

LEGAL SERVICES TRUST FUND COMMISSION
BANK GRANTS COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Summary and Action Items
Friday, November 13, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
State Bar of California (Conference Call via Zoom)

OPEN SESSION

Chair Kim Savage called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Roll was taken and quorum was established.

Committee Members

Chair Kim Savage
Amin Al-Sarraf
Herman Debose
James Meeker
Richard Reinis

Liaison

Salena Copeland
(Legal Aid Association of
California)

State Bar Staff

Christine Holmes
Doan Nguyen

Public

None

II. CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Savage invited members of the public to comment on any items on the agenda. No public comment was made.

III. CONSENT

A. Approval of Meeting Summary and Action Items from July 20, 2020 Meeting

The Chair invited a motion to approve the Summary and Action Items from the July 20, 2020 meeting. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote (Meeker moved, Al-Sarraf seconded, DeBose and Reinis abstained).

IV. BANK COMMUNITY STABILIZATION AND REINVESTMENT (BCSR) GRANTS

A. Discuss and Approve 2020 Budget Revisions and Carryover Requests in Excess of 25 Percent of Grant Award for Recommendation to the Legal Services Trust Fund Commission

Senior Program Analyst Christine Holmes noted two errors on the Budget Revision and Carryover Request spreadsheet that was posted as meeting materials. 1) Central California Legal Services' 2020 grant amount was \$355,434 not \$355,287. The carryover percentage therefore dropped from 58 percent to 56 percent. 2) Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance's 2020 grant amount was \$288,714 not \$225,000. The carryover percentage therefore dropped from 58 percent to 46 percent.

Staff reported that eleven requests had been received to carryover or revise budgets in amounts exceeding 25 percent of their grant award, requiring Committee approval. Many organizations cited COVID-19 related issues for their requests. Programs with grants ending December 31, 2020 also expressed a desire to carryover funds in order to meet their goals and deliverables. Holmes reminded the Committee of the motion it had approved at its July 20, 2020 meeting to maintain a flexible approach to carry-over requests for 2018 Bank Grants with grant periods ending in 2020, in particular by allowing larger amounts to be carried over and by permitting spenddown over all of 2021; and, to maintain a flexible approve to budget revisions requests.

The Committee inquired about the requests that did not have a staff recommendation. Staff explained it deferred requests that exceeded fifty percent of the grant award for Committee consideration because that was the maximum amount the Committee has traditionally approved. Staff noted that given the current circumstances and the Committee's messaging about flexibility, the recommendation would be approval of all requests.

The Committee also noted that many requests cited difficulties with recruiting and maintaining staffing and asked if there was anything the State Bar could do. Staff noted that during monitoring visits it will flag for organizations if they have particularly low salary scales. Staff ultimately do not have the authority to do anything further. Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC) noted that low salaries in the legal aid community remains a systemic problem but addressed some ongoing efforts. Staff recommended the Committee bring up the issue to the full Commission to continue the discussion.

Noting that all requests were COVID-19 related and in light of the commitment the Committee made to be flexible, the Chair invited a motion that due to the extraordinary challenges brought by COVID-19, the Bank Grants Committee approval all 2020 budget revisions and carryover requests in excess of 25 percent. The motion was passed by unanimous roll call vote (Reinis, moved and Debose seconded).

V. NEXT STEPS

A. Discuss Release of 2022 Request for Proposal

Staff provided a brief overview of the Committee's last discussion regarding remaining Bank Grant funds. The Committee expressed its intent to reserve the funds for emergencies, like wildfires, but it did not make a commitment of when it would release the final RFP. Staff reported a leaning toward not releasing the funds in 2022, noting that IOLTA revenues did not decrease as sharply as predicted and the recent addition of Homelessness Prevention grants. The Committee also noted that 2021 budgets were expanded with the approval of all the carryover requests. No motion was required, and the Committee agreed to revisit the discussion during its next meeting.

B. Overview of 2021 Calendar

Staff provided an overview of the timeline for the Committee's meetings. This Committee's first 2021 meeting is scheduled for February 4.

VI. ADJOURN

There being no other business Chair Savage adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.