



COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD
COUNCILMEMBER VIVIAN MORENO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 14, 2018

TO: Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer

FROM: Councilmember Christopher Ward, District 3

Councilmember Vivian Moreno, District 8

SUBJECT: Vera Institute for Justice Grant Funding Opportunity

The Vera Institute of Justice has recently announced the upcoming expansion of its Safety and Fairness for Everyone (SAFE) Network, a diverse group of a dozen cities and counties across America dedicated to providing publicly-funded, universal representation for people facing deportation.

The SAFE Network launched in November 2017 replicating the successful “public defender” model pioneered by the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project. To support the local efforts of the Network, Vera provided catalyst funding and technical assistance to help design, launch, and administer these programs. Vera also partnered with local legal service providers to deliver ongoing substantive, procedural, and programmatic technical assistance to the Network and develop evidence of the impact of representation on case outcomes, families, and communities.

In its first year, the SAFE Network demonstrated that publicly funded counsel programs are an effective, common-sense approach to protecting immigrant communities from extended detention and erroneous deportation. In the first year, 38 percent of cases represented by SAFE attorneys and completed in immigration court resulted in successful outcomes, permitting SAFE clients to remain in the United States. By comparison, only approximately 3 percent of unrepresented cases nationwide are successful.

Building off this and the growing national momentum toward universal representation, Vera

is expanding its network and invites applicants to be considered for one of three levels of membership: Member, Partner, or Affiliate. Vera will award up to five jurisdictions with Member status, which includes a catalyst grant of up to \$100,000 for legal assistance.

As the largest border city in the United States, San Diego is already deeply impacted by the negative effects of the dramatic escalation of federal law enforcement and deportation efforts targeting immigrant communities. Our unique cross-border relationship which ties together families, business, and culture in our dynamic city brings with it an important responsibility to lead on issues which threaten to disrupt these connections. This potential grant from the Vera Institute of Justice presents an opportunity to pursue targeted local action to protect the well-being of our city and those who live here.

Letters of Interest are due January 17, 2019. **We request that the City of San Diego pursue this grant opportunity to expand services to better aid those most in need in our city.**

For more information, please see <https://www.vera.org/spotlights/safe-expansion-and-success>. Should you have any further questions, please free to contact Lucas O'Connor in the District 3 Office at (619)236-6633 or loconnor@sandiego.gov or Kevin Smith in the District 8 Office at (619)236-6688 or kssmith@sandiego.gov.

cc: Hon. City Attorney Mara W. Elliott
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