
From: Lynne Hiortdahl

Sent: Friday, November 6, 2020 9:42 AM

To: Nguyen, Doan <Doan.Nguyen@calbar.ca.gov>; Yvonne Mariajimenez

Cc: Carroll, Erica <Erica.Carroll@calbar.ca.gov>

Subject: Re: Additional Questions Regarding NLS' 2021 IOLTA Budget

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Hi Doan:

My apologies for the delay in responding. Please see our responses are below. Also, attached is the El Monte office lease agreement.

To what extent is NLS utilizing your office space currently? In other words, are you open for business as usual, operating at 25% capacity, etc.?

"NLSLA's offices are closed to the general public due to LA County Health Department directives. However, the offices are staffed by essential staff to ensure smooth and efficient remote and in-office operations. In addition, the offices remain open to all staff as needed to conduct business and by appointment with clients. Staff are encouraged to work from home when feasible and follow our procedures to safely access the office. The El Monte office building is between 25%-50% at full capacity, depending on the day. We anticipate being back to full capacity by July 1, 2021."

What specific improvements is NLS making? I think last year you stated a need to expand office space to accommodate increased staff, but is it the same this year?

"Now that we have been in the space for a while, operationally, it became clear that a few adjustments and additions are needed to maximize the effectiveness of the office. Specifically, NLSLA would like to install a sliding bifold door between the kitchen and community room, where clinics are held, to maximize the use of both spaces; and built-in credenzas in the kitchen and clinic spaces to aid with

overall noise control, privacy and storage. We anticipate this Phase II renovation will cost approximately \$100,000. NLSLA sought HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding from the City of El Monte, but were denied funding as NLSLA did not own the building. NLSLA requests the use of \$25,000 in 2021 IOLTA funds to cover 25% of the cost of the project."

If the office is not in use, what is the justification for making these improvements now? When do you anticipate making use of these changes?

"Legal Services are essential services as defined under state safe at home orders. Thus, NLSLA continues operating remotely while providing in-office access to staff to assist clients when needed. Thus, the El Monte office is being utilized at approximately 50% capacity. It is ideal to finish the renovations now keeping the risk of staff injury low and any work disruptions to a minimum during any construction and installation. We anticipate making the improvements in the first quarter of 2021, once funding approvals are secured."

What is the length of your lease? How would an investment such as this affect depreciation of the property? Do you contemplate an opportunity to sublease if you don't think you'll be using the space in the near future?

"NLSLA's El Monte Office Lease is for an initial term of 5 years (August 2018 to July 2023). The lease has two options to extend the lease for an additional 3-year period each from 2023 to 2026 and then 2026 to 2029 - an anticipated lease term of at least 11 years. The lease also includes a *Right of First Refusal to Purchase* the building clause should the landlord decide to sell the property. It has been a long-time goal of the program to own an office building in the San Gabriel Valley. This building is in a prime location within the heart of El Monte and near critical County resources that our clients frequently utilize. We continue to view all investments into this leased property as valuable use of NLSLA funds to support the critical work of the program and be a visible face and presence in the San Gabriel Valley. This investment would further enhance the value and appreciation of the property.

As NLSLA is utilizing the building for its intended purpose, a legal aid office, we do not intend to sublease the space. Our staff still need full access to their office and office equipment regardless of working on site or remotely. We anticipate being back to full capacity by July 1st, 2021."

Let us know if you have any questions or need further information.

Thank you,

Yvonne E. Mariajimenez, Esq.

President & CEO (she/her/hers)



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Lynne Hiortdahl

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