



**Student Legal Services,
University of Washington, Seattle
Services & Activities Fee
Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request**

Unit Leads

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Budget Request Highlights

In this section, please list all line items for any changes in request amount greater than \$1000, along with a short description of each line item and the amount requested. For all other changes under \$1000, please list the total summed figures in a final "miscellaneous expenses" item at the bottom. Please ensure that all the SAF funded line items below and previous SAF allocation total add up to the requested amount. Our goal with this section is to provide an overview of the current financial state, along with any changes in SAF funding that are being requested this year.

Each unit's FY26 request may only represent a maximum increase of 6% or \$35,000 over the unit's allocation for FY25 (whichever is higher in context of the unit's FY25 allocation).

While we would love to fund everyone's full request, SAF is financially constrained by the Washington State Legislature. RCW 28B.15.069 limits the amount that the Services and Activities Fee (SAF) is allowed to increase each year. For FY26, the SAF amount can be increased by a maximum of 3.55%.

Our unit's request in FY22 was **\$311,936.98** and our award was **\$311,936.98**.

Our unit's request in FY23 was **\$317,400.43** and our award was **\$317,400.43**.

Our unit's request in FY24 was **\$337,127.83** and our award was **\$327,739.00**.

Our unit's request in FY25 was **\$330,146.70** and our award was **\$330,146.70**.

Our request for FY26 is **\$349,955.50**, which represents a **6% (\$19,808.80)** from FY25.

In this section, please break each increase into its own sections (e.g. wage & benefits changes, increases in current employee hours/FTE, funding new positions, etc.). Example sections have been provided (you may delete the example sections).

SALARIES & BENEFITS

\$34,434.35

In FY 26, we plan to hire a new full-time staff attorney which will improve our availability and quality of service to UW students across all three campuses. This new staff position will be made possible by transitioning our 3L Rule 9 Interns from paid positions into academic credit positions in partnership with the UW School of Law. This plan also allows Student Legal Services to accept students from any year of law school (1L, 2L, 3L, and LLM candidates), expanding the opportunity to gain real-world legal clinic experience to more students.

Our request also includes standard wages and benefits increases for staff and student employees that went underfunded in FY25 due to higher-than-budgeted minimum wage and merit increases.

OPERATIONS

\$2,744.64

This increase reflects the addition of a new full-time staff attorney and standard inflationary cost increases. We have worked strategically to reduce and minimize operational costs where possible, including eliminating unnecessary IT services. The most significant operational costs are our attendance at two annual SLS conferences where we strategically network with regional and national SLS programs, and annual legal licensing renewals permitting our staff to practice law and represent clients.

Full Budget Overview & Justification

In this section, you will have the opportunity to explain your request in greater detail via the guiding question(s) below. You are encouraged to use graphs, charts, or other visual tools. Your goal for this section is to provide the SAF committee (and the public) with sufficient (and substantive) context and justification for the use of these funds.

1. How are expenditures distributed across the programs and/or services your unit offers? Please provide a general overview of how much spending is allocated to each category of expense, such as staffing, materials, etc., as is applicable.

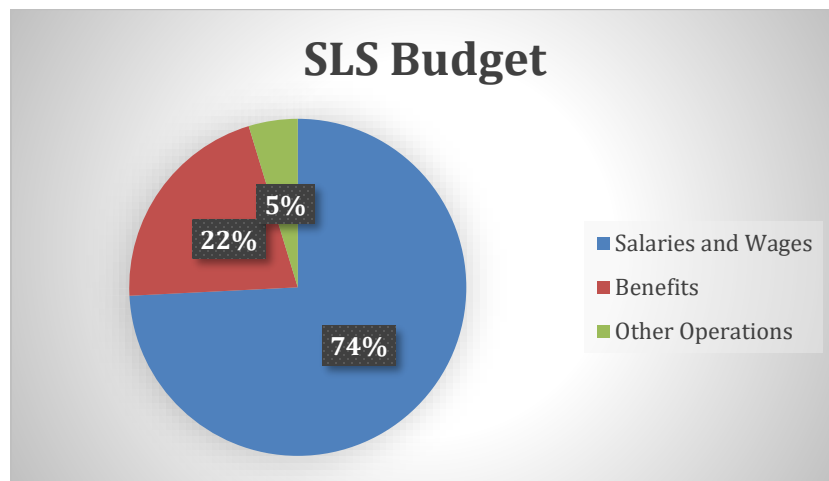
Our budget is primarily allocated to salaries and wages, benefits, and office operations. Approximately \$285,681.90 is designated for the wages of professional and temporary student employees. Benefits for professional and student employees amount to around \$84,168.10.

The remainder of our expenditures, approximately \$18,698, are operational, covering necessary IT services, subscriptions to legal tools, license renewal fees, and travel to annual SLS conferences.

Over the past year, we've seen a significant rise in the number of meeting requests, with more than 1,000 requests received last year. To meet this increased demand, we need to restructure our staffing model by adding another full-time attorney. With three full-time attorneys, we will significantly expand our capacity by increasing the number of appointment slots, doubling weekly consultations, managing more ongoing caseloads, and addressing urgent or time-sensitive cases promptly.

This expansion will strengthen our outreach efforts and uphold our commitment to delivering high-quality, client-centered legal services. A central objective is for our attorneys to model exceptional client-focused lawyering for our student employees. This includes demonstrating best practices in delivering legal advice during client interviews, upholding the highest ethical and professional standards, and offering comprehensive training on implicit bias and cultural awareness throughout the academic year.

With SAF's support, we will continue to offer affordable legal services that align with the University's institutional priorities and the Division of Student Life's primary initiatives.



2. Please give a summary elaborating on how SAF Funding has been used to support students (*Please refer to dollar amounts in this discussion when possible*).
 - a. In what ways has SAF funding been essential to supporting your unit's on-going services and role in the university? Please provide at least one specific example of a program/service.

Student Legal Services (SLS) plays a critical dual role at the University of Washington by offering comprehensive legal support to students, ensuring that legal issues do not hinder their academic success. SAF funding is essential in enabling us to provide affordable legal representation, particularly for underrepresented communities who face far greater barriers in accessing affordable legal services. Simultaneously, we offer mentorship, hands-on experience, and job opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students, helping them gain valuable career skills in public interest law, specifically, in the areas of immigration and landlord-tenant law.

Through our services, clients are able to resolve legal issues and concentrate on their academic objectives. We prioritize serving students most in need, especially those from historically marginalized communities. Similar to the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity (OMAD), SLS works to enhance diversity on campus and enrich the college experience for students from all walks of life. In 2024, approximately 67% of students we served identified as students of color, 37% as first-generation college students, and 55% as non-U.S. citizens. SAF funding is crucial in supporting these underrepresented student communities and ensuring our services remain equitable, inclusive and accessible.

We play a vital role in supporting UW's high retention rate by addressing legal barriers that can prevent students from graduating. Our office fosters student success through preventative legal

education, community engagement, and access to affordable legal services. Since the launch of our immigration legal services program in 2018, we have been instrumental in meeting the needs of non-U.S. citizens, including international and undocumented students. We continue to serve the UW community through free consultations, workshops, and collaborations with UW Law School, various departments, and RSOs. For example, our outreach coordinator partnered with the Q Center and D Center to host a meet-and-greet during Dawg Daze, introducing students to the three student service centers on the 3rd floor of the HUB. Looking ahead, we plan to collaborate with International Student Services (ISS) on an information session for international students. This session will introduce on-campus immigration resources, outline the services available offered by our units, clarify our limitations, and guide students to the most appropriate resources for their needs. SLS also plans to partner with the Q Center and Leadership Without Borders at the ECC to host community events designed to inform attendees about policy changes and updates to federal, state, and local laws introduced by the new administration that could disproportionately affect the rights of undocumented students, BIPOC communities, and the LGBTQIA+ community.



Our resources are made available through our social media platforms, SLS website, and after each consultation. We provide legal and community resources to those who may not be eligible for our services, such as individuals who are not current UW students or whose legal issues involve another UW-affiliated person. These resources are accessible in multiple languages and are tailored to accommodate students with disabilities.

Since our office works with undergraduates and graduate students who are interested in the field of law, we play a pivotal role in educating and mentoring our SLS student employees.

Undergraduate Students

At SLS, we equip undergraduate student employees with critical skills for professional development. Our undergraduate legal assistants and outreach coordinator ensure efficient office operations, including client communications, collaboration with campus organizations, and managing legal technology. Legal assistants handle administrative tasks such as scheduling consultations, running conflict checks, and managing client billing. Our outreach coordinator raises awareness of SLS services through tabling and hosting various outreach events throughout

the academic year. Our undergraduate employees gain valuable firsthand experience in legal work, helping them determine whether to pursue law school and a career in the legal field. Many of these undergraduate students are working in a legal environment for the first time, and we are proud to help them build a strong foundation for their future careers.

Graduate Students

SLS plays a pivotal role in mentoring UW law students, especially those interested in public interest law. We have traditionally worked with third-year law students to help them obtain Rule 9 licenses and practice under our attorneys' supervision. To accommodate the growing number of meeting requests, we are evolving our approach to ensure we continue providing meaningful and impactful mentorship opportunities to our graduate students. In FY 26, we plan to recruit 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls to extern at SLS for academic credit, expanding access to internship opportunities for law students at all levels. This change removes the previous restriction on 1Ls and 2Ls, allowing them to gain valuable experience by shadowing attorneys, assisting with legal research, and preparing documents such as demand letters, client declarations, and immigration applications.

This new model also offers internship opportunities for law students in both the JD and LLM programs, diversifying the talent pool and broadening our recruitment reach. As the demand for our services has continued to rise, we will need to hire an additional full-time attorney in FY 26 to ensure we can meet the growing need for consultations and legal support. With three full-time attorneys, we can double our consultation slots, serve more students, and maintain the high standard of mentorship that prepares law students for post-graduate career opportunities.

The Importance of SAF Funding

SAF funding is imperative to the daily operations of SLS, enabling us to provide affordable legal services to UW Seattle students and support our mission. Without adequate funding, we would be forced to limit the number of employees we hire and reduce the number of consultations and cases we can handle. This would result in fewer students receiving the support they need and could drive them to seek costly private sector services, where the average hourly rate is \$322. In contrast, SLS charges only \$20 per hour. Without SAF funding, we would be forced to raise our fees, undermining our ability to offer free legal assistance, and limiting our impact on the UW community.

- b. How have your unit's services and programming changed over time, and how have you adapted the use of SAF funding?

SLS History and Mission

Student Legal Services (SLS) was founded in 1969, initially with UW law students advising their peers on legal matters. Over the years, our services and staffing model have expanded, but our commitment to providing accessible, low-cost legal support for students remains unchanged. We have actively engaged in outreach initiatives to reach more diverse student populations, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to the legal resources and information they

need. Additionally, we have transformed our services to a more holistic approach by collaborating with campus allies and community partners to serve specific student groups, including those with disabilities, LGBTQAI+ students, international students, undocumented students, first-generation students, BIPOC students, and students from immigrant backgrounds. While our primary focus remains on university students, we also strive to offer resources to community members. This includes offering bilingual resources in English and Spanish, hosting “Know Your Rights” workshops in partnership with nonprofit and grassroots organizations, and responding to inquiries from anyone seeking legal guidance. By addressing students’ legal challenges, we help them stay focused on their academic goals, contributing to the university’s high retention rates by removing barriers—both financial, psychological and emotional—that might impede their academic progress.

SLS Immigration Program

Thanks to the generous Services & Activities Fee support in FY18, Student Legal Services expanded its immigration services by hiring an in-house immigration specialist. This initiative was driven by our commitment to better support the growing number of students from diverse backgrounds, including undocumented and international students, who face unique challenges in navigating higher education and securing employment. Prior to this, students with immigration concerns were referred to private immigration attorneys, often resulting in significant out-of-pocket expenses. In the 2018-2019 budget, we secured funding to hire two directors—one full-time and one part-time—enabling us to recruit a Co-Director with expertise in immigration law.

That year, we hired Tanya Fekri, who brings over a decade of experience in immigration law. Her expertise has enabled us to provide more comprehensive and affordable immigration services to students. Since her arrival, our immigration caseload has skyrocketed, growing from 39 consultations in 2018 to 249 consultations in 2019. The expanded immigration program has been vital for undocumented students navigating issues such as DACA renewals, work permits, study abroad opportunities, and family-based green card applications. International students have also benefited from guidance on visa terms, post-graduation work options, and status changes. By the midpoint of FY 25, SLS has already been retained in 46 legal matters—nearly matching the 52 cases handled over the entirety of the previous fiscal year. Currently, immigration cases account for 54% of our active caseload, while landlord-tenant issues make up 17%. Tanya continues to lead the immigration program, spearheading outreach initiatives to ensure that more students and community members can access this essential service.

SLS Landlord Tenant Program

Landlord-tenant law has been a key focus of SLS since our inception. Housing issues are a common concern for UW students and college students across the nation, and our office has long served as a resource for those navigating lease agreements, reasonable accommodation requests, and other housing challenges. This program became especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when students faced increased housing instability.

Each year, SLS attorneys and staff assist students by reviewing leases, negotiating early terminations for uninhabitable units, and recovering security deposits. With SAF funding, we

have been able to sustain this vital service, helping students secure safe, stable housing while easing the stress of navigating complex housing-related legal issues.

Impact of SAF Funding

In FY 2020, SAF funding allowed us to increase professional staff time, transitioning our Director to full-time and hiring a new full-time staff attorney, Amanda Reynoso-Palley, to address the growing caseload. This increase in staffing allowed us to handle complex and time-intensive cases, provide structured supervision for our student employees, and expand our capacity with a wide range of legal matters—including uncontested divorce cases, traffic cases, and domestic violence protection orders.

This increase in professional staff has had a direct impact on the quality of service we can provide, both in terms of mentorship for our student employees and in handling the rising demand for legal services. In the 2023-2024 school year, 1,040 students contacted SLS, and we held 620 free consultations. Among these, 214 (35%) were immigration cases, 165 (27%) were landlord-tenant issues, 23 (4%) were divorce cases, and 9 (3%) were traffic cases.

Since the beginning of FY 25, 472 students contacted SLS to seek legal help and resources and 230 consultations were held. Out of that number of consultations held, 80 (35%) were immigration cases, 79 (34%) were landlord/tenant law, 8 (3%) were divorce cases, and 7 (3%) were torts (personal injury) cases. Since July 1, 2024, our office has worked on 46 different legal matters and our student employees and attorneys have spent over 353.97 hours on their ongoing legal cases.

Due to SAF funding, we are able to offer legal representation at a fraction of the cost of private attorneys, with students saving an estimated \$111,504.64 in legal fees so far in FY 25 alone. We are also committed to eliminating financial barriers by offering fee waivers or reductions in 48% of ongoing cases this year.

Looking Ahead: Expanding Our Legal Services

In FY 26, we plan to hire a full-time staff attorney specializing in family and criminal law. This addition will enable us to better support students facing contested family law and criminal matters, expand our capacity to handle more complex cases, and further reduce students' legal costs.

SAF funding is essential to the continued success of SLS, allowing us to offer affordable, high-quality legal services to both students and community members. It ensures that legal obstacles do not hinder academic and career progress. Without this critical subsidized funding support, we would face substantial challenges in maintaining our operations and meeting the increasing demand for legal assistance among UW students.

- c. Are there programs/services that SAF has funded in the past that your unit no longer provides?

There are no services that SAF has funded in the past that we no longer provide.

- d. Are you currently using your unit's allocation for new programs or services that were not originally requested as an item in your SAF budget request?

No, we are not currently using any allocation for new services that were not originally approved as a line-item in our SAF budget.

- 3. What is the nature of your reserves/fund balances? For what purposes do you hold reserves? How were they accrued?** (Reserves/Fund balances are termed and considered differently in every unit. If you are unsure of what these terms mean or would like clarification on anything, please reach out and ask.)

We project that we will have about \$141,669 in reserves by the end of FY 25. At the start of FY 25, we had \$126,621.40 in reserves, carried over from prior years (FY 20 and FY 21) due to staff changes, vacancies, and cost savings during COVID-19 remote work, which reduced expenditures on conferences, travel expenses and supplies.

This increase is due to uncontrollable variables such as employment changes, work study for our student staff, externships, etc.

We maintain a reserve balance equal to 3 – 6 months of our operating expenses per standard practice.

Budget Breakdown

In this section, please include a breakdown of your requested revenues/expenses for FY26 and your unit's budget for FY25.

The template, instructions, and an example can be found here: [SAF FY26 Budget Breakdown.xlsx](#)

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

	<i>FY26 Request</i>	<i>FY25 Expected</i>	<i>FY25 Actuals Notes</i>
REVENUES			
SAF Funding	\$ 349,955.50	\$ 330,146.70	We are seeking a 6% increase from FY 25.
State/University Funding	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Self-Generated Revenue	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	Anticipate the same revenue as last year. Provided fee waivers to 48% of our clients.
Grants/Subsidies	\$ 10,472.94	\$11,519.00	Expected to receive annual grant in Spring.
Interest Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Other Revenue	\$ 22,220.00	\$ 19,900.00	Funding we expect to receive from UWb and UWt to continue our services.
Total Revenue	\$ 387,648.44	\$ 366,565.70	
Change in Revenues	\$ 21,082.74	5.75%	
EXPENSES			
<i>FY26 Request</i> <i>FY25 Expected</i> <i>FY25 Actuals Notes</i>			
Salaries & Wages:			
Classified	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Professional	\$ 252,894.00	\$ 173,568.13	As part of our service expansion, we will be hiring a staff attorney. See comments below
Graduate Appointments			
Temporary	\$ 32,787.90	\$ 83,676.56	See comments below.
Other Salaries & Wages	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Total Salaries & Wages	\$ 285,681.90	\$ 257,244.69	
Retirement & Benefits:			
Classified	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Professional	\$ 76,626.88	\$ 55,194.67	Covers benefits for three attorneys.
Graduate Appointments			
Temporary	\$ 7,541.22	\$ 17,990.46	See comments below.
Other Retirement & Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Total Retirement & Benefits	\$ 84,168.10	\$ 73,185.13	
Operations:			
Personal Service Contracts			
Other Contract Services	\$ 1,580.00	\$ 2,777.74	
Grants & Subsidies	\$ -	\$ -	N/A
Travel	\$ 1,950.00	\$ 1,885.32	
Supplies	\$ 5,082.00	\$4,446.20	
Other Operations	\$ 10,086.00	\$7,024.76	
Total Operations	\$ 18,698.00	\$ 16,134.02	
Total Expenses	\$ 388,548.00	\$ 346,563.84	*We plan to recruit 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls from the law school to extern with our office for academic credit, providing them with valuable experiential learning opportunities. This program will allow law students to shadow attorneys without requiring a Rule 9 limited license. To meet the increasing demand—over 1,000 meeting requests were received last year—we intend to hire a third attorney. Adding a third attorney will enable us to increase our daily appointment availability from three to six slots. We are specifically targeting an attorney with expertise in family law or criminal law to address the high demand for services in these practice areas.
Change in Expenses	\$ 41,984.16	12.11%	
Revenue - Expenses	\$ (839.56)	\$ 20,001.86	

Information on Other Revenues:

If you have other sources of revenue, please give an overview of those anticipated revenues (including new sources) and how you expect them to change in the coming years. If relevant, include a breakdown of services & positions funded by SAF vs other revenues.

We have a few other sources of revenue that make up a small fraction of our budget.

UW Bothell

We maintain a separate contract with UW Bothell to provide legal services to UW Bothell students. For FY 2026, we are requesting \$11,100.00. All time spent on Bothell cases, whether by student employees or attorneys, is carefully tracked in a separate timekeeping spreadsheet.

We submit quarterly invoices to Bothell, and all funds are transferred and documented accordingly to ensure that no Seattle SAF funds are allocated to support our Bothell-related work.

UW Tacoma

This marks our second year with a separate contract with UW Tacoma to provide legal services to UW Tacoma students. For FY 2026, we are requesting \$11,100.00. All time spent on Tacoma cases, whether by student employees or attorneys, is carefully tracked using a separate timekeeping spreadsheet. Quarterly invoices are submitted to Tacoma, and all funds are properly transferred and documented to ensure that no Seattle SAF funds are used for Tacoma-related work.

Career Internship Development Fund Grant

For the past few years, we have received a Career Internship Development Fund (CIDF) grant from the Career and Internship Center. In the first three years, the grant was fully funded, but in recent years, we have received only half of our requested amount. This funding enables us to hire a part-time undergraduate Outreach Coordinator, who plays a key role in building campus and community partnerships and raising awareness about SLS services across UW. We plan to apply for this grant again for FY 26. CIDF typically prioritizes new applicants, so we are uncertain whether we will be awarded the grant. If we are not selected, we will cover the cost of the Outreach Coordinator position ourselves.

Self-Generated Revenue

In addition to offering free consultations, we charge significantly lower legal fees for our ongoing representation cases. Our standard rate is \$20 per hour, which is a fraction of the typical cost of hiring a private attorney, where rates average around \$322 per hour. This year, we anticipate generating approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000 in self-generated revenue. Four years ago, we observed an increase in the number of students requesting fee waivers or fee reductions, likely because of the financial challenges that stemmed from the pandemic. Since the beginning of FY 25, we have granted fee waivers or reductions in 48% of our ongoing cases. While we remain committed to eliminating financial barriers for students, we can only continue to do so if we can meet our operational needs through Seattle SAF funding.

Donations

Finally, three years ago, we were honored to receive a generous donation of \$1,000 from the parent of a student who had benefited from our services. This gesture prompted us to establish a donation fund, with all contributions dedicated to supporting students facing significant financial hardship, particularly for court and immigration filing fees—costs we have previously been unable to cover. We have made it easy for donors to contribute by including information and a donation link on our website, in our promotional materials (including brochures and flyers), and in our SLS Annual Report. The creation of this fund furthers our mission to eliminate financial barriers and ensure all students have access to affordable legal representation.



Additional Questions

1.
 - a. How would you adjust your operations if you did not receive your full request? Please elaborate on the potential impact on staffing and services.

If we do not receive the full amount of SAF funding requested, we may need to reduce the weekly hours our student employees can work, depending on the reduced funding amount. This would require us to prioritize consultation requests, addressing only the most urgent cases immediately. While we will continue to offer free legal consultations to all students, we may be forced to schedule these appointments further in advance to ensure sufficient staffing and resources for critical cases. As a result, students may experience longer waiting times to meet with our legal staff or may be forced to seek costly private attorney services out of pocket.

- b. What if you received an amount less than your FY25 allocation?

If we receive significantly less SAF funding than requested, we would be forced to reduce our staff size and/or hours, which could result in layoffs of student employees. This would severely impact on our ability to meet the needs of UW Seattle students, potentially forcing us to refer students to off-campus resources even at the consultation stage

- c. **What student services/programs are integral to your mission that you would not cut even if you received an amount less than your FY25 allocation?**

Even with a reduced funding allocation compared to FY 25, we remain committed to providing ongoing legal representation services. These services save students thousands of dollars in out-of-pocket costs and directly support our mission to protect their legal rights—and, by extension, their mental, financial, and academic well-being.

One international student client put it best: *“This service helped me regain my F-1 status, allowing me to stay in school legally. It also restored my eligibility for campus positions, CPT, OPT, and other benefits. This service is a reliable resource that turned my life around and gave me hope. Thanks to this support, I can now stay legally to complete my degree, graduate as a master’s student, and move forward with my life.”*

2. If financial resources were not a restriction, what is one program/service your unit would add/expand on to enhance students’ experience at the University?

While our office is dedicated to removing financial barriers for UW students, budget constraints prevent us from fully subsidizing our legal services. If financial resources were unlimited, we would consider offering free ongoing legal representation to all UW Seattle students.

3. How does your unit ensure that student fees do not subsidize non-student, academic, research, and other costs that are the primary responsibility of the University and its colleges?

At Student Legal Services, we make it clear to our student-clients that we are not responsible for assisting with academic coursework or research. However, in rare instances, students have approached us with matters that appear to intersect with academic work, particularly when there is a potential overlap between academic requirements and external employment or business ventures. In these client meetings, our focus is on providing legal advice related to the student's personal concerns, rather than the academic or university-related aspects. When necessary, we refer students to relevant university on-campus resources, such as the Entrepreneurial Clinic at the School of Law or the student’s academic advisor. Additionally, when students seek assistance with navigating or resolving conflicts within the University, we typically refer them to the Ombuds Office or suggest they consult with attorneys specializing in the relevant area of law.

4. How are you utilizing the SAF logo? In what ways do you spread awareness of your affiliation with SAF?

We feature the SAF logo on our website, marketing materials, and in our annual SLS Reports. We make it a point to inform every client who utilizes our services that our program is affiliated with SAF. To ensure our services are accessible only to currently enrolled students, we regularly verify student enrollment status through the University of Washington's Registrar’s office. Additionally, we highlight our SAF affiliation at every campus presentation, workshop, or webinar where our department is invited to participate.

5. If you are projecting a net deficit for FY26, please provide additional context for this net deficit (e.g. reallocation of carryover funds from previous fiscal years, extraordinary expenses necessary to meet operational needs, etc.). *(Optional – Answer “N/A” if not relevant to your unit)*

N/A

6. When projecting out 1-3 fiscal years, what challenges, if any, do you foresee for your unit? How could SAF be helpful in navigating these challenges? *(Optional – Answer “N/A” if not relevant to your unit)*

In recent years, Student Legal Services (SLS) has experienced significant growth. With the support of the generous Services & Activities Fee (SAF) funding, we have been able to promote academic retention by allowing UW students to focus on their education and overall student experience, rather than being overwhelmed by the stress, emotional pitfalls and distractions of legal challenges.

Our program expanded substantially in 2018 with the addition of an in-house immigration specialist. This expansion resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of students seeking free consultations, a demand that required additional SAF funding to cover the increased professional staff time needed to meet the growing need.

In FY 24, SLS received 1,040 meeting requests and conducted 620 consultations, a significant increase from 741 requests and 445 consultations in FY 23. This upward trend is expected to continue as potential policy changes under this new administration are expected to significantly raise the demand for legal assistance. However, our current staffing model has led to longer wait times for students seeking free consultations, underscoring the need for additional resources. To address this challenge, we are proposing a new full-time (1.0FTE) staff attorney. This position would enable us to serve more students, improve office efficiency, reduce wait times, and provide legal support in high-demand areas such as family law and criminal law.

As we plan ahead to the next 1-3 fiscal years, we remain committed to finding practical solutions to address these challenges. Without SLS, many students would lack the necessary resources and guidance to effectively navigate legal issues. The majority of our clients are young students with limited financial resources, more than half of whom are non-U.S. citizens. We expect that upcoming changes in immigration law under the current administration will have a significant impact on students from immigrant backgrounds. Adding a 1.0 FTE staff attorney will enhance our ability to support UW students facing legal obstacles and ensure we continue meeting the evolving needs of our diverse student community.

Legal issues can force students into the impossible position of choosing between resolving their legal concerns and continuing their education at the University of Washington. Securing this funding will ensure that no student's education is derailed by legal obstacles, empowering them to focus on their studies, excel academically, and confidently pursue their professional aspirations.