



# Judicial Council of California

Advisory Committee on Providing  
Access & Fairness

[www.courts.ca.gov/accessfairnesscomm.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/accessfairnesscomm.htm)  
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## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROVIDING ACCESS AND FAIRNESS

### MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

August 15, 2024

12:15 - 1:15 p.m.

Virtual

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**Advisory Body Members Present:** Hon. Kevin Brazile (Cochair), Hon. Victor Rodriguez (Cochair), Ms. Morgan Baxter, Hon. Jose Castillo, Hon. Thomas Delaney, Hon. Rebekah Evenson, Ms. Ana Maria Garcia, Hon. Clare Keithley, Hon. Victoria Kolakowski, Hon. Sunil Kulkarni, Hon. Cynthia Loo, Ms. Shirley Luo, Hon. Lia Martin, Mr. Lawrence Meyer, Ms. Kemi Mustapha, Ms. Julie Paik, Ms. Andrea Pella, Hon. Michael Rhoads, Ms. Fariba Soroosh, Hon. Terry Truong, and Hon. Laura Walton.

**Advisory Body Members Absent:** Hon. Judith Dulcich, Hon. Amy Guerra, Hon. Richard Lee, Hon. Elizabeth Macias, Ms. Nina Magno, Mr. Michael Powell, Ms. Twila White, and Mr. Mitchell Wunsh.

**Others Present:** Ms. Deanna Adams, Ms. Irene Balajadia, Mr. Douglas Denton, Ms. Eunice Lee, Ms. Veronica Lewis, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson, Ms. Chio Saephanh, and Hon. Charles A. Smiley, III.

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#### OPEN MEETING

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##### Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:16 p.m. and took roll call.

##### Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the June 20, 2024, Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness meeting. Ms. Fariba Soroosh abstained from voting.

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#### DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1-3)

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##### Item 1

##### Language Access Subcommittee Update

Presenter: *Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Three, and Co-chair of the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness*

Justice Victor Rodriguez updated committee members on multiple language access projects. The Language Access Signage & Technology Grants, Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (Cycle 6) is scheduled to go to the Council for approval in September 2024. If approved by the council, intra-branch agreements will be drafted for the awarded courts in October. For Cycle 7, staff plans to launch applications in Spring 2025. The California Court Interpreter Workforce Pilot Program received 1,107 applications from potential

candidates. Staff will be working with the pilot courts to select candidates for the first cohort, which will start January 1, 2025. The Language Access Subcommittee will meet on August 22nd, to review language access projects and highlights from the 2023 Language Access Data Tool.

## Item 2

### **2024 Pathways to Justice Conference**

Presenter: *Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson, Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts*

Ms. Resendiz-Johnson informed committee members about an upcoming legal services provider focused conference called the Pathways to Justice Conference which will be held for the first time, in person, since 2019. It is scheduled for October 29 and 30 in San Francisco, at the Milton Marks Conference Center. The conference is being organized and sponsored by The State Bar of California, The Legal Aid Association of California, and the Judicial Council.

## Item 3

### **Draft Report – Addressing Racial Disparities and Improving Equity in California’s Adult Collaborative Programs**

Presenters: *Hon. Charles A. Smiley, III, Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, and Co-Chair of the Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Collaborative Justice Court Advisory Committee*

*Ms. Veronica D. Lewis, Director, Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System, and Co-Chair of the Racial Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Collaborative Justice Court Advisory Committee*

Judge Smiley and Ms. Lewis presented to committee members on the draft report of addressing racial disparities and Improving Equity in California’s Adult Collaborative Court system. The report is an initial effort by the subcommittee to focus on four overall priority areas to promote collaboration at the state and local levels. Each priority area includes actionable recommendations that cover a range of council or court opportunities, such as improving practices and procedures in adult collaborative programs, program assessment and data evaluation, training and education, and promoting improved access to culturally responsive treatment and services.

**Action:** *Motion to approve the draft report and recommendations by Judge Kolakowski, seconded by Mr. Lawrence Meyer and Judge Brazile. There were no oppositions or abstentions. Motion carried.*

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## **A D J O U R N M E N T**

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:56.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.



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### Minutes of Action by Email Between Meetings

September 26, 2024

#### Email Proposal

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness (PAF) was asked to approve the revised draft Judicial Council report with proposed allocations for the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program, Cycle 6 (Fiscal Year 2024-25). PAF needed to approve the revised draft report before its next meeting on October 17, 2024.

#### Notice & Revised Draft Report

On September 24, 2024, PAF posted public notice on the California Courts webpage that it planned to approve the revised draft report by e-mail at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 26, 2024, and invited public comment. The revised draft report was also posted. No comments were received.

#### Action Taken

On September 26, 2024, after the public comment period ended, all PAF members were asked by e-mail to submit their votes to approve the revised draft report. Twenty-five (25) of the 28-members of PAF voted to approve the revised draft report.

Approved by the advisory body:

**Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness**  
**Annual Agenda<sup>1</sup>—2025**  
**Approved by the Executive and Planning Committee: [Date]**

**I. COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

<b>Chair:</b>	Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Cochair, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Three Hon. Kevin C. Brazile, Cochair, Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
<b>Lead Staff:</b>	Ms. Cristina Resendiz-Johnson, Attorney, Center for Families, Children & the Courts
<b>Committee’s Charge/Membership:</b>	
<p><a href="#">Rule 10.55</a> of the California Rules of Court states the charge of the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness (PAF), which is to make recommendations for improving access to the judicial system, fairness in the state courts, diversity in the judicial branch, and court services for self-represented parties. The committee also makes recommendations to the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) Advisory Committee, proposals for the education and training of judicial officers and court staff.</p> <p><a href="#">Rule 10.55(c)</a> sets forth the membership position of the committee. PAF has 30 members. The current committee <a href="#">roster</a> is available on the committee’s web page.</p>	
<b>Subgroups of the Advisory Committee<sup>2</sup>:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ad Hoc Legislation Working Group: Review and receive updates on legislation from Judicial Council Governmental Affairs in the areas of access and fairness affecting the judicial branch.</li> <li>2. Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group: The working group will gather information on branch wide efforts in racial justice and bias, work with stakeholders in promoting those activities, and consider recommendations on racial justice within the branch for the committee.</li> <li>3. Standing Language Access Subcommittee: Advise and present recommendations to PAF regarding the Language Access Plan (LAP) and its overarching goal of ensuring access to justice for all court users, especially court users with limited English proficiency; as appropriate,</li> </ol>	

<sup>1</sup> The annual agenda outlines the work a committee will focus on in the coming year or cycle and identifies areas of collaboration with other advisory bodies and the Judicial Council staff resources.

<sup>2</sup>For the definition of “subcommittee” see Cal. Rules of Court, rule 10.30(c); “working group” see rule 10.70, “workstream,” see rule 10.53(c); and “education curriculum committee,” see rule 10.50(c)(6).

make recommendations to PAF in the areas of technology, education, and translation; as well as recommendations on legislative and rule of court proposals to enhance language access services throughout the judicial branch.

**Meetings Planned for 2025<sup>3</sup> (Advisory body and all subgroups listed above.)**

Regular bi-monthly videoconference meetings on third Thursdays, 12:15–1:15 p.m., beginning February 2025.

Check here if in-person meeting is approved by the internal committee oversight chair.

DRAFT

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to section IV. 2. of the [Operating Standards for Judicial Council Advisory Bodies](#) for governance on in-person meetings.

Note: Because of the current budget and staffing constraints, advisory body chairs and staff must first consider meeting remotely. The chair of the Executive and Planning Committee is suspending advisory body in-person meetings for the 2024–2025 annual agenda cycle. If an in-person meeting is needed, the responsible Judicial Council office head must seek final approval from the advisory body’s internal oversight committee chair. Please see the prioritization memo dated July 1, 2024, for additional details.

## II. COMMITTEE PROJECTS

#	New or One-Time Projects <sup>4</sup>	
1.	<b>Project Title: Implementation of Superior Court Lactation Accommodation Procedure (Sen. Bill 949 Stats. 2024, Ch. 159) in All Court Proceedings (New/Implementation Project)</b>	<b>Priority<sup>5</sup> 1(a)</b> <b>Strategic Plan Goal<sup>6</sup> I, IV</b>
<p><b>Project Summary:</b> Develop a proposal to implement Senate Bill 949 for superior courts. The proposal will outline a process for courts to offer lactating court users who are participating in an ongoing proceeding, a confidential request for a reasonable amount of break time to express breast milk for their infant child. To comply with SB 949, PAF will draft a new form for court users, circulate the proposal for public comment, and address any public comments received.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> An Invitation to Comment on the new form would circulate in the spring 2025 cycle with an effective date of July 1, 2026.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources:</b> Center for Families, Children &amp; the Courts (CFCC) staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> None.</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> PAF Ad Hoc Legislation Working Group.</p>		

<sup>4</sup> All proposed projects for the year must be included on the Annual Agenda. If a project implements policy or is a program, identify it as *implementation* or a *program* in the project description and attach the Judicial Council authorization/assignment or prior approved Annual Agenda to this Annual Agenda.

<sup>5</sup> For non-rules and forms projects, select priority level 1 (must be done) or 2 (should be done). For rules and forms proposals, select one of the following priority levels: 1(a) Urgently needed to conform to or accurately reflect the law; 1(b) Council has directed the committee to consider new or amended rules and forms; 1(c) Change is urgently needed to remedy a problem that is causing significant cost or inconvenience to the courts or the public; or 1(d) Proposal is otherwise urgent and necessary, such as a proposal that would mitigate exposure to immediate or severe financial or legal risk. *For each priority level 1 proposal, the advisory body must provide a specific reason why it should be done this year and how it fits within the identified category.* 2(a) Useful, but not necessary, to implement changes in law; 2(b) Responsive to identified concerns or problems; or 2(c) Helpful in otherwise advancing Judicial Council goals and objectives. *If an advisory committee is interested in pursuing any Priority Level 2 proposals, please include justification as to why the proposal should be approved at this time.*

<sup>6</sup> Indicate which goal number of The Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch the project most closely aligns.

#	<b>Ongoing Projects and Activities</b>	
1.	<b>Project Title: Develop Training for Court Staff on Appropriate Use of Machine Translation Tools (Implementation Project)</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>
	<b>Strategic Plan Goal IV</b>	
<p><b>Project Summary:</b> The Language Access Subcommittee will partner with Judicial Council staff from CFCC and Information Technology (IT) to develop training for court staff, including self-help center staff, on the appropriate use of machine translation tools within the courthouse. Training will ensure that machine translation tools are used appropriately for different situations and maintain meaningful and accurate communication between litigants and the court. Training will also highlight situations where an in-person or telephonic interpreter may be needed to ensure that legal rights and remedies are maintained and to avoid misunderstandings in communication.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> June 2025.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources:</b> The National Center for State Courts is assisting with this project under a contract funded by the Language Access Services program budget; CFCC and IT staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> Training development will include input from court stakeholders (e.g., court clerks, self-help center staff, and court Language Access Representatives).</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> PAF Language Access Subcommittee and Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC).</p>		
2.	<b>Project Title: Language Access Signage and Technology Grants, Cycle 7 (Implementation Project)</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>
	<b>Strategic Plan Goal I</b>	
<p><b>Project Summary:</b> In coordination with the Judicial Council’s Executive Office, PAF Language Access Subcommittee, Technology Committee, Information Technology Advisory Committee, , and Center for Families, Children &amp; the Courts Language Access Services Program, the PAF Language Access Subcommittee will disburse ongoing monies (\$2.35 million each year) from the 2018 Budget Act as grants to trial courts for language access signage and technology initiatives on an annual basis. The grant program commenced in September 2019, following council approval. For the fiscal year 2025–26, the grant cycle (Cycle 7) will commence in Spring 2025. Council staff will continue to develop annual reports on the grant program.</p> <p>This grant project was approved on the committee’s 2020 annual agenda and will result in recommendations to the Judicial Council.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> Ongoing.</p>		

#	<b>Ongoing Projects and Activities</b>	
	<p><b>Fiscal Impact/Resources:</b> CFCC, Branch Accounting and Procurement, and IT staff, ongoing monies from the 2018 Budget Act.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</i></p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> Information Technology; trial courts and public, including Limited English Proficient (LEP) court users.</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> PAF Language Access Subcommittee, and ITAC.</p>	
3.	<b>Project Title: Diversity in The Branch (Implementation Project)</b>	<b>Priority 1</b>
	<p><b>Project Summary:</b> PAF will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Continue to update the <a href="#">Pathways to Judicial Diversity</a> toolkit based on feedback received from users. Conduct presentations and continue the rollout of the toolkit statewide in collaboration with justice partners, provided sufficient resources are available.</li> <li>b) Continue to serve as a subject matter resource with justice partners and stakeholders on initiatives for increasing diversity in the judicial branch.</li> <li>c) Continue to collaborate with CJER staff on improving and expanding educational resources in areas under PAF’s purview and expertise related to diversity, inclusion, and fairness.</li> <li>d) Work on implementation of the recommendations from the 2021 Judicial Diversity Summit that were approved by the Judicial Council on December 2, 2022. On March 3, 2023, the Executive and Planning Committee referred the following recommendations to PAF and its Judicial Council staff for consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Summit recommendation 1, <i>Increase Education and Resources on Judicial Appointments and Elections Process</i>;</li> <li>b. Summit recommendation 3, <i>Strengthen Efforts to Mentor Judicial Officers on the Bench as a Crucial Component of Their Continued Professional Development and Advancement</i>; and</li> <li>c. Summit recommendation 4, <i>Strengthen and Coordinate Judicial Outreach to Connect with Diverse Younger Generations</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>This task was included in the committee’s prior Annual Agenda.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> Ongoing.</p>	



#	<b>Ongoing Projects and Activities</b>	
	<p><b>Fiscal Impact/Staff Resources:</b> CFCC, IT, Governmental Affairs, and CJER staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</i></p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> California Judges Association, California Lawyers Association, and California ChangeLawyers.</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> Executive and Planning Committee, Legislation Committee, CJER Advisory Committee, and Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee (TCPJAC).</p>	
4.	<p><b>Project Title: Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group (Implementation Project)</b></p>	<p><b>Priority 1</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Plan Goal I</b></p>
	<p><b>Project Summary:</b> PAF will continue to review and provide updates regarding the branch’s efforts to address racial bias and fairness. The working group will gather information on branch wide efforts in racial justice and bias, work with stakeholders in promoting those activities, and consider recommendations on racial justice within the branch to the committee.</p> <p>PAF will also continue to update and promote the <a href="#">Racial Justice Toolkit</a> an online hub for educational and training resources to assist local courts with increasing access and fairness in the area of racial justice. The toolkit will be continuously updated based on user feedback and ongoing developments in the areas of racial justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> <p>This task was included on the committee’s prior Annual Agenda.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> Ongoing.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Impact/Resources:</b> CFCC, CJER, Criminal Justice Services (CJS), and IT staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <i>The project includes allocations or distributions of funds to the courts, which have been reviewed and approved by Budget Service.</i></p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> Trial courts.</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> This item may include collaboration with various Judicial Council advisory bodies, including, but not limited to: Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, Court Executives Advisory Committee (CEAC), Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee (CJCAC), Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC), Criminal Law Advisory Committee (CLAC), Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee (CSCAC), TCPJAC, ITAC, and Judicial Branch Ethics, and Fairness Curriculum Committee.</p>	

#	Ongoing Projects and Activities	
5.	<b>Project Title: Collaborate and Provide Subject Matter Expertise (Implementation Project)</b>	<b>Priority 2</b> <b>Strategic Plan Goal I</b>
<p><b>Project Summary:</b> PAF will serve as lead/subject matter resource for issues under the committee’s charge to avoid duplication of efforts and contribute to the development of recommendations for council action.</p> <p>PAF will continue to provide education and technical assistance to the court self-help centers; make recommendations to the Judicial Council, as needed, regarding reports to the legislature on self-help services, requests for funding for self-help, and updates to the <a href="#">Guidelines for the Operation of Self-Help Centers in California Trial Courts</a> as provided by <a href="#">California Rules of Court, rule 10.960 (e)</a>.</p> <p>PAF will continue collaborations with the TAC, CLAC, and other relevant Judicial Council advisory bodies and staff on recommendations to improve access and fairness in traffic court. These collaborations started in 2017 when the Rules Committee chair directed PAF to collaborate with TAC and CLAC on recommendations to improve access and fairness in traffic court. This resulted in liaison relationships between the three committees as well as successful collaborations on several rules and forms, including the “Ability to Pay” rules and forms which went into effect in April 2018. PAF will continue to collaborate with and provide subject-matter expertise to CLAC and TAC as appropriate.</p> <p>PAF will also continue to provide technical assistance to JusticeCorps program on evaluation of members’ career paths and promote program’s efforts to increase diversity in the legal system and enhance civics education.</p> <p><i>Post-Pandemic Initiative</i> - Outreach on Remote Services including the SRL portal.</p> <p><i>Post-Pandemic Initiative</i> - Explore partnerships with community-based organizations to assist with remote proceedings. This task was included in the committee’s prior Annual Agenda.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> Ongoing.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Impact/Resources:</b> CFCC, Governmental Affairs, IT, and CJS staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> None.</p>		

#	<b>Ongoing Projects and Activities</b>	
	<p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> This item may include collaboration with various Judicial Council advisory bodies, including, but not limited to: Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, TCPJAC, CEAC, CJAC, TAC, CLAC, CSCAC, ITAC; and Judicial Branch Ethics, and Fairness Curriculum Committee.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Project Title: Improving Access and Fairness through Technology (Implementation Project)</b></p>	<p><b>Priority 2</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Plan Goal I</b></p>
	<p><b>Project Summary:</b> PAF will continue coordinating with Judicial Council IT staff on the development of the online California Courts Self-Help Guide (See <a href="#">The Critical Role of the State Judiciary in Increasing Access for Self-Represented Litigants: Self-Help Access 360</a>) and coordinate with IT staff on development of a new reporting portal to assist courts in complying with Civil Code section 54.8 regarding assisted listening devices. PAF will also discuss and explore with ITAC other intersections between access, fairness, and technology and explore how to encourage the use of technologies that benefit court users with disabilities.</p> <p>This project does not result in recommendations to the Judicial Council and was approved on the committee’s 2016 annual agenda.</p> <p><b>Status/Timeline:</b> Ongoing.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Impact/Resources:</b> CFCC and IT staff.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This project may result in an allocation or distribution of funds to the courts. We will coordinate with Budget Services to ensure their review of relevant materials.</p> <p><b>Internal/External Stakeholders:</b> None.</p> <p><b>AC Collaboration:</b> ITAC.</p>	

### III. LIST OF 2024 PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#	Project Highlights and Achievements
1.	<p><b>Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group:</b> The Racial Justice Toolkit was officially launched and presented to trial court staff statewide at various informational sessions, including the February 2024 joint TCPJAC/CEAC in person meeting. Status: Updates to and presentations of the toolkit will be ongoing.</p>
2.	<p><b>Language Access Signage and Technology Grants, Cycle 6:</b> The Cycle 6 Grants launched for FY 2024–25 in March 2024. In November 2024, the council approved funding to 18 courts for language signage and technology-related projects. Status: Ongoing.</p>
3.	<p><b>Public Outreach for the Online California Courts Self-Help Guide:</b> A language drop-down feature was developed on the redesigned <a href="#">California Courts Self-Help Guide</a>, which links to newly translated web pages and existing multilingual resources in the top eight most spoken languages in California. Outreach was conducted to ensure the multilingual resources and translated information, including materials for remote court hearings, are known to LEP communities throughout the state. Status: Completed.</p>
4.	<p><b>Collaborate and Provide Subject Matter Expertise:</b> Staff continued to provide weekly statewide training to Self-Help Center staff on a wide variety of subject matter including family law updates, form changes, and remote proceedings’ customer service. Status: Ongoing.</p>



# Judicial Council of California

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.:*

For business meeting on November 15, 2024

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**Title**

Equal Access Fund: Distribution of Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission

**Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected**

None

**Recommended by**

Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness

Hon. Kevin C. Brazile, Cochair

Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Cochair

**Agenda Item Type**

Action Required

**Effective Date**

November 15, 2024

**Date of Report**

August 30, 2023

**Contact**

Melanie Snider, 916-263-5442

[Melanie.Snider@jud.ca.gov](mailto:Melanie.Snider@jud.ca.gov)

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### Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness recommends approval of a distribution of \$250,000 to the California Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program for service providers employed by qualified legal service projects and support centers. The Judicial Council has been directed by Senate Bill 133 (Stats. 2023, ch. 34) to take this ongoing action since fiscal year 2023–24.

### Recommendation

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness recommends that the Judicial Council, effective November 15, 2024, approve a distribution of \$250,000 to the California Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program, as authorized by Senate Bill 133 (Stats. 2023, ch. 34).

### Relevant Previous Council Action

On September 19, 2023, the Judicial Council approved the distribution of \$250,000 of Equal Access Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program (Link A). A report on the distribution of

funds by the commission in the first year of administering the tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program is included as Attachment A.

### **Analysis/Rationale**

The California Access to Justice Commission is an independent nonprofit agency. Beginning in fiscal year 2023–24, SB 133 directed the Judicial Council to annually distribute \$250,000 of Equal Access Funds to the California Access to Justice Commission for administration of a tax-advantaged student loan repayment assistance program for purposes of recruiting and retaining staff attorneys (Link B).

### **Policy implications**

This recommendation helps implement Goal I of the Strategic Plan for California’s Judicial Branch—Access, Fairness, Diversity, and Inclusion. By working with justice system partners, these funds will aid the recruitment and retention of qualified legal aid attorneys and achieving greater diversity in the legal profession.

### **Comments**

This funding allocation is directed by SB 133. Therefore, public comment was not solicited, and the committee received no additional comments.

### **Alternatives considered**

There is no alternative to distributing the funds in accordance with SB 133.

### **Fiscal and Operational Impacts**

The funds for the California Access to Justice Commission require no court implementation because all funds will be used to administer the loan repayment assistance program. Council staff will develop a contract between the Judicial Council and the California Access to Justice Commission, setting out reporting requirements and responsibilities to comply with the terms of SB 133. The recommendations in this report will have no direct fiscal effect on the courts.

### **Attachments and Links**

1. Attachment A: California Access to Justice Commission, *Report to the Judicial Council of California on Equal Access – Access to Justice Commission (FY 2023-2024) Agreement Number 98178* (Mar. 2024)
2. Link A: Sen. Bill 133 (Stats. 2023, ch. 34),  
[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202320240SB133](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB133)
3. Link B: Judicial Council Rep., Aug. 11, 2023, *Equal Access Fund: California Access to Justice Commission Grants*,  
<https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12245978&GUID=38448FB7-D433-4E1B-80E1-BA6DF4AA820E>