

LEGAL SERVICES TRUST FUND COMMISSION

PARTNERSHIP GRANTS COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary and Action Items

Friday, January 14, 2022, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

State Bar of California (Conference Call via Zoom)

Roll Call		
Members Present	Advisors	Staff
Chair Eric Isken	Judge Lisa R. Jaskol	Christal Bundang
William Boschelli		Elizabeth Hom
Jason Galkin	Liaisons	Danielle MacRae
Joseph Lee	Bonnie Hough	Dan Passamaneck
Christina Vanarelli	Melanie Snider	Colleen Seto

	Public Members	Members Absent
	None	Diana Kruze

OPEN SESSION

Chair Isken called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken, and quorum was established.

II. CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Isken invited members of the public to comment on any items on the agenda. No public comments were made.

III. CONSENT

A. Approval of Meeting Summary and Action Items from November 4, 2021 Meeting

The Partnership Grants Committee (committee) approved the Meeting Summary and Action Items from the November 4, 2021, meeting (Isken moved, Vanarelli seconded). The motion passed by unanimous roll call vote.

IV. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

A. Review and Approve Late 2021 Budget Revision Requests

Senior Program Analyst Christal Bundang reported on a late 2021 budget revision request. Budget revision requests were due on October 29, 2021. San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation (SLOLAF) submitted a budget revision request on November 12.

Since the budget revision request is greater than 25 percent of the total grant award, committee review and commission approval is required. SLOLAF requests to allocate 63.7 percent of their award toward personnel costs, so that the budget accurately reflects actual expenditures. Staff recommends approving SLOLAF's request.

The committee approved the following motion by unanimous roll call vote (Boschelli moved, Isken seconded):

RESOLVED, that the Partnership Grants Committee approve staff's recommendation regarding the late 2021 Budget Revision Request.

B. Updates Regarding 2021 Partnership Grants

Bundang reported that the 2021 Partnership Grants Evaluation Report will be released on January 28 and due on March 11. The reporting period is January 1 to December 31, 2021.

Grantees with approved 2021 carryovers will have until June 30, 2022, to spend down those funds. Any unspent funds will need to be returned to the State Bar and added to the Partnership Grant reserve for future distribution.

C. Updates Regarding 2022 Partnership Grants

Bundang gave updates on the 2022 partnership grants. The Judicial Council approved a total allocation of \$2,580,574 for 36 projects. The grant agreements were released in December 2021 and are due in January 2022. Award disbursement is scheduled for February 3, 2022. Due to new EAF reporting requirements in the State Budget Act, grantees must submit a 2022 Mid-Year Evaluation Report in July, reporting on project activities from January 1 through June 30.

D. Review 2022 Partnership Grant 2.0

Bundang provided background on Partnership Grants 2.0 (PG 2.0) funding opportunity and reminded the committee that nearly \$3.9 million is available for distribution. Bundang reported that 28 applications were submitted; 11 were supplemental applications and 17 were new applications. The supplemental applications requested a total of \$206,000. The new applications requested a total of \$4,511,478. There is a difference of approximately \$840,000 between the total requested amount and the available funding.

At its November 4 meeting, the committee delegated two review teams comprised of staff and one committee member to review the supplemental and new applications. Both review teams consisted of Senior Program Analyst Christal

Bundang, Senior Program Analyst Danielle MacRae, Senior Program Analyst Dan Passamaneck, and Program Analyst Colleen Seto. Committee member Christina Vanarelli serves on the review team for the supplemental applications and Chair Isken serves on the review team for the new applications.

a. Proposals Supplementing Approved 2022 Partnership Grant Projects

Bundang reported that the review team preliminarily reviewed all 11 supplemental applications, and staff is following up with some applicants to ensure they have addressed application deficiencies identified in the first 2022 application cycle. The supplemental amounts requested from each grantee ranged from \$4,000 to \$40,000, and the review team anticipates recommending that all supplemental applicants receive the full requested amount. Staff will present a formal recommendation to the committee at its February 16 meeting.

The committee asked why only 11 programs applied for supplemental funding. Staff indicated that some programs chose to focus their time and attention on preparing a new application instead, as evidenced by the large number of new applications (17) received, which is notably higher than usual.

b. New Proposals for 2022 Grant Funding

Chair Isken set forth the goals for the PG 2.0 initial calibration. Three applications for new projects were shared with the committee prior to the meeting and members were asked to submit preliminary scores for each, using the scoring rubric. During the meeting, the committee aimed to reach a consensus score for those applications. Chair Isken noted that the committee members' scores did not need to perfectly align on each category of the rubric for each proposal by the end of the meeting, because the goal ultimately was to provide guidance to the review team on how to apply the scoring rubric in application review, and to identify any specific aspects of a proposal that would merit an exceeds, meets, or below expectations score in the various rubric categories. The review team will utilize the feedback provided as it reviews the remaining 14 proposals.

The committee discussed the merits of each application – Inland Counties Legal Services, Mental Health Advocacy Services, and Public Counsel. Significant points of discussion and committee feedback on each application and each rubric category are summarized below.

Inland Counties Legal Services – Family Law Access Partnership

COURT INVOLVEMENT

This is a family law clinic in Riverside that takes place at a law school 0.7 miles from the courthouse. Some committee members had concerns about the clinic not being at the courthouse, particularly when considering client access. State Bar staff indicated it is not a requirement for projects to be “at or near a courthouse;” rather, the project should be well-integrated with the court.

The project includes enhanced access to court records. Committee members discussed whether access to court records was unique. If an attorney-client relationship is formed, the attorney would have access to the court records via their client. Bonnie Hough, liaison from the Judicial Council, indicated that if the attorney is not the attorney of record, they may not have access to court documents otherwise. The application notes the attorneys would have remote access to the case registry and documents, which some committee members found to be unique. Committee members were largely comfortable with the project scoring an “exceeds expectations” in court involvement.

PROJECT IMPACT

The project proposes to serve 300 clients with document preparation. To some committee members, 300 clients seemed low. State Bar staff noted that only a part-time attorney and part-time paralegal are charged to the project. The project would also leverage law school students. The committee discussed the time required to conduct document preparation and draft declarations and requested more clarity about the documents the program expects to prepare.

It is also a new project, which requires time to develop and launch the program. Some committee members were willing to give new projects more flexibility in the number of clients served when evaluating project impact. Committee members also asked the scoring team to consider the level of service provided in addition to the number of clients served.

ADMINISTRATION

On-site staff include a legal assistant and volunteers; the staff attorney would be available by video. State Bar staff noted that a lot of projects are supervised this way via video conferencing, and advocates (including legal assistants) are often experts in the relevant area of law. Committee members found this staffing to be adequate.

PROJECT BUDGET

Some committee members noted and were concerned that the project budget includes high administrative costs. State Bar staff noted that new projects may require higher administrative costs, but staff can follow up with the program to get more information on these costs. Most committee members scored the project budget at a “meets expectations.”

In 2022, the Rules Committee will be reviewing and establishing, as needed, a new policy regarding indirect costs.

CONTINUITY PLANNING

The proposal identified potential sources of other funding; the committee found this to be a “meet expectations” on the scoring rubric. Bundang noted that it might be hard for new project proposals to reach an “exceeds expectations” rating, but committee members felt that if a proposal demonstrated other funding sources committed to the project, that might warrant an “exceeds expectations.” The committee noted that projects that tried but were unsuccessful in securing other funding should not necessarily be punished for being unsuccessful; that might still warrant a “meets expectations.”

EVALUATION

Partnership Grant evaluation requirements state that programs must include a survey and at least one other evaluative method. Committee members noted the survey is short, which may make it easier to use. Committee members discussed whether administering a survey over an electronic app merits an “exceed expectations.” Bonnie Hough of the Judicial Council noted that courts have guided interview apps that are free to use. Committee members indicated that if a program devotes resources to evaluation (of case filings, for example), that might merit an “exceeds expectations” scoring.

FUNDING PRIORITY

The committee has historically given preference to new projects, but most PG 2.0 applications are proposing new projects. Committee members discussed whether the relative quality of a project should be considered when scoring the funding priority category. The scoring rubric indicates funding priorities include new projects, projects serving rural areas, projects responsive to a recent emergency or disaster, or high-functioning and heavily-utilized projects that have been unable to secure alternate funding.

The scoring rubric and Request for Proposals allow the committee to exercise discretion in evaluating project merits.

INNOVATION

Some committee members awarded points for the proposed use of a guided interview app, while others felt that similar apps were used by other programs and therefore less innovative. The committee awarded an average of approximately two out of ten innovation points.

Mental Health Advocacy Services – Mental Health Court Clinic

Advisor Judge Jaskol recused herself from the scoring of Mental Health Advocacy Services' application because she works at the partner courthouse and consulted on preparing the application.

COURT INVOLVEMENT

The proposed project is a twice-weekly clinic, partnered with a mental health court, to provide court-approved information and resources about proceedings as well as services on ancillary legal issues. Some committee members noted that the proposal included strong collaboration with the public defender's office, but the public defender's office is not court staff. However, several committee members were still impressed by the project's collaboration with the court.

PROJECT IMPACT

Committee members discussed the types of legal services the project proposes to provide; while the public defender represents clients in criminal matters, the project proposes to provide ancillary legal services related to housing and income stability, among other issues. The project would not do document preparation for court proceedings. The committee felt this was a novel approach and service-delivery method; most awarded the project an "exceeds expectations" for project impact.

ADMINISTRATION

Staffing includes one staff attorney, two days per week. State Bar staff noted that the budget includes a full-time attorney. Most committee members felt the staffing and resources constituted a score of "meets expectations."

PROJECT BUDGET

The committee noted concerns with the budget's proposed space and "other costs" allocations and recommended asking for further clarification from the program on the use of "other costs" funds.

CONTINUITY PLANNING

The committee was largely in agreement on scoring continuity planning at a “meets expectations” and did not have substantive discussion on this topic.

EVALUATION

The committee was largely in agreement on scoring evaluation at a “meets expectations” and did not have substantive discussion on this topic.

FUNDING PRIORITY

Committee members again discussed whether the scoring team should consider relative project quality when assessing funding priority. Committee members were impressed by the quality of MHAS’s proposal, and some scored it more highly in this category as a result.

INNOVATION

Several committee members awarded innovation points because MHAS’s proposal aims to provide services in a new type of court, a mental health court. The committee awarded an average of approximately four out of ten innovation points.

Public Counsel – Guardianship Clinic Expansion

COURT INVOLVEMENT

The committee noted Public Counsel’s long-standing relationship with the partner court. The committee felt the proposal merited an “exceed expectations” in court involvement.

PROJECT IMPACT

The committee felt the proposal also merited an “exceed expectations” in project impact. Committee members were impressed by the proposed number of clients served and the proposal’s goal to schedule litigant appointments at the clinic on the same day as litigant appointments at the probate investigator’s office.

ADMINISTRATION

The proposal’s staffing includes an on-site attorney, a legal assistant, a social worker, and a part-time administrative assistant. Most committee members felt the level of staffing merited an “exceeds expectations.”

PROJECT BUDGET

Some committee members noted the budget included high administrative costs, but others were impressed by the level of detail provided in the

budget. The committee asked staff to request more detail on the administrative costs.

CONTINUITY PLANNING

The proposal identifies several sources of potential and secured funding. The committee was largely in agreement on scoring continuity planning at a “exceeds expectations” and did not have substantive discussion on this topic.

EVALUATION

The committee was largely in agreement on scoring evaluation at a “meets expectations” and did not have substantive discussion on this topic.

FUNDING PRIORITY

State Bar staff asked whether an expansion of an existing project might be viewed as a new project, for the purposes of scoring funding priority. The committee and scoring team indicated most PG 2.0 project proposals might receive a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1-5) for funding priority since they are all new projects or expansions of existing projects. The committee discussed factors that might increase a project’s score from a 4 to a 5; factors might include whether the project is rural or not, whether it is in a new substantive area, and whether the project is struggling to secure other sources of funding.

INNOVATION

Some committee members awarded one point for innovation because of the project’s novel relationship with the probate investigator’s office. The committee awarded an average of approximately one out of ten innovation points.

V. ADJOURN

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.