component complements the direct services. Services and facilities are distributed both near the courthouse at the county seat, and in more remote, rural communities where resources are especially scarce.	$50,000
EAST BAY COMMUNITY LAW CENTER	Alameda County Clean Slate Clinic	Alameda	New proposal	This project, based at the Alameda County Courthouse, will provide a self-help clinic for people seeking to remove civil barriers to employment, housing, and civic participation resulting from old criminal convictions. In collaboration with the courts, District Attorney, Public Defender, and Probation Department, an attorney will train and supervise volunteer attorneys and law students to advise individuals of the forms of relief available to them, and to assist them in pursuing those remedies.	$50,000

GREATER BAKERSFIELD LEGAL ASSISTANCE, INC.	Pro Se Guardianship Project	Kern	Third year of funding	Sited in the Bakersfield Courthouse, a bilingual paralegal supervised by an attorney provides legal information and procedural guidance on the guardianship process to pro per litigants to meet the high and growing demand by grandparents for legal assistance in obtaining guardianships over grandchildren.	$50,000
INLAND COUNTIES LEGAL SERVICES	Banning and Indio Court Access Project	Riverside	Second year of funding	This project will provide services at the Banning Court in Riverside's rural Mid-County Region, an economically depressed area. An attorney with legal secretarial support will staff the project two days per week, providing legal information to all court customers on both sides of a dispute and preparing court documents for indigent pro se users who are unable to understand and complete court forms. ICLS expects most litigants will need help in family law, landlord/tenant, small claims and debt collection.	$50,000
INLAND COUNTIES LEGAL SERVICES	Proyecto Ayuda Legal	San Bernardino	Fourth year of funding	Legal information, forms preparation assistance and referrals are provided to self-represented litigants on family, guardianships and eviction cases, with services aimed at monolingual Spanish/limited-English speaking persons at the San Bernardino, Rancho Cucamonga and Victorville Courts. The proposed grant will help fund services to an estimated 4,800 to 6,000 consumers annually.	$60,000
LAW CENTER FOR FAMILIES	Alameda County Family Law Collaborative	Alameda	Second year of funding	This is a collaboration between the Superior Court of Alameda, Law Center for Families, the County Bar's Volunteer Legal Services Corporation, and the Legal Language Access Project that will provide a range of family law assistance. Experienced staff and pro bono attorneys will provide intake, assessment, and information regarding the legal process, and assistance filling out forms at Day-of-Court clinics in Oakland and Hayward courts on the self-represented litigant calendar days. Additional follow-up services will be offered. Interpreters will be provided from the Legal Language Access Project.	$40,000

LEGAL AID FOUNDATION OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY	Inglewood Self-Help Legal Access Center	Los Angeles	Fourth year of funding	Due to the high number of unrepresented litigants utilizing the Inglewood Courthouse (85-90%), the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors funded a self-help center modeled after the Van Nuys Center run by Neighborhood Legal Services. NLS subcontracts with LAFLA to staff the center with one attorney and one paralegal. Proposed Partnership Grant funding will supplement clinic staff with a paralegal and screener, so that the center can serve an anticipated 40-55 litigants per day. Staff help litigants with civil problems , however, landlord-tenant, family law, civil harassment TRO's, and small claims court claims matters.	$55,000
LEGAL AID FOUNDATION OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY	Self-Represented Litigant Resource Center	Santa Barbara	Fourth year of funding	The two Self-Represented Litigant Resource Centers, situated in the law libraries of each of the county courthouses, were established to assist self-represented litigants in a wide range of civil legal concerns. Each center is staffed by a supervising attorney and equipped with computers, books and self-help materials. Volunteers from the legal community, the local law schools and UC Santa Barbara continue to be key sources of volunteer assistance. Services will be provided free of charge to all residents of Santa Barbara County.	$60,000
LEGAL AID OF MARIN	Legal Self Help Center of Marin	Marin	Fourth year of funding	The Legal Self-Help Center of Marin was launched in 2003 in the new Marin Justice Center, where it plays an integral part, not only in providing a complete array of information services to pro pers, but also in screening users for direct referral to other legal assistance agencies and services throughout the county. With the active leadership of the Marin Superior Court and Legal Aid of Marin, Marin's Self-Represented Litigant Planning Team has grown to include nearly twenty organizations.	$35,000

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY	Compton Self Help Center	Los Angeles	Third year of funding	The Compton Self-Help Legal Center operates 4.5 days at the courthouse, housing a variety of services that help pro per court users to identify and explore their legal options, fill out and file necessary paperwork, and navigate their way through simple or complex legal processes. For more complex cases and those that are not well-suited to self-representation, the Center will refer clients to Community Legal Services (LAS-OC). Small workshops for income-eligible users focus on divorce, small claims, and eviction defense.	$70,000
LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, INC.	Conservatorship Clinic at the Probate Court	San Diego	Third year of funding	Working together with the Superior Court's Probate Division, this project brings assistance to those seeking to proceed in pro per with conservatorship actions or substitutes for conservatorship. Services will target the physically disabled and non-English speakers. Facilitator-style assistance will be provided to financially eligible participants in the main Probate Court through staff and volunteers who will provide information about conservatorship and alternates to conservatorship; they will also complete court documents and explain court proceedings. Weekly outreach broadens the reach of this project.	$25,000
LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, INC.	Unlawful Detainer Assistance Program	San Diego	Fourth year of funding	This grant renews an ongoing partnership with the Superior Court to provide on-site assistance to the many self-represented litigants in unlawful detainer actions in the East County division, completing paperwork for eligible tenants and informing them of legal processes and related consumer issues. The target community covers some 2,000 square miles that are home to thousands of indigent tenants with no practical access to services offered in the downtown areas. Targeted monthly outreach will heighten awareness of these services in this community.	$50,000
LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	Legal Information and Assistance Project	Shasta, Lassen, Siskiyou, Trinity	Third year of funding	This project assists low-income self-represented civil law litigants in four remote counties. Assistance is provided in a clinical format focusing on assisting consumers with state and local civil law requirements and procedures on filing and responding to pleadings, meeting service and notice requirements, and filing and obtaining enforceable orders after hearing. The project continues to expand the number of self-help center sites.	$40,000

LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA	Unlawful Detainer Mediation Project	Butte	Second year of funding	This program provides mediation services to all eligible litigants in unlawful detainer cases, prior to trial, for cases in the Butte Superior Court. Services would be provided at four Superior Court locations. The respective courts would send out notice to the litigants of both the mediation date (set at least 10 days prior to trial), and trial date and time. Mediation services would be conducted by an attorney-mediator. If the case is resolved, the mediator would file the stipulation with the appropriate court.	$17,000
LOS ANGELES CENTER FOR LAW & JUSTICE	Default Judgment Assistance Project	Los Angeles	Second year of funding	This project will assist self-represented litigants in the Family Law Division who have deficiencies in their default judgment papers. Default court staff will refer these litigants to the project where staff will assist them correct their deficiencies and help them secure a final judgment in their family law cases.	$65,000
NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY	Domestic Abuse Self-Help Project	Los Angeles	New proposal	Based in five different Los Angeles courthouses, this project will convert existing Domestic Violence Clinics from a representation model to a self-help model, focusing on assisting persons petitioning for domestic violence restraining orders. Workshops will be supervised by program staff and services will be primarily provided by volunteers.	$70,000
SAN DIEGO VOLUNTEER LAWYER PROGRAM	Domestic Violence Prevention Project	San Diego	Fourth year of funding	The Domestic Violence Prevention Project is a collaboration with the San Diego Superior Court to assist domestic violence victims in obtaining legal protection and referrals for counseling, shelter, support and ongoing legal services as appropriate. The project runs clinics at which staff and volunteers provide legal advice and assistance to victims in completing the domestic violence restraining order application which they will file in pro per. Services are offered to as many as 4,000 victims annually at the court's Madge Bradley Building in central San Diego and at its North and East County Regional Center.	$45,000
TOTAL:					**$950,000.00**

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Location:

Grant Recipients

Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and the state Equal Access Fund (EAF) are the two sources which fund grants administered by the Legal Services Trust Fund Program of The State Bar of California. These grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations that provide free civil legal services to low-income Californians. For more information about these organizations or to find a referral in your area go to www.lawhelpcalifornia.org.

2005-06 IOLTA and EAF Grant Recipients

Affordable Housing Advocates	San Diego
AIDS Legal Referral Panel	San Francisco
Alameda Co Bar Volunteer Legal Services	Oakland
Alameda County Homeless Action Center	Berkeley
Alliance for Children's Rights	Los Angeles
Asian Law Caucus	San Francisco
Asian Pacific American Legal Center	Los Angeles
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach	San Francisco
Bay Area Legal Aid	Oakland
Benchmark Institute	San Francisco
Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Los Angeles
Calcosh Legal Services Support Project	San Francisco
California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform	San Francisco
California Center for Law and the Deaf	San Leandro
California Indian Legal Services	Oakland
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation	Sacramento
California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.	San Francisco
California Women's Law Center	Los Angeles
Casa Cornelia Law Center	San Diego
Center for Community Advocacy	Salinas
Center for Health Care Rights	Los Angeles
Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law	Los Angeles
Center for Law in the Public Interest	Santa Monica
Central California Legal Services	Fresno
Centro Legal de la Raza	Oakland
Child Care Law Center	San Francisco
Children's Rights Clinic	Costa Mesa
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Orgs.	Sacramento
Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto	East Palo Alto
Contra Costa Senior Legal Services	Richmond

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	Berkeley
East Bay Community Law Center	Berkeley
Elder Law & Advocacy	San Diego
Family Violence Law Center	Oakland
Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance	Bakersfield
HALSA	Los Angeles
Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law	Los Angeles
Homebase: The Center for Common Concerns	San Francisco
Immigrant Legal Resource Center	San Francisco
Inland Counties Legal Services	Riverside
Inland Empire Latino Lawyers Legal Aid	Riverside
Inner City Law Center	Los Angeles
La Raza Centro Legal	San Francisco
Law Center for Families	Oakland
Law Foundation of Silicon Valley	San Jose
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	San Francisco
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Los Angeles
Legal Aid Foundation of Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara
Legal Aid of Marin	San Rafael
Legal Aid Society of Orange County	Santa Ana
Legal Aid Society of San Bernardino	San Bernardino
Legal Aid Society of San Diego	San Diego
Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County	San Mateo
Legal Aid Society of SF-Employment Law Center	San Francisco
Legal Assistance for Seniors	Oakland
Legal Assistance to the Elderly	San Francisco
Legal Center for Elderly and Disabled	Sacramento
Legal Services for Children	San Francisco
Legal Services for Prisoners with Children	San Francisco
Legal Services for Seniors	Seaside
Legal Services of Northern California	Sacramento
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice	Los Angeles
Los Angeles Co. Bar Association Projects	Los Angeles
McGeorge Community Legal Services	Sacramento
Mental Health Advocacy Services	Los Angeles
National Center for Youth Law	Oakland
National Economic Development & Law Center	Oakland
National Health Law Program	Los Angeles
National Housing Law Project	Oakland

National Immigration Law Center	Los Angeles
National Senior Citizens Law Center	Los Angeles
Neighborhood Legal Services	Pacoima
Prison Law Office	San Quentin
Pro Bono Project Silicon Valley	San Jose
Protection & Advocacy, Inc.	Sacramento
Public Advocates	San Francisco
Public Counsel	Los Angeles
Public Interest Clearinghouse	San Francisco
Public Interest Law Project	Oakland
Public Law Center	Santa Ana
Public Service Law Corp. of Riverside	Riverside
San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program	San Diego
San Francisco Bar Volunteer Legal Services	San Francisco
Santa Clara County Asian Law Alliance	San Jose
Santa Clara University Alexander Law Center	Santa Clara
Senior Adults Legal Assistance	San Jose
Senior Advocacy Center of Northern California	Redding
Senior Citizens' Legal Services	Santa Cruz
Senior Law Project	Lakeport
Sonoma County Legal Aid	Santa Rosa
The Impact Fund	Berkeley
UC Davis School of Law Legal Clinics	Davis
USC Law School Litigation Clinics	Los Angeles
USD School of Law Legal Clinics	San Diego
Voluntary Legal Services of Northern California	Sacramento
Western Center on Law and Poverty	Los Angeles
Western Law Center for Disability Rights	Los Angeles
Youth Law Center	San Francisco
Yuba-Sutter Legal Center for Seniors	Marysville

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