

**Agenda**  
Utah Judicial Council's Standing Committee  
on Resources for Self-represented Parties

July 17, 2020  
12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

Via Webex

Welcome and approval of minutes	[minutes circulated separately]	Judge Rich Mrazik, Chair
Employment law discussion	Tab 1	Lauren Scholnick, Sue Crismon, Nathanael Player
Outreach discussion	Tab 2	All
Technology discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MyCase</li><li>• Pro se e-filing</li><li>• Virtual trials</li></ul>		Judge Rich Mrazik, Nancy Sylvester
Salt Lake County grant requests	Tab 3	Nancy Sylvester, Judge Rich Mrazik, Nathanael Player

**2020 Meeting Schedule:** Every other month on the second Friday at noon.

Tab 1



Nancy Sylvester &lt;nancyjs@utcourts.gov&gt;

---

## Employment Law Project

2 messages

---

**Sue Crismon** <scrismon@sllda.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 10:31 AM

To: "lauren@utahjobjustice.com", Nancy Sylvester, "monte.sleight@slcc.edu", Carrie Boren, Rob Jepson, "Tatiana B. Christensen"

Cc: Leslie Francis, Nathanael Player, Charles Stormont

The Committee on Resources for Self-Represented Parties met Friday and as part of our agenda discussed the Utah Foundation's Justice Gap report. Which can be accessed here:

<http://www.utahfoundation.org/reports/the-justice-gap-addressing-the-unmet-legal-needs-of-lower-income-utahns/>

One of the identified gaps in the report is Employment Law and specifically wage theft claims. I wanted to reach out to those of you who might have some ideas on how to help address this gap. One issue identified is that many people need help filling out the claim forms which if not done properly result in delays or denials.

<https://laborcommission.utah.gov/all-forms/uaid-forms/>

Some ideas presented in the meeting included:

- ULS/Bar pro bono project to train attorney volunteers and give proper referrals for assistance (Tatiana can you remind us what priorities ULS currently has around employment law?)
- LPP expansion to allow assistance with the forms; perhaps LPP being hired at a private employment law firm to assist with this for a profit while still cost effective for the client
- Paralegal students or/and other non-lawyers trained to assist with form preparation. Perhaps working it into the curriculum of existing class.

Other ideas anyone has? Any other issues practitioners see that this committee might be able to help within the Employment Law context?

In addition, there is a need for employment discrimination claims. I know that the DLC does some of these. Leslie can you tell us the screening process? Is there a way to address this broader gap perhaps while working within the new regulatory framework?

We appreciate your feedback.

Cheers,

Sue Crismon

---

**Carrie Boren** <Carrie.Boren@utahbar.org>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 10:58 AM

5/18/2020

Utah State Courts Mail - Employment Law Project

Cc: Leslie Francis <francisl@law.utah.edu>, Nathanael Player <nathanaelp@utcourts.gov>, Charles Stormont <cas7w@yahoo.com>

Sue,

I actually worked at Utah Antidiscrimination and Labor Division (UALD) for almost 4 years doing employment discrimination investigation. I didn't do wage claims, but I know the manager of that department and I'd be happy to reach out to see if they have any contributions. I know that they had someone who would make presentations about Utah's employment laws to employers and other groups, so they might have some resources already pulled together.

The ideas you proposed are great and are definitely steps in the right direction!

Thanks!

Carrie

[Quoted text hidden]

# Tab 2



## FY 2021 / FY 2022 BUSINESS CASE

**Agency:** Judicial Branch (Courts) - Public Information Office

**Request Title:** Public Outreach and Education Coordinator (Coordinator I)

**Request Amount & Source:** General Fund

FY 2021 One-time	FY 2022 One-time	FY 2022 Ongoing	Total Request
\$0	\$0	\$100,000.00 (Midpoint Salary w/ Benefits, plus travel and equipment)	\$100,000.00

**Objective:**

The Public Information Office is requesting 1 FTE to provide much-needed support for public outreach and education in all corners of Utah's communities. This need has been amplified due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it's future impact in years to come.

**Executive Summary:**

Based on past recommendation by the courts' Racial and Ethnic Fairness study to invest more time and resources toward actively reaching out to marginalized communities, based on a national call by NCSC and the SCOTUS Chief Justice to provide more public education about the role and functions of the Judicial Branch, and based on the identified urgent need to reach self-represented litigants during a time of social and economic uncertainty, the **Committee on Judicial Outreach** and the **Committee on Resources for Self-Represented Parties** recommends the creation of a Public Outreach and Education Coordinator position under the Public Information Office. The courts can no longer rely upon limited resources and the good will of judges and staff to volunteer time to spearhead outreach to various communities in need. A more formal and coordinated effort is needed to forge important partnerships and educate community leaders, and social workers.

## History and Background of Request:

Currently, the duties of community outreach and public education are handled by the Courts' Communication Director. Over time, the Committee on Judicial Outreach has concluded that breaking down barriers of distrust that exist in some communities requires much more time and resources than what one person can provide. Also, the Committee on Resources for Self-Represented Parties has identified the lack of adequate staff resources to reach self-represented parties who could greatly benefit from court services. Reports from the Self-Help Center and outside legal organizations show there is a disconnect between the services the courts provide for disadvantaged and underserved communities, and the people who need them.

The Utah Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness (1998-2004) [issued its first annual report and recommendations in January 2003](#). The goals of the commission were to: achieve equality and justice for all people, encourage implementation of equitable practices, and institutionalize accountability. Among the Commission's recommendations (Pg.13), was the call for "building partnerships with Community Resources and Outreach through the State Office of Education, the Judicial Council's Public Outreach Committee, the Minority Bar Association, the Utah State Bar and communities of color..."

"The Judicial Council's Public Outreach Committee should take the lead in helping communities to understand the court process by considering implementation of the following: civics classes for minority communities, tours of the courts for schools and youth clubs, Meet the Judges nights, and having a Court - Community Outreach effort to link the courts and the public." (Pg. 36).

In an effort to accomplish this outreach directive, the Judicial Council adopted [Rule 3-114 of the Code of Judicial Conduct](#). The Standing Committee on Judicial Outreach has implemented school tours, public education resources for judges and teachers, and the Judge for a Day student/judge shadowing program. Statewide, many judges have volunteered to speak at their local schools. But, more needs to be done.

In an effort to reach out to marginalized communities, the Utah Courts hosted several judicial forums over the course of a three-year period (2013-2016) in Orem, Provo, West Valley, Salt Lake City and Ogden. Community attendance of these forums was sparse; prompting discussion by Judicial Outreach and Community Relations Subcommittee members about ways to increase participation. Community representatives in both bodies advised that there exists deep distrust and lack of education among many minority communities. The lack of public participation is an indicator that the Courts need to invest more time and resources toward building relationships with Utah communities, and community-based organizations. Several organizations who work within Utah Hispanic communities have told the Courts that more time needs to be spent forging relationships with groups who work within marginalized communities.

The Courts Self-Help Center has done its best to ensure some limited presence by the Courts at community events, but staff time and resources are very limited. What is needed is a coordinator who can work with already-established, community-based workers and organizations to provide education and training on where people in need can go for help with legal issues, and just as importantly, how the justice system works.

This type of community work is time-intensive. While our judges and staff members are dedicated to help in this regard through volunteering with outreach efforts, it will require more staff resources than is currently available.

Significant effort has been invested by the Courts to study, identify needs, and implement important services for self-represented and underserved parties. However, recent studies continue to show that many people have trouble finding and accessing those services ([Key Findings - "The Justice Gap, Addressing the Unmet Legal Needs of Lower-Income Utahns," Utah Foundation, April 2020](#)). The Courts must take a more active role in narrowing the access to justice gap. While providing one FTE position will not completely eliminate this gap, it will be a much-awaited, good-faith investment by the Courts.

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic many Utah residents will turn to the courts for help in domestic, landlord/tenant, small claims, and employment matters. Given the radical changes to court services, the public will need help understanding how to get help in the months, and possibly years, to come.

A secondary benefit to the Public Outreach and Education Coordinator position is it will allow the Courts Communication Director to focus on the growing issue of public misinformation about the courts.

[A recent study points to Russian efforts to undermine the American public's trust in its governmental institutions.](#) While it may sound surreal, there is evidence that Russia's efforts are being directed toward courts across the country. We have seen at least two incidents in which news and social media reports on two Utah judges were amplified with the intent to sow distrust in Utah's courts. One involved the sentencing by a female judge for a Somali refugee who admitted to raping two white women at knife point. We saw evidence that the story was being circulated using "bot" accounts to push it in front of users who espouse hatred toward immigrants and minorities. We've also seen a similar pattern involving another female judge, where local criticism and disinformation regarding her sentences were amplified in a similar way. The National Center for State Courts is currently working with the authors of this study to create a resource manual to help courts combat misinformation campaigns.

One conclusion is that public education is a good inoculation to disinformation. NCSC and the report's authors recommend that courts invest more resources in educating the public about the role and purpose of the courts. This should include working more closely with schools at all levels to make sure they have materials and information about the courts, as well as working with community-based organizations to help train community-based caseworkers on the functions and services the courts provide.

There will also be secondary benefits to expanding staff within the Public Information Office.

With the expansion of staff resources, the Courts Communication Director proposes to review the way the Courts handle judicial criticism and attacks upon the judiciary, and to explore the formation of a fast-response team comprised of the Courts, Utah Bar, JPEC, JJCC and legal higher education. It is also proposed to create a judicial speakers bureau comprised of retired judges who would volunteer to serve as subject-matter experts to the public and media. Additional education opportunities could be created through social media and marketing.

Detailed Request of Need:

**a) Summarize the current budget for this system or program.**

The Public Information Office budget (Unit 2440) does not have funds to support adding 1 FTE.

**b) What problem would be solved with additional funding? (Show historical data to support and quantify problem statement.)**

While community outreach and education needs have been identified, the Communication Director has limited time to dedicate to effective outreach. Unlike some other government organizations (Health Department, Public Safety, Human Services) the Judicial Branch relies on one FTE for media relations/public outreach/publications/social media/marketing. The Communication Director currently spends an estimated 80% of his time involved in managing media, including helping with information/data requests, explaining processes, training media, and aiding judges statewide with high-profile cases. On average, the Communication Director handles 62 media inquiries a month, and an average of 24 Camera Pool requests a month. In addition, the director is also in charge of publications, such as the Annual Report, and internal communication, such as the court newsletter. The director also monitors the Courts' social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) at all times. Creating a Public Outreach and Education Coordinator position would provide more resources needed to accomplish the



outreach and education needs previously identified. The alternative would be to allow unfamiliarity and distrust to build within communities.

While it is recognized that Utah will face some serious budget cuts to government entities, both committees would argue that this outreach support will be needed now more than ever.

**c) What has already been done to solve this problem with existing resources and what were the results?**

We have attempted to conduct outreach efforts with current resources, but with little success. Public events are not well attended and community representatives indicate the Courts need to invest more time establishing relationships with those within marginalized communities who could help us educate. A new FTE position would allow the Public Information Office to provide community-based training, be more of a resource to school teachers at all levels, and train court staff on outreach to have more of a presence at community events statewide. To date, limited administrative support has been offered to assist with outreach. While the gesture of support is appreciated, the situation will not improve until the Courts dedicate an FTE to public outreach and education.

Cost Detail:

**a) How will new funding be utilized?**

There exist several comparable positions in other court systems. We've identified several program coordinator positions in Colorado, Los Angeles, San Mateo, and Florida. Similar positions require a Bachelor's degree and usually several years of experience in education or community relations. Positions range from \$55,000 - \$100,000 annually with benefits. The Courts' salary range for a Program Coordinator I position is \$43,055 - \$64,729. Midpoint with salary including benefits is about \$94,000. Beyond position funding, an additional \$6,000 in funds may be needed for equipment, materials, and travel.

**What are the anticipated results or outcomes of the new funding and how will the results be tracked?**

Creating this position will have an effect in two main areas:

- A full-time coordinator will open a new field of outreach that will inform and improve on court services, and help increase public trust and confidence in the courts. The Public Outreach and Education Coordinator will create outreach programs to provide training to community case workers, establish working relationships within marginalized communities, and create events tailored to feedback and needs of those communities. The coordinator will also act as an education resource for schools at all levels. The coordinator will work with educators to create a formalized educational experience about the Judiciary by providing mock trial materials, worksheets about the courts, coordinate judicial speakers and tours well-timed with a school's curriculum.
- Having this additional staff resource will allow the Communication Director to expand much-needed additional resources within the Public Information Office. The Communication Director will work to establish a speaker's bureau of selected retired judges who can help educate the public on issues of interest to the Courts. The traditional model of having the Bar come to the defense of the judiciary will be added to a more rapid response cadre of retired judges who can speak from experience and respond to rapidly evolving controversies. Following the recommendation of the Cyber-Attack report, the Communication Director will also coordinate a rapid-response cyber team to proactively respond to misinformation campaigns. Members of

this team will include representatives from CCJJ, DHS (for juvenile matters), Utah Bar, JPEC, and legal experts from the two law schools. Efforts will include countering misinformation spread on social media as well as coordinated efforts to have problematic posts taken down by Social Media providers. NACM is also proposing that it will establish relationships with representatives of all major social media companies on behalf of courts across the country.

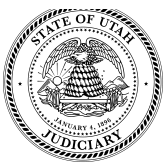
Results will be reported to the Judicial Council annually through the Judicial Outreach Committee. This annual report will include statistics on outreach as well as a detailed rundown of relationships built with partner organizations, trainings, and outreach materials created.

**b) What are potential negative effects if the funding is not received?**

Not having a public outreach and education position puts the Courts at a disadvantage when it comes to shaping the public's perception of the Utah court system. There has already been identified the need to penetrate marginalized communities and educate them on services the courts can provide and demystify assumptions people have about the courts; either based on cultural differences, fear, or both. Members of our own advisory committees will speak to the need to forge relationships with community groups on a personal level, and that this effort takes time and dedication.

**Alternative Funding Opportunities:**

The request is for an ongoing FTE position. This request was prioritized by the Council during the FY21 budget cycle, but was set aside from Legislative funding to be funded with cost savings funds, which turned out not to be possible. Seeking funding through grants for this FTE position would not be advisable, as the nature of this position requires a long-time commitment in order to work.



# The Utah Judiciary Office of Fairness and Accountability



## Charter

The Utah Judiciary belongs to the people of Utah. The work of the courts is to provide an open, fair, efficient, and independent system to advance access to justice under the law. Fairness is the basic premise of our system of justice. The goal is a fair process that produces a just result. The goal cannot be achieved in a system tainted by racism or any other form of bias.

The Utah judiciary understands the public's trust and confidence in the courts requires us to identify any part of our process or outcomes that contribute to or cause the unequal treatment of individuals based on factors such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or gender. We understand we must take action to address inequities and hold ourselves accountable for equitable treatment for all.

The Office of Fairness and Accountability is created to organize and lead the Utah Courts in examining and addressing bias within the judicial system. The Office will work collaboratively, both within the courts and with individuals and entities outside our system, including the executive and legislative branches of government. The Office will focus on, among other items, outreach to marginalized communities; data collection and research; judicial officer and employee education; recruitment and selection of court commissioners and employees; interpreter and language access; and reporting.

## Role

The Office of Fairness and Accountability, composed of a Director and additional staff will work collaboratively with other offices and departments in the judiciary, such as Data Services, Judicial Education, Human Resources, the State Law Library and Self-Help Center, and Information Technology Services. The Director will also collaborate with Judicial Council standing committees including: the Standing Committee on Judicial Outreach; the Standing Committee for Self-Represented Parties; the Standing Committee on Language Access; and the Standing Committee on Judicial Branch Education.

The Director will create and operationalize a strategic plan consistent with the charter.



## The Utah Judiciary Office of Fairness and Accountability

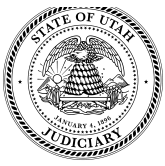


The strategic plan will include the following areas of focus:

- Identify and address racism and other forms of bias within the judicial system
- Community outreach
  - Network with community partners such as CCJJ, UCLI, Diversity Offices, universities, etc.
  - Partner on access to justice initiatives and projects
  - Develop a speakers bureau to reach K-12 schools statewide
- Data collection and research
  - Collaborate with national experts and thought leaders to identify, gather and analyze relevant data
  - Coordinate with Court Data Services and Information Technology Services to capture and report relevant data
  - Jury information including juror selection, service, and pools
- Education for judicial officers and employees
  - Coordinate with the Judicial Education Department
  - Cultural competency
  - Implicit bias, institutional and individual biases
  - Other relevant skill sets
- Recruitment and selection of court commissioners and employees
  - Collaborate with Human Resources to obtain and analyze data
  - Monitor Human Resources implementation of best practices for recruitment and retention
  - Collaborate with organizations such as the Utah State Bar, UCLI, and schools to encourage individuals from marginalized communities to apply for judicial openings
- Interpreter and language access program
- Reporting

### Director Qualifications and Skills

The Director of the Office of Fairness and Accountability is established in the Administrative Office of the Courts under the direction of the State Court Administrator. The Director serves as a member of leadership in the Administrative Office of the Courts and works collaboratively with the leadership team to implement the strategic plan and advance the goals of the Office. Qualifications include:



## The Utah Judiciary Office of Fairness and Accountability



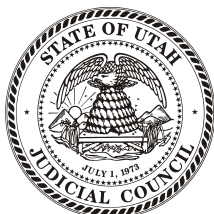
- At least a bachelor's degree or equivalent level of education in Criminal or Social Justice, Court Administration, Institutional Change Management, Public Administration, Business Administration or related education. Master's degree preferred.
- Six (6) or more years of professional experience and two (2) or more years in a supervisory or management capacity.
- Experience advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in a complex organization.
- Knowledge and skill in both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methodologies, tools, and strategies.
- Ability to interface with diverse populations and various criminal/juvenile justice stakeholders.
- Ability to build strong professional relationships.
- Second language skills preferred but not required.

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

450 South State Street  
P.O. Box 140241  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-0241  
801-578-3800

---

**NEWS RELEASE**



**Matthew B. Durrant**  
Chief Justice, Utah Supreme Court

**Hon. Mary T. Noonan**  
Interim State Court Administrator

**Catherine J. Dupont**  
Deputy State Court Administrator

*Ensuring Justice for All*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**July 9, 2020**

**Contact: Geoffrey Fattah**

**UTAH JUDICIAL COUNCIL CREATES  
NEW OFFICE OF FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Salt Lake City, UT**— The Utah Judiciary belongs to the people of Utah. The work of the courts is to provide an open, fair, efficient and independent system to advance access to justice under the law. Fairness is the basic premise of our system of justice. The goal is a fair process that produces a just result. The goal cannot be achieved in a system tainted by racism and bias.

Today, the Utah Judicial Council, as part of its ongoing commitment to identify and eradicate racism and bias from the judicial system, announced the establishment of the Office of Fairness and Accountability. The Office is created to organize and lead the Utah courts in examining and addressing racism and other forms of bias within the system. The Office will work collaboratively both within the courts, and with individuals and entities outside the system, including the Executive and Legislative branches of government. It will focus on, among other items, outreach to marginalized communities; data collection and research; and judge and employee education.

The Office will enhance the Judiciary's efforts to address inequities and to provide greater access to our courts; especially for those who, whether due to race, socio-economic status or some other factor, have been marginalized or have otherwise been unable to access the rule of law on equal footing with their fellow Americans.

We hope that, now, more than ever, we can receive increased public input regarding how we can continue to reform as we strive toward the more perfect Union our constitution promises.

# # #

# Tab 3

Project	Purpose	Additional Information
<b>Computer work stations at Matheson and West Jordan</b>	This request is for placing private computer stations at the Matheson and West Jordan Courthouses in Salt Lake County. Salt Lake County litigants are required to use Webex to access court hearings during the pandemic. While many Salt Lake County residents have access to reliable computers and internet, many do not. This has created access to justice issues for the most disadvantaged Salt Lake County litigants. There is also arguably a constitutional concern under the Open Courts provision of the Utah Constitution. If approved for grant money, these computer stations would create a private space in which litigants who do not otherwise have computer access could reliably access their court hearings.	Just like the rest of the state, Utah's courts shut down in-person proceedings and court business in March 2020, the goal of which was to slow COVID-19 case transmission. As part of that shutdown, the courts moved their operations online, opting for Webex hearings and remote court appearances. The hope was that this would be a temporary situation, with the ability to return to in-person hearings and proceedings beyond only the most essential cases as we moved toward the summer months. That hope hinged on the stabilization of and decrease in COVID-19 cases. Although the Judicial Council has approved the ability of some courts to petition for restarting in-person hearings if their county is in a lower COVID-19 risk level, Salt Lake County consistently leads the state in number of daily COVID-19 cases. As such, there is no indication at this point that in-person hearings will resume in Salt Lake County in the near future. Remote hearings have downsides, of course. In-person hearings allow for nuanced communication and interaction that can be lost through technology. But there are still benefits for litigants, including ensuring the health and safety of all participants in the court process, and litigants not having to leave work or find childcare just to attend a hearing. So Webex hearings will likely continue in some form even once the dangers of the pandemic pass. But remote hearings rely upon the participants having good internet access via computer or cell phone. And some litigants simply do not have reliable internet at home, so that means they are unable to meaningfully participate in their court hearings. A study by Microsoft in 2018 estimated that about half of Americans – 163 million people – do not have high-speed internet at home: <a href="https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2019/04/08/its-time-for-a-new-approach-for-mapping-broadband-data-to-better-serve-americans/">https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2019/04/08/its-time-for-a-new-approach-for-mapping-broadband-data-to-better-serve-americans/</a> . Moreover, judges and the courts' Self Help Center have noted that even when a litigant does have a data plan on their smart phone, it may not be unlimited. What that means is that the person may run out of data before or during their court hearing, costing a low-income litigant valuable resources and limiting their ability to meaningfully participate. This request thus addresses this gap by providing reliable internet and computer access to litigants who do not have it. It also provides a private space large enough to be ADA accessible and to allow the litigant to have a support person or children with them if necessary.
<b>ODR facilitation administrator</b>	This is a time limited position designed to expand Online Dispute Resolution to all Salt Lake County justice courts. The position would recruit, train, and monitor volunteer ODR facilitators in the performance of their duties. The position would also analyze the number of facilitators needed, as well as the facilitator monitoring required, to maintain the ODR program's long-term viability in Salt Lake County.	<p>a) In an effort to improve access to justice, the Utah Supreme Court initiated an Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) pilot project. The West Valley City Justice Court has served as the location for the pilot project. The project included all small claims cases filed in that court beginning September 19, 2018, and has continued to the present day.</p> <p>b) The Supreme Court and Judicial Council believe ODR will increase the participation rate of parties, assist the parties in resolving their disputes, and improve the quality and presentation of evidence at trial in those matters that cannot be resolved. In short, the Supreme Court and Judicial Council believe ODR will further the statutory goal of small claims: dispensing speedy justice between the parties. In the pilot site, ODR has already delivered on that promise, reducing defaults from 71% to 53% by allowing parties to engage in the small claims process on their own terms and through remote technology.</p> <p>c) The Judicial Council recently approved ODR being taken statewide. Salt Lake County represents the largest need and a facilitation administrator would help corral and supervise the Salt Lake County volunteer facilitators needed to ensure its success. Additionally, the benefit this will create during the pandemic and beyond is undeniable. In many cases, Salt Lake County residents and businesses will be able to pursue their small claims cases without the need to step into the courthouse, saving time and expense, and reducing potential public exposure to COVID-19.</p>
		<a href="https://www.govtech.com/civic/SXSW-2019-Utah-Pajama-Court-and-Resolving-Cases-Online.html">See https://www.govtech.com/civic/SXSW-2019-Utah-Pajama-Court-and-Resolving-Cases-Online.html.</a>
		<a href="https://www.utcourts.gov/smallclaimsodr/">See also https://www.utcourts.gov/smallclaimsodr/.</a>



<p><b>Hire additional SHC staff to answer eviction-related questions</b></p>	<p>To hire a temporary employee to focus on eviction-related and landlord-tenant issues, while helping with other selected issues if time allows</p>	<p>The Utah State Courts' Self-Help Center (SHC) proposes to use emergency COVID-19-related funding to hire a temporary employee to assist unrepresented parties facing eviction.</p> <p>About the Self-Help Center SHC is a free service of the Utah State Courts providing legal help and information for people trying to navigate the legal system on their own. We can help people understand what legal issues they face, what options they have for addressing their issues and connect people with resources, including court information and forms; we also refer to partner agencies when appropriate. SHC assists people via phone, text and email. We are unique because we do not screen for assistance. That is, we help everyone - the first question someone is asked when they contact us is "how can I help you?"</p> <p>Our service is popular - in fiscal year 2020, SHC had 23,466 contacts. SHC is a trusted resource in Salt Lake County: all new court employees are trained on our services and are directed to refer difficult legal questions to us; we have close relationships with other legal service providers such as Utah Legal Services, the Legal Aid Society of Salt Lake and the Disability Law Center; we also have good working relationships with social service providers such as Utah Community Action, the Road Home, DWS and 2-1-1 Utah.</p>
		<p>The need for assistance Tenants facing eviction need help, and this need will probably grow more intense. In fiscal year 2019, 90% of landlords were represented and 95% of tenants were unrepresented. This means most tenants face court the eviction process without the benefit of legal counsel, while most landlords have the benefit of a savvy and experienced advocate. There is a consolidated eviction calendar at the Matheson courthouse where volunteer attorneys represent defendants in eviction cases for the day, but there is very little assistance to tenants before and after the consolidated calendar.</p> <p>Court data and data from the Utah Apartment Association suggests that court filings for eviction went down after Governor Herbert signed his eviction moratorium. Although filings increased after the moratorium ended on May 15, 2020, evictions are still down, probably because the federal CARES Act (Public Law 116-136) banned evictions for nonpayment of rent in covered properties. The protections under the CARES Act expire July 25, 2020. After that, tenants behind on rent will be issued a 30 day eviction notice. Preliminary data from the Apartment Association suggests there could be a backlog of as many as 700 eviction cases.</p> <p>In the middle of a pandemic, eviction is arguably a public health issue. Keeping people housed can mean saving lives and preventing the spread of COVID-19. Renters who know their rights and how to access the legal system will be better equipped to cope with their eviction cases.</p> <p>Given the services we provide and the relationships we have, SHC is well-positioned to provide assistance to people facing eviction. However, SHC is oversubscribed. Phone calls are the most common way people contact SHC, representing 47% of our contacts, SHC misses over four calls for every one we answer.</p>

		<p>Additional staff to increase capacity for eviction-related questions</p> <p>SHC proposes to use funds from Salt Lake County to hire a temporary employee to focus on eviction-related and landlord-tenant issues, while helping with other selected issues if time allows. Although it typically takes many months to train a new SHC staff attorney, this employee would have a much narrower focus and, depending on the timing with funds disbursement, could be ready to answer questions very close to August 25, 2020, when eviction lawsuits are likely to be filed after the CARES Act expires. SHC would revise its phone tree to allow someone with eviction-related questions to be prioritized for assistance by this new employee, increasing our bandwidth and allowing us to help more people. Time is truly of the essence in eviction cases because, unlike other civil cases, defendants to an eviction lawsuit have three short days to file a response to the complaint, and failure to do so can result in a default judgment and an immediate order of restitution, which is virtually impossible to undo under our current legal system.</p> <p>Outsize benefit for Salt Lake County</p> <p>SHC's services are available statewide, which helps to make our system fair. Residents throughout the state can expect the same level of assistance from their state courts. However, Salt Lake County residents will realize a greater benefit from this assistance than other residents. In fiscal year 2016 there were 7,384 eviction cases filed statewide and 4,134 - or 56% - of those cases were filed in the Third Judicial District, which includes Salt Lake County. The other counties in the Third Judicial District are Tooele and Summit counties, both with small populations. Because over half of the eviction cases in the state are in Salt Lake County, funds to increase assistance for eviction help statewide will necessarily mean more Salt Lake County residents receive help.</p>
<b>Multi-person listening devices for Matheson and West Jordan</b>	<p>This request is to purchase multi-person listening devices so that courts in Salt Lake County can safely provide language access to court patrons while maintaining social distancing for the court patron and court interpreter. This equipment allows the interpreter to simultaneously interpret through headsets to the court patron from a safe distance rather than interpreting while standing directly beside or slightly behind the court patron.</p>	<p>Providing language access for court patrons is essential, if not the very first step, for ensuring access to justice to limited English proficient court patrons. COVID-19 has impacted how courts can provide language access while keeping court patrons and court interpreters safe. COVID-19 has made the standard practice of having the court interpreter stand beside or slightly behind the court patron unsafe due to the proximity that's required to simultaneously interpret. Court interpreting equipment, called multi-person listening devices, would allow the interpreter to simultaneously interpret through headsets to the court patron while standing anywhere in the courtroom. Providing one set of this equipment for each District and Juvenile Court judge's courtroom would allow Salt Lake County, which has the most court interpreter requests in the state, the ability to ensure safe access to justice to the very court patrons who need it the most</p>