Judicial Council *of* California

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REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No. 23-116
For business meeting on September 19, 2023

Title
Language Access Plan: Proposed Allocations for Signage and Technology Grant Program, Cycle 5, Fiscal Year 2023–24

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
Language Access Subcommittee
Hon. Victor A. Rodriguez, Chair
Information Technology Advisory Committee
Hon. Sheila F. Hanson, Chair
Hon. Louis R. Mauro, Vice-Chair

Agenda Item Type
Action Required

Effective Date
September 19, 2023

Date of Report
August 23, 2023

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Executive Summary

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness and the Information Technology Advisory Committee recommend approving proposed grant awards for the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program of $2.35 million to expand language access for court users. For Cycle 5 (fiscal year 2023–24), 13 courts applied for signage and technology needs. Funding of all requested court projects is recommended, and remaining funding will support 4 additional courts that applied for grants under different but related grant opportunities.

Recommendation

The Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness and the Information Technology Advisory Committee recommend that the Judicial Council, effective September 19, 2023:

1. Approve the proposed allocations of $423,567.04 for signage and $1,926,432.96 for technology for the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program for fiscal year 2023–24; and

2. Direct Language Access Services staff to work with Branch Accounting and Procurement to draft and execute intra-branch agreements with each awarded court.

The proposed allocations and summary of the requests for funding are included as Attachment A.

Relevant Previous Council Action

In January 2015, the Judicial Council adopted the *Strategic Plan for Language Access in the California Courts*. The plan provides recommendations, guidance, and a consistent statewide approach to ensure language access for all of California's approximately 7 million limited-English-proficient (LEP) residents and potential court users.

The Budget Act of 2018 (Stats. 2018, ch. 29) included $2.55 million in ongoing funding for language access signage and technology (S&T) infrastructure support and equipment needs for the trial courts and the Judicial Council. On September 24, 2019, the Judicial Council adopted a process to annually disburse these language access signage and technology grants to the trial courts and directed Language Access Services staff to solicit and review grant applications and develop recommendations for review and approval by the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness, the Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the Judicial Council.[1] Grants are also approved by the Technology Committee.

This is the fifth year of the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program (Cycle 5). Most recently, in December 2022, for Cycle 4 (fiscal year (FY) 2022–23), the council approved grants to all 19 trial courts that applied for S&T grants and 7 additional courts that applied for grants under different but related grant opportunities.[2] All funding from Cycle 4 under the $2.35 million annual allocation, was distributed to courts.

Analysis/Rationale

To support judicial branch language access expansion efforts, the Budget Act of 2018 included ongoing funding of $1 million per year for language access signage and $1.55 million per year

[1] See Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Language Access Plan: Signage and Technology Grants* (Sept. 9, 2019), *https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7675626&GUID=F2CCA714-356A-41B7-82B5-05C058CE0D6E*.

[2] See Judicial Council of Cal., Advisory Com. Rep., *Language Access Plan: Signage and Technology Grant Program, Fiscal Year 2022–23: Requests and Proposed Allocations* (Nov. 10, 2022), *https://jcc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11462752&GUID=24564058-70C0-4A36-8581-BC27E26D9D97*

for language access technology infrastructure support and equipment needs. Of the $1.55 million for technology, $200,000 is dedicated to the Judicial Council for upgrades to the online Language Access Toolkit and other council language access infrastructure support (such as translation costs for statewide forms, web content, and other multilingual resources for LEP court users). The amount available to trial courts for technology is, therefore, $1.35 million each year. With the signage funding, the total grant amount available to trial courts each year is $2.35 million.

Under the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program, courts may be eligible to receive up to $200,000 for signage projects and up to $270,000 for technology projects, unless total requests are under the annual allocation for each category, in which case, larger amounts may be requested and approved by the council for grants to expend funding.

Following are the goals of the Language Access Signage and Technology Grant Program:

- Support courts with the development of multilingual signage to help LEP court users navigate the courthouse.
- Assist courts that may need equipment or software that will facilitate communication with LEP court users and the courts.
- Allocate funds to as many trial courts as possible within the given budget to support language access signage and technology initiatives.
- Fund enhancements that provide LEP court users with greater access to the courts and to information in their language.
- Encourage courts to establish for grant funding an ongoing plan that coordinates with other facilities planning and/or with planned or ongoing technology initiatives that support language access as a core service of the court.

On March 21, 2023, a memorandum was released by Judicial Council Information Technology to courts on how to request funding for various technology grant opportunities on a single platform. The deadline for courts to apply was April 21, 2023.

Judicial Council staff coordinated the review of Cycle 5 Language Access Signage and Technology Grant requests with the other technology funding requests (Information Technology Modernization Fund Program, Jury Management Systems Grant, and Model Self-Help (MSH) Technology Grant) to ensure that no court would receive duplicate funding for the same project. For related projects, staff also confirmed with the courts that their projects would benefit LEP court users.

For Cycle 5, 13 courts applied for signage and technology needs. The projects from all 13 courts can be funded, and remaining funding will support 4 additional courts that applied for grants under different but related grant opportunities.[3]

For signage, the Superior Court of San Francisco County requested $225,000, which was over the maximum application amount ($200,000). Because the court also applied for the same project under the MSH grant, both grant programs agreed to split the funding with S&T to cover $162,470, with the remainder of $62,530 to be covered by MSH. When tabulating the signage-related projects across all grant opportunities, $576,433 of funding remained in the signage category.

During Cycle 4, Budget Services confirmed that remaining funding from the signage category is allowed to go toward related technology category projects, and vice versa, as long as the projects benefit LEP court users. For Cycle 5, this approach results in a proposed allocation of $423,567 for signage projects, and $1,926,433 for technology projects, which would allocate the entire $2.35 million.

For technology, project requests exceeded the available S&T technology funding of $1.35 million because Santa Clara County requested $1,250,000 for a video remote project. For projects submitted under related grant opportunities, Butte requested $2,267,196 for audiovisual upgrades, and San Francisco requested $1,061,000 for a video remote project. Staff consulted with the chairs and determined that Santa Clara, Butte, and San Francisco would each receive an award over the recommended maximum; these additional awards would be based on the individual amounts they requested for each project. The approach would distribute all funding and allow awards to 17 courts, which represent the northern, southern, and central regions of the state. The proposed awards for courts are summarized in the table below.[4]

Proposed Allocations: Signage and Technology Grant Program, Cycle 5 (FY 2023–24), in Dollars

County of Trial Court	Signage Award	Technology Award	Total Proposed Award
Butte	—	384,861.11	384,861.11
Contra Costa	—	141,537.52	141,537.52
Fresno	19,700.00	—	19,700.00
Kings	—	15,500.00	15,500.00
Madera	—	23,468.40	23,468.40

[3] The four courts that applied for related projects under other grant opportunities are Fresno and Tulare for signage-related projects and Butte and Mariposa for technology-related projects.

[4] Because some courts are receiving additional funding to support remote access through Assembly Bill 716 (Stats. 2021, ch. 526), Judicial Council staff will consult with S&T courts receiving remote/audio solutions funding before developing intra-branch agreements. Doing so will prevent duplication of funding with AB 716 funding. If there is extra funding because of reductions of awards for Cycle 5, the remaining funding will revert to contingency funding to be used in case of need by the awarded S&T courts for Cycle 5.

Mariposa	—	65,745.99	65,745.99
Orange	—	230,150.00	230,150.00
Sacramento	11,850.00	—	11,850.00
San Benito	6,630.20	—	6,630.20
San Diego	85,000.00	17,500.00	102,500.00
San Francisco	162,470.00	333,327.73	495,797.73
San Mateo	3,000.00	15,230.00	18,230.00
Santa Clara	—	323,752.58	323,752.58
Santa Cruz	12,380.00	—	12,380.00
Tulare	122,536.84	—	122,536.84
Ventura	—	203,359.63	203,359.63
Yolo	—	172,000.00	172,000.00
	$423,567.04	**$1,926,432.94**	**$2,350,000.00**

The table below summarizes the number of project requests by signage grant priority.

Signage Grant Projects

Priority #	Signage Grant Project	Total # of Projects
1	Translation of Signage	1
2	Court Websites & Wayfinding Translations	2
3	Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies	6
4	Automated Queue-Management System	0
5	Multilingual Non-electronic Signage	1

The table below summarizes the number of project requests by technology grant priority.

Technology Grant Projects

Priority #	Technology Grant Project	Total # of Projects
1	Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions to Support Language Access	5
2	Interpreter Equipment	8
3	Scheduling or Other Software	0
4	Multilingual Videos	1
5	Audiovisual Systems Upgrade	3
6	Multilingual Kiosks	2

The above two tables summarize the total number of projects requested; some courts requested multiple projects. As a result, the total number of projects in the third column exceeds the total number of courts that applied this cycle. For a detailed explanation of all the grant projects, see Attachment A.

Policy implications

Under the grant program, courts can apply for funding for audio or video remote solutions to support language access, including video remote interpreting (VRI), if permitted by their memorandums of understanding and any other agreements between court administration and court employees or independent contractors. All courts, including courts that participate in the grant program and request funding for VRI equipment, will be asked to follow the council's updated VRI guidelines for spoken language–interpreted events.[5]

Comments

The proposed allocations were reviewed and approved by the Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness on July 28 (action by email), the Information Technology Advisory Committee on August 9, and the Technology Committee on August 14, 2023.

Alternatives considered

The goal of the S&T grants is to fully allocate funds to as many trial courts as possible within the given budget to support language access signage and technology initiatives. For S&T projects that were submitted under different but related grant opportunities, staff confirmed with the courts that all the projects would benefit LEP court users.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Funding assists courts with language access signage and technology initiatives. Because funding is ongoing for the trial courts, individual courts are encouraged to establish an ongoing grant funding plan that coordinates with other facilities or technology initiatives planned or underway in their court to support language access.

Judicial Council staff has clarified with Branch Accounting and Procurement and Facilities staff that courts may use grant funding for facilities modification costs that directly relate to the purpose of the grant—for signage or technology—as long as the anticipated facility modification costs are built into the total grant amount.

All courts that submitted S&T requests for Cycle 5, FY 2023–24, will be notified as to whether they will receive funding. Intra-branch agreements for the S&T grant requests that are funded are expected to be delivered to court executive officers for signatory approval and returned to the Judicial Council in November 2023. If the reimbursement request and invoices to support the

[5] See Judicial Council of Cal., *Recommended Guidelines and Minimum Specifications for Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for Spoken Language–Interpreted Events* (May 21, 2021), *www.courts.ca.gov/documents/vri-guidelines.pdf*.

requested reimbursement amount are not received by June 30, 2025, grant funding for the cost of the project will be unavailable for reimbursement to the awarded court.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: Signage and Technology Grant Program, FY 2023–24: Proposed Allocations

Attachment A: Signage and Technology Grant Program, FY 2023–24: Proposed Allocations (Signage)

#	Trial Court Name	SIGNAGE Project Description(s):	TOTAL SIGNAGE Requested	PROPOSED SIGNAGE Awards
1	Fresno*	Courthouse Docket Screens - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies**	19,700.00	19,700.00
2	Sacramento	Language Access Signage and Technology Multilingual Signage - **Signage Priority 1: Translation of Signage**	11,850.00	11,850.00
3	San Benito*	Electronic Board Display for Judicial Calendar Assignments - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies***	3,430.20	3,430.20
		Informational Signs & Flowcharts & Bulletin Board - **Signage Priority 5: Multilingual Non-electronic Signage**	3,200.00	3,200.00
4	San Diego*	Court User Directional Kiosks - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies***	35,000.00	35,000.00
		Signage and Wayfinding - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies**	50,000.00	50,000.00
5	San Francisco**	Self-Represented Litigants WayFinder Project – Phase III Program Development - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies**	225,000.00	162,470.00
6	San Mateo	Multilingual Online Wayfinding - **Signage Priority 2: Court Websites & Wayfinding Translations**	3,000.00	3,000.00
7	Santa Cruz	Electronic Display Addition - **Signage Priority 2: Court Websites & Wayfinding Translations**	12,380.00	12,380.00
8	Tulare*	Electronic Docket Display and Courthouse Signage Refresh - **Signage Priority 3: Multilingual Wayfinding Strategies**	122,536.84	122,536.84
			$486,097.04	**$423,567.04**

* Court applied for ITMF grant but S&T can fund

** Court also applied for MSH grant - MSH to cover $62,530

Funding amount for signage projects under S&T grant only	$242,900.00
Funding amount for signage projects under other grant opportunities	$180,667.04
Total	**$423,567.04**
Remaining signage funding (out of $1M available)	$576,432.96

Signage and Technology Grant Program, FY 2023–24: Proposed Allocations (Technology)

#	Trial Court Name	TECHNOLOGY Project Description(s):	TOTAL TECHNOLOGY Requested	PROPOSED TECHNOLOGY Awards
1	Butte*	Audiovisual Upgrades - **Technology Priority 5: Audiovisual Systems Upgrade**	2,267,196.00	384,861.11
2	Contra Costa	Multilingual Wayfinding Kiosks - **Technology Priority 6: Multilingual Kiosks**	141,537.52	141,537.52
3	Kings	Juror Educational Orientation Video - **Technology Priority 4: Multilingual Videos**	15,500.00	15,500.00
4	Madera*	Court Phone Tree Translation **- Technology Priority 1: Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions**	3,168.64	3,168.64
		Interpreter - Integrated Technology **- Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	19,043.28	19,043.28
		Traffic Department Kiosk Check In - **Technology Priority 6: Multilingual Kiosks***	1,256.48	1,256.48
5	Mariposa*	Lower Courtroom Remote Appearance - **Technology Priority 1: Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions**	65,745.99	65,745.99
6	Orange	Video Remote Interpreting Equipment - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	230,150.00	230,150.00
7	San Diego	Interpreter Audio Equipment**- Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	17,500.00	17,500.00
8	San Francisco**	Interpreter Equipment-Listen Talk Transceivers - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	30,000.00	30,000.00
		Remote Jury Selection Management - **Technology Priority 1: Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions****	1,061,000.00	303,327.73
9	San Mateo	Video Remote Interpreting Implementation Project - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	9,230.00	9,230.00
		Voice to Text Expansion Project - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	6,000.00	6,000.00
10	Santa Clara	Interpreter Hardware - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	15,000.00	15,000.00
		Video Remote Interpretation - **Technology Priority 1: Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions**	1,250,000.00	308,752.58
11	Ventura*	Interpreting Transceiver / Receiver Equipment - **Technology Priority 2: Interpreter Equipment**	16,587.00	16,587.00
		Courtroom Video Upgrades for Remote Proceedings - **Technology Priority 5: Audiovisual Systems Upgrade***	181,142.63	181,142.63
		Video Remote Interpreting Solutions - **Technology Priority 1: Telephonic/Video Remote Solutions**	5,630.00	5,630.00
12	Yolo	Courtroom AV Upgrade (for remote appearances) - **Technology Priority 5: Audiovisual Systems Upgrade**	172,000.00	172,000.00
			$5,507,687.54	**$1,926,432.96**

* Court applied for ITMF grant but S&T can fund

** Court applied for JMS grant but S&T can fund

Signage and Technology Grant Program, FY 2023–24: Proposed Allocations (Technology)

Funding amount for tech projects applied under S&T grant only	$1,346,261.85
Available funding for tech projects applied under ITMF/JMS grants	$3,738.15
Additional amount available for this purpose from signage category	$576,432.96
Total allocation for technology projects	**$1,926,432.96**

Signage and Technology Grant Program, FY 2023–24: Proposed Allocations (Summary)

#	Trial Court Name	Funded in FY 2019-2020	Funded in FY 2020-2021	Funded in FY 2021-2022	Funded in FY 2022-2023	Funded in FY 2023-2024	SIGNAGE AWARD	TECHNOLOGY AWARD	TOTAL PROPOSED AWARDS
1	**Butte**	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes		384,861.11	384,861.11
2	**Contra Costa**	No	No	No	No	Yes		141,537.52	141,537.52
3	**Fresno**	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	19,700.00		19,700.00
4	**Kings**	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		15,500.00	15,500.00
5	**Madera**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		23,468.40	23,468.40
6	**Mariposa**	No	No	No	No	Yes		65,745.99	65,745.99
7	**Orange**	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes		230,150.00	230,150.00
8	**Sacramento**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	11,850.00		11,850.00
9	**San Benito**	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	6,630.20		6,630.20
10	**San Diego**	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	85,000.00	17,500.00	102,500.00
11	**San Francisco**	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	162,470.00	333,327.73	495,797.73
12	**San Mateo**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	3,000.00	15,230.00	18,230.00
13	**Santa Clara**	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		323,752.58	323,752.58
14	**Santa Cruz**	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	12,380.00		12,380.00
15	**Tulare**	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	122,536.84		122,536.84
16	**Ventura**	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		203,359.63	203,359.63
17	**Yolo**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		172,000.00	172,000.00
							$423,567.04	**$1,926,432.96**	**$2,350,000.00**