

ATTACHMENT

For Item

#01

June 12, 2023

June 15, 2023

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION RECEIVED BY THE
CLERK OF THE BOARD

DISTRIBUTED 6/21/2023

From: [Erin Tsurumoto Grassi](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Andrea Guerrero](#)
Subject: [External] Alliance San Diego -- public comment in support of IRLDP
Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 4:49:30 PM
Attachments: [ASD IRLDP LOS 2023.docx.pdf](#)

Hello,

Please find attached a letter of support from Alliance San Diego for the Immigrant Rights Legal Defense Program (\$5 million in county budget). Thank you.

Best,
Erin

--

Erin Tsurumoto Grassi
Policy Director
Alliance San Diego | Mobilization Fund
www.alliancesd.org
619.629.0349 (direct)
619.269.1823 (office)



June 20, 2023

San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego CA 92101

Re: Support – Continued funding for the Immigrant Rights Legal Defense Program

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of Alliance San Diego, a human rights organization working to build a more inclusive democracy where everyone can exercise their human dignity in an environment of safety, harmony, equity and justice, I am writing to express our support to continue the expansion and funding of the county's Immigrant Rights Legal Defense Program (IRLDP).

In May of 2021, the board approved the Legal Defense Program, now known as the Immigrant Rights Legal Defense Program (IRLDP), to provide immigrants facing deportation access to legal representation. By providing legal representation to anyone in immigration proceedings who cannot afford a lawyer, the County is upholding the universal human right to equal protection under the law, as well as the universal human right to seek asylum.

Alliance San Diego supports the Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO's) recommended budget for an additional \$5 million to continue to support the efforts to expand legal representation for all San Diego area migrants who are facing deportation. For migrants who cannot access or afford legal representation, the deportation process is difficult and often results in unfavorable outcomes. Now that the IRLDP has been implemented, the program is changing lives in our community and we are proud of the County's effort to step up. In fact, numbers provided by the Office of Assigned Counsel demonstrate an upward trend in those now having access to a lawyer.

Alliance San Diego has witnessed the harmful impacts of the new asylum ban and harsh border policies to arriving asylum-seekers and long-time community members. It is vital that individuals have legal representation to navigate these complex, new immigration laws and policies. We

commend the program for quickly adjusting to meet the needs to provide legal assistance to those in Border Patrol custody that are in immediate risk of deportation. However, there are still limitations, and we look forward to the day where everyone has the ability to have legal counsel by their side.

In San Diego County, we are showing the nation that we can lead with our values by upholding and protecting human rights. The Board of Supervisors has continued to step up for working families, for those that are unhoused, and for all residents regardless of where they were born. We applaud the CAO for including funding to continue this program and ensure everyone in our community has the right to fair representation in a court. We respectfully ask the board to continue supporting the IRLDP by approving the additional \$5 million included in this year's proposed budget.

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to the impact this program will continue to have in our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Grassi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Erin Tsurumoto Grassi
Policy Director, Alliance San Diego

From: [Asma Abdi](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Homayra Yusufi](#)
Subject: [External] Legal Defense Program Letter of Support
Date: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 5:50:01 PM
Attachments: [LOS.2023 IRLDP.docx \(1\).pdf](#)

Hello,

Please see attached our letter of support. Thank you.

Best regards,

--

Asma Abdi

Policy Associate

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans — PANA

5348 University Avenue, Suite 110, San Diego, CA 92105 — panasd.org



Follow:



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Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans

June 20, 2023

San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway
San Diego CA 92101

Dear San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

In May of 2021, your board approved the Immigration Legal Defense Program to provide immigrants facing deportation access to pro bono legal representation. By providing legal representation to anyone in immigration proceedings who cannot afford a lawyer, we protect the widely shared American values of due process and justice for all.

PANA (Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans) is a research, public policy, and community organizing hub dedicated to advancing the full economic, social, and civic inclusion of refugees in San Diego and across the country. This item is important to our organization and communities because we primarily serve immigrant families from Black, Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (BAMEMSA) backgrounds, including asylum seekers in the border region. PANA has a growing legal team that provides pro bono immigration support to the local BAMEMSA community. We recognize that the legal needs are much higher than what is available. Since the inception of the County's Immigration legal Defense Program, PANA's Community Organizers have worked to conduct intakes in language with asylum seekers and provide referrals to those eligible for the program. These valuable resources help to support and bolster the available legal resources in the region. This is why PANA supports the CAO's recommended budget for an additional \$5 million to continue to support these efforts. This program is changing lives in our community and we are proud of the County's effort to step up. In fact, numbers provided by the Office of Assigned Counsel demonstrate an upward trend in those now having access to a lawyer.

Over the last year, asylum seekers from Afghanistan, Russia, Somalia, Ethiopia, Syria, and other countries have sought safety and freedom in the United States and have approached PANA in desperate need of support. We have witnessed the dire situations in which they arrive at our offices, often homeless and in need of immigration support. Being able to refer those who are eligible for the County Immigration Legal Defense Program has provided them with a sense of

hope. We hope we can continue to work with your offices to provide additional support to those seeking asylum like temporary and permanent housing.

In San Diego County, we are showing the nation how we can lead with our values and ensure that the aspirations laid out in our nation's Constitution are met. This board has continued to step up for working families, for those that are unhoused, and for those pursuing the American dream. **We applaud the CAO for including funding to continue this program and ensure everyone in our community has the right to fair representation in a court.**

Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to the impact this program will continue to have on our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hodayra Yusufi', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hodayra Yusufi

Interim Executive Director

Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA)

From: [Margaret Cargioli](#)
To: [FGG, Public Comment](#)
Subject: [External] FY2023-25 Recommended Operational Plan Comments
Date: Wednesday, June 21, 2023 3:49:58 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[Final- E Comment FY2023-25 Recommended Operational Plan.pdf](#)

Attached please find our e-comment regarding the FY2023-25 Recommended Operational Plan.
Please confirm receipt of our comment.

Regards,

Margaret Cargioli| Directing Attorney, Policy and Advocacy
Immigrant Defenders Law Center

Pronouns: She/Ella

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Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) is a social justice law firm that defends immigrant communities within the immigration system. We use a model of universal representation because we believe no immigrant should stand alone. We have offices in Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Riverside, and San Diego. ImmDef's San Diego office has been open for over four years and is in District 1. We represent non-detained individuals in removal proceedings before the San Diego Immigration Court and detainees at Otay Mesa Detention Center. Since 2022, two ImmDef attorneys have served as Panel Attorneys in San Diego County's Immigrant Legal Defense Program. The program is a vital resource not only to the individuals that we represent in immigration court but to their families, to their loved ones, and to the entire San Diego community.

We strongly urge you to support the \$5 million budget allocation for the Immigrant Legal Defense Program to aid immigrants in San Diego County facing complex immigration laws that could rip them from their homes and tear their families apart. Through the program, we have assisted detainees at Otay Mesa Detention Center in obtaining release and reuniting with family. As part of our non-detained work, we assisted a young adult immigrant who fled violence in his country of origin with applying for temporary protective status and a work permit to contribute to the well-being of his family and to the San Diego community. Universal representation programs like the Immigrant Legal Defense Program also provide relief to asylum seekers. ImmDef was successful in having a complex immigration case administratively closed for a woman fleeing domestic violence from a country where protection for abuse victims is simply not viable. In essence, the Immigrant Legal Defense Program preserves family unity and saves lives.

Access to counsel is a civil right that should be afforded to all people. Universal representation increases due process and promotes [racial equity](#) by providing access to counsel for black and brown communities disproportionately embroiled in the criminal justice system. According to the Vera Institute of Justice, immigrants who are represented are [3.5 times more likely](#) to be granted bond when compared to immigrants that are unrepresented. A study from UCLA School of Law found that immigrant detainees who are represented by an attorney are [10.5 times for likely](#) to succeed in their immigration cases than those who are not able to obtain an attorney.

Universal representation programs at the state and local levels have been rapidly growing across the country for more than five years, including in California. We hope the Immigrant Legal Defense Program will not only continue to operate with additional funding but also expand to include more legal service providers as part of the program and not exclusively as panel attorneys. ImmDef is committed to foster a robust universal representation program in the County of San Diego. We know that with continued and expanded funding, the program will continue to help improve the lives of immigrants, their families, and our community.