July 27, 2020

South Dakota Commission on Equals Access to our Courts

500 East Capitol Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501-5070

Re: A2J, Inc./DPLS/ERLS Joint Grant Application

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of Access to Justice, Inc., East River Legal Services and Dakota Plains Legal Services, we submit for your consideration the following joint application for funding from the Commission on Equal Access to our Courts for general program support. All three organizations have utilized the criteria of HB 1083 to develop our application.

Our joint application seeks funding to continue our work with veterans, the elderly, individuals with a disability, and/or victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In terms of the $135,000 currently available in CEAC funds, East River Legal Services and Dakota Plains Legal Services are requesting an equal division of funding in the amount $38,333.34 each to support their individual programs. Access to Justice is seeking $23,333.32 in funding. This will leave a balance of $35,000 remaining in CEAC funds. The three programs are all in agreement to reserve the remaining $35,000 to assist with maintaining normal CEAC funding levels in the next grant cycle(s) due to the fact that all three programs expect filing fees to continue to be lower than normal over the next several months due to the impact of Covid-19 in our area. However, all three programs are open to alternative disbursement amounts if the CEAC determines that the entire amount of available funds should be disbursed at this time.

East River Legal Services intends to continue to utilize all CEAC funding awarded during this grant cycle to supplement existing unrestricted funds in support of assisting veterans, elderly, individuals with disabilities, and victims of violence. This will enable the ERLS program to make more efficient use of existing ERLS restricted funds to better serve applicants who qualify for ERLS assistance.

Dakota Plains Legal Services intends to use additional CEAC funds in the same manner as described in the April 2020 joint CEAC grant application: All DPLS staff who provide services, or who receive or provide training regarding veterans' issues, will be charged against the grant in increments of .25 hour for work done under the grant. The costs will include the employee's gross wages and fringe benefits. In addition, an overhead cost of 28% of gross wages and fringe benefits will be charged and travel expenses will be charged at cost. The cost for travel via an employee's personal vehicle will be charged at the applicable IRS rate per mile.

Access to Justice intends to use $13,333 in CEAC funds to supplement the A2J Judicare program with the remaining $10,000 to be used towards either general operating expenses/program support and/or Judicare funding, depending on the developing needs of the program.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this joint application and we look forward to hearing from the Commission. Please feel free to contact any of the organization representatives should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Tom Mortland, Director, Dakota Plains Legal Services

Denise Langley, Co-Coordinator, Access to Justice, Inc.

Elizabeth Overmoe, Co-Coordinator, Access to Justice, Inc.

Brent Thompson, Director, East River Legal Services