

Equal Justice Authority Board
Minutes Board Meeting
May 12, 2025

- . Welcome
 - . The meeting was convened at 4:03pm by board chair Matt Baca and was conducted via Zoom.
 - . The following board members and staff were present:
 - 1. Matt Baca, Toni-Anne Nunez, Charlie Willman, Allison Esser, Renzo Reategui, Lauren Peach, and Elise Bechthold (staff).
 - . Cesar Jimenez was absent.
 - a. No members of the public were present.
 - b. Calendar Discussion
 - 1. Due to a scheduling conflict, Matt cannot attend the May 19 meeting. Lauren cannot attend either. The following Monday is Memorial Day. The board decided to cancel the next two meetings and requested that Elise send an administrative update email to the board during those two weeks.
- . Approval of Minutes
 - . Allison made a motion to approve the minutes and Renzo seconded. The minutes of the May 5, 2025, board meeting were approved with no changes.
- . Finance/Insurance Update
 - 1. Insurance
 - 1. All coverages have been bound and Charlie is awaiting the invoices, with the estimated cost being approximately \$7,000. Charlie will print and send a check to the insurance broker. The broker informed Charlie that if the board creates the suggested policies they received from the insurer, they should be able to issue a refund in the future.
 - 2. Elise deposited 20 checks today into the EJA account totaling \$279,490. There are 5 outstanding checks for the month of April, which should account for approximately \$83,000. There will only be one more month of incoming checks prior to grant disbursements.
 - 3. Charlie and Elise met with a representative from Alpine regarding the information needed for ACH services to distribute grants on July 1.
 - 1. Elise will conduct the administrative set up distributions and then Emo and/or Charlie will approve the amounts.
 - 2. The current setup allows for two disbursement categories for the board: grantees and expenses.
 - 4. Elise & Charlie are tracking interest and updating the spreadsheet accordingly.
 - 5. Toni-Anne asked about reimbursement for expenses incurred by board members. Elise said that she and Charlie will draft a budget for the board that includes this line item.
 - 6. Elise suggested the use of a password protected document for grantees to enter their ACH information into. The board expressed support for this.
- I. Staff Update

1. As aforementioned, Elise made a deposit today in the amount of \$279,490.
2. Elise notified the board that eight grant applications have been received so far.
3. The board received questions at the second Grant Information Session that required feedback.
 1. Question 1: If the organization has a pro bono coordinator and mentor that works with cases qualifying under the income guidelines, would you also count those case numbers in the total number served in attorney hours?
 1. The board discussed the question and agreed only hours worked by an attorney should count for this question.
 2. Question 2: If our law firm focuses on impact litigation and we can't verify the income of every person who is covered in our class actions (sometimes there are 2-3k or more people), just the few plaintiffs, is there a way to include those numbers in reporting?
 1. Elise linked board members to the full context provided via email by the potential applicant.
 2. The board discussed the question and context provided by the potential applicant, reviewing the statute intent and purpose.
 3. For the contextual question regarding educational legal clinics, the board determined that all attendees may be counted except for known duplicates.
 4. Regarding income data for individuals in class action lawsuits, the board determined they will only consider people served in this section that have an attorney-client relationship with the legal organization, such as instances where there is an executed representation agreement. Grant applicants will not be permitted to count all members of a class as people served.
 5. The board asked Elise to draft an answer and send it to Matt for review.
4. Elise turned the discussion over to Toni-Anne for a conversation on recusals.
 1. Toni-Anne highlighted the ongoing requirement for board members to articulate any conflicts of interest and thus recuse themselves from discussion.
 2. Per the direction of the board, Elise shared the names of current applicants. Renzo identified a conflict of interest with CIIC and Better Tomorrow. He works for CIIC part-time, and he has previously served as an advisor for a project with Better Tomorrow. No other board members expressed conflicts at this time.
 3. Renzo signed off from the meeting. The board agreed that per the recusal policy, Renzo had the two conflicts he identified and that he would not be permitted to review those applications.
 4. Elise texted Renzo to re-join the meeting. Renzo logged back into the meeting and Toni-Anne shared with Renzo that the group agreed there was

a conflict of interest related to him and those two applicants and that he would not be permitted to review them.

. Grant Deliverables

1. Draft Award Letter/Terms & Conditions

1. Due to time limitations today, the board will review this document at the next meeting.

2. Grant Reviews & Scoring

1. Lauren followed up on the board question regarding Open Meetings Law requirements for grant reviews. Lauren shared that her research indicated that a convening of more than two board members for grant application reviews would likely be subject to Open Meetings Law.
2. The committee decided that Lauren, Judge Esser, and Elise will plan to meet in-person for reviews and score on consensus. Charlie voluntarily left the review committee. Each member of the review committee will conduct an independent review, then convene for a consensus scoring. The review committee will follow up with each other to schedule the next steps.

I. Open Discussion

1. Charlie inquired about why the final grantee report is due on July 15, 2026 instead of June 30, 2026. Elise reviewed the previous conversation held regarding this topic, highlighting that the funding goes through June 30 and thus grantees will not be able to report on the funding until the grant period has closed; additionally, the board previously discussed that they are unsure if it is appropriate to consider the spending down of previous funds when considering the next round of funding.
 1. Toni-Anne shared that grantees may be unaware if they have spent the exact amount, as the money will go to general funds.
 2. Elise highlighted that an option for monitoring this can be via the mid-year report that is due on December 1. At that point, the board will have a better understanding of if grantees are able to spend the funding; furthermore, the board can step in and offer support if grantees are finding challenges with the funding.
 3. The board agreed to keep the due date as is for now and revisit it in the future.
2. The next EJA Board meeting will be on June 2 at 4:00 p.m.
 1. The board discussed adding a calendar hold for an extra one-hour before the June 2 and June 9 meetings in order to review grant scoring. Elise will send calendar invites to hold this time.

. Adjournment

- . The meeting was adjourned at 5:02pm.