



FAMILY AND JUVENILE LAW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF OPEN SESSION

March 25, 2026

4:30-5:30 p.m.

Advisory Body Members Present: Hon. Tari Cody (Cochair), Hon. Stephanie Hulseley (Cochair), Hon. Akemi Arakaki, Hon. Craig Arthur, Ms. Holly Benton, Hon. Brett Bianco, Hon. Dawn Bittleston, Hon. Roger Chan, Ms. Trina Edwards, Hon. Ana España, Ms. Lizette Estrada-Valencia, Hon. Susan Gill, Ms. Julia Hanagan, Ms. Leslie Heimov, Mx. Cory Hernandez, Hon. Michelle L. Kazadi, Hon. Clare Keithley, Ms. Selis Koker, Mr. Joseph Koller, Hon. Mary Kreber Varipapa, Mr. Jonathan Laba, Hon. Frank Menetrez, Hon. Kelly Neel, Ms. Alexandra O'Neill Muller, Ms. C. Joy Ricardo, Ms. Susan Thrall, and Hon. Monica Wiley.

Advisory Body Members Absent: Hon. Michael Bishay, Hon. Brooke A. Blecher, Hon. Katherine Fogarty, Ms. Diane Iglesias, Hon. Esther P. Kim, Ms. Jessica Muñoz, Mr. Joe Navarro, Ms. Melissa Poulos, and Hon. Lawrence Riff.

Others Present: Mr. Tony Cheng, Ms. Sarah Davis, Mr. Eric Divine, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Christina Gonzalez, Ms. Diana Glick, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Mr. Cyrus Ip, Ms. Sarah Jacobvitz, Ms. Tracy Kenny, Ms. Stephanie Lacambra, Ms. Anna Maves, Ms. Cassie McTaggart, Ms. Kelly Meehleib, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Lollie Roberts, Ms. Sarah Saria, Ms. Kristen Schmit, Ms. Jannie Scott, Ms. Gabrielle Selden, Ms. Marymichael Smrdeli, Ms. Melanie Snider, Mr. Greg Tanaka, Mr. Rodney Trevino, and Hon. Daniel Zeke Zeidler (CJER Committee Liaison).

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. and roll was taken.

Approval of Minutes

The committee reviewed and approved the minutes of the March 16, 2026, Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee meeting.

Remote Public Comment

Three members of the public commented on Item 1:

1. Zabrina Aleguire, Dependency Representation Manager of the Court Appointment Programs for the Bar Association of San Francisco, Lawyer Referral & Information Service;
2. Kristin Mateer, Executive Director of the East Bay Children's Law Offices in Alameda County; and
3. Katie Joh, Chief Executive Officer of the Dependency Advocacy Center in Santa Clara County.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM (ITEM 1)

Item 1

Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2027–28 Budget Change Concept – Workload Assessment for Court-Appointed Dependency Counsel (Action Required)

(Presenter: [Kelly Meehleib](#), Supervising Analyst, Center for Families, Children & the Courts)

The committee reviewed and considered a 2027–28 Budget Change Concept to request support for the costs of producing a comprehensive workload assessment on court-appointed juvenile dependency counsel practice in California; and to add provisional language in the Budget Act for court-appointed dependency counsel funding.

Action: The committee approved the Fiscal Year 2027–28 Budget Change Concept for a Workload Assessment for Court-Appointed Dependency Counsel for submission to the Judicial Branch Budget Committee. The committee delegated authority to the cochairs to approve changes to the Budget Change Concept with input from any interested committee members before April 1, 2026.

Item 2

Allocations and Reimbursements to Trial Courts: Reallocation for the Access to Visitation Grant Program Contract Year 2025–26 (Action Required)

(Presenter: [Gregory Tanaka](#), Supervising Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts)

The committee reviewed and considered a recommendation to reallocate unspent grant funds for the Access to Visitation (AV) Grant Program for the contract period of fiscal year 2025–26.

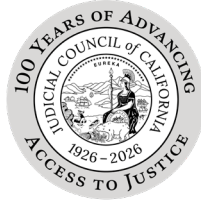
This request was deemed urgent and required prompt action pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 10.75(e) as the unspent grant funds needed to be encumbered before the end of the grant year on March 31, 2026.

Action: The committee approved the recommended AV Grant Program midyear reallocation of unspent grant funds for the contract period FY 2025–26 by reducing the Superior Court of Orange County's allocation by \$44,780.50 from \$98,780.50 to \$54,000; and increasing the Superior Court of San Francisco County's allocation by an additional \$44,780.50 from \$98,780.50 to \$143,561.

A D J O U R N M E N T

There being no further open meeting business, the open session was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

Telephone 415-865-4200 · Fax 415-865-4205

M E M O R A N D U M

Date

April 29, 2026

Action Requested

Please Review

To

Members of the Family and Juvenile Law
Advisory Committee

Deadline

May 4, 2026

From

Kelly Meehleib
Supervising Analyst, Center for Families,
Children & the Courts

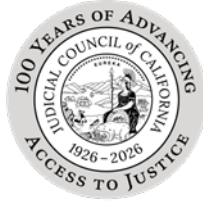
Contact

Kelly Meehleib, 916-263-1693
kelly.meehleib@jud.ca.gov

Subject

Fiscal Year 2026–27 Funding Allocations for
Court Appointed Special Advocate Local
Assistance

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory committee serves as the oversight body for Judicial Council’s Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program funding and annually recommends allocations to the Judicial Council. The committee is asked to review the attached draft Judicial Council report and make recommendations, as detailed in the attached report and set forth in Attachment A, to propose funding allocations for fiscal year 2026–27.



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

courts.ca.gov

REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-052

For business meeting on July 17, 2026

Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2026–27 Funding Allocations for Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance

Judicial Council Report Details

Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected

None

Effective Date

July 1, 2026

Recommended by

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory
Committee

Hon. Tari L. Cody, Cochair

Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse, Cochair

Date of Report

April 29, 2026

Contact

Kelly Meehleib, 916-263-1693

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Irene Balajadia, 415-865-8833

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Report Type

Action Required

Executive Summary

The fiscal year (FY) 2026–27 judicial branch budget includes \$2.7 million for Judicial Council Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) grants. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends the Judicial Council allocate \$2.7 million to fund 45 CASA programs serving 53 counties, using the amended funding methodology approved on July 12, 2024.

Recommendation

Effective July 1, 2025, the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends the Judicial Council allocate the \$2.7 million in CASA grant funds for FY 2026–27 using the amended funding methodology approved on July 12, 2024. Proposed allocations are detailed in Attachment A.

Relevant Previous Council Action

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program is a nonprofit organization that supports trained volunteers appointed by judicial officers to provide advocacy for a children who are under the jurisdiction of a juvenile court. A CASA volunteer spends time with the child, monitors the child's needed services, and provides child-focused recommendations to the court based on the best interests of the child.

In August 2003, at the recommendation of the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, the Executive Committee approved a formula-based method for distributing Judicial Council CASA program funding to California CASA programs. The new approach replaced the previous competitive request-for-proposals process with predetermined program awards. On August 23, 2013, the Judicial Council approved a new funding methodology that was formula based and used program data submitted by local programs to evaluate the efficiency and growth of those programs.¹

On July 20, 2018, the Judicial Council adopted a revised methodology that provides a larger percentage of funds as base funding and replaced the two existing incentives with a growth incentive for eligible programs.² The revised methodology made no changes to the four-tiered base funding³ portion of the methodology.

The Budget Act of 2018 (Stats. 2018, ch. 29) included a \$500,000 augmentation to Judicial Council CASA funding, increasing the total funding from \$2.2 million to \$2.7 million to promote program growth. On September 21, 2018, the Judicial Council approved allocating these funds as additional base funding for FY 2018–19 and FY 2019–20 using the existing methodology.⁴ In this report to the council, the committee noted that it would develop recommendations for a methodology specific to these funds for implementation in FY 2020–21; However, the committee deferred this item during the pandemic.⁵

¹ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Dependency: Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Funding Methodology* (July 19, 2013), courts.ca.gov/sites/default/files/courts/default/2024-10/jc-20130823-itemm.pdf.

² Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Judicial Council Budget: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology and FY 2018-19 Allocations* (June 28, 2018), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6357571&GUID=C010F4D4-28C5-4868-871C-94B763688ACA.

³ The range between the lowest and highest county populations is used to determine tiers, with Tier 1 comprising lower county populations and Tier 4 comprising the most populous counties. The county population of each local program determines the tier to establish the base amount.

⁴ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Judicial Council Budget: Allocation of Augmented Funding for Court Appointed Special Advocate Grant Program* (Aug. 14, 2018), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=6612315&GUID=5A5F8317-1BC8-45A1-8CB8-AB2BEA0C37EE.

⁵ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Fiscal Year 2021–22 Funding Allocations for Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance* (June 16, 2021), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=9487734&GUID=BD0E146D-4BF6-40A9-B325-779E70763AAD.

At its meeting in July 2023, the Judicial Council approved recommendations to continue allocating the \$500,000 funding augmentation using the existing methodology.⁶ The council also directed the committee to continue reviewing data regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the child welfare system and local CASA programs and to present recommendations for a funding methodology for this \$500,000 augmentation for FY 2024–25.

At its meeting in July 2024, the Judicial Council adopted an ongoing funding methodology for the \$500,00 augmentation.⁷ The methodology allocates the \$500,000 equally, as a separate growth-based incentive, to 30 eligible local CASA programs, 15 small and 15 large.

Analysis/Rationale

A total of \$2.7 million is included in the annual state budget for Judicial Council CASA grants. The proposed allocations for FY 2026–27 in Attachment A were derived using the funding methodology approved by the Judicial Council as detailed in the reports listed above.

Policy implications

There are no policy implications to consider for the recommended allocation.

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 recommended allocation outlined in Attachment A was determined using the methodology approved by the council.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

This recommendation is for the allocation of funds that are included in the FY 2026–27 budget. No additional costs or impacts are anticipated.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Proposed Allocation for FY 2026–27 Judicial Council Court Appointed Special Advocate Local Assistance Funding

⁶ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology, Program Expansion, and Fiscal Year 2023–2024 Allocations* (June 21, 2023), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12124955&GUID=4BBC2005-07B6-4FC7-AF49-155BED6339E0.

⁷ Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Juvenile Law: Court Appointed Special Advocate Funding Methodology and Fiscal Year 2024–25 Allocations* (July 3, 2024), jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13082727&GUID=AF8564C9-F4CB-4A77-A7AF-057412B47816.

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)
PROPOSED ALLOCATION for FY 2026-27**

Local CASA Programs by County(ies)	Base Allocations	Growth Incentive A \$500,000	Growth Incentive B	TOTAL PROPOSED CASA LOCAL ASSISTANCE ALLOCATION
Alameda	\$57,500	\$0	\$0	\$57,500
Amador/Calaveras	\$44,850	\$0	\$0	\$44,850
Butte/Glenn	\$58,650	\$0	\$0	\$58,650
Contra Costa	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
Del Norte	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$0	\$46,566
El Dorado	\$39,100	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$60,168
Fresno/Madera	\$86,250	\$0	\$0	\$86,250
Humboldt	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$0	\$46,566
Imperial	\$39,100	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$60,168
Inyo/Mono	\$44,850	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$65,918
Kern	\$57,500	\$0	\$0	\$57,500
Kings	\$39,100	\$0	\$0	\$39,100
Lake/Mendocino	\$58,650	\$0	\$0	\$58,650
Lassen	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Los Angeles	\$57,500	\$0	\$0	\$57,500
Marin	\$39,100	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$60,168
Mariposa	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Merced	\$39,100	\$0	\$0	\$39,100
Modoc	\$29,900	\$0	\$0	\$29,900
Monterey	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
Napa	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Nevada	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Orange	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
Placer/Sutter/Yuba	\$72,450	\$0	\$0	\$72,450
Plumas	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Riverside	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
Sacramento	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
San Benito	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
San Bernardino	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
San Diego	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
San Francisco	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
San Joaquin	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
San Luis Obispo	\$39,100	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$60,168
San Mateo	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
Santa Barbara	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
Santa Clara	\$57,500	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$78,568
Santa Cruz	\$39,100	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$60,168
Shasta/Tehama	\$58,650	\$0	\$0	\$58,650
Siskiyou	\$29,900	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$50,968
Solano	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$0	\$64,966
Sonoma	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
Stanislaus	\$48,300	\$0	\$0	\$48,300
Tulare	\$48,300	\$16,666	\$4,402	\$69,368
Ventura	\$48,300	\$0	\$0	\$48,300
Yolo	\$39,100	\$0	\$0	\$39,100
Totals	\$2,094,150	\$499,980	\$118,854	\$2,712,984

Total Local Assistance Grant	\$2,713,000
Total Base Amounts	\$2,094,150
Growth Incentive A Awards for Top 30 Programs (15 Small & 15 Large)	\$499,980
Growth Incentive B Awards for Top 27 Programs (13 Small & 14 Large)	\$118,854

*Base Allocations are based on the four-tier methodology
After allocating funds to the base according to the methodology, \$4,402 per qualified program was available for Growth Incentive B funding.