

Communication from Public

Name: Tania Sawczuk

Date Submitted: 08/10/2020 02:05 PM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: Good afternoon. My name is Tania Sawczuk and I work at the Vera Institute of Justice, which works with diverse jurisdictions around the country that are dedicated to ensuring all members of their communities have access to due process and a fair day in court, a principle that is central to America's vision of justice. Vera was tasked with the data collection for the pilot period of LAJF as well as engaging in the implementation and impact evaluation of the program. The pilot period has shown the power of public-private partnership to expand the safety net to the one-third of Angelenos who identify as immigrants. During the two years of the fund, LAJF not only met its goals but exceeded them in various ways. Not only did grantees significantly surpass the case goal but also bolstered existing removal defense capacity of providers in the region and shifted the culture of advocacy in Los Angeles immigration courts. Representation has had radiating impact far beyond those people directly served. Roughly half of adult clients have minor children in the United States, the vast majority of whom are U.S. citizens. LAJF clients have deep ties to the United States, with 55 percent of adult clients having lived here for more than 10 years and an average of 14 years in the United States. In addition, almost all clients confronted additional vulnerabilities beyond their precarious immigration status and risk of removal. LAJF attorneys have achieved a lot of success. They have prevailed on behalf of their clients in a high number of cases, demonstrating the crucial importance of representation in immigration. Sixty-three percent of completed cases have resulted in clients being able to stay with their families in the US and attorneys have helped secure release from custody for 48 percent of their initially detained clients. Through this work, LAJF has built a critical deportation defense infrastructure across Los Angeles City and County communities, which has led the organizations to develop collaboration procedures and structures that have changed the landscape of legal services, as well as improved coordination with County and City agencies that serve immigrants. Clients have expressed to Vera that LAJF services were critical to protecting their families and stability, and that being treated with respect and dignity alleviated their anxiety about immigration court processes. They also highlighted how access to counsel allowed them to preserve their limited resources

for other critical expenses as their families struggled with finances during a loved one's detention. As the city is looking at phase two of LAJF , we encourage the City to not limit the fund to "existing cases" but instead maximize the fund by allowing grantees the flexibility to decide for themselves, whether after careful review of their caseloads, they have the capacity to responsibly accept additional cases without adversely impacting their obligation to zealously represent their existing clients. We also ask the City to align with the County in committing to work with partners to develop an implementation strategy for future funding of the LAJF. Thank you for your consideration.

Communication from Public

Name: Rabeya Sen

Date Submitted: 08/10/2020 03:07 PM

Council File No: 17-0046-S2

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Honorable Budget Committee members, On behalf of Esperanza Committee Housing, we urge you to please fully fund the LA Justice Fund at the level of \$1 million for 1 year and to ensure that it provides due process for all, rather than restricting it to specific cases. In these pandemic times, ICE still continues to attack LA's immigrant communities and the LA Justice Fund is a critical piece that protects our fellow Angelenos being targeted. Thank you, Rabeya