

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
COMMISSION ON EQUAL ACCESS TO OUR COURTS

December 14, 2023, at 11:00 AM (CST)
Room 132 State Capitol Building and Via Zoom

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Michelle Glodt, Judge Margo Northrup, Greg Sattizahn, Margo Tschetter Julius, Sarah Wachal, Tom Welk

Directors Present: Tom Mortland (DPLS), Denise Langley (A2J), Lea Wroblewski (ERLS)

Others Present: Paige Undeberg(UJS), Alisa Bousa (UJS), Sadie Stevens (UJS, recording secretary)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Tom Welk called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. Roll call was taken and a quorum was determined to be present. There is currently one Commissioner vacancy awaiting Governor appointment.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commission Funding Status Update

Greg Sattizahn provided the group with an update on the funding currently available. There is currently \$250,000 available for the spring and summer, and \$125,000 available in the current grant solicitation cycle. Approximately \$8,000 to \$9,000 is accumulated each month of new monies from received fees.

Update on Previous Grant Awards

Commissioner Welk informed the group that the organizations have already submitted their written updates. He provided each entity the opportunity to add anything to their proposal. ERLS and A2J had no additions. DPLS informed the group that this afternoon they were holding a meeting and would have final figures related to the "Justice Bus" concept, which would cover items such as computers, wheelchair lifts, and chairs and various connections to be placed in the shell of the bus.

Mr. Sattizahn inquired if there was any additional information about the expenditure funds, as he thought that this would be asked during the UJS budget hearing in January. ERLS replied that it would be easy to provide 2023 numbers, as well as client stories and data. Mr. Welk inquired if the A2J video would be completed by the budget hearing. Ms. Langley said it would not, as they were still working through the final technological pieces.

Mr. Sattizahn added that the legislature would be very interested in learning more about the Justice Bus. He will reach out to DPLS closer to January for an update.

Ms. Julius inquired about the ERLS's expanded areas of practice for disability and social security and if they would be able to take fees for those services. Ms. Wroblewski said that while they were not taking fee generating cases at this time, they could.

Ms. Wachal asked Mr. Mortland for information about the geographic area of the proposed Justice Bus. He informed her that it would cover the area from North Dakota, through the Cheyenne River valley, Pierre, and to Fort Thompson.

Mr. Welk inquired to Ms. Wroblewski about the salary changes and if they were able to find an individual for their chief financial officer. She shared the salary ranges of the lawyers, paralegals, and support staff and responded that they had not been able to secure a person for the CFO, but have been contracting with a 3rd party accounting firm, the Woltman Group, to fulfill this duty. Mr. Welk encouraged the directors to be prepared to answer questions about funding that went to increasing salaries.

Mr. Mortland shared information about the operational plan for the Justice Bus, which would be stored in Pierre. From April to October, the bus will be driven to preplanned and advertised locations to operate for 3 days, every other week. The off week will allow the attorney to work on the cases from the previous week.

Review of Grant Submissions

Mr. Welk opened the floor to the directors to share if there was anything else they would like to add to their submissions. The three directors indicated that they did not. Ms. Wroblewski added that she would like to discuss additional information about improving legal aid's presence online, such as adding chat bots, FAQs, and more educational material to a new website. Mr. Welk added that he had asked Ms. Wroblewski to add these additional details to the website redesign request. Mr. Sattizahn asked if she felt like there would be an ability to bring together the various entities that provide information, such as the UJS legal help page and the Bar Association, under a similar goal. Ms. Wroblewski thought that it would be helpful if the various agencies worked together. Mr. Mortland reminded the group that even with the best webpage, it is not helpful unless people can access it. He does agree that we need a new webpage, but also wants to make sure that information is accessible to people who are uncomfortable or unable to access the internet, such as low-income brackets and the elderly. Ms. Glodt added that the technology gap was gradually decreasing, and it would be important to stay ahead of the gap and start making the changes now. Mr. Welk added that he also wanted to make other parts of the page more accessible, such as information about how attorneys can help pro bono, and not be confused as to where to volunteer their services.

Grant awards

Ms. Glodt made a motion to approve the grant awards as presented which included \$40,000 to ERLS, \$40,000 to DPLS, \$15,000 to A2J and an additional award of \$30,000 to ERLS for a website redesign for all three legal service entities. It was seconded by Ms. Julius.

Mr. Sattizahn clarified if the webpage money would go to East River as the

central hub. Ms. Wroblewski said that yes, it would be similar to how it worked when DPLS was the hub for previous needs project.

All members voted aye.

Next Meeting Date

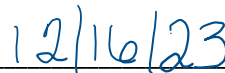
The next meeting is scheduled for June 11th at 10am CT.

Judge Northrup made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Sattizahn.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00pm CT.



Michelle Glodt, Secretary, CEAC



Date: