

PART I - FACE SHEET

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)		
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS):	3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE: 12-JAN-11	STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:
2b. APPLICATION ID: 11ES124578	4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY:	FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 09ESHCA0010001
5. APPLICATION INFORMATION		
LEGAL NAME: Administrative Office of the Courts DUNS NUMBER: 124971982	NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes):	
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 455 GoldenGate Ave San Francisco CA 94102 - 3660 County: San Francisco	NAME: Nicole Claro-Quinn TELEPHONE NUMBER: (415) 865-4504 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: nicole.claro@jud.ca.gov	
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 943105441	7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. State Government 7b. Other State Government	
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box).		
<input type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>		
A. AUGMENTATION B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		
9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: Corporation for National and Community Service		
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER:94.006	11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Capitol Region JusticeCorps	
10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps Fixed Amount Grant (State)	11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):	
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Sacramento, Placer, and Yolo counties.	13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/24/11 END DATE: 09/21/12	
14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF: a.Applicant <input type="text" value="CA 008"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="CA 008"/>		
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: <input type="text" value="3"/>		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS?
a. FEDERAL	\$ 3,600.00	<input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372
b. APPLICANT	\$ 0.00	
c. STATE	\$ 0.00	
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	
g. TOTAL	\$ 3,600.00	
17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.		
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Nicole Claro-Quinn	b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (415) 865-4504
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:		e. DATE SIGNED: 05/06/11

Narratives

Executive Summary

The JusticeCorps program addresses a vital need--increasing access to justice for all, especially low-income and non-native English speakers trying to resolve family law, civil, or small claims case without the assistance of a lawyer. JusticeCorps members are placed in legal access self-help centers, where they provide information and referrals, assist in completion of forms, and help people navigate the entire court process. Since 2004, 600 members have served over 100,000 Californians.

Rationale and Approach

Compelling Community Need

California is experiencing an explosion in numbers of individuals appearing before the court without professional legal representation on a variety of matters from family law to housing issues. According to the Judicial Council of California's Statewide Action Plan for Serving Self-Represented Litigants (February 2004), California courts report 80% self-representation rates in family law and housing related cases. In all, the Statewide Action Plan asserts that over 4.3 million California court users each year are self-represented. The majority of these individuals do not obtain legal representation because they cannot afford it.

Resources available to meet the needs of these self-represented individuals are sorely lacking. In fact, as stated by California Assembly Judiciary Committee Chairman Dave Jones in a December 20, 2006 article in the San Francisco Chronicle, "California has one lawyer for every 240 people but only one legal aid attorney for every 8,737 low income people."

Because court procedures are designed for lawyers, the large number of people coming to court without professional representation creates problems on multiple levels. Self-represented litigants face many obstacles in their attempts to access the justice system including:

- 1) Lack of understanding about how to initiate a legal action

Narratives

- 2) Lack of familiarity with legal terms and mandatory forms
- 3) Misunderstandings about proper procedures, especially those regarding giving notice to the other party and
- 4) Inability to follow or fully comprehend court proceedings including misunderstandings about orders given in court.

Inability to resolve legal matters jeopardizes an individual's ability to secure safe and affordable housing, to overcome barriers to employment, to obtain guardianships, or to avoid domestic violence and elder abuse. It also has far reaching societal impacts including: family instability and resultant increases in numbers of children involved in the juvenile dependency and delinquency system; a general lack of public trust and confidence in the court system; increased challenges for law enforcement officers; and increased rates of homelessness.

The JusticeCorps program was first created in 2004 in Los Angeles (LA) because the challenge of effectively meeting the needs of self-represented litigants is particularly great in California's largest urban areas. Based on similar needs in Northern California urban counties, JusticeCorps expanded to the Bay Area in fall of 2006, as an AmeriCorps EAP program.

In 2007, the Bay Area program joined LA in its operational grant and the EAP slots for the next two years of support were shifted to a new pilot effort in the Superior Court of San Diego County. Based on the successful community impact of the first two years of the JusticeCorps EAP program, and the ongoing success of the program statewide, the Administrative Office of the California Courts (AOC) is requesting to once again receive EAP support for the years 2009-2012. Our request includes a proposal to increase the number of members in the San Diego JusticeCorps program from 22 to 30, to accommodate placing members at an additional court site in northern San Diego county.

Narratives

Like many courts throughout California, San Diego faces great challenges in meeting the needs of self-represented litigants in their community. In fiscal year 2005-2006 (the most recent year for which statistics are available), the San Diego court saw more than 35,000 cases filed in common self-representation case types such as marriage dissolution (divorce), child custody and landlord tenant disputes (Judicial Branch Statistical Information System Report 2007). In 2007 more than 100,000 self-represented litigants came to the San Diego court's self-help legal access centers to try to resolve their legal matter.

San Diego is home to 2.9 million people. In portions of the county up to 22% of the population lives below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau: State and County Quick Facts). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has designated a segment of San Diego as a "Renewal Community," acknowledging special resources needed to address high levels of economic distress. While countywide the level of poverty is lower than the statewide average, it is important to note that the cost of living consumes a far greater portion of a San Diego families' income than it does in most other places in the nation. In fact, 77% of low income families in San Diego spend over 30% of their income on housing, compared to a national average of 66% of low income families. (Annie E. Casey Foundation. CLIKS: Community Level Information on Kids.) In San Diego, the percentage of foreign born residents is 21% and 33% of households speak a language other than English at home. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.).

The current economic crisis has hit San Diego County especially hard. RealtyTrack's most recent Foreclosure Market Report lists the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas by foreclosure rate and ranks San Diego as nation's 11th highest with one in every 65 homeowners facing foreclosure proceedings. So far, anecdotal reports from San Diego court staff show an increase in individuals

Narratives

coming to court to address an eviction, typically as a result of their landlord's impending foreclosure.

Statewide, the California courts have made strides in addressing the problems faced by self represented litigants. Judges are seeking new professional training in communications, learning how to write and explain clear orders that litigants are more likely to understand and follow. In January 2003, the Judicial Council approved major changes to the format of the state's legal forms with the adoption of new "plain language" forms designed for those without professional legal assistance who read at about a fourth-grade level. In 2007, the Judicial Council launched an initiative focused on Procedural Fairness, to make sure that court users fully understand and have a voice in the entire court process.

Most significantly, courts have made the implementation of self-help legal access programs a high priority. San Diego Superior Court, in partnership with local legal aid organizations and county agencies, has implemented centers and associated services to provide the kind of help needed. Some of the centers focus primarily on family law issues such as divorce, paternity and child custody and visitation arrangements. Others handle a wide variety of legal matters that may also include employment issues, landlord/tenant disputes and small claims matters. The centers help litigants understand legal procedure, identify the proper forms and complete them as required.

The primary beneficiaries of these services are individuals, many of whom are low-income and may speak limited English, who have legal issues to resolve. The benefits to litigants include improved overall understanding of the court process; less time required away from work and family obligations to file paperwork or appear in court; referral to other related social services; and speedier resolution of the legal matter allowing the litigant to move past family conflicts or employment or housing crises to a place of greater stability in their lives. The benefits to the courts include: a reduction in inaccurate or incomplete paperwork and inappropriate filings; minimization of unproductive court appearances; and

Narratives

an overall increase in the court's ability to handle its entire caseload. Benefits to the greater community include: better support of law enforcement with clear, written orders for child support, visitation or restraining orders; lessening trauma for children at risk due to family conflict or violence; and significantly contributing to the public's trust and confidence in the court and government as a whole.

The establishment of these centers and related local programs is done entirely at the local courts' own initiative with training, technical assistance and limited support from the AOC, and in some cases county and private partners. As a result, the self-help centers operate under a creative patchwork of minimal funding from diverse sources with varying staffing patterns and hours of operation. The majority of California's now established court based self-help legal access centers were overwhelmed with litigants seeking assistance shortly after they opened their doors. According to the staff of the centers, it is not uncommon to arrive in the morning to greet dozens of people waiting in line for assistance.

One San Diego JusticeCorps alumni described the community need met by the program particularly well.

"The JusticeCorps program exposed me to the disparity that I knew existed, but hardly encountered personally. As I listen to each individual's story, they become more than a statistic, and I see first-hand how hard it is to break the cycle of poverty. I have met enough people being evicted due to being laid off to dispel any previous assumptions I had about evictees being lazy or disruptive. One family particularly touched me. I was helping the wife with her unlawful detainer case while her husband watched their three young children outside the room. He had just been laid off and they had no money to pay rent. She hardly spoke English and her husband knew none at all, so I tried my best to help in Spanish. She grew noticeably weary as the process drew out, putting personal information on every page for both her and her husband on all the paperwork. As I looked over the documents, I was taken aback that she was only

Narratives

22 years old, the same age as me. I could not even imagine what it would be like to have three kids and be in the process of an eviction. It reminded me to the core that not everyone is on the track that I and my friends take for granted as the norm -- from attending high school to college, to graduate school, finding a job, getting married, and having kids. My interactions with the litigants have deepened my understanding of the world around me."

Member Activities and Roles

In 2003 staff of the AOC began to work collaboratively with staff at Los Angeles Superior Court to devise and implement a new AmeriCorps program serving the public's important legal needs. All subsequent pilots of the JusticeCorps program are based on this model. With the help of energetic, motivated college students, serving as JusticeCorps members, the courts' self-help programs can offer more in-depth, individualized services to more self-represented litigants. Members serving under attorney supervision assist self-represented litigants, helping them to understand required processes and paperwork, to improve the accuracy of their paperwork, and to enhance the thoroughness of their case preparation.

The JusticeCorps program differentiates itself in several important ways from other volunteer recruitment and training programs that some courts may operate. First, the JusticeCorps member makes a 300-hour commitment over the course of a whole academic year, which translates to a consistent 6 to 8 hours per week from September to June. This minimizes turnover in the centers because it's a much longer commitment than most self-help centers are able to obtain from volunteers or law school interns. Also, JusticeCorps members are recruited, trained, and scheduled by the JusticeCorps program staff, taking the burden of a very intensive time commitment away from the self-help center staff and allowing them to focus more on daily operations and direct assistance to the dozens of litigants waiting each day. The JusticeCorps program also has the important added benefit of enhancing the participating centers' language accessibility more significantly than volunteer recruitment

Narratives

within the general public yields. Because the program recruits from local public campuses with very diverse student bodies, the JusticeCorps members are representative of those served in the centers.

JusticeCorps members serve in a variety of capacities in the court-based self-help centers, primarily providing three types of services--in many cases, members will be providing some or all of these types of assistance to the same litigant during one visit or multiple visits. JusticeCorps members:

- 1) Provide litigants with initial information and referrals to associated services within or outside the courts
- 2) Assist with identifying and completing paperwork either one on one or in a workshop setting, and
- 3) Observe in the courtroom and providing litigants with information after courtroom sessions.

JusticeCorps San Diego members serve in two types of self-help center environments, both physically located within court facilities or adjacent county owned buildings used for court business: The legal assistance center at the Family Law Facilitators Office and the Central Division Civil Business Office. These two locations handle a variety of legal issues including divorce, child custody, establishment of paternity, civic harassment, restraining orders, name changes, evictions, and guardianships. Located in downtown San Diego, both sites are busy environments, with a constant flow of customers throughout the business day.

The daily activities of the members are always guided by California Rules of Court, which outline the proper role for assisting the public, and best practices in the field. According to a 2002 report compiled by the University of California at Irvine titled "An Evaluation of the Legal Aid Society's Interactive Community Assistance Network," self-help legal assistance is most effective when offered in a variety of different ways. For these reasons, members are trained to provide assistance through: one on-one direct

Narratives

contact provided on a drop-in, first come first served basis; specially scheduled and advertised workshops; use of computer terminals designed to assist litigants in completing forms; and over the phone or written correspondence.

JusticeCorps members are supervised at all times by court-based attorneys, managers, or clerks. It is important to note that because JusticeCorps members are serving in California's courts, representing the judicial branch to the public, members provide neutral legal information, not advice. Members are trained to make it clear that they are not "representing" litigants in their legal matter, or advising them on choices to make, but rather providing the information necessary for litigants to make decisions and resolve their matter.

A typical JusticeCorps experience, for example, might include the following: a litigant waiting for assistance at a self-help center speaks with an intake screener who then assigns the individual to work directly with a JusticeCorps member. The member will then determine how best to assist the litigant and will either: 1) provide legal information to the litigant regarding family law, housing, small claims issues, civil, and/or guardianship matters (e.g. answering questions based on court rules or procedures or legal research); or 2) decide that part or all of the litigant's matter is actually handled outside the center, referring them to non-court resources including low cost legal aid, counseling, domestic violence shelters, parent education, mental health services and job training or placement programs; or 3) the JusticeCorps member may determine that the litigant needs additional court based assistance and therefore will recommend the litigant to sign up for a workshop or clinic facilitated by attorneys, paralegals, and other center staff; or 4) the member may assist the litigant in the identification of and proper completion of family law, housing law, small claims and other pending legal forms in hard copy or on computer terminals.

Narratives

Members assigned to specific legal clinics, workshops or courtroom based self-help projects may provide additional services. All members who speak a second language are asked to assist with interpreter and translation services to the extent available and appropriate.

Specifically, at the Central Division Civil Business Office in San Diego, members assist clients in completing pre-hearing paperwork for civil restraining orders, unlawful detainers (evictions), and name changes. Members then attend the relevant courtroom hearings, and then meet again with the litigants to make sure they understand the judge's ruling, and assist them in completing the process--whether that involves additional paperwork, a new referral, or other assistance. At the San Diego Family Law Faciliator's Office JusticeCorps members provide similar assistance to litigants who are dealing with cases including dissolution (divorce) and obtaining domestic violence restraining orders. Throughout this process, self-help center supervisory staff is on hand to review JusticeCorps members' work and answer all questions as necessary.

For this EAP proposal, JusticeCorps members will be recruited for the 300 hour, minimum time positions for a total of 30 minimum time members serving in San Diego. Because the JusticeCorps program recruits fully enrolled college students, the 300 hour, minimum time commitment is the most realistic given their class schedules and other personal obligations.

The minimum time position also accommodates the needs of the self-help centers and the community members they serve. 300 hours of service equates to two half day or one full day shift each week for the duration of the academic year. These blocks of time are scheduled for consistent days each week, making it relatively easy for center supervisors to manage JusticeCorps members' time. This also achieves consistent ongoing coverage for the centers. Additionally, because the students have consistent shifts, some litigants who need to return multiple times to complete a matter will know when the same

Narratives

member they worked with previously will be available.

During the course of the program year, staff estimate members will serve approximately 2,000 litigants by providing them referrals, completing forms or observing in the courtroom and providing information after hearings.

Measurable Outputs and Outcomes

As our performance measures outline, in the third year of San Diego's program (the first year of the new EAP cycle), San Diego JusticeCorps aims to provide services to 2,000 litigants; to assure that at least 70% of all instances of information and referral provided are assessed as appropriate by supervisors; and to assure that at least 70% of all legal forms coversheets are assessed as accurate and complete by supervisors.

The JusticeCorps program is designed to allow San Diego's court-based legal access self help centers to better serve growing numbers of litigants coming to court to resolve important legal matters. To that end, the program will continue to use the tools and measurements that have proven successful since JusticeCorps began in 2004. The program will measure exactly how many litigants are served by JusticeCorps members. The program will also track how accurately and completely the members make referrals and help litigants fill out legal forms to resolve their legal matter.

The JusticeCorps program coordinator will continue to be responsible for measuring community impact. The coordinator will tally the numbers of litigants served monthly by collecting the tally sheets documenting the numbers of litigants served by JusticeCorps members. The coordinator will also monitor the members' performance in helping litigants to complete forms "accurately and completely" by collecting and tallying the legal forms cover sheets submitted to site supervisors by members.

Narratives

Plans for Self-Assessment, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement

The program's performance measures will be tracked at the local level by staff and reported to the statewide coordinator at the AOC who will then verify and report on the measures in CaliforniaVolunteers through quarterly progress reports. The performance measures are agreed upon at the outset of the program by all partners, and explained to members at the beginning of their term of service. Quarterly partnership reviews of the performance measures will be facilitated by AOC staff to spot indication that progress may be slower than expected and to help improve performance. The members themselves are also an important participant in plans for continuous improvement. After each group training members fill out an evaluation form providing information on which training sessions were most helpful and how future sessions could be improved. Program partners also have opportunities to give feedback about the program's operation at the annual all partner meetings and through regular e-mail and phone communication with the local program directors or the AOC coordinator.

The AOC will be overseeing a formal external program evaluation during the 2008-2009 program year. Details of this in-progress project are included in the "Evaluation Summary/Plan" section of this application.

Community Involvement

California communities served by the self-help legal access centers have been involved in shaping the types of services offered in a variety of ways. With the assistance of the AOC, San Diego Superior Court worked at the local level to develop and implement an action plan for serving self-represented litigants. As part of this process, culminating in 2003, San Diego held public information forums to receive input from community members directly. The overwhelming recommendation--in San Diego and around the

Narratives

state--was to increase access to legal assistance to the public through self-help programs like court-based self help centers and related programs offering on-on-one help and workshops.

In 2005 and 2006 the AOC helped JusticeCorps courts conduct a series of focus groups to gather community input on self help services. In many cases, the non-profit legal aid organizations helping to staff the self help centers were assigned to recruit for and facilitate some of the focus groups. Results showed that many litigants needed more clarification on the difference between legal information and advice--that is, what information court staff could provide, and where they had limitations.

Organizational Capability

Ability to Provide Sound Programmatic and Fiscal Oversight

The JusticeCorps San Diego program will continue to be funded with support from the AOC and a combination of in-kind and staff time from the San Diego Superior Court.

The AOC, the legal applicant for this EAP request, serves as the staff agency to the 27-member Judicial Council of California. The Judicial Council is the policy-making body of the California courts, the largest court system in the world. The AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) conducts many state-wide projects related to family, juvenile, and domestic violence law and procedure. Ongoing projects include: developing rules and forms; providing training, education, and grants; and coordinating research and statistical analysis. CFCC also initiates projects involving issues of juvenile dependency, victim reconciliation, and court access for those with disabilities and those without representation.

The first goal listed in the Judicial Council's Strategic Plan is "Access, Fairness and Diversity," specifically that "All Californians will have equal access to the courts and equal ability to participate in court proceedings." In the effort to promote "accessibility," CFCC staff at the AOC helped to implement

Narratives

several significant improvements in our court system over the past several years. First, AOC staff helped to oversee the implementation of Assembly Bill 1058 providing a full time Family Law Facilitator to assist with child support cases in every county. The AOC also guided the establishment of three pilot Family Law Information Centers (FLIC) in Los Angeles, Fresno and Sutter counties to address severe family law case backlogs. In addition, CFCC staff helped establish five pilot Self-help Centers around the state. The centers build on the work of the FLICs and provide other much needed services, many of which are targeted to specific ethnic communities in need. Other successful self-help programs for self represented litigants have been established in additional counties throughout the state with AOC staff's technical assistance and expertise.

These accomplishments were made possible only through the many valuable partnerships fostered along the way. Foremost, the inter-governmental partnerships forged between the AOC and local superior courts were critical to the successful establishment of the self-help centers. While the AOC is responsible for setting statewide policy, that policy would never be successfully implemented without the daily perseverance of the local courts in forging partnerships with organizations like San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Inc., the Legal Aid Society of San Diego, and the San Diego County Public Law Library to provide new clinics and workshops and other vital ongoing services to the public.

For the last five fiscal years, the AOC has administered an average of \$60 million in federal grants and contracts. These funds include over \$600,000 in Department of Justice (DOJ), Violence Against Women Office funding to conduct a Violence Against Women Judicial Education project; over \$500,000 in DOJ Office of Justice Programs funding to conduct a state-wide Drug Court Cost-Benefit Study; and over \$1 million in Department of Health and Human Services funding to administer Access to Visitation projects for non-custodial parents statewide. This and all other special funding administered by the AOC is managed by our finance department's accounting unit. All expenses will be tracked and reported by

Narratives

assigned staff person in the accounting unit. The AOC has never defaulted on any of its contracts nor had any grant funding withdrawn for problems in administration.

Most of the AOC's grant funding includes "pass through" funding to local courts and community based agencies, similar to the structure in which the AOC has worked on past grants with CaliforniaVolunteers. The AOC acts as the lead grantee because of its capacity to administer this type of funding, its ability to provide matching funding in the form of cash and assistance with member training and project evaluation, and its position at the state level to disseminate the findings of this innovative court project and replicate it in other counties where appropriate. AOC staff will oversee communications between the AOC accounting unit and the JusticeCorps Project Director to facilitate fiscal reporting on grant funds.

The AOC received its first ever AmeriCorps grant of \$250,000 a year for three years in 2004 to establish the JusticeCorps program in Los Angeles. It is now a beneficiary of a three-year grant of \$750,000 each year to support the statewide JusticeCorps program in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. In September 2008, the agency began its third year of AmeriCorps EAP support for the San Diego JusticeCorps program. The AOC has successfully administered the EAP program for two years, drawing on the programmatic and structural strengths of the established statewide program, including clear MOUs between the AOC and the courts and creating and maintaining commitments by all partners including cash and in-kind support from the court.

The AOC is subject to regular audits from the Bureau of State Audits. Under the federal Single Audit Act this entity audits for compliance with federal requirements. The AOC also has a system of internal audits and programmatic audits from state agencies outside the judicial branch that may provide funding to the courts through the AOC.

Narratives

Administrators and Staff

The JusticeCorps partnership features three main components: 1) court partners; 2) university partners; and 3) community partners

Court Partners: Administrative Office of the Courts; the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego.

University Partner: University of California San Diego.

Community Partners: San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, Inc., the Legal Aid Society of San Diego, and the San Diego County Public Law Library.

JusticeCorps staff at the AOC are overseen by a manager and an assistant division director, providing regular support and input as the program progresses. The managers will review all JusticeCorps final fiscal and programmatic reports submitted to the funder. The JusticeCorps staff are also asked throughout the year to report to the Judicial Council and to regional meetings of county presiding judges and court executives on the progress of the program so that others in the state may learn from its accomplishments. Also, the funds provided by the AOC to San Diego Superior court are governed by Memoranda of Understanding that explicitly outlines how the funds are to be used to support the JusticeCorps program, when the court is to report on the expenditure of the funds and how the funds will support the requirements for the proposed AmeriCorps EAP program.

The AOC staff will be the primary contact for the designated CaliforniaVolunteers (CV) program associate. AOC staff will work with CV staff to develop the contract, refine and improve performance

Narratives

measures and learn from the program handbooks and tutorials provided and either include local program staff in conference calls or trainings, or pass the materials along to assure local staff benefit as well. AOC staff will also identify and coordinate the attendance of local program staff at any relevant statewide self help legal access conferences that are sponsored by the AOC for court staff and justice system partners through out the year.

The 2009-2012 EAP program will continue to operate out of the Superior Court of California, County of San Diego. The AOC will continue to leverage its experience in grant-making and grant management; its policy expertise; and its breadth of work with and on behalf of the California courts, to assist San Diego Superior Court in implementing a highly functioning and successful JusticeCorps program. This valuable collaboration between the AOC and the San Diego court will enhance both groups' efforts to provide equal access to justice for all Californians, especially those who come to court without a lawyer.

Key staff involved in implementing the JusticeCorps EAO program for the 2009-2012 program years will be: Martha Wright, AOC Senior Court Services Analyst and creator of the JusticeCorps program; Nicole Claro-Quinn, AOC Senior Court Services Analyst, and liaison with CaliforniaVolunteers for the past 1.5 years; Abigail Birnbaum, AOC Staff Analyst; Julie Myres, Manager of Volunteer Services for the San Diego Superior Court; and Kathleen Abbott, Administrative Analyst in Volunteer Services for the San Diego Superior Court. Ms. Abbott is responsible for day-to-day coordination of the JusticeCorps program and is overseen by Ms. Myres. As a long-standing court employee, Ms Abbott has experience with court programs, implementing grant funded projects, working with universities and college students, and recruiting volunteers and managing court partnerships.

Track Record of Accomplishment

The JusticeCorps program was established in 2004, as a collaborative project of the AOC, the Superior

Narratives

Court of Los Angeles County, a number of public California universities and colleges, and a number of community-based legal aid organizations. Since then, the program expanded in Los Angeles county, and was replicated by five Bay Area counties, under the leadership of the Superior Court of Alameda County. The San Diego JusticeCorps program has been in existence since September 2007 and represents the first smaller-scale replication effort. This proposal includes additional slots to accommodate a new court site and leverage the AOC's existing relationship with CSU San Marcos.

As of September 2008, JusticeCorps members have:

- * Assisted 119,000 litigants
- * Filed 88,000 legal documents
- * Provided 85,000 referrals and
- * Completed 160,000 hours of service.

The AOC's goal is to continue to expand the JusticeCorps program and place members in court self-help centers throughout the state. Program replication and resource management will be based on the multi-partner model that includes courts, universities, and community organizations.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

The third year of the San Diego JusticeCorps program will recruit and train just 30 minimum time members representing 6 MSYs--the San Diego program will continue to exist as a small-scale replication of the larger JusticeCorps effort. The plan is for the program to grow gradually, adding members and funding at a measured pace. Funding will be provided by the AOC (\$10,000 in cash, to cover uniform costs, member transportation reimbursements, and member training costs), San Diego Superior Court (approximately \$90,000 in cash and in-kind resources) and UCSD (in-kind staff time). The court's contribution will continue to include a .5 FTE JusticeCorps Program Coordinator, and 20 percent in-kind time designated to the JusticeCorps Program Director. During the program's tenure as an

Narratives

AmeriCorps EAP, staff will continue to seek ways to diversify funding beyond the funds provided by the AOC. As mentioned previously, the AOC is seeking private and community foundation partnerships that should yield more resources to support program operations.

The major costs expected for each of the three EAP program years include: the salary for one .5 FTE Program Coordinator and one .20 FTE Program Manager (a total of \$79,000 plus benefits, funded by the Superior Court of San Diego County); transit reimbursements for members to travel to placement sites and trainings (\$5,000); member service gear and supplies (\$3,000); and operations and training supplies (\$2,000).

Evaluation Summary or Plan

The AOC will work with the Superior Court of San Diego, its designated partner university, UCSD, and its community based legal aid partners to conduct a program year 2008-2009 evaluation. The AOC recently released an RFP to hire a consultant to evaluate all California JusticeCorps sites in Los Angeles, the Bay Area and San Diego. At the time the consultant is hired, the AOC will meet by conference call with all JusticeCorps site staff, university partners and community partners to brainstorm research questions. Then a select committee of that larger group will be responsible for finalizing the research questions with the new consultant.

The overarching evaluation questions will likely be the following: What impact do JusticeCorps members have on self-represented litigants' ability to move forward with and eventually resolve their legal matters? How do JusticeCorps members help the court process work more efficiently for court staff and the public? Other questions may involve program implementation issues including an evaluation of the successes and challenges of the San Diego court's establishment of a smaller-scale Ed Award Only version of the larger JusticeCorps program. This question is directly relevant to successfully replicating the JusticeCorps program in additional communities.

Narratives

Methods chosen as most appropriate for JusticeCorps program evaluation will be proposed by the successful bidder ultimately selected as our consultant. Staff would expect those methods to include litigant and court staff focus groups and or interviews and exit surveys of litigants on site at self-help centers.

Amendment Justification

n/a

Clarification Summary

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT CLARIFICATION--MAY 2, 2011

Serving Litigant in Self-Help Centers

1. CNCS QUERY: One output has two targets: 2,000 instances of assistance and completion of 1,400 packets of legal forms.

JUSTICECORPS RESPONSE: This is correct. "Instances of assistance" comprises all interactions between JusticeCorps members and litigants, including making referrals, helping to translate for non-English-speaking litigants, and explaining courtroom orders to litigants who have appeared in front of a judge. Completion of forms captures separate, extended interactions in which JusticeCorps members assist litigants to properly complete forms needed to move a case through the court system.

2. CNCS QUERY: Plus in the application narrative update, the program discusses breaking the clients (N = 1,000) into two distinct groups: LEP and litigants whose cases have an impact on families & children. Please clarify. What happens when LEP litigants also qualify for the second group?

JUSTICECORPS RESPONSE: "LEP" means "Limited English Proficient," that is anyone that does not speak English as his or her primary language. Language barriers can also be present for native English-speakers who have literacy or comprehension issues. In 2010, the JusticeCorps program decided to capture not just instances of assistance, but also instances where the assistance involved an LEP person

Narratives

as well as instances where children were involved. It is important to clarify that we count instances of assistance, not litigants served. As we have noted previously, one litigant may require several separate instances of assistance. For example, first, that litigant receives a referral to a workshop to learn about the phases of the divorce process. In attending the workshop, he or she may be assisted by a JusticeCorps members with language translation and/or to complete forms required for that phase of the process. Each of these is counted as a separate "instance of assistance." For this reason, we feel that reporting a count of instances of assistance where English language skills were a barrier as well as instances where children were involved in the situation at hand is an accurate portrayal of the complexity and magnitude of the assistance provided.

3. CNCS QUERY: The intermediate outcome is based on the number of forms completed successfully; target is 80% of 1,400 = 1,201 forms. The only instruments appear to be the member tally sheets and site supervisor reviews. Is this adequate? This measure sounds more like an output. What is the impact on the clients?

JUSTICECORPS RESPONSE: This is adequate. Per our program design, the member tally form tracks the "output"--number of instances of assistance and number of forms completed; and the site supervisor--an expert attorney who can assess a completed legal packet to identify potential errors that would provide obstacles for a case moving through the system--measures and rates the accuracy of the form completed. The site supervisors are more than adequately equipped to make this assessment.

The JusticeCorps program is designed to support litigants dealing with a number of sensitive issues, including domestic violence, divorce, and child welfare. The program design provides assistance to move through these cases with assistance only--the members are not assigned as attorneys and are not expected or trained to follow cases to completion. Given that most litigants make multiple trips visits to the self-help centers to resolve their legal matter, our program is designed to serve the public

Narratives

independent of where they might be in the process of their case.

The measure of "accurate and complete" ensures increased access to justice for everyone coming to court. This accuracy rating is indeed an outcome and its impact is the primary one for our program, that: "assisted litigants are better prepared to proceed with their cases."

4. CNCS QUERY: Please consider breaking this one performance measure into two distinct outputs with corresponding intermediate outcomes that demonstrate the impact on the clients.

JUSTICECORPS RESPONSE: The "Output" measure does track two outputs: instances of assistance and number of forms completed. The impact is measured through accuracy of forms--instances of assistance constitutes an output and an impact in that that assistance (such as a referral, or translation support) helps litigants move to the stage of completing forms, which is key in moving a case forward.

BUDGET ITEMS CLARIFICATION--MAY 2, 2011

CNCS Query: In the budget line item "Section 1 -- I: Other Program Operating Cost", please ensure that your program has appropriately budgeted for required criminal history background checks, including FBI checks for all staff and members supported by this grant. Please make this change directly in the application budget and budget narrative in eGrants.

JUSTICECORPS RESPONSE: Because of the nature of our program--members serving at court-based self-help centers--all members and staff have always been required to undergo a full background check, including an FBI check. (In order to work or volunteer at a California court, you must undergo this multi-level check. This was true well in advance of the CNCS requirement that went into effect in April of this year.) As this is a necessity for service or employment at the court, we have not included grant or

Narratives

match costs for this item in any of our JusticeCorps program budgets (and in fact the EAP program has no budget costs at all). Given that the California courts are already required to run comprehensive local and national background checks on all staff and volunteers, we can verify the community being served by the JusticeCorps program is safe in the hands of our members and staff.

Continuation Changes

3a. ENROLLMENT

Currently, the program is at 97% enrollment--29 of 30 M/T slots are filled.

3b. RETENTION

Our current retention rate is 100%. For the past three years, the JusticeCorps EAP program has been operating in San Diego--this year the slots were shifted to pilot the Capitol Region program in Sacramento, Yolo, and Placer counties. San Diego JusticeCorps ended Program Year 2009-2010 with a retention rate of 83%. The program had struggled with retention initially and in response had developed and implemented action plans that included: increased training for site supervisors to strengthen mentoring of members; improved screening of candidates during the interview process, to ensure that prospective members understood the commitment and were not already overscheduled; and stronger monitoring by program staff to quickly identify and counsel members who might be falling behind in hours. Year on year, retention did improve for our San Diego EAP program--however, the challenging economy over the last year forced an unprecedented number of members to exit early because of family financial challenges that affected their ability to complete an unstipended service commitment.

Even in the face of a difficult economy, the program's retention strategies are still vital to ensuring the maximum amount of members complete their JusticeCorps commitment. With this in mind, we have integrated all the strategies mentioned above at the outset of the Capitol Region program. Past

Narratives

experience also shows us that newer JusticeCorps programs can benefit from additional support from AOC staff. We plan to do monthly monitoring of member hours and bi-monthly conference calls with program staff and all site supervisors to learn about the details of members' experience and provide oversight and support for retention challenges (hopefully before they come up.) Additionally, The Capitol Region program launched with supplemented staff. In addition to the program's half-time program director, they are lucky to have Rosalyn Li--who is enrolled at UC Davis, one of the partner campuses--on board as a part-time student assistant. Rosalyn joined the staff well before orientation and is acting very much in the capacity of the university reps who work with members and staff in our statewide operational grant program. We find that university reps are a key component of successful member retention so it is fortuitous that we were able to build this into the Capitol Region program.

3c. COMPLIANCE WITH 30-DAY ENROLLMENT-EXIT POLICIES

As we have discussed with our Program Associate, due to a calendar miscalculation on the part of program staff (all of whom are new to JusticeCorps' compliance requirements) all member enrollments were approved at 31 days. (Our established process is to enroll members at 30 days in order to comply with our stated 30-day probationary period.)

Our entire program staff recognizes it is vitally important to remain in compliance with AmeriCorps enrollment rules. The situation caused us to re-examine our 30-day probationary-period policy, which we developed in order to ensure confidence in the members who are enrolled, to avoid a negative effect on our retention early in the program year. As we have discussed previously with our Program Associate, we are planning to revise our program-wide process for enrollment, to find a balance that still allows us a probationary period but also leaves enough time to rectify errors as they arise. Our program has been in compliance with the 30-day rule for the last several program years running, and we attribute this error to the fact that the staff is working on this for the very first time. Of course, we definitely want

Narratives

to ensure we do not repeat the same mistakes in coming program years.

D. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Our performance measures remain largely the same for 2011-2012. We have made one slight change to the description of our high-need target. In the process of gathering data on litigants who receive language assistance and of litigants whose cases have an impact on children, we realized it is most accurate to break the number into two distinct groups, rather than striving for one round number that includes both. Our high-need target will now read:

(b) High-need target population: Litigants whose cases involved families and children, and litigants who are "Limited English Proficient" (LEP). LEP persons are defined as individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English.

(c) # of direct high need beneficiaries: (a) 300 LEP litigants; (b) 700 litigants whose cases have an impact on families and children.

Following is progress through November 2010 on our 2010-2011 Performance Measures;

Primary PMW--Assisting Self-Represented Litigants

High-Need Beneficiaries

"LEP" Litigants Assisted: 58 (Target of 300--19% of target met)

Assistance on Cases Involving Families and Children: 202 (Target of 700--29% of target met)

Output:

[1] Total Instances of Assistance = 3,222 (Target of 2,000--target met)

[2] Total Number of Legal Forms Completed = 378 (Target of 1,400--21% of target met)

Intermediate Outcome:

Narratives

No data update to date

Secondary PMW--Member Development and Training

29 members have attended orientation, for a total of 416 hours (Target of 480 hours for full cohort--87% of target met)

Secondary PMW--Volunteer Recruitment

(a) Number of One-Time Volunteers Recruited: 0 (Target of 5--0% target met)

(b) Number of One-Time Volunteer Hours Completed: 0 (Target of 40 hours--0% of target met)

(a) Number of Ongoing Volunteers Recruited: 0 (Target of 10--)% of target met)

(b) Number of Ongoing Volunteer Hours Completed: 0 (Target of 300 hours--0% of target met.)

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None
- Geographic Focus - Rural
- Geographic Focus - Urban
- Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 0

Service Categories

Other Human Needs Primary Secondary

Serving Litigants in Self-Help Centers

Service Category: Other Human Needs

Measure Category: Needs and Service Activities

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

JusticeCorps members serve at court-based self-help assistance sites doing the following: provide general information about court services and locations, triage long lines of litigants waiting for services, provide referrals to associated services as appropriate, assist one-on one in identifying and completing correct legal forms, assist litigants in the courtroom as appropriate, and assist with legal workshops in a group setting. In San Diego, JusticeCorps members work at two sites: The Family Law Facilitator Program and the Central Division Civil Business Office.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Self help center litigants will receive assistance to complete appropriate legal paperwork completely and accurately.

Indicator: The percent of legal paperwork completed "accurately and completely" by assisted

Target: 80% (1,201/1,400) of forms completed with JusticeCorps members' assistance will be

Result: Intermediate Outcome

self-help center litigants.

assessed as "accurate and complete" by the site supervisor on first review.

Target Value: 1201

Instruments: Member Service Tally Sheet to collect data on accuracy and completeness of legal documents as assessed by the site supervisor.

Completed by: JusticeCorps members

Frequency: Daily (members complete Member Service Tally Sheets for each shift they serve.)

PM Statement: 80% (1,201/1,400) of forms completed with the assistance of JusticeCorps members will be verified as accurate and complete on first review.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Output

Self help center litigants will receive assistance with their legal matter.

Indicator: The number of instances of assistance provided by JusticeCorps members .

Target: JusticeCorps members will provide 2,000 instances of assistance.

Target Value: 2000

Instruments: Member service tally sheet to collect data on number instances of assistance.

PM Statement: JusticeCorps members will provide 2,000 instances of assistance.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Output

JusticeCorps members will assist self-help center litigants to complete packets of legal forms.

Indicator: The number of packets of legal forms completed with JusticeCorps members'

Target: 1,400 packets of legal forms will be completed with JusticeCorps members' assistance.

Target Value: 1400

Instruments: Member service tally sheet to collect data on number of packets of legal forms with which members assisted.

PM Statement: JusticeCorps members will assist self-help center litigants to complete 1,400 packets of legal forms.

Prev. Yrs. Data

Result: Output

assistance.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Already on File at CNCS

Labor Union Concurrence

Already on File at CNCS