

SENATE THIRD READING
SB 2 X1 (Wiener and Gabriel)
As Amended January 10, 2025

SUMMARY

Amends the 2024 Budget Act to provide \$25 million of additional General Fund resources for immigration and legal aid services.

Major Provisions

Provides \$25 million (one-time General Fund) in the 2024 budget act for immigration services, specifically;

1. Appropriates \$10 million to the Legal Services Trust Fund to provide legal services to vulnerable persons at risk of detention, deportation, eviction, wage theft, intimate partner violence, and other actions that put their safety at risk, as a result of potential or actual federal action;
2. Adds \$10 million to the Immigration Services Funding program (also called “One California program”) at the Department of Social Services for immigration services funding;
3. Increases \$5 million to the Judicial Council, to be distributed through the California Access to Justice Commission to nonprofit providers of legal services.
4. Specifies that up to 2.5 percent of funding provided for each item in this bill can be used for administrative expenses and requires reporting to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

COMMENTS

This bill amends the 2024 Budget Act to augment funding for three existing state programs that serve immigrant communities. This additional funding is intended to help fortify the existing legal aid services network in anticipation of workload increases from adverse federal actions against immigrant communities in the State. The three specific programs receiving an increase are:

1. Legal Services Trust Fund Commission: The Legal Services Trust Fund Commission, within the State Bar, administers the Equal Access Fund which provides grants to 100 nonprofit organizations for indigent legal assistance across the state. The total program in the 2024 budget act is \$40 million and this bill would add \$10 million to the program to current legal service providers to provide legal services to vulnerable persons at risk as a result of federal action.
2. Immigration Services Funding or “One California”: Since 2015, the Department of Social Services has had contracts with approximately 85 nonprofits to provide free immigration legal services, community outreach and education, and other critical immigrant inclusion

efforts. The 2024 budget included \$45 million for this program, which is an on-going base funding amount. This bill would increase the amount of funding available by \$10 million for a total of \$55 million for the current fiscal year.

3. Access to Justice: The Access to Justice Commission administers a grant program to legal aid service providers to increase their service capacity. The 2024 Budget Act includes \$5 million for this program, which would be increased to \$10 million.

According to the Author

This bill provides funding to allow California residents to assert their legal rights in a court of law.

Arguments in Support

None on file.

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill appropriates \$25 million General Fund in the current 2024-25 fiscal year.

VOTES**UPDATED**

VERSION: January 10, 2025

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