

Special Education Project Proposal (SEAP) – Year 3

1. Executive summary that is no longer than one page

This project will focus on empowering students with developmental disabilities, along with their caregivers, to understand their rights in the special education system. The project will provide assistance and resources to Arizona children and young adults with developmental disabilities. This year, the project will continue to prioritize youth who have been impacted by the foster care system and/or the juvenile justice system. The project will also increase outreach efforts to students in the refugee community and Native American students in the Four Corners region. The project will provide trainings to students with developmental disabilities and their caregivers about their legal rights in the special education system. It will also offer individualized advocacy services, such as telephonic consultations, attendance at Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and mediations, and assistance with special education dispute resolution.

2. Describe the project in detail, elaborating on the need or scope of the problem and how this project is meant to address it. What DDPC Goal does this address

BACKGROUND

The Arizona Center for Disability Law (ACDL) is part of a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, legally based disability rights agencies, called the Protection and Advocacy System. An agency just like ACDL exists in every U.S. state and territory.

ACDL is a unique non-profit law firm. Its legal staff includes attorneys and advocates who are highly knowledgeable about the various legal rights of individuals with developmental disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, the Fair Housing Act, and other federal and state disability rights laws. ACDL is one of the only entities in Arizona providing free legal representation and advocacy services related to education and transition-to-employment needs for children and young adults with developmental disabilities.

ACDL has developed expertise and experience in representing children with developmental disabilities in education in matters related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Family and Education Rights and Privacy Act, and Every Student Succeeds Act. ACDL represents children in negotiations, mediation, administrative complaints before

the Arizona Department of Education and U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, and due process proceedings in the Arizona Office of Administrative Hearings.

In addition, ACDL has a vast library of user-friendly self-advocacy resources. Currently, ACDL has over 35 self-advocacy guides in circulation, covering topics ranging from employment rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act to how to obtain assistive technology and voting rights. During the 2021-2022 year, under year one of the SEAP grant, ACDL developed or made more accessible over 60 different self-advocacy resources relating to the rights of students with disabilities.

The Center has substantial experience as well in providing information and assistance in the use of our instructional materials and conducting virtual and in-person workshops and training on complex legal issues for persons who have developmental disabilities. During the 2021-2022 year, under the original SEAP grant, ACDL conducted 15 trainings for a variety of audiences across the state on topics related to the rights of students with disabilities. During the 2022-2023 year, the second contract year for SEAP, ACDL exceeded the total number of required trainings as of the second quarter of the contract year.

THE NEED

Research suggests that children with disabilities are three to four times as likely as other children to be abused or neglected. The presence of a developmental disability in addition to other adverse circumstances, such as exposure to physical and/or sexual abuse and caregiver instability, increases the risk of emotional and behavioral difficulties and adverse educational outcomes. Children with disabilities are disproportionately represented in foster care, with twice as many students eligible for special education in foster care as in the general population. Additionally, individuals with developmental disabilities account for about 33% of children living in juvenile justice facilities. This is almost double the percentage of children who have developmental disabilities in the general population.

Over 140,000 Arizona school-aged children have one or more disabilities, representing about 12% of the enrolled student population. Children and youth with disabilities who are denied individualized education programs (IEPs) or whose IEPs are not implemented appropriately are extremely disadvantaged in their ability to receive an education, achieve independence, and integrate into the community.

The SEAP project helps to prevent or ameliorate negative outcomes for students with disabilities by providing students and their caregivers with rights information, trainings, and individualized advocacy that helps ensure these students are

provided all of the services and supports they need to receive access to a free and appropriate public education. The project improves access to services for students with disabilities not only by educating and advocating for students and their caregivers, but by educating other key players who come into contact with youth impacted by foster care and the juvenile justice system, such as juvenile court judges, guardians ad litem, children's attorneys, court appointed special advocates (CASAs), group homes, and foster care licensing agencies. Greater understanding of the legal rights of students with disabilities among such systems personnel leads to increased enforcement of those rights, which is particularly vital for students who lack consistent educational advocates.

In its third contract year, SEAP will also be providing targeted outreach to students in the refugee community and Native American students in the Four Corners region of Arizona. SEAP will collaborate with community partners already working with these populations in order share special education know-your-rights information and spread the word about the SEAP program and its ability to provide individual assistance and representation to students in need of advocacy services.

TARGET POPULATION

K-12 students with developmental disabilities who are eligible for or should be eligible for special education services. Outreach/trainings and technical assistance will target students who have been impacted by the foster care and/or juvenile justice systems, students in Arizona's refugee community, and Native American students in the Four Corners region.

HOW PROJECT WILL ADDRESS THE NEED

This project will focus on empowering students with developmental disabilities, along with their caregivers and other key stakeholders, to understand their rights in the special education system. These rights include the right of students with developmental disabilities to be educated alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate, a concept described in federal law as "the least restrictive environment." They also include the right to be included in school activities and provided educational services free from discrimination or discipline on the basis of disability, the right to not be subjected to restraint/seclusion practices that deny them access to a free and appropriate public education, and the right to individualized transition services.

The project will accomplish this goal in two ways: 1) by providing virtual and, when safe, in-person training to students, caregivers, and relevant systems personnel on the special education rights of students with disabilities; and 2) by providing individualized consultations, technical assistance, and referrals to students with developmental disabilities, with priority given to children who have been impacted by the foster care system and/or the juvenile justice system, students in Arizona's refugee community, and Native American students in the Four Corners region.

Trainings

During the third year of funding, ACDL will provide the target population with 8 know-your-rights trainings. ACDL expects an average of 15 persons to attend each training for a total of at least 120 total attendees. At least one of these trainings will target the refugee community in Arizona. At least one of these trainings will target Native American students in the Four Corners region.

We will plan to provide these trainings either in person or in a virtual format, using Zoom or similar technology. The trainings will be related to special education and transition services/planning for youth with developmental disabilities. The location of trainings will be dependent on the target audience and whether the trainings can be safely offered in person or if they will be virtual. When offering trainings virtually, ACDL may record the trainings and make them available for asynchronous viewing in order to increase accessibility and viewership.

Although all trainings will be focused on information about the special education rights of the project's target population, some trainings will have appeal to a broader audience and may be marketed more widely (e.g., a training on school discipline may also be of interest to students who do not have developmental disabilities or who have not been impacted by foster care/juvenile justice and are not members of the refugee or Native American communities). Conversely, some trainings may be more focused on certain subsets of the target population (e.g., a training specifically on the rights of students in foster care provided to foster parents). Additionally, some trainings may be marketed toward a specific geographic location or population (e.g., a training in partnership with the Native American Disability Law Center targeting students with developmental disabilities who live on the Navajo or Hopi reservations in the Four Corners area will be marketed through radio advertisement on the Navajo and Hopi reservations; a training tailored for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) will be marketed in partnership with CASA training organizations such as VOICES for CASA Children; etc.). The trainings will not be restricted to only certain types of attendees—anyone with interest will be welcome to participate. However, the content and intended audience will influence where and how we advertise these events, which will in turn influence the composition of the audience.

Technical Assistance (Basic and Complex)

This project will continue to provide special education assistance to Arizona students with developmental disabilities. The level of technical assistance provided will vary. Some individuals will be provided with basic technical assistance by our dedicated intake advocate and/or intake attorney. Basic technical assistance will include providing the individual with general special education information over the phone, sending the individual resources and guides applicable to their particular situation, and referring the individual to relevant agencies and providers. Other individuals will be selected, based on the

egregiousness and complexity of their special education issue as well as whether they are part of one of our priority populations (youth impacted by the foster care or juvenile justice systems, youth in the refugee community, or Native American youth in the Four Corners region) for complex technical assistance from a special education advocate or attorney. This complex technical assistance will include things like legal consultations, tailored legal information letters, attendance at IEP or 504 plan meetings, advocacy communications with schools, attendance at mediations, and assistance with drafting and filing administrative complaints.

The project will provide basic technical assistance to at least 65 Arizona students with developmental disabilities. The project will provide complex technical assistance to at least 20 Arizona students with developmental disabilities.

This project addresses the following DDPC goals:

Goal 3, Objectives 2 & 3: Inclusion

- This project will increase inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in school environments and activities and will advocate that students with developmental disabilities to be taught alongside their nondisabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.

3. Who are the other community partners.

Over the past five years, ACDL has developed expertise in the unique needs of children with disabilities in foster care or touched by the foster care system as well as justice involved youth. ACDL has partnered with other Arizona nonprofit organizations, including Advocacy 31 Nine, FosterEd, VOICES for CASA Children, Foster Arizona, FostAdopt Connections, Black Mothers Forum, the Arizona Center for African American Resources, to expand the reach and impact of our work on behalf of children with disabilities in foster care. We have also collaborated with state agency stakeholders, such as the Arizona Department of Child Safety, the Arizona Department of Education, and the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts, to train service providers and address systemic problems.

This contract year, SEAP will partner with additional community organizations that work with our expanded target populations of refugee and Native American youth. Through ACDL's role on the DDPC, SEAP will collaborate with Arizona DES and the Refugee Resettlement Program there to outreach to refugee resettlement agencies and families of students with disabilities to provide know-your-rights trainings and accessible resources. Additionally, SEAP will partner with Raising Special Kids and the Native American protection and advocacy agency, the Native American Disability Law Center, as well as the protection and advocacy agencies and parent training institutes from Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico to develop a training/outreach event in the Four Corners region targeting Native American students with developmental disabilities and providing them with information

about their special education rights in state controlled schools, tribally controlled schools, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools.

4. What data will be tracked and monitored and reported to the DDPC.

ACDL will track data that is outcome-focused on how the technical assistance the project provides resolves or does not resolve the client's issue, or if the issue is still in process of being worked through. ACDL will measure this by reaching back out to those recipients of complex technical assistance approximately 3 months following the conclusion of the assistance to administer a survey. See Exhibit D. ACDL will report results of these surveys to DDPC on an annual basis.

ACDL will track data related to the trainings it provides. At the conclusion of each training, ACDL will ask audience members to complete a brief survey that asks for an evaluation of the efficacy of the training and that collects demographic data (age, race, geographic data [rural vs. urban], relation to individual with I/DD [self, parent, provider, etc.]). ACDL will report results of these surveys to DDPC on an annual basis.

5. Why does the DDPC need to fund this project; how will this be sustained beyond DDPC funding

Because ACDL does not have a funding stream dedicated to special education, it is difficult for our attorneys/staff to engage in targeted work, like this project, without outside support. With help from the DDPC, this project will provide these desperately-needed services to a wide array of children in Arizona with developmental disabilities.

The project will be able to outlast the third year of funding from the DDPC because the project may pursue funding from other sources to offset programmatic costs. The results the project will achieve during its first three years will provide us with attractive and convincing data to share with future private and public funders about the impact and efficacy of the program.

Furthermore, the project will focus not just on providing technical assistance to individuals, but also on training. As a result of the trainings, Arizona families and service providers will be better equipped to understand their rights, self-advocate, and find community resources that can help. The resources that were created during the first year of funding, including written and online resources, will continue to provide information and support to individuals with developmental disabilities long after DDPC's funding for this project ends.

Additionally, ACDL will invite legal interns from Arizona State University and the University of Arizona to work with us on the project. Exposing law students to this

type of work will help inspire a new generation of attorneys to pursue a career in public interest law or to dedicate pro bono time to advancing special education rights in our state, helping to address the gap in access to justice in this arena.

6. Who are the key staff and their backgrounds/experience

ACDL Attorneys (Managing, Staff and Consulting)

- ACDL Attorneys will provide complex technical assistance to students with developmental disabilities, including providing consultation and legal advice, drafting and submitting complaints, and representing students in mediation and informal negotiations. The Attorneys will provide education to the public by providing trainings on the rights of students with DD in special education. Attorneys will also provide supervision, consultation and support for other ACDL staff working under this grant.

Advocates and Administrative Staff

- Advocates may provide technical assistance to individual students and caregivers. Advocates may also provide outreach and training to the public. Advocates will conduct telephonic intakes for callers who fit within the parameters of the grant. Advocates and Administrative Staff will collect needed demographic information regarding the caller, as well as the facts of the special education situation. ACDL administrative staff will assist attorneys and advocates in their work on this project by developing and maintaining client files, processing paperwork, scheduling appointments, gathering surveys, and mailing of special education technical assistance related materials.

Legal Interns

- Each semester (fall, spring, and summer), ACDL retains legal interns from Arizona State University Law School and the University of Arizona Law School. These interns are unpaid, but may earn law school credit for their practical experiences in ACDL's office. These interns may provide in-kind support for this project by assisting attorneys and advocates with their work developing trainings, creating resources, and providing technical assistance to individuals.

7. Provide a one year implementation plan

| Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 | ANNUAL TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic technical assistance to at least 15 students and caregivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic technical assistance to at least 15 students and caregivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic technical assistance to at least 15 students and caregivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic technical assistance to at least 15 students and caregivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Technical Assistance for 60 individuals |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complex technical assistance to at least 5 individuals with developmental disabilities • Provide at least 2 trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complex technical assistance to at least 5 individuals with developmental disabilities • Provide at least 2 trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complex technical assistance to at least 5 individuals with developmental disabilities • Provide at least 2 trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide complex technical assistance to at least 5 individuals with developmental disabilities • Provide at least 2 trainings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex Technical Assistance for 20 individuals • 8 trainings- one training for refugee community and one for four corners region |
|--|--|--|--|--|

8. Provide a one year budget summary with budget narrative for all costs. Show Match that is 25% cash or in-kind.

See Attachment Budget for Year 3.

Budget Request Form

Contractor Name: Arizona Center for Disability Law

Contractor Address: 5025 E. E Washington Street, Suite 202 Phoenix AZ 85034
Street Address City State Zip

Project Name: Special Education Advocacy Project (SEAP).

| Budget Category | Requested ADDPC Funds | Non-Federal Cash Match | Non-Federal In-Kind Match | Total Program Cost |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Personnel/Salaries | 116,144 | | 49,500 | 165,644 |
| Fringe Benefits | 5,000 | | | 5,000 |
| Supplies / Operating Expenses | 1,000 | | | 1,000 |
| Travel | 3,000 | | | 3,000 |
| Translation | 3,000 | | | 3,000 |
| Rent or Cost of Space | 11,356 | | | 11,356 |
| Contracted Services / Professional Services | 10,000 | | | 10,000 |
| Administrative / Indirect Costs | 500 | | | 500 |
| Total Costs | 150,000 | - | 49,500 | 199,500 |

It is understood that Non-Federal Funds identified in this budget will be used to match only ADDPC Federal Funds, and will not be used to match any other Federal Funds during the period of the ADDPC funded Project.

Additional description and background information shall be included as a budget narrative, including for match. The contractor agrees to submit additional background information to the ADDPC upon request.


 Name of Certifying Official

Chief Executive Officer

Title of Certifying Official

520-327-9547
 Phone

jrlico@azdisabilitylaw.org
 Email



Budget Narrative for Special Education Advocacy Project (SEAP)-Year 3

Budget Narrative:

A. Salary Expenses & Fringe Benefits

| [Redacted Header] | | | | |
|--|------------------|------|-----------|--|
| Attorney (Contracted) | \$5,000 | 100% | 12 months | \$10,000 |
| Law Interns | \$49,500 | 100% | 12 months | \$49,500 (In-Kind from ACDL not included in total) |
| SEAP Director & Managing Attorney | \$78,705 | 40% | 12 months | \$31,482 |
| Attorney Staff | \$103,255 | 4% | 12 months | \$4,130 |
| Advocate -Staff | \$74,624 | 45% | 12 months | \$33,581 |
| Advocate -STAT | \$68,473 | 40% | 12 months | \$27,389 |
| Deputy Legal Director | \$99,845 | 3% | 12 months | \$2,995 |
| Director -Legal | \$138,120 | 3% | 12 months | \$4,144 |
| Managing Intake Attorney | \$85,458 | 3% | 12 months | \$2,564 |
| Legal Secretary | \$57,750 | 10% | 12 months | \$5,775 |
| Administrative Assistant | \$47,376 | 3% | 12 months | \$1,421 |
| Advocate - Staff | \$66,575 | 4% | 12 months | \$2,663 |
| Total Salaries Expense (w/o in-kind or Contracted Attorney) | \$820,181 | | | \$116,144 |
| Total Salaries Expense (w/ in-kind & Contracted Attorney) | \$879,681 | | | \$175,644 |



Budget Narrative for Special Education Advocacy Project (SEAP)-Year 3

B. Expenses

Expenses Related to the Project

| Type of Expense | Amount Associated to Expense | | Total Expenses Covered by Grant |
|---|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Fringe Benefits -Portion of benefits for staff associated to the contract | Paid monthly. Includes long term disability, medical, dental, vision, insurance, etc. | 12 Months | \$5,000 |
| Travel -Travel to meetings to provide individualized services, meetings with community members and/or special education professional to assist in developing resource materials. Hotels and per diem included in the total. | Paid monthly to staff attorney, contract attorney & staff advocate for technical assistance & consultation visits. Estimated \$300 per month. Travel Expense to Four Corners area (Twice in FY) | 12 months | \$3,000 |
| Translation/Interpretation Services - Services needed for translation and interpretation for intakes, meetings with individuals, and training sessions, and training and resource materials. ASL, CART, Language translations. | At least 10 students with an average of 10 interactions to include intake, follow-up, IEPs, and mediation meetings \$100 per contact | 10 contacts in 12 months | \$1,000 |
| | Translation for outreach to refugee & Native communities | 2 contacts | \$2,000 |
| Office Supplies -Supplies utilized by the staff members listed above. | Amount will vary. | 12 months | \$1,000 |
| Rent - ACDL has 2 locations; Phoenix and Tucson. The staff associated with the project conduct business and work from various locations. | Total ACDL Rent Expense for 1 year \$174,924 | 6.4% | \$11,356 |
| Administrative/Indirect Costs - | Administrative costs for SEAP will primarily be the costs related to internet, IT, database fees, etc. | 12 months | \$500 |
| Total (w/o Contracted Attorney) | | | \$23,856 |
| Total (w/ Contracted Attorney) | | | \$33,856 |

Total Expenses: \$150,000=\$116,144+\$33,856 (ACDL staff salaries + Total expense with contractor added)

Total In-Kind: \$49,500



Budget Narrative for Special Education Advocacy Project (SEAP)-Year 3

Supplies/Operating Expenses

The staff members committed to this project will utilize office supplies over the course of the yearlong project to complete the necessary task related to the project. This expense includes copy paper, writing utensils, file folders, protected USB drives, and tablets.

Travel

ACDL serves the entire state of Arizona. ACDL requires staff to have insurance on their personal vehicles that are used for company business. For local and reasonable travel staff utilize their own vehicles. ACDL reimburses for a percentage of the fuel used per mile. If the distance of travel becomes farther than deemed reasonable, ACDL utilizes a rental car service for daily rentals. The staff is reimbursed for fuel put into the rental (receipt required). Long distance travel and appointment times may require an overnight stay that will include a hotel fee. Staff will also be provided a per diem amount to cover meals for travel days and appointment days extending 12-hours. Fees associated with travel (parking, tolls, etc.) are considered travel expenses that are reimbursed with receipt. ACDL has accounted a portion of the fund to cover the expense.

Rent/Cost of Space

ACDL has two locations that the staff associated with this project conduct business and access to complete their tasks. The annual total of the rent expense is approximately \$174,924 ACDL will seek reimbursement near 6.5% of those cost; relative to the labor distribution percentage for the previous fiscal year.

Contracted Services/Professional Services

Translation and interpretation services are provided as legally required accommodations for those receiving services. These interpretation services are provided by a professional and certified consultant and professional companies. Trainings, phone conferences, meetings, and consultations required this accommodation. This expense is significant as ACDL recognizes the need to provide students, parents, caregivers, educators, etc. with appropriate and effective means of communication and accurate renditions of the conversations and trainings. This line item will also include the contracted attorney.

Administrative/Indirect Costs

Administrative costs for SEAP will primarily be the costs related to internet, IT, database fees, etc.

Exhibit A – ACDL's Special Education Advocacy Project (SEAP) Trainings

Trainings

| Target Date | Subject of Training |
|-------------|---|
| Quarter 1 | Meeting Educational Needs for Foster Youth (Go2Grow training for the Department of Child Safety) |
| Quarter 1 | Assisting Parents to Navigate their Children's Educational Rights (Training for Building Expertise with Early Childhood Professionals ECHO) |
| Quarter 2 | Meeting Education Needs for Foster Youth (Training for VOICES for CASA Children) |
| Quarter 3 | Special Education 101 (for Arizona refugee community) |
| Quarter 3 | Transition and Graduation (in-person training in Spanish with GANE) |
| Quarter 4 | Meeting Education Needs for Foster Youth (Juvenile Court Dependency 101 Judges Training) |
| Quarter 4 | Special Education Rights of Students with Chronic Illness (Presentation at African American Conference on Disabilities) |
| Quarter 4 | Special Education 101 (in collaboration with Native American Disability Law Center, for Native American students living in the Four Corners region) |

Any missed target dates must be addressed within the next quarter.

Special Education Advocacy Project

Post-Survey

You were recently provided special education advocacy services by the Arizona Center for Disability Law (ACDL). These services were provided through the Special Education Advocacy Project funded by the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. We ask you that you complete this survey in order to help us evaluate the effectiveness of the project and make improvements.

1. Which of the following best describes the current status of the issue about which you contacted ACDL for assistance?

Fully resolved with a favorable outcome ____ Fully resolved with an unfavorable outcome ____
Partially resolved; expect full resolution soon ____ Partially resolved; do not expect full resolution ____
Original issue resolved, but new related issues have emerged ____ Not at all resolved ____

2. I have a greater understanding of my rights/my student's rights after working with ACDL.

Strongly Agree ____ Agree ____ Not Certain ____ Disagree ____ Strongly Disagree ____

3. After working with ACDL, I feel equipped to more effectively advocate for myself/my student.

Strongly Agree ____ Agree ____ Not Certain ____ Disagree ____ Strongly Disagree ____

4. How many interactions did you have with ACDL (meetings, phone calls, school meetings, etc.).

1-3 ____ 4-6 ____ 7-10 ____ 10-14 ____ 15+ ____

5. The lawyer or advocate I worked with was knowledgeable and effective.

Strongly Agree ____ Agree ____ Not Certain ____ Disagree ____ Strongly Disagree ____

6. What were you seeking help with (generally)?

Evaluations/Eligibility ___ Discipline ___ Restraint/Seclusion ___ Disagree with IEP ___
IEP not being followed ___ Placement ___ Forced graduation ___ School enrollment ___
Other _____

7. What type of school does the student attend?

Public ___ Charter (public) ___ Private ___ Homeschool ___
Other _____

8. What is your relationship to the student?

Self ___ Biological parent ___ Adoptive parent ___ Foster parent ___
Guardian ___ Kinship placement ___ Surrogate parent ___
Other _____

9. Were you provided and did you use any of ACDL's self-advocacy resources (blog posts, template letters, explainer videos, FAQs, etc.)? If so, which were most helpful?

10. Other Comments:

