



## Washington State Office of Civil Legal Aid

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To: ATJ Delivery Systems Committee  
Equal Justice Coalition

From: Jim Bamberger

Re: Allocation of Additional CJRP Staff and Related Issues

Date: August 20, 2019

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On June 26, 2019, the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) forwarded a memo outlining the results of the FY 2019 legislative session and its intent with respect to the additional 20 FTE Civil Justice Reinvestment Plan (CJRP) attorneys for which the Legislature provided funding in the FY 2020-21 operating budget. The June 26<sup>th</sup> memo invited comments and asked that they be received by July 19, 2019.

Three sets of comments were received and are posted on the OCLA website at <https://ocla.wa.gov/reports/>. A memorandum (July 19<sup>th</sup> memo) was sent by TeamChild Director Anne Lee. The memo was signed by organizations represented on the Delivery Systems Committee as well as others, including those who do not receive state funding. Pro Bono Council Manager Catherine Brown forwarded comments on behalf of the Council (PBC comments). JustLeadWA also submitted comments.

The July 19<sup>th</sup> memo and PBC comments endorsed the proposed allocation of positions along the lines set forth in the June 26<sup>th</sup> memo. The July 19<sup>th</sup> memo went on to express concerns about OCLA's decision to move away from the historic approach it has taken with respect to mapping state supported legal aid service capacity through the Client Demographics/Client Service Capacity Matrix (Matrix). In particular, objection was made to not include TeamChild (a state-funded legal aid entity) from the version of the Matrix used to help inform OCLA's approach to allocating additional CJRP attorney positions.<sup>1</sup> Signatories to the July 19<sup>th</sup> memo observed that the approach employed by OCLA deviated from that which guided both the CJRP planning effort and the FY 2019-21 budget development process.

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<sup>1</sup> In the June 26<sup>th</sup> memo, OCLA explained that the Matrix was designed as a tool to track client service capacity available to low-income people generally, rather than services focused on members of specific sub-demographic cohorts. For that reason a number of client service providers and components were not included. As TeamChild limits services to members of a single sub-demographic cohort, OCLA decided not to include it in the June 26<sup>th</sup> version of the Matrix posted on the OCLA website.

The PBC comments expressed appreciation for the opportunity to comment, affirmed support for the CJRP expansion outlined in the June 26<sup>th</sup> memo, and expressed interest in participating in an effort to upgrade the Matrix. The JustLeadWA comments echoed concerns about the change in approach to mapping client service capacity in the Matrix while noting OCLA's interest in and support for a deeper conversation about approaches to client service capacity and related funding considerations.

OCLA appreciates the thoughtful comments received and the unanimous endorsement of the incremental CJRP staff allocation approach outlined in the June 26<sup>th</sup> memo. We also appreciate the concerns raised about changes in the approach to mapping state-funded client service capacity in the Matrix. We accept the critique and have revised the [Matrix](#) to reflect the state-funded positions staffed at TeamChild.

While we have done so, we reiterate that the OCLA Matrix offers a limited perspective of client service demographic and capacity needs and resources, as it only focuses on client service capacity underwritten with state and federal funds. The Matrix was designed as a means of documenting geographic presence of state funded legal aid capacity. It was never intended to offer a complete picture of the collective client service needs, client service capacity, and client service capacity gaps facing people living in or near poverty in the state. In particular, it was not designed to document the needs of or collective capacity to serve members of discrete sub-demographic cohorts of the low-income community (*e.g.*, children and youth, residents of Indian County, immigrants and refugees, farmworkers, individuals reentering from incarceration) nor those categorically ineligible for or who present legal problems that fall outside of those that can be supported with federal or state appropriated legal aid funding (LSC and OCLA).

For these reasons, OCLA strongly supports the effort undertaken by the ATJ Board's Delivery Systems Committee to undertake a more comprehensive approach to identifying client service capacity needs, resources, and gaps – including the needs of members of identifiable sub-demographic cohorts who require specialized legal services and those ineligible for state or federal funded legal services. OCLA believes that such an exercise will enhance our collective understanding of needs, resources, and service gaps in a manner that will help inform not only the priorities and focus of future state funding efforts, but also those of non-governmental funds managed and administered by the Legal Foundation of Washington. While OCLA is not a party to the group exploring these issues, we stand ready to provide support for this effort.